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Phil 15:51

The Freethinker

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

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THOMAS PAINE.

THE above portrait of Thomas Paine shows a fine intellectual face, lit up with imagination, and further characterised by what Carlyle would call "strong executive faculty." The possessor of such a face could not be a common man. It belonged—to use Paine's own phrase—to one of nature's aristocracy. That face alone is a sufficient refutation of the slanders circulated against him by fanatical Christians.

Happily the fame of Thomas Paine is emerging securely through clouds of detraction. His vindication has always been complete enough in Freethought literature, but the general public is now being disabused. Mr. Conway's "Life of Thomas Paine," in two handsome volumes, published by a "respectable" firm, has compelled the principal organs of public opinion to admit that he was not only one of our greatest political writers, but a man of sterling integrity and devotion to principle; in fact, that his real crime was being a hundred years in advance of his generation. He was a light-bearer of the vanguard of the army of human liberation, and was naturally hated, and therefore maligned, by the superstitionists and oppressors who flourished in the darkness.

Thomas Paine was not, in the strict sense of the word, a scholar. Certainly he was not one of those pedantic nincompoops, of whom Buckle said that their erudition only ministers to their ignorance, and the more they read the less they know. He was not steeped in the fallacies of the schools. He looked upon the world with a fresh eye. He saw things as they were, and he reflected upon them himself. His point of view was that of common sense. He refused to be deceived by the glamor around ancient falsehoods. He tore away the mask from venerable impostures, though their very dupes cried "Shame!" He wanted the unsophisticated truth, the plain reality. And when he took the pen in his hand he wrote in the same spirit. His style, perhaps, owes something to Bolingbroke, but it is essentially his own. He is always vivid and vigorous; he is naturally eloquent; his periods flow along with the ease of a full and rapid stream. Yet he never falls into the eloquent man's danger. He is never diffuse or turgid. He is always as perspicuous as mountain air in sunlight.

Cobbett, another self-taught man, and in his mature life one of Paine's admirers, was also a great writer. Sir Arthur Helps—no mean authority—said that no one ever wrote English with greater force and accuracy. Cobbett, however, was less graceful than Paine. His ear seems to have been defective. There is a certain music in Paine's sentences. They will bear reading aloud. And a great French writer, Flaubert, gave this as one of the tests of style.

Paine's lucid writing was one of his offences. Had he written Republicanism like Harrington, or Freethought like Lord Herbert, he would not have become the bogey of Church and State. Common people could understand him. His very illustrations were all within the range of their experience. His criticism of Monarchy was perfectly intelligible to field laborers, and "the man in the street" could catch every point of his attack on the Bible. Paine believed that principles can be understood by common people who are looked down upon as "uneducated" by those who attach a foolish importance to mere bookishness. He acted upon that belief, and gained an immense audience. The result was that he was tried for treason and cast out of "decent" society.

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Paine's first important writing was *Common Sense*, and the title was characteristic of the man. During the recent ridiculous quarrel between England and the United States, Mr. Gladstone telegraphed that "common sense is all that is required." Paine thought so a hundred and thirty years ago. He asked the Americans why they allowed King George to rule them like a lot of slaves from the other side of the Atlantic. He suggested that they should govern themselves. His voice rang like a clarion over the tumult. It roused the Americans, and they took his advice. King George was kicked out, and was succeeded by the first President of the United States. Thomas Paine was one of the chief founders of the great Western Republic. He spoke the word that fired men's hearts and led on to victory.

Having helped to establish one Republic, Paine returned to England with the hope of assisting in the establishment of another. Some cosmopolites said that their country existed wherever they found freedom. Paine said finely, Wherever freedom *is not*, there is *my* country. He was a born fighter, and he always fought for the rights of others.

Paine could not believe that the English people would go on worshipping the rags and tatters of Monarchy. He thought they would soon cast aside the rattles and play-things of their political childhood. But he was mistaken. He did not understand the great Conservative instinct to which Burke appealed. The multitude did not want "The Rights of Man." They preferred slavery, and hated their intended liberator; indeed, they knocked him down with their chains

This satisfied Paine that he had begun at the wrong end. Men's minds must be freed before their bodies. It is not the fetter, but the slavish mind, that makes the slave. The Age of Reason must precede the Rights of Man.

Paine saw it was necessary to attack Priestcraft, the corrupter and enslaver of the human mind. The priests based their teaching and authority upon the Bible, and he pulled it to pieces before their eyes. At the end of his task he told them that he had gone through the Bible like a woodman through a forest, and had cut down tree after tree. You may stick them up again, said Paine, but you will never make them grow.

Bishop Watson published a feeble reply. Other bishops preferred persecution. They knew the *Age of Reason* could not be answered, so they tried to suppress it. It was the subject of uncounted prosecutions for blasphemy. Scores of men and women went to prison for selling it. Richard Carlile spent more than nine years in English gaols for publishing that book. Brave man! It takes some courage to go to gaol again and again. It requires a strong conviction to do what you know will incur a sentence of three years' imprisonment. To borrow a phrase of Paine's, those were the times that tried men's souls. Richard Carlile was a hero. And when superfine Agnostics, who profit by his heroism, and lie snug and safe because he faced the howling storm; when these sniff at his "coarse self-confidence," it is enough to reply that a man needs a good deal of obstinate belief in himself to face the daily prospect of imprisonment for his convictions. The martyr is rude to superior persons who would not risk the singeing of a whisker.

It is said that Paine's *Age of Reason* has done its work. What if it has? How many books have a hundred years of usefulness? But this book has not done its work. It makes Freethinkers to-day.

Paine's work is carried on now by the descendants of his persecutors. All he said about the Bible is being said in substance by orthodox divines from chairs of theology. Canon Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* confirms Paine at every point. The perceptions of common sense are corroborated by the slow conclusions of scholarship. It is now admitted that most of the Old Testament books were not written by the men whose names they bear, and in many cases not for hundreds of years afterwards.

This truth, which Paine demonstrated a hundred years ago, is gradually creeping down from the "Higher Critics" to the common clergy. Father Ignatius may denounce it as much as he pleases, and call these "Higher Critics" mere "infidels," who take the Church's bread and do the work of her enemies. But he is a voice crying in the wilderness. No one heeds him. Even when he attends a Church Congress, they respect his honesty, but smile at his simplicity.

The "Higher Critics"—divines like Canon Driver, Dr. Bruce, and Professor Sanday—admit *the facts*. Where they fail, from timidity or personal prudence, is in the admission of the *meaning* of the facts. Moses did not write the Pentateuch; David did not write the Psalms; Solomon did not write Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or the Canticles; Daniel did not write the book of Daniel; Jonah did not go as a missionary to Nineveh, he never took a three days' trip in a whale's belly, and the book bearing his name was written hundreds of years after his supposed time. Nevertheless, all those books are inspired. Whoever wrote them, whenever they were written, and whether their contents be true or false—they are still the Word of God.

Such a position is an absurdity. It was Thomas Paine's merit that he accepted the truth with his whole heart. He scorned the artifices of cowardice and insincerity. He attacked the fetish-book of Christianity with logic, eloquence, and wit. He was derided, insulted, and persecuted; but he is now being vindicated by theological professors. They do not praise him, they do not even mention him; but the fact remains that they are preaching the gospel of Thomas Paine. The great difference is that they preach it to students, and he preached it to the people.

Thomas Paine did a great work in many fields. He was not a man of one idea, a monomaniac. His interests were varied, his mind moved in many directions. But above all he was a bright, undaunted soldier of freedom. That is his chief distinction, and that gives him his immortality.

G. W. FOOTE.

RELIGION AND PROGRESS.

EVOLUTION is the key-note of the thought of the age. All things are growths, and are studied in relation to their past. There is no art, science, or institution which cannot be traced to earlier, simpler, and ruder forms. Religion alone is supposed to be exempt. No one would ever think of going back two thousand years for their astronomy; but, for religion, the proper thing to do is to search out the musty records of the past, not for light on religious evolution, but implicitly believing the ancient dogmas are infallible and divine. Can any rational person credit that, while every other institution has been subject to change and development, religion alone is permanent? Who would think of saying that for all instruction in art or science we must go back to the ancient Hebrews? Why, then, in religion or morals, should we stop at Jesus, any more than at Moses, Buddha, or Confucius?

The temporary character of Christianity sufficiently appears from its endorsement of the Old Testament, which Professor Goldwin Smith now writes of as the millstone around its neck. It cannot disengage itself. The New Testament is built on the alleged prophecies of the Old. Jesus says, "Moses wrote of me," and that "One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." He even endorses the forgery of Daniel and the tale of Jonah in the whale's body. Beyond this, he regarded diseases as the work of evil spirits, and promised the end of the world and his own return in the lifetime of that generation. If mistaken on such points, why should he be supposed infallible in others?

Modern progress owes little to religion save the hardihood which comes from opposition. Religion has inculcated faith. Progress has come by scepticism and free inquiry. Its increase depends on the diffusion of reason and intelligence. As surely as dirt induces disease will superstition foster corruption, and wherever religion deals with the unverifiable, superstition and priestcraft are sure to enter.

Despite its pretences to be divine, infallible, and "once for all," Christianity has been constantly changing. It had to. It set out by proclaiming the speedy advent of the end of the world. But the world obstinately refused to wind up its affairs and make its exit, and Jesus Christ has never put in an appearance. His faith had to accommodate itself to Paganism, and was so undivine that, for the largest part of its existence, it was represented by forged and false creeds, and by a Church that has borne evil fruit instead of good.

As a matter of fact, the religion of to-day is not what it was half a century ago. It is constantly shifting its attitude, striving to accommodate itself to modern thought. The

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men of God do not dare to preach the old creeds. Even to read from the pulpit the once-admired sermons of such Protestant theologians as Jonathan Edwards would result in the desertion of the pews by the *élite* of the congregation. Hell has cooled wonderfully within the present century. If preached at all, it is blurred over with a dodging indefiniteness of outline. The New Testament teaches eternal torments, but the modern Christian says, with the dying Trilby: "*Il y aura amnistie générale.*" Satan, once omnipresent, is now superannuated, and even his celestial antagonist is veiled in vague vapors of incomprehensibility.

Christianity has only a Sunday existence. Huxley has well said: "The phraseology of supernaturalism may remain on men's lips, but in practice they are naturalists. The magistrate who listens with devout attention to the precept, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,' on Sunday, on Monday dismisses, as intrinsically absurd, a charge of bewitching a cow brought against some old woman; the superintendent of a lunatic asylum who substituted exorcism for rational modes of treatment would have but a short tenure of office; even parish clerks doubt the utility of prayers for rain, so long as the wind is in the east; and an outbreak of pestilence sends men, not to the churches, but to the drains."

We Freethinkers ask that creed shall square with conduct; that facts shall be honestly admitted; and that humanity, instead of persistently facing the twilight dimness of the past, shall look forward to the dawn. We stand for intellectual truth, honesty, and plain dealing, as alone consistent with human dignity. We do not antagonise anything that is tender, poetic, humane, and lovable in the old faiths, but rather seek to absorb and assimilate anything of worth they may possess. Morality is none the less essential because a growth of earth, not a revealed will from heaven. We do not deny that morality has been associated with religion; we only deny that religion possesses the exclusive monopoly of morality, and contend that right conduct will have more play when disengaged from dogmas which people only pretend that they believe.

Concentration is the secret of all success. To leave our sphere and rush into the skies results only in disaster. In the wondrous and wide field of realism is sufficient scope for all our energies. Were but the attention and organisation bestowed on salvation from imaginary disasters in an imagined hereafter concentrated on the amelioration of the present, the most glaring blots upon our civilisation would speedily be effaced, and we could confidently look forward to a time when the masses of mankind would be above the fear of poverty and degradation. Let us, then, calmly work for "one world at a time."

Let us abandon the false pretences of following guides whose real teachings we have discarded, or so modified and accommodated them to modern ideas that the original teachers would not recognise them. Let us not put the new wine of science into the old bottles of theology, but frankly accept the teachings of evolution; and if we cannot look forward to any miraculous millennium, we may at least work and hope for the amelioration and improved happiness of our race in this its earthly home.

J. M. Wheeler.

NECESSITY AND UTILITY OF FREETHOUGHT.

In sincerely wishing our readers "A Happy New Year," it may be well to consider the present position and the future prospects of the great Freethought movement in this country. It has often been to us a pleasing duty to expatiate upon the nature of Freethought, and to indicate its potent influence in promoting the personal and general welfare of the community. Mental freedom is the very foundation of that Secular philosophy which is now so rapidly permeating all sections of society. While much practical work remains to be done, we cannot overlook the fact that during the past quarter of a century immense strides have been made towards the goal of intellectual liberty. The seeds sown by the Secular martyrs of earlier days have developed and blossomed forth in the labors and writings of such able and brave men as Mill, Buckle, Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer, and other exponents of Freethought. Their work was not merely destructive, for they established a scientific and philosophic method of thought that has imparted a practicability to the conduct of modern times which had been hitherto unknown. It may be true that, before the results of the efforts of those mighty minds are fully realised, we, who are humbly following in the path they made, will have to do much more destructive work, for the pinnacle of mental freedom can never be reached until the nightmare of priestly domination is destroyed. As Colonel Ingersoll says, "the storm and tempest of thought must purify the calm of ignorance and faith." So long as men and women are held in cruel bondage by the superstitions of the Church, and offered as victims on the altars of fear, so long will the work of destruction be necessary. If theologians will keep up a senseless imposition, shall we not render society a service in exposing such a fraud and deception?

It is hardly possible to over-estimate the necessity of Freethought when we glance even at the present condition of society. Among the leaders of theological thought we fail to discover a rational and philosophic conception of human rights, so far as the entertaining and expounding of heretical opinions are concerned. The earnest believers in "the faith once delivered to the saints" have no real sympathy for those who are not of their household of faith. It does not appear to have suggested itself to orthodox enthusiasts that the liberty to hold one's own opinion unmolested involves the application of the principle to all members of the community, irrespective of the nature of the views professed. The very use of the degrading word "toleration," which is so frequently employed in religious circles, is a proof that those who use the term have narrow ideas as to what constitutes real mental freedom. We require no "toleration," but justice—which is, that all persons shall be free to think according to the dictates of their own judgment, without any apprehension of social ostracism in this world or of punishment in any other. The work of Freethought is to create among all classes of society a condition of mind in which this principle shall be put into practice. The Church has made such professions of liberty, but its members have not consistently carried them out when dealing with those who differed from them.

The work of Freethought, as began at the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and subsequently advanced by the inauguration of the Deistical movement, has to be continued until the human intellect is free to secure its highest possible development in every department of rational inquiry after truth. The Deistical struggle was too localised to exert any great and permanent national influence upon general thought, and the leaders of the Reformation were inconsistent in their conflict with error. Having won certain freedom for themselves, they cared not to aid others who were struggling to reach the same goal by a different road. Luther and his colleagues, having overcome their persecutors, became bitter persecutors themselves of those who were not of their faith. Thus the Church has ever been the enemy of man, fettering human thought and impeding human progress. The aim of our Freethought propaganda is to destroy its power for mischief, and, where we are unable to do this, to lessen its degenerating influence. As Ingersoll truly remarks, the Church "has done harm enough. It has covered the world with blood. It has filled the asylums for the insane. It has cast a shadow in the heart, in the sunlight of every good, tender man and woman. I say, Let us rid the heavens of this monster, and write upon the dome 'Liberty, Love, and Law.'"

Besides the reactionary party in the Protestant Church, there is Roman Catholicism, which is rapidly growing in our midst, and which, as Freethinkers, we must confront with all earnestness. Churches, where this blighting and mind-destroying faith is taught, are increasing to an alarming extent. Can we reasonably suppose that this growing power will ever be upon the side of liberty? Let its dark and blood-stained history answer the question. If there were no other fact than that this demon of darkness is overshadowing the intellects of thousands of the rising generation, we should be amply justified in increasing our Freethought activity. The battle against the encroachments of this Church of delusion and devastation must be maintained with persistent vigor, for the final conflict in civilised and progressive communities will be between Rationalism and Roman Catholicism—that is, between adherence to forced authority and trust in cultivated reason.

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While we may congratulate ourselves upon the Freethought progress already achieved, we must not forget that the final victory over traditional error and theological usurpation has yet to be won. Bigotry still reigns, prompting its adherents to seek to re-enact the barbarous laws of a rude age; religious zeal still urges its devotees to persecute those who do not accept the prevailing faith; fanaticism is still in our midst, impelling its victims to denounce the "infidel" as one unworthy the fellowship of general society. The growth of our national system of education is still retarded through impertinent theological interference; the rational use of Sunday is still denied by the selfish conduct of the supporters of the Church; we are still deprived by the professors of Christianity of legacies left to Secular Societies; and the Statute Book of England still contains "Acts against blasphemy" and enactments against free speech, which, if they dared be enforced, would imprison those who write or speak against the truth of the Christian religion.

Now, in the face of these facts, is it not imperative upon all who value Freethought to do their best in aiding its extension? In our opinion, Secular organisation and Freethought advocacy should command our first attention. Of course, the circulation of our literature is of vast importance; but it is only by wise, organised propaganda that any new system, any innovation, can be made general and rendered permanent. In proof of this statement it is only necessary to refer to the origin, the progress, and the development of the Christian Church, to the growth of monasticism, and to the remarkable advance made in Great Britain by Freethought since it first took definite form and shaped itself into a homogeneous societarian body. It is as true now as ever it was that, as a rule, people cannot be induced to stir except the impulse be given them. More especially is this the case with Freethinkers, whose views are regarded by so many with pious horror and sanctimonious bigotry. An isolated Freethinker is almost certain, if he run counter to the prejudices of his neighbors, to incur their dislike and to suffer loss and detriment. Yet, to their honor be it recorded, there are scattered throughout all parts of the country isolated men and women who do not fear to avow their unbelief in theology, and who unhesitatingly profess that unbelief in the very teeth of a creed which is only too prone to persecute and to enforce social ostracism. These noble witnesses, who, in their humble way, are no less heroic than were Vanini and Bruno, give a powerful impetus to the cause of freedom. All honor to those who are true to their convictions, who are firm in withstanding the blandishments, and even the threats, of their neighbors, and who will not, for the sake of quietness and worldly advantage, bow the knee to the idol of public fashion.

Writing from practical experience, we have great faith in Mr. Foote's "Lecture Scheme," as being a most efficient plan of extending a knowledge of our principles, and of consolidating the forces of our organisation. Those who can join us in the work should do so, while those who cannot, or who prefer not to do so, and who have sufficient means, should render financial assistance. The task which Mr. Foote has set himself is a heavy one, but it needed to be undertaken, and if all who sympathise will help in the enterprise 1896 will be a memorable year in the history of Freethought. Wealthy Secularists have ever been generous in their financial support, and there is no reason to doubt that they will continue their benevolence in supporting a scheme which cannot but further the cause they have at heart.

In again wishing our friends "A Happy New Year," we desire not only their welfare, but also the success of the Cause. We have briefly pointed out what we deem the work nearest hand, and we trust the year that has just dawned may be more fruitful than its predecessors in all that will tend to promote the happiness of mundane existence. In our opinion,

> What suits the gods above
> Only the gods can know;
> What the people want is sense
> *How* best to live below.

CHARLES WATTS.

Elder Berry—"What is your idea of faith?" Joblots—"Putting a nickel on the plate and expecting a crown of pure gold."

MISSIONARY WORK.

To visit twenty towns, deliver thirty-three lectures, hold a two-nights' discussion, and travel about 1,500 miles may be regarded as a fair amount of work for one to get through within the brief compass of thirty-three days; and a short account of my recent tour may not be without interest to members and friends of the Freethought party.

Leaving London on November 16, I made my first halt at Bradford, in the neighborhood of which town a ten-days' crusade had been arranged by Mr. J. W. Gott.

Bingley, Heckmondwike, Stanningley, Todmorden, Leeds, Huddersfield, Halifax, and Keighley were visited in turn—towns where, for many reasons, Secular lectures had of late been lamentably absent. At each of these places I was pleased at finding that fresh interest was awakened in the cause. An assurance was received that a more energetic propaganda should be carried on in the future, and at five out of the eight places visited new Branches were formed.

At Leeds, despite the fearful weather that prevailed during the whole of the evening, the meeting was a complete success. A splendid gathering assembled; a lengthy discussion followed the lecture; the meeting lasted about three hours; and, in the end, a new Branch was opened, and about twenty-five members enrolled. I have since heard from the secretary that fresh applications for membership have been received, and that a vigorous campaign is contemplated for the new year.

One incident that occurred during the time allotted for discussion is worthy of note, as illustrating the tactics of a certain section of the religious world. One of my opponents, who commenced his speech by paying a tribute to his own love of truth and general manliness, proceeded to read, or pretended to read, from the Objects and Principles of the N.S.S., the statement that "we believe in the abolition of the marriage law." A more deliberate and villainous lie it would be impossible for anyone to utter; and I at once rose to a point of order, and requested the chairman to read the Principles. But the immediate exposure of such a cold-blooded falsehood did not seem to lower the speaker in the estimation of his followers, nor did either of the other speakers feel called upon to repudiate such conduct. No; the majority of Christians present seemed to feel that, if that statement was not among the Objects of the N.S.S., at least it ought to have been, and "If my lie hath abounded unto God's glory, why am I then judged a sinner?"

The incident, however, is instructive as showing the depths of scurrility to which champions of the faith will sink, and the need of active propaganda upon our part in order to counteract such disgraceful tactics. Five years' experience upon the Secular platform has convinced me that a large part of the public opposition to Secularism arises from sheer ignorance of its teachings; and, although apologists on the platform and in the pulpit usually confine themselves to vague insinuations rather than direct charges, the above may be regarded as merely an extreme instance of that general policy of slander against which Freethought has always had to fight.

I must not take my leave of Yorkshire without thanking Mr. Gott, both in my own name and in that of the party, for his exertions in arranging the above course of lectures. All were arranged through him, and several by him; and it is largely owing to his efforts that the crusade was brought to such a successful issue.

As a set-off to the moral success of the crusade in Yorkshire, I have to chronicle a loss of a little over ten pounds—a loss that will be borne by the fund inaugurated by Mr. Foote. But the money is well spent. In future each of the places I have visited will be in a position to take upon itself the full responsibilities of lectures, and even to assist others in their immediate locality.

Leaving Bradford on November 30, I made my way to the far North, and, on December 1, delivered my first lecture to a Scotch audience. I had heard so much of the coldness of Scotch audiences that I was rather curious as to the treatment I should experience. But I had no reason to complain; far otherwise. My lectures were followed closely and intelligently, were received enthusiastically, and, personally, I was accorded everywhere the greatest heartiness and hospitality. At Edinburgh, Dundee, Glasgow, and Paisley I met with the same experience—a warm reception, and a hearty invitation to return at an early date.

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On the whole, with the exception of nearly breaking my neck on Arthur's Seat—a circumstance which I need not dwell upon, as not being part of my ordinary duties as lecturer—my first trip to Scotland passed off very pleasantly, and I trust to see much more of our Northern friends in the near future.

From Glasgow I made my way to Newcastle, where I was booked for a two-nights' discussion with the Rev. A. J. Waldron. The meeting was well attended, the audience behaved in a most exemplary way, and the discussion passed off in a fairly satisfactory manner.

Working my way homewards, I lectured on the 14th at Todmorden—one of the places mentioned above; on the 15th and 17th at Blackburn, where the propaganda is making splendid headway; on the 16th at Darwen; 19th Barnsley, and finished up by paying a first visit to Derby on the 20th, reaching London on the following day.

Taken altogether, I am fairly well satisfied with the result of my tour. Towns where Secularism had been unknown for many a day have been visited, Branches started, literature disseminated, and fresh interest in the movement aroused. And that these new Branches mean business is shown by the fact that I have already received from them applications for more lectures; while some of them have volunteered to open up the work in fresh towns, and bear part of the expenses, if the remaining portion can be borne by Mr. Foote's fund. Out of the thirty-five lectures delivered during my tour eighteen of them were delivered under our President's plan—I was booked for twenty, but halls were not obtainable; and it must be borne in mind that the majority of these would never have been given but for that scheme. "What do you think of Mr. Foote's scheme?" is a question put to me with unfailing regularity. Well, there can be but one answer to that question. It is bound to do good, provided that funds are forthcoming. Organising a movement throughout the country is largely a question of finance, and if the scheme receives the support it deserves, there can be little doubt that it will be the means of permanently benefiting the Secular movement in Great Britain. It is impossible to open out the movement in strange towns, where Secularism is unknown, without funds; and it is ridiculous, from a party point of view, that the dissemination of Secular principles should be permitted to depend upon the inclination or ability of one or two individuals to arrange for lectures in their particular localities.

One of my last meetings in Yorkshire, with the exception of Leeds, took place in a town where we did not even know anyone who would act as chairman, and on that occasion Mr. Gott became a veritable Poohbah in the number of offices he was called upon to discharge. Now, it is certain that, had we waited until someone in that town had arranged a meeting, there would have been no lecture; and it is equally clear that, if other towns in the same condition are to be visited, some such scheme as at present exists is indispensable. Individuals have not always the inclination, the ability, or the time to arrange for lectures in the towns in which they are living, nor have speakers always the funds that will enable them to stand the loss consequent upon visiting new places, and for these reasons the work has been more backward of late than it should have been.* Another method by which the work might be helped is by the dissemination of leaflets or literature generally. Where halls cannot be obtained the town should be flooded with advanced literature, which would help to break down the bigotry that closes public halls to Freethought speakers. It appears to me that this part of the work is at present sadly neglected, and if its neglect is unavoidable owing to the absence of funds, I trust that this reason will grow weaker as time passes.

I find no lack of interest in Secularism; on the contrary, I find growing audiences and more sympathetic listeners. In towns where a few months ago I addressed audiences of twenty or thirty people, I now have several hundreds. I find but one thing wanting—organisation—and that should be remedied speedily if Freethinkers do but carry out their duty. Secularism appears to me to have now taken its place as one of the settled institutions of the country, to be regarded as a power to be reckoned with upon all occasions. The increased attention paid by the clergy to secular matters; the strenuous efforts made to prevent the spread of Secularism, as well as the respect paid to its advocates, all show this. Now, more even than in the fiery and exciting days of Charles Bradlaugh, is the time for serious organising work. It remains to be seen whether Secularists will permit the golden opportunity to slip by, or whether, sinking all petty jealousies and differences, they will, with an undaunted and united front, press forward to certain victory.

C. COHEN.

* The present scheme will at least do something towards remedying this condition of affairs.

INGERSOLL UNCONVERTED.

COLONEL ROBERT G. INGERSOLL found a heavy mail from the Christian Endeavorers, who have been praying for him in convention, when he returned home from his Western trip, and he said, last night, to the *Sun* reporter: "No, I have not been converted by their prayers, I am glad to say, and there is no occasion for taking a 'before and after' picture of me."

"Why glad?" asked the *Sun* reporter.

"I want to finish my days without the consolation of a hell," said the Colonel, looking very solemn, though there is nothing in his appearance to indicate that his days are likely to be finished for half a century more.

"Did it annoy you to have the Endeavorers take such a public interest in your conversion?"

"Dear me, no," said Colonel Ingersoll. "They meant it kindly, and for my good. The only difference of opinion that we have is that I believe that this world is natural, and they believe that it is supernatural—something that was constructed by sleight of hand, by someone up in the clouds. That is all." And Colonel Ingersoll settled back comfortably in his chair, as if the difference of opinion were too trifling to discuss.

"But what if you should be converted?" suggested the *Sun* reporter. An expression of mock terror spread over the Colonel's rosy cheeks as he replied:—

"That would be a dreadful misfortune, and I should be unhappy all the rest of my life."

"If you had absolute faith in the Christian religion, would it make you unhappy?"

"It certainly would. How could it be otherwise? A man of intelligence who is a Christian, and who has imagination, couldn't help but be unhappy. Just think of the hell that it holds out. If he is a Christian, he must believe that the people whom he knows and loves on earth are to be separated in death, and some are to go to hell and some are to go to heaven, and they are to stay there forever. It would make me very unhappy to believe that. This is to be for eternity. I have asked many Christian people, 'What are you going to do in heaven?' and they reply that they are going to be happy there. 'But how are you going to be happy?' I ask. Are they just going to do nothing and be happy, or are they going to get their happiness from playing on golden harps all the time? Are they going to be happy knowing that some of those whom they loved here are suffering eternal tortures in hell? I couldn't be happy under those circumstances."

"Admitting the truth of the Christian religion, wouldn't you wish to be converted?"

"Why, if there is someone up in the clouds to whom these people who pray give advice and instruction how things should be run down here, I certainly want to know about it. But, you see, I don't believe that there is. I should very much dislike to accept the Christian religion, and all that it holds out, even to those who believe it and live by it."

Colonel Ingersoll hadn't time to read all of the hundred or more letters that were waiting for him, and the two or three that he had opened struck him as being very foolish. One writer made a violent attack on the Colonel, and another wrote in a kindly, argumentative way. Neither produced any effect, however.

—*New York Sun.*

Each man in whom dissatisfaction is aroused by institutions which have survived from a less civilised past, or whose sympathies make certain evils repugnant to him, must regard his feelings thus excited as units in the aggregate of forces by which progress is to be brought about; and is called on to expend his feelings in appropriate deeds.—*Herbert Spencer.*

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THE SUPERNATURAL "NATURAL"; OR, LEGITIMATE ILLEGITIMACY.

REJOICE, O bastards! shout and sing!
Nor longer envy babes of marriage;
Your charter from the East I bring,
All free of charge, including carriage.

Arise! too long you've been despised!
And celebrate your ban's removal;
For God the Lord has patronised
Your caste, and stamped it with approval.

Jehovah, whom the Christians name
The Holy One, came down and tarried
A while on earth, and then became
A "dad"; but ne'er his partner married.

So, thus you see the Savior's Pa—
Whom Christians ne'er will call a dastard—
Declined to wed his youngster's ma;
And wished his boy to be a bastard.

But Christians—Christ's most deadly friends—
Look down on illegitimation;
And so, perforce, their scorn extends
To God and Christ, by implication.

An honest priest—unless an ass—
Must think that God was most erratic;
And that he should have "spliced" the lass,
At least in manner morganatic.

If God, *as Son*, came down to stay,
He should, *as Father*, first have tarried,
And treated in a proper way
The girl he ne'er, but should have, married.

But no; his ways with ours conflict,
And His are right; hence this illation:
That priests blaspheme who interdict
The state of "illegitimation."

So, therefore, bastards all be glad!
For those who "naturals" disparage
Contemn their Savior and his Dad,
Who honored *you*, and slighted marriage.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

WE have received a circular full of Armenian Atrocities, which Mr. Percy Bunting, editor of the *Contemporary Review*, and J. B. Paton, D.D., beg us to insert. We decline to do anything of the kind. There is absolutely nothing to be gained by multiplying narratives of murder, rapine, and outrage. We beg to tell these two Christian gentlemen that the Christianity of Europe is to be blamed for the present situation. If the Christian powers did not hate each other—if there were any reality in their Christmas talk of peace and goodwill—they would soon bring the Turk to his senses. The simple truth is that Armenians are being slaughtered, and Armenian women worse than slaughtered, because of the ignoble jealousies of the Christian nations. If Europe were full of Freethinkers, the Armenian Atrocities would be stopped in five minutes.

Just look at this wretched situation. If England tried to help the Armenians against their murderers, Russia would fight England; and if Russia tried it, England would fight Russia. France, Germany, Austria, and Italy would take sides, and the result would be the most awful war in history. Christian "goodwill" has brought us to this pass, that we cannot stop wholesale murder and rape, because we hate each other more than we hate the criminals. No, no, Messrs. Bunting and Paton! You have sent your circular to the wrong quarter.

Christian hypocrisy is positively sickening. All the sky-pilots in England and the United States have been cackling about "Peace," and a superficial observer might believe in their sincerity. But the fact is, the men of God simply saw that war between England and the United States wouldn't pay. It would be a devilish ugly business, with certain loss to both sides, and gain to nobody—not even to the Churches. For this reason the men of God cried "Peace!" But who hears them cry "Peace!" on behalf of the poor Ashantees? They are black heathen, and we can lick them easily, and lay our grip on their land, and dig out its gold. On, then, Christian England! Mow down the wretches who stand between you and gain! And don't for a moment apprehend so much as a whisper of denunciation from the pulpits of your Bethels.

Patrick Morley, the Batley wife murderer, has been executed at Leeds Gaol. He felt sure he was forgiven, and was full of hope as regarded the next world; in fact, the ministrations of Father Heassing and the prison chaplain had filled him with comfort. It does not appear, however, that this comfortable murderer was at all anxious about his poor victim. "How make *my own* salvation sure" is the sublime aspiration of a true Christian.

Winstanley, the Wigan murderer, who was executed at Liverpool, stated beforehand that "he was now prepared to meet his God." The trouble is that all the good people in heaven must be prepared to meet Winstanley.

It is comforting this cold weather to come across a parson who actually preaches the good old doctrine of eternal hell-fire—the Rev. J. Pearce, as reported in the *Barrow News*. "Where, in the whole compass of the Bible, is it expressly set down that souls which have had a chance here, and have made nothing of the chance, will have a chance of being saved?" There is nothing in Scripture to indicate this, but the eternity of hell is put in juxtaposition with that of heaven. But, then, some people say: "If the Bible teaches eternal punishment, so much the worse for the Bible."

One of the choristers at St. Tudor's Church, Cefu, Merthyr Tydvil, has been fined for throwing kisses to the ladies in the church. He seems to have been overcome by the spirit.

David L. Pearson, living near New Buffalo, Iowa, was driven insane, as the result of his belief that the recent earthquake heralded the end of the world, and is now confined in an asylum. His daughter, aged eighteen, has also been adjudged of unsound mind, her father's peculiar hallucination having also affected her reason.

Hudson Tuttle computes that in the 1,405 convents in the United States there is probably an average of sixty inmates, or 84,300 nuns, who are kept in more abject slavery than ever befell the negro of the South, and are more closely guarded prisoners than the most depraved convicts in the penitentiary.

Mr. Tuttle says: "The supreme law of the land cannot hold a single individual in prison for an hour without assumption of a just cause, and here a power, that ought to be subject to the government, holds 84,300 persons in inaccessible bastiles." Nothing so strongly displays the power of religion as the crimes that can be perpetrated in its name.

The *Christian Advocate*, a New York Methodist organ, has made a discovery. It has found out that Thomas Paine denied being an Atheist, and says: "If he ever avowed himself an Atheist, or hesitated to declare that he believed in one God, we should like to have some reader who is in possession of the proof communicate with us." The *C. A.* will not receive the proof; but assertions that Paine was an Atheist can easily be discovered from Christian sources.

In a communication to the Boston *Transcript* C. R. Grinsted says: "No people on the face of the earth are more priest-ridden than the Southern negroes, or contribute to a more unworthy cause, it being undeniable that the plantations of the South swarm with 'churches' and 'preachers' of every known denomination, very few of whom can read a word; hence their teachings are anything but scriptural, their 'religion' generally a grotesque mixture of dreams, visions, and physical manifestations, their examples anything but moral; yet it seems to suit a class of people in the South, brought up in the ignorance and vices of slavery, scarcely removed from the heathen customs and superstitions of Africa. Such preaching draws the crowd by pandering to their ignorance and defending their vices and immoralities as not incompatible with religion."

Dr. W. F. Cobb, assistant secretary of the English Church Union, writes to the *Isle of Wight County Press* denying that the E.C.U. is a Romanising body, or prepared to give entire submission to Rome. But "all true Christians desire union," etc. Mr. Cobb's letter reminds one of the saying, "*Qui s'excuse s'accuse.*"

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Christ Schlatter has gone to Santa Fé, in New Mexico. In the City of the Holy Faith he is among a population steeped in faith in the miraculous, and may be expected to increase by thousands the numbers of those who hail him as a new Messiah. Schlatter's reputation will soon outdo that of Sequah.

The vicar of a certain parish in Monmouthshire is a queer character. He sits up late at night and gets up late in the afternoon, unless he is obliged to deviate from this practice. His church was tastefully decorated for Christmas Day, and the congregation had long been awaiting him with impatience when he arrived. For some cause or other, he failed to read the lessons and prayers without much blundering and confusion; and at length he called for a light, although it was morning service and broad day. Perhaps he was blessed (or troubled) with spiritual vision.

George Macdonald remarks in the *Truthseeker*: "The unconversion of Ingersoll fails to prove that God does not always answer prayer. We are informed by a no less distinguished theologian than the Rev. Dr. Ward, editor of the *Independent*, that when God omits to grant our petitions it shows that he has chosen to respond in the negative! Nobody can deny this, because it is equally true of great wooden gods, medium-sized brass gods, and little tin gods on wheels."

The *Christian Advocate* gives the following as a form of prayer for the conversion of Ingersoll: "O Lord, we have an arch-enemy who is travelling over the country. He is working against Thee. He is working against us. He is endeavoring to injure the cause. We have all faith in Thee. We believe that Thou canst do this thing. Thou hast answered our prayers before, and we believe that Thou wilt do it now. O Lord, Thou hast everything, and canst do everything. Save this enemy. Make a friend, a co-worker of him. O God, Thou art all-powerful, and holdest everything in Thy hands. Answer this our prayer." God made no response, and the *C. A.* says it is because "the wicked through the pride of countenance will not seek after God."

The *Toledo Blade* has a suggestive query on this business. It says: "Either the prayers put up will result in Ingersoll's conversion, or he will remain an Agnostic still. In the former case, the efficacy of prayer will be unerringly demonstrated; in the latter, ——?"

The *New York Evening Post* says of these prayers for the arch-enemy: "Compared with Calvin's eager desire to get his hands on Servetus, or Luther's amiable wish that a hook might be put in the snouts of his enemies, this implies a change to call for Colonel Newcome's single and gratified Latin quotation about *emollit mores*. Indeed, the change seems greatest of all when one goes back only forty years to the time when the prayers for Theodore Parker delicately hinted that his 'removal' would please as well as his conversion to the truth. His biographer records that Parker's early death was considered an answer to these petitions."

The *Chicago Evening Post* says: "Dr. John Henry Barrows discontinued his evening services in the First Presbyterian Church because he did not want to preach to empty pews. He predicts the ultimate failure of the evening service, on the ground that the American people are beginning to recognise more and more Sunday evenings should be devoted to the home. Dr. Barrows' experience is a common one with pastors all over the city."

Dr. Jane Elizabeth Hotchkiss recently advocated prayer before retiring to sleep, as a means "for decomposing the muscular tension and inducing a complete relaxation of the nervous system." So, without expecting any answers to prayer, it might nevertheless be retained as a cheaper nightcap than toddy. The lady doctor is, however, outdone by the Muslim, Dr. Ahmed Djeyhoun, who, in the *Islamic World*, contends that Muslim prayer five times a day, being accompanied with regular movements of different parts of the body, inclination, genuflection, the elevation of the arms, etc., replaces other gymnastics.

Dr. Djeyhoun says: "The Muslim prayer becomes then a moderate and regular exercise, developing the muscular system, regulating the circulation of the blood and respiration, strengthening the constitution, modifying in a happy manner the temperament, stimulating the appetite, favoring digestion and the assimilation of the food, preserving the body from many maladies and weaknesses; as also the recitation of the Koran and other books of piety strengthens and regulates the vocal organs."

Our Muslim doctor, of course, finds a good deal to say about the hygienic effects of temperance and ablutions prescribed by Mohammed. Even the monthly fast of Ramazin, he declares, "gives a very necessary rest to the digestive organs," while the pilgrimage to Mecca "gives the traveller a change of air, which, from a medical point of view, is very important." It is notable how all religions are now seeking to defend themselves on the ground of their secular utility.

Another evidence of the spread of modern views among Muslims appears in the same number of the *Islamic World*, in a letter from an orthodox Muslim dated from Calcutta. This gentleman laments that among the English-speaking Muslims of India religion is falling in abeyance from attempts being made to reconcile it with science. He says ninety per cent. of these Muslims do not pray, forty per cent. at least do not keep the fast, and ninety-seven or ninety-eight per cent. do not know Arabic. Those who have not received English education are the only ones who can be relied on to preserve the old faith and formulas of Islam.

The *Crescent* (December 25) contains a letter from Mr. C. Kroll Laporte on "The Progress of Islam." As a traveller in Africa, Mr. Laporte says: "During the last fifteen years the Mohammedans have steadily progressed in Dahomey, as well as in other parts of Africa. At Porto Novo alone there are about 10,000. They are on good terms with the Fetichists. No religious strife has occurred thus far. The followers of Mohammed are known by the name of Halloufas, and are much liked by all who come in contact with them. During my residence I admired none so much as the Mohammedans."

Mr. Laporte holds with his friend, Winwood Reade, that the Mohammedans will be the real regenerators of the inhabitants of inner Africa. With regard to Christian enterprise he says: "The natives on the seaboard have been completely ruined by degenerate white men, who bring with them badly-translated Bibles, rifles, adulterated spirits, syphilis, and the gallows."

In the *Sunday Magazine* Dean Farrar writes on "The Legendary Infancy of Jesus Christ," and gives the well-worn platitudes about the superiority of the canonical to the apocryphal gospels. He does not see that this very superiority indicates that the received gospels are later. He accepts Mark as the oldest, and there the wonder-working Christ is most evident. The very absurdity of the stories told of the infant Christ shows their antiquity.

The world sometimes forgets that during the largest portion of the Christian era the immense mass of Christians had no books at all. Preaching, mystery plays, and mumming puppet-shows were their sources of instruction in religion, and during all this period the stories of the apocryphal gospels were even more devoutly believed than the canonical gospels are now.

The Rev. Joseph Bilcher, who has been ordered to pay 5s. a week for the support of the child of Mrs. Hobbs, who lived with him three years, is a Roman Catholic priest of some eminence in the Church.

It is a good thing to notice that Christmas charity is not decreasing, but, better still, to note that it is passing into the agency of other hands than those of the clergy. While so many gifts are in the paws of the priests, their recipients tend to become hypocritical and degraded. The donors naturally preach charity instead of justice, since they can dispense the one without any advance towards the other, and parish doles and charities are unblushingly made buttresses of the Church. Such a gift as the Christmas hampers to cripples, through the medium of the *Daily Telegraph*, was free from the usual objection to such charities.

A person officially connected with Board schools once expressed the opinion that religious lessons helped to make the children Freethinkers; for, if they used their minds at all, they could not but contrast the nature of the subjects taught from the Bible with that learnt in other departments. But the very purpose of religious teaching is to inculcate a spirit of submissive reverence to authority, which stands in the way of such exercise of judgment by children. If Bible teaching resulted generally in making Freethinkers, it would not be appropriate in public buildings paid for by all; and if the precious time now devoted to this subject were given up, elementary science could be taught, which would delight and elevate the scholars.

That Scotland has ceased to stand where she did in the matter of Sabbatarianism is sufficiently evinced by the voting of the Edinburgh Burgess Golfing Society, who resolved by 108 to 96 to keep the links open for the playing of golf on Sunday. Dr. Begg, in heaven above, must look down with disgust at the sight of auld Reekie adopting a rational Sunday.

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According to the statement of a prominent clergyman, "Nothing is impossible in this world." Then why has the Church given up trying to convert infidels by argument?

It appears that the chaplain of the American Senate went in for peaceable prayers, while the chaplain of the House of Representatives took the opposite tack, and asked God to uphold the American flag and protect the country from insults. This gives point to a recent joke in the *Judge*, as under: First Senator (in Fifty-fifth Congress)—"Do you think our minority can talk for two weeks longer?' Second Senator—"Yes. The new senator who stammers will consume one week, and after that the chaplain has promised to make filibustering prayers."

The same number of the *North American Review* which contains Professor Goldwin Smith's article on "Christianity's Millstone" has a paper on "Cranks and Crazes," by Mrs. Lynn Linton. Mrs. Linton deals some heavy blows at religious crazes. The belief in the Millennium, she says, is on a par with the reappearance of popular dead heroes. Theosophy and Spiritualism are classed as crazes, having *Credo quia impossibile* as their motto. The missionary craze is noticed as a dangerous one, often inciting to war, and with no respect for ultimates "beyond that doubtful gain of inducing a Chinaman to repeat the Apostles' Creed, instead of chin-chinning Joss; of substituting for the Brahmin's belief in the genesis of man from the body of God, the story of the clay figure and the abstracted rib." Then she deals with the cranks who want to play the part of Providence and trounce the Turk for his dealing with his Christian subjects.

Yet another article in this same review, speaking of the things that make for war and peace, says, incidentally: "The Old Testament is one of the worst offenders in this praise of battle."

A new sect has been started in Howard County, Indiana. The members are known as the Amish, and found their religion mainly on the Old Testament. They answer "Yea" and "Nay," and will not take an oath. Like Abraham and his descendants, they believe in close interbreeding, and they have been indicted for incest and marrying without licences, for the maltreatment of children, and other offences, which they claim are not crimes according to their religion. The Amish represent a reversion to old Bible practices which will hardly be tolerated in the present day.

Forgiveness is supposed to be essentially a Christian virtue. Yet, says Herbert Spencer, in his *Principles of Ethics*, sec. 137, "if we seek a case in which the virtue supposed to be especially Christian is practised, we must seek it among the non-Christians. Certain peaceful tribes of the Indian hills are characterised by it, as witness this account of the Lepchas: 'They are wonderfully honest, theft being scarcely known among them; they rarely quarrel among themselves. . . . They are singularly forgiving of injuries, when time is given them after hasty loss of temper.'"

In the cash accounts of the Stationers' Company for Yuletide, 1510, is the following item: "Item payd to the preacher, vi.s.; item payd to the minstrel, xii.s.; item payd to the coke, xv.s." These items represent the relative importance of religion, music, and cookery at the old festival.

"Peter Lombard" tells in the *Church Times* of a ceremony which still takes place year by year at Poschiavo, at the foot of the Bernina Pass. After the Christmas Eve service in the church, the "Vigil of the Christmas Rose" is held at one or other of the houses in the village. The mistress of the house places on the table lighted candles and the best glass she possesses, which is filled with water, in which floats a dried plant, probably a specimen of the well-known "Rose of Jericho." The company surround the table-singing psalms and hymns and watch the flower, which, loosened by the water, gradually spreads its fibres and opens its calyx. Then, saying, "the Christmas Rose has opened," they begin a new hymn of rejoicing, and from the church tower the bells carry the message up and down the valley.

Mr. Wheeler tells in his "Notes on the Calendar," in the *Secular Almanack* for 1896, a funny story about a sprig from the Glastonbury thorn which blossomed at Christmas, and refused, for a while, to adopt the New Style. Possibly such legends, as well as the old custom of wassailling orchards, may be traced to that worship of the tree-spirit of which Mr. Frazer tells in his *Golden Bough*.

The New York *Sun* (Dec. 15) devotes a column and a half to another prayer test, reported in the *Galveston Daily News*. When Mr. J. R. Charlesworth, the Freethought lecturer, was in Dallas, Texas, at the close of one of his meetings, Mrs. S. J. Sweeney, a lady at the head of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in that State, challenged him to allow himself to be prayed for and state the result. He consented, with the proviso of giving God a time limit of three months, and that the lady should also make the result as public as her challenge. The time is up and the Freethinker unconverted.

At the expiry of the time Mr. Charlesworth stated in public that he had experienced no change in his attitude towards the Christian or any other religion. He invited the lady to be present, but she declined. She, however, sent a letter, in which she said: "Your name has been so continuously on my thought and prayer that, when the time limit was out, I found myself very loth to believe that God had not revealed himself to you, and yet I find my faith stronger in Him than ever." Mrs. Sweeney is apparently a sentimental lady whose faith grows by want of nourishment.

Most of our readers have heard of that "strumpet," as the Christian advocates call her, who personated the Goddess of Reason during the French Revolution. She was a beautiful actress, and apparently a woman of quite blameless character. But the Church has always hated the Stage, and when an actress personated Reason in opposition to Faith, amidst the plaudits of the multitude, there was a double cause for detestation. So the clericals called her a strumpet, and in the course of time they added that she displayed herself stark naked. This made two lies instead of one, but the Church was always rich in falsehood, and could spend freely without fear of becoming bankrupt.

It is not always safe, however, to libel *living* actresses. They are apt to be women of spirit, and may make it warm for their traducers, as the Rev. Dr. Pullman, of Bridgport, Connecticut, has found to his cost. This man of God's bile was stirred up by Mdlle. Jane May, a most delightful comedienne, whose pantomime performance in *L'Enfant Prodigue* was such a hit in London. Mdlle. May is touring in the United States, and the Rev. Dr. Pullman denounced her from the pulpit as an unchaste woman. As the lady is a good wife and mother, and as such superior to any man who preaches lies for a living, she decided to give this man of God a lesson. She had him arrested, and though he is out on bail he has to face an action for slander, involving a claim of $25,000 damages. We hope the court will make him shell out.

Voltaire, if he had lived now, would say of England, not one hundred, but three hundred, religions, and but one sauce. The number of religious denominations given in *Whittaker's Almanack* for 1896 is two hundred and ninety-three. The seeker after religious truth must be considerably embarrassed if he attempts to investigate all religions fairly. Life would probably be too short for the task.

Cardinal Vaughan has got from Rome a grant of arms for his so-called See of Westminster. The arms granted are the same as those of the Archbishop of Canterbury, except that a red ground is substituted for blue, "in memory of the martyrs." This change makes them like the arms of the Primate of York. The *Church Times* says: "In trying to pose as a successor to St. Augustine, he has only succeeded in making himself a pseudo-Archbishop of York."

Science.

What knowledge is of most worth? The uniform reply is—science. This is the verdict on all counts. For direct self-preservation, or the maintenance of life and health, the all-important knowledge is—science. For that indirect self-preservation which we call gaining a livelihood, the knowledge of greatest value is—science. For the due discharge of parental functions the proper guidance is to be found only in—science. For that interpretation of national life, past and present, without which the citizen cannot rightly regulate his conduct, the indispensable key is—science. Alike for the most perfect production and present enjoyment of art in all its forms, the needful preparation is still science; and for the purposes of discipline—intellectual, moral, religious—the most efficient study is, once more, science.—*Herbert Spencer.*

MAN can never be so sufficiently assured of the course of his thoughts as to swear fidelity to this or that system, which for some time being he may regard as the true one. All that he can do is to consecrate himself to the service of Truth, whatever she may be, and to incline his heart to follow her wherever he thinks that he sees her, and this though at the cost of the most painful sacrifices.—*Ernest Renan, Letter to Cognat.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 5, North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road, Camberwell:—7.30, "What has Become of the Devil?"

January 12, 19, and 26, St. James's Hall, Piccadilly.

February 2, Liverpool; 9, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—January 5 and 6, Birmingham; 8, Hammersmith; 12 and 13, Bolton; 14, Blackburn; 19, Glasgow; 26, Edinburgh; 29, Dinner of the N.S.S. February 2, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 3 and 4, Ipswich; 16, Athenæum Hall, London; 23, Manchester. March 15, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Captain Otto Thomson (Stockholm).—A Happy New Year to you. We were pleased to hear your American admirers had presented you with Mr. Putnam's *Four Hundred Years of Freethought*. Papers shall be sent as desired.

W. V. S. Cockson (Engobo, S. Africa).—Papers always welcome.

Well-Wisher (Brighton).—R. Harrison & Son, 40 New England-road, supply the *Freethinker*.

Onward.—Thanks. See answer to "Well-Wisher."

Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme.—B. (Manchester), £1; Mrs. Jackson, 10s. Per Miss Vance: A. Marks, 10s. 6d.

N. S. S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: A. Tripp, £1 1s.; A. Marks, £1 1s.; R. Axelby, 1s.

J. Richards.—You shall have a date.

E. Howard.—See paragraph. You are doing a good work at Failsworth. We wish you all success.

Charles E. Moore, editor of the *Blue Grass Blade*, one of whose articles was lately reproduced in the *Freethinker*, informs us that he has changed his address to 9 Murdock-building, Longworth-street, Cincinnati, Ohio. We take this opportunity of shaking hands (in spirit) with Mr. Moore.

Rockingham.—(1) Your state of mind is quite natural. Christianity lingers in your feelings after it has been rejected by your intelligence. This is the result of early training. In the course of time, as your feelings adjust themselves to the truth, you will find relief. (2) When the Christians talk to you about their prospects after death, they forget to mention *hell*, where most people go, according to the New Testament. Surely an everlasting sleep is better than everlasting torture. Weigh a small chance of heaven against the great chance of hell, and then judge whether the Christian's prospect is, after all, so rosy. (3) With respect to a future life, independently of heaven and hell—if there be such a life, it cannot be destroyed by want of belief; and if there be no such life, belief cannot create it. What is, is; and what will be, will be—in spite of all wishes and opinions.

H. R. Collon.—Your lecture notice arrived too late for insertion last week. We notified that we should go to press early, in consequence of the holidays.

J. Partridge.—See paragraph.

J. Jones.—Pleased to hear from you, and glad to know you have such a high opinion of the *Freethinker*. Your letter to the local paper is excellent.

A. Mitchell.—Not without merit, but you require practice in versification, with close attention to good models, before your efforts will be fit for publication.

Alpha.—We have remitted the matter to the Benevolent Fund Committee.

F. W. Swain.—Mr. Foote hopes to see you all at Derby in February.

Verax.—We do not quite agree with your diagnosis, but we refrain from political discussions in this journal.

A. Wylam-Stavers.—Thanks for your good wishes.

T. Wilmot.—We cannot waste time on such a lying braggart. Let him cadge, if he can, from Christian fools.

George Anderson, 35a Great George-street, Westminster, writes: "I have recently read a very able pamphlet by Charles Watts—*The Claims of Christianity*, 52 pages, price 6d. I am desirous to circulate this work. It is agreeable reading to those who have thrown off the trammels of Christianity, and is especially useful to those who want arguments for their own justification or in answering opponents. I am willing to send six copies, post free, to any Branch of the N.S.S. that will send me eighteen penny stamps."

W. Simons.—The document is healthy, but it does not appear to call for special notice.

C. E. Hill.—Mr. Conway's *Life of Thomas Paine* is published in two volumes at 12s. 6d. each. Your suggestion is a good one, if it can be carried out. Certainly the N.S.S. member's certificate might be improved; it was not, we believe, specially designed.

Italicus.—(1) George Bishop is really a poor creature. We cannot devote more space to his views on any subject. (2) The Puritans were not polygamists. The statement is absurd. That they were persecutors is beyond question. (3) We cannot discuss Capital Punishment in this column.

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

Papers Received.—Blue Grass Blade—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—Freethought Magazine—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Boston Investigator—Arbeiter Freund—Crescent—Isle of Man Times—Islamic World—New York Sun—New York Public Opinion—Umtata Herald—Pretoria Government Gazette—Ourselves—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Liberty—East Anglia Daily Times—Figaro.

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

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

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

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

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

SPECIAL.

I have terminated, for the present, the tenancy of the Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell, where Freethought lectures have been given since the first Sunday in September. We were unable to charge for admission, and the collections have naturally not yielded enough to defray expenses. The deficit has been met under my Lecture Scheme.

For two Sunday evenings I am lecturing at Camberwell. The Secular Hall there has not been doing so well lately, and I hope to visit it a little more frequently, as the President's attendance seems to give fresh inspiration to the gallant workers.

My next effort in London is in the West-end, which I intend to work—not alone, but with other lecturers—during the rest of the winter. I have engaged St. James's Hall (Banqueting Room) for three more Sunday evening lectures on January 12, 19, and 26. My subjects will be found in an advertisement on another page of the *Freethinker*. They are fresh, and should be attractive. Of course, the expenses at St. James's Hall are very heavy, and I appeal to the London Freethinkers to make these meetings successful. I hope to get some notice of the lectures in the Radical press, and the attendance will be of the nature of a demonstration. Anyone who can distribute handbills, or exhibit a placard, should obtain the same of Miss Vance at 28 Stonecutter-street. A post-card will suffice in application.

After the St. James's Hall meetings there will be Sunday evening lectures in February, by Messrs. Watts and Parris, at the Athenæum, in Tottenham-court-road. During nearly the whole of that month I shall be on tour in the provinces. I hope to spend March in London, and to devote the whole of April to another provincial tour.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

The Christmas season told on Mr. Foote's meetings at Manchester. The morning and afternoon audiences were small, but the hall was crowded to the door in the evening. Before the lecture Mr. Foote gave a reading of Tennyson's "Rizpah," which was highly appreciated. The lecture itself was delivered amidst a running fire of laughter and applause. During the day a collection was taken on behalf of the General Fund of the National Secular Society.

On Sunday evening last Mr. Foote lectured in the Secular Hall, Camberwell, to a large and enthusiastic audience. Mr. A. B. Moss, who came to listen, was pressed into taking the chair. "How and Why was Jesus Born?" was the subject, and the laughter which greeted the "How" part was equalled by the applause which greeted the "Why" as the lecturer illustrated the failure of Christianity. It is gratifying to know that the ovation at the close of the lecture was not mere barren sound, for new members were afterwards enrolled by the secretary.

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Mr. Foote lectures again at Camberwell this evening, his subject being, "What has Become of the Devil?" Christians themselves ought to be interested in the disappearance of this personage.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures to-day, Sunday, January 5, and to-morrow (Monday), at Birmingham. Arrangements are being made for him to lecture in the district on following evenings under Mr. Foote's scheme. We hope our Midland friends will rally in good force at all the meetings.

Friends in the Midlands are reminded of the Conference to be held at the Alexandra Hall, Hope-street, Birmingham, this Sunday, January 5, at 2.30, which Mr. Watts will attend. The object of this Conference is to promote co-operation amongst the said Branches. We hope there will be a good gathering, and we shall be glad to receive a brief report of the proceedings.

Colonel Ingersoll is not only unconverted, but lecturing as much as ever. On December 29 he was at Jersey City, New Jersey; on January 5 he lectures at Detroit, Michigan; and on January 12 at Toledo, Ohio. The gospel of Freethought is being well spread over the States, and the prayers of the Christian Endeavorers are helping to spread it.

The *Literary Guide* for January contains a well-written and interesting interview with Mr. J. Allanson Picton, the writer being Mr. F. J. Gould. Mr. Picton, who has always been a stalwart Radical, describes the Nonconformists' support of Bible-reading in Board schools as "one of the greatest inconsistencies and treacheries to principle that the history of parties can show." Being reminded that Huxley advocated the retention of the Bible, Mr. Picton replied: "Yes, but he did not do so out of any truckling to public opinion. I sat on the School Board with him. His motive, I am sure, was thoroughly genuine. He looked upon the Bible as a great classic, and he believed its stories formed a useful means of conveying moral instruction to children. He had no idea that it would be used as it has been. He told me afterwards, in the course of conversation, that he was disappointed with the result, and that he was inclined to think my point of view was the right one."

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Minnesota has decided that opening school with prayer is illegal, as in violation of Sec. 16 of the State Constitution, which provides that no person shall be compelled to attend any service of religious worship.

The Ryhope Branch had a well-attended social gathering on Christmas Eve. The first toast of the evening was "The President of the N.S.S. and success to his lecture scheme." The next toast was "The memory of Charles Bradlaugh." Speeches were delivered by Messrs. Weightman and Hutchinson. The Ryhope friends are looking forward to a visit from Mr. Foote in February.

The Bristol Branch held a successful concert and dance on Boxing night, in spite of the wind and sleet. We understand that this Branch intends to carry on an active propaganda during the rest of the winter.

Christmas Day was celebrated by the Failsworth Secular Sunday School with an annual tea. Nearly three hundred scholars, parents, and friends sat down to the repast, which was followed by singing, recitations, and games. Mr. W. Jones, the president, distributed the prizes, and congratulated the school on its continued progress. The annual public party and entertainment takes place on January 4, when *The Honeymoon* will be played. Tickets for the tea and entertainment, on shilling.

Captain Otto Thomson sends us "tidings of great joy"—the advent of a talented lady Freethought orator on the platform of the Freethought Federation in Stockholm. The lady's name is Miss Ellen Key, and she is already well known in Liberal circles in Sweden. From the report of her lecture sent to us it is evident the lady has a good grip on religious and social questions. She will prove an acquisition to the Freethought party, and, we trust, help to rally its forces together.

We have received a letter from Mr. G. Gilette, one of our readers at Newcastle, Natal, South Africa, in the course of which he says: "Let me know when my subscription falls due, but on no account stop the paper, as I should feel lost without it. It is the best appetiser and digestion-promoter I ever tackled. If I read it before meals, it disperses all worries from my head, and enables me to enjoy my food; if after meals, for the same reason I digest my food. It is the most sensible paper I read. I have recommended it to several of my friends, and keep lending it right and left. I believe if you had an agent here he would sell any quantity." Mr. Gilette hopes Mr. G. L. Mackenzie will publish his satirical verses in pamphlet form. He says he has distributed a lot of our tract, "The Parson's Idol."

An American physician writes to us from Mount Sterling, Illinois. He says that he went to church and heard a sermon on Thomas Paine's deathbed. "Upon coming home," he continues, "I recollected that I had kept a number of your publications, obtained while in England attending your hospitals; and, looking through them, I found *Infidel Death-Beds*, to my mind one of the most valuable reference books in Secular literature, and one that should be at the elbow of every thinker, as it saves so much time and bother." This correspondent adds: "I trust the good work in England continues, as I know it will as long as G. W. Foote and the *Freethinker* live."

The *Hereford Times* prints a long and able letter from "A Farmer" in support of Secular Education. It is a good sign of the times to see such a letter in an ordinary newspaper. "A Farmer" speaks very plainly about the superstitions of the New Testament.

London Freethinkers will remember the Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, January 29 (Thomas Paine's birthday). Mr. Foote, who presides, will be supported by Mr. Charles Watts and other well-known Freethinkers. The tickets are at the usual price, 4s., and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or from any London Branch secretary.

WHY DON'T HE LEND A HAND?

You say there is a God
  Above the boundless sky,
A wise and wondrous deity
  Whose strength none can defy.
You say that he is seated
  Upon a throne most grand,
Millions of angels at his beck—
  Why don't he lend a hand?

See how the earth is groaning,
  What countless tears are shed;
See how the plague stalks forward,
  And brave and sweet lie dead.
Homes burn and hearts are breaking,
  Grim murder stains the land;
You say he is omnipotent—
  Why don't he lend a hand?

Behold, injustice conquers;
  Pain curses every hour;
The good and true and beautiful
  Are trampled like the flower.
You say he is our father,
  That what he wills doth stand;
If he is thus almighty,
  Why don't he lend a hand?

What is this monarch doing
  Upon his golden throne,
To right the wrong stupendous,
  Give joy instead of moan?
With his resistless majesty,
  Each force at his command,
Each law his own creation—
  Why don't he lend a hand?

Alas! I fear he's sleeping,
  Or is himself a dream,
A bubble on thought's ocean,
  Our fancy's fading gleam.
We look in vain to find him
  Upon his throne so grand,
Then turn your vision earthward—
  'Tis *we* must lend a hand.

'Tis we must grasp the lightning,
  And plough the rugged soil;
'Tis we must beat back suffering,
  And plague and murder foil;
'Tis we must build the paradise
  And bravely right the wrong;
The god above us faileth,
  The god *within* is strong.

—*S. P. Putnam.*

The Church is at rest only when she has everything her own way, or is able, without let or hindrance, to trouble the tranquility of others.—*Voltaire.*

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PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH ON THE BIBLE.

"CHRISTIANITY'S MILLSTONE" is the title of a very significant article by Dr. Goldwin Smith in the *North American Review*. The millstone which Dr. Smith desires to see cast off is neither more nor less than what during the palmy days of Christianity was considered its very basis—viz., belief in the historical character of the Bible. He begins his article by citing the admission of Professor Bonney, Canon of Manchester, "that the increase of scientific knowledge has deprived parts of the earlier books of the Bible of the historical value which was generally attributed to them by our forefathers. The story of the creation in Genesis, unless we play fast and loose either with words or with science, cannot be brought into harmony with what we have learned from geology. Its ethnological statements are imperfect, if not sometimes inaccurate. The stories of the flood and of the Tower of Babel are incredible in their present form: Some historical element may underlie many of the traditions in the first eleven chapters of that book, but this we cannot hope to recover."

Dr. Smith then refers to such admissions of *Lux Mundi* as that "very little of the early record can be securely traced to a period near the events." He tells how he himself, as a student at college, attended the lectures of Dr. Buckland, a pioneer in geology; and he remembers the desperate shifts to which the lecturer was driven in his efforts to reconcile the facts of his science with the Mosaic cosmogony, the literal truth of which he did not venture to impugn. By a "day," Dr. Buckland said, Moses meant a geological period, though the text says that each day was made up of a morning and an evening; while the Decalogue fixes the sense by enjoining the observance of the seventh day as that on which the Creator rested after six days' labor.

The following passage brings forward an argument often urged in our own columns. It is significant by its source: "The history of every nation begins with myth. A primeval tribe keeps no record, and a nation in its maturity has no more recollection of what happened in its infancy than a man of what happened to him in his cradle. It is needless to say that the first book of Livy is a tissue of fable, though the Romans were great keepers of records and matter-of-fact as a people. When the age of reflection arrives, and the nation begins to speculate on its origin, it gives itself a mythical founder, a Theseus, a Romulus, or an Abraham, and ascribes to him its ancestral institutions or customs. In his history also are found the keys to immemorial names and the origin of mysterious or venerated objects. It is a rule of criticism that we cannot by any critical alembic extract materials for history out of fable. If the details of a story are fabulous, so is the whole. If the details of Abraham's story—the appearances of the Deity to him, so strangely anthropomorphic, the miraculous birth of his son when his wife was ninety years old, his adventures with Sarah in Egypt and afterwards in Gerar (evidently two versions of the same legend), the sacrifice of his son arrested by the angel, the episode of Lot, the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, and the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, are plainly unhistorical, the whole story must be relegated to the domain of tribal fancy. We cannot make a real personage out of unrealities, or fix a place for him in unrecorded time."

"That the alleged record is of a date posterior by many centuries to the events, and therefore no record at all, plainly appears from the mention of Kings of Israel in Genesis (xxxvi. 31). No reason has been shown for supposing that the passage is an interpolation, while the suggestion that it is prophetic is extravagant. It stamps the date of the book, like the mention of the death of Moses in Deuteronomy, to get rid of which efforts equally desperate are made."

The patriarchs, thinks Professor Smith, must be set down as mythical. Of efforts to identify the Pharaoh of the Exodus he asks: "What if the whole is mythical? There is a famine in Palestine. The Patriarch sends his ten sons, each with an ass and a sack, across the desert to buy food in Egypt. Provisions must have been furnished them for their journey, and of what they bought they must have consumed not a little on their journey home. This seems improbable, nor was it very likely that the ten should strike the exact place where their brother Joseph was in power."

He brings out the improbabilities of the whole story of Joseph; the evident fables of the plagues sent upon the helpless people of Egypt to make their ruler do that which Omnipotence might at once have done by its fiat; the extraordinary multiplication of the Hebrews, whose adult males, in spite of the destruction of their male children, amount to six hundred thousand, a number which implies a total population of at least two millions; their sudden appearance as an armed host, though they had just been represented as the unresisting bondsmen of the Egyptians; their wanderings for forty years within the narrow limits of the Sinaitic peninsula, where, though the region is desert, they find subsistence not only for themselves, but for their innumerable flocks and herds; their construction of a tabernacle where materials for it could not have been found; the plague of fiery serpents which was sent among them, and the brazen serpent by looking on which they were healed; the miraculous destruction of the impious opponents of an exclusive priesthood; the giants of Canaan; the victories gained over native tribes by the direct interposition of heaven; the strange episode of Balaam, and his colloquy with his ass; the stopping of the sun and moon that Israel might have time for the pursuit and slaughter of his enemies. This last incident alone seems enough to stamp the legendary character of the whole. In vain we attempt to reduce the miracle, which would imply a disturbance of the entire solar system, to a mere prolongation of the daylight. The Old Testament is altogether geocentric, and not merely in the phenomenal sense. The sun and moon are made "for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light on the earth," and with them is coupled the creation of the stars. The writer of the book of Joshua cites the book of Jasher as evidence of the miracle. Was the book of Jasher inspired? Could an inspired writer need or rest on the evidence of one who was uninspired?

Professor Goldwin Smith has, it will be noticed, got nearly to the length reached by Thomas Paine, in his *Age of Reason*, one hundred years ago. As we shall see next week, he goes so far that he is logically compelled to go very much further.

(*To be concluded.*)

FOOTSTEPS OF THE PAST.

POETRY and Science are not enemies. Shelley called them sisters. Both are necessary, and both are beneficent. Intellect can really do nothing great without Imagination. United they achieve wonders; divided, the one is barren, and the other anarchic. It is in the harmonious cultivation of these two faculties that our hope lies for the future of humanity.

A perception of this truth, I suppose, prompted my friend and colleague, Mr. J. M. Wheeler, to give the poetical title of *Footsteps of the Past* to a volume of scientific essays, which he has just published through Mr. Forder, and for which I bespeak readers, and of course purchasers, among the Freethought party. For the small sum of three shillings, the reader with moderate leisure and opportunity for study will here find the essence of what has been learnt by many investigators in the field of comparative religion. Mr. Wheeler does not waste his time in showing the mere doctrinal or ritual affinities of the great historic systems, like Christianity, Brahmanism, and Buddhism. He goes deeper, and shows how the religion of civilised nations is rooted in the superstition of savages, who are the living representatives of our own far-off ancestors. His book is full of facts, gathered from all points of the compass; and the writer's industry is well matched by his vivid insight, grasp of principles, and skilful presentation. Hundreds of the readers of this journal ought to buy Mr. Wheeler's book at once. They will find it immensely useful, and if they read it in the right spirit they will find it more interesting than any romance. Indeed, it *is* a romance; the romance of MAN on his upward way from darkness to light.

Mr. Wheeler writes an admirable preface to this volume. He declares that Christianity has outlived its possible usefulness, that the majority of educated persons have outgrown its teachings, that now it is mainly an organised hypocrisy, and that it is an iniquity to enforce its dogmas

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on the minds of little children. In his introductory essay on "Early Religion" Mr. Wheeler points out that religion and morality grew up independently, that they had at first no sort of connection; and he agrees with Huxley that in their final evolution they will cease to have any connection for ever.

Mr. Wheeler's book will help on that evolution, and hasten that desirable consummation. All the more so if it finds its way into the hands of open-minded people who still call themselves Christians. For that reason, I ask those who possess themselves of a copy to *lend it* to their more orthodox friends.

I am a hater of "log-rolling." I detest anonymous puffs of books, written by the authors' personal friends. Frequent praise of one's colleagues, even when not anonymous, is in my judgment a thing to be guarded against. But there is a time and season for everything, and I take this opportunity of congratulating the Freethought party on having in its midst a writer of such industry, information, and judgment as Mr. Wheeler. I knew what I was about when I asked him, all those years ago, to join me in the conduct of the *Freethinker*. We are both sobered by age and experience, and little prone to hysterical language. It is the simple truth that I am proud to have my old friend at my side in the war against superstition, and that I trust we may fight together till Death strikes his dart at one of us and "the rest is silence." G. W. FOOTE.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

WHY do the parsons so furiously rage,
And the bishops take counsel together?
The sun, moon, and earth have thro' many an age
Decided the question of weather.

Not to mention those diamonds which hang in the sky
Shining nightly—"the stars in their courses,"
Their attraction is great; but to tell of them—why
'Twould o'ertax a poor rhymer's resources.

Why do not the civilised men of to-day
Celebrate the New Year at its birth?
They draw all their sustenance out of the clay;
They should also take time from the earth.

Our Old Mother Earth, with her orbit and axis,
Her winds, and her tides, and her seasons,
To dwell on her bosom we pay rent and taxes,
And hug her—for obvious reasons.

Why do I sully good paper with ink,
In this season, both cheery and drear?
Astronomy answers the question, I think—
'Tis to wish you a Happy New Year.

D. D.

Obituary.

Sergev Mikhailovitch Kravchinski "Stepniak" was a man whose memory will remain deeply impressed on the minds of all who knew him. His very appearance bespoke a man of no common order, but of vast energy, determination, and intelligence. Born in 1852, his parents were people of substance, who united White Russian and Ukrainian blood. He was educated at the Military Gymnasium, and, like Bakunin, the founder of Nihilism, his mental leader, he became an artillery officer. In the army he began his Nihilist propaganda, and it was to the army he looked for overthrowing Czardom. In 1874 he was arrested on suspicion, but contrived to make his escape, and threw himself into the movement of rival terrorism. The story of his operations as a conspirator is not yet fully known, but he was *capable de tout*. He organised the escape of Prince Krapotkin, and was party to many another daring deed. Russia was too hot to hold him, and his life-long friend, M. Tchaykovski, persuaded him to devote himself to the task of rousing the Western World to sympathy with the victims of despotism. This he effectively did by his works on *Underground Russia*, *The Russian Peasantry*, *Russia under the Czar*, etc. "Stepniak" had accustomed himself to work amid noise, and was frequently so absorbed in thought as not to hear what was going on around him. The result was that he was killed by an engine at a level railway crossing at Chiswick on December 23rd. His only religion was that of Humanity, and he was cremated at Woking on December 28, the funeral being attended by a great number of Socialist friends, speeches were delivered by Volkhovski, Krapotkin, Morris, Lows, Burns, Mrs. Aveling, and others.

"MR. DEVIL."

THE words of Jesus, "No man, when he has had the old, straightway desireth new wine; because he says the old is better," are as true to-day as ever they were. And yet I would modify the expression and make it read thus, "Few men," etc., for I believe there are some who are eager for the new wine.

I, for one, was delighted when I found that I might cease to believe in the Devil, or to believe that such a being existed. When I dared to think, "I do not believe there is such a being," and was not immediately struck dead by the power of God, I was indeed happy. To be able to realise that that dreadful being, who had filled my childhood with terror, lest at some dreadful moment he should seize me and drag me down to "hell"—who was ever waiting in dark rooms and secret corners, especially when I had been "naughty"; that dreadful being who made me do these naughty things so that he could obtain my soul when I died—I say, to be able to realise that no such being ever existed was to relieve me of the greatest burden of my life.

Distinctly do I remember one particular night, of awaking myself and the occupants of the bedchambers with a shriek of terror, for there, protruding from beneath my bed, was the dreadful head with its fiery eyes and terrible horns—the Devil!—come to take me to his abode.

O, how cruel! that parents should render their children's lives miserable, destroying their health and happiness, by such a hideous belief. And yet to this day many do so, and ministers of the Gospel (?) stand in the pulpits of our land and reiterate their belief in a "personal devil."

To show how utterly I believed in this awful being, I will relate a little anecdote of my own life.

For a long time I had been earnestly praying to God for some much-desired article—I fail to remember just what it was, but a childish toy, no doubt; and I had faithfully believed, for so I had been taught, and so I read in God's Holy Word, that it would surely come in some way.

Well, I at last gave up all hope of God answering my prayer, so I began to reason thus: According to my teaching, God is not running this earth at present. The Devil has got the upper hand of God, and so I will ask the Devil for this.

So I bowed myself beside my bed, and here I paused—I was about to perform a dreadful act—praying to the Devil. After a few moments I decided to go on and take the risks. Then another difficulty presented itself—how should I address this sovereign? It did not occur to me that, as he was temporarily ruling the sons of men, the usual O Lord! would be appropriate; so I began: "Mr. Devil."

I then told him how that I had been asking God for this, but that I had received nothing from him; and then made my request known.

It is needless to say that "Mr. Devil" seemed no more able to gratify my desire than "O Lord" was, and I never received an answer to my prayer.

I never think of this occurrence without smiling, and yet there is a sad side to it. The teaching children that God will give them that which they ask of him, if they are good children, is literally interpreted by them; as is also that other teaching, that if they are "bad," the "bad man" will get them.

I am glad that my dear boy's life has never been shadowed by such teaching. M. A. S.

PROFANE JOKES.

Clergyman—"Some people think I preach long sermons. Do you think so?" She—"Oh, no! they only seem long."

Grimaldi is said, when the "No Popery" cry was raised, to have put his head out of window, and cried, with most comical grimaces: "Gentlemen, in dis house dere be no religion at all."

American Obituary:—"The wife of the Rev. J. Dolittle listened to her husband's preaching on Sunday last, and died in convulsions the following Tuesday afternoon."

First Tramp—"What day of the week is it?" Second Tramp—"Sunday, I guess—everybody is going in the back door of that saloon over there."

Sunday-school Teacher—"What are we to understand by this passage: 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss'?" Precocious Boy—"Ought to ask a widow."

Numerous are the people who have "builded better than they knew." A small boy in one of the public schools was asked to define a demi-god. "A demi-god," he said, "is a vessel that holds wine, gin, whisky, or any other liquor."

Mrs. H. (returning from church)—"You seemed to agree with all the parson said this morning." Mr. H.—"What makes you think so? I heard very little of it." Mrs. H.—"Well, you nodded at nearly every sentence."

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BOOK CHAT.

The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism, with its mystic cults, symbolism, and mythology, and in its Relation to Indian Buddhism, by L. Austine Waddell, M.B. (W. H. Allen; 1895), is likely long to remain a standard work on the subject with which it deals. The only other treatise on the subject in English is that by E. Schlagintiveit, published over thirty years ago. The author has personally studied Southern Buddhism in Burma and Ceylon, and Northern Buddhism in Sikhin, Bhotan, and Japan. He has visited Tibet and studied Lamaism from original sources with the aid of Buddhist priests, setting up a Lamaist temple with its fittings; and his work is profusely illustrated.

* * *

Buddhism in Tibet is hardly the philosophical cult one would expect to be patronised by Mahatmas. Sorcery and devil-worship underlie it as plainly as it did the fetishism of Central Africa. The deep yet simple faith of the Hindu reformer, Gautama Buddha, is in Tibet overgrown with a thick jungle of legends, superstitious rites, and charms. Prayers are found in their original form as spells to ward off evil spirits, or to convey the reciter to paradise. The celebrated invocation, Om ma-ni pad-me Hum (the jewel in the Lotus), is on some of the large prayer-wheels printed 100,000,000 times, and it does not even need to be articulated to be of efficacy.

* * *

Buddhism originally was a revolt against Brahmanical priestcraft. Yet in Tibet the Lama is rather a priest than a monk. He assigns himself an indispensable place, and has coined the current saying: "Without a Lama in front there is no (approach to) God." The Chinese Emperor, Yung-Chung, openly expressed his contempt for their mummery, saying in his edict: "If you neglect to burn paper in honor of Buddha, or to lay offerings on his altars, he will be displeased and let his judgment fall upon your heads. Your god Buddha, then, is a mean fellow. Take for your pattern the magistrate. Though you never pay court to him, he will none the less attend to you if you are honest; but if you transgress the law, it will be useless to try flattery."

* * *

Spiritual perfection is cultivated by the Lamas by "the meditative posture of the seven attitudes," which is part of the daily routine of the Lama to subjugate their senses. These attitudes are (1) sitting with legs flexed in the attitude of Buddha; (2) hands resting one above the other in the lap; (3) head bent forward; (4) eyes fixed on the tip of the nose; (5) shoulders expanded like the wings of a vulture; (6) spine erect and straight like an arrow; (7) tongue arching up to the palate like the curving petals of the lotus. One of the chief functionaries in Tibet is a State sorcerer, who, for a heavy consideration, works himself into a wildly ecstatic state, and gives truly ambiguous oracles.

* * *

The Buddhism of the Hindu Gautama proclaimed "Every man his own creator." It placed human duties before divine-worship. But in Tibet Buddhism is as low a superstition as Christianity is in Abyssinia. Worship is paid to a crowd of deities, demons, Buddhas, Bodhisats, gods, godlings, genii, and saints of all kinds. The pantheon of Lamaism is so numerous that no one has attempted to enumerate all the objects of worship. It naturally resolves itself into image-worship, and images of Napoleon and other European celebrities have found their way among Tibetan deities.

* * *

Of course a chief purpose of having gods is to give them, or their priests, something. There is no limit to the variety of things that are offered to the gods. Wealthy votaries offer art objects, rich tapestries, gold and silver vessels, jewels and the plunders of war, including weapons. Mr. Waddell also mentions American clocks, tins of jam, sardines, biscuits, and Birmingham umbrellas; and still more, incongruous objects as offered on Lamaist altars. All is fish that comes to the priestly net.

* * *

The January number of the *Free Review* has an excellent list of contents. Mr. B. Powell contributes a racy article on "Smith the Censor"—the great Smith of Westminster, now in heaven, who organised the railway-bookstall system, and applied the boycott to all advanced literature. Mr. J. M. Robertson begins an essay on "The Revival of Phrenology." Mr. Geoffrey Mortimer reviews *Jude the Obscure* with sympathy and insight. Mr. J. M. Wheeler has a capital article on "Buckle and Sociology." "A Rustic" writes mordantly on "The Provincialism of London." We wish this magazine the success it certainly deserves.

* * *

Daudet, who has another chance of a seat in the French Academy, refuses decidedly to take back what he wrote in *L'Immortel*, or to present himself in any way before the Academicians. When solicited before, he was urged by Zola to become a candidate on the ground of the standing it would give to the new literature.

* * *

A new edition of the Bible has been printed which contains pictures of negro angels, and was gotten out by a shrewd Yankee at a cost of $1.50 each. He sells them to the Southern negroes for $8 a piece on the instalment plan, demanding $2.50 on delivery.

* * *

Susan B. Anthony took no part in "The Woman's Bible," but she quite approves of it. She says: "Of course, people say these women are impious, presumptuous, and all sorts of things, for daring to interpret the Bible as they themselves see it. But I think the women have just as good a right to translate and twist the Bible to their own advantage as the men have to twist and turn it to their advantage, as they have done always. But now that these women have dared to do what the men have always done, they are called impious. Originally the orthodox women were to write their views and translations also, but when the time came they did not put in an appearance, and so only the opinions of the radical women were published."

CORRESPONDENCE.

NOT SATISFIED WITH DEATH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I observe in your issue of December 22 a note on a slight criticism passed by the Paisley *Mirror* on the lecture recently delivered here by Mr. Cohen on Darwin. In that note you take this sentence from the *Mirror's* article, "Granting, for the moment, that it (*i.e.*, the doctrine of Secularism *re* Immortality) is true, how can it be called satisfactory?" and you append the query, "Does the writer, then, find no satisfaction in truth, or is he only satisfied with illusions?"

That, Sir, is a mere quibble. I did not say, nor yet lead it to be understood, that I adhered to any other doctrine on the ground that it was "satisfactory," or that I discarded the Secularist's because it was not so. I meant simply to challenge Mr. Cohen's statement that there is satisfaction in thinking life ends for us here. The belief in immortality may be an illusion, and I don't undertake to prove that it is not. I simply fail to see why it should be satisfactory to believe that it is. If Mr. Cohen contemplates utter death with equanimity, he is not very closely akin to his fellows. Can he have read De Musset's *Pourquoi La Mort*, and yet fail to subscribe to the sentiment of it? Or take a writer Mr. Cohen may argue from more willingly. Take Hume, as he pauses to reflect on the dignity of human nature: "We see a creature whose thoughts are not limited by any narrow bounds, either of place or time; who carries his researches into the most distant regions of this globe, and beyond this globe, to the planets and heavenly bodies; looks back to consider the first origin, at least the history of the human race; casts his eye forward to see the influences of his actions upon posterity, and the judgments which will be formed of his character a hundred years hence; a creature who traces causes and their effects to great length and intricacy; extracts general principles from particular appearances; improves upon his discoveries; corrects his mistakes; and makes his very errors profitable." Now, there is nothing of rhetoric in that. It is a clear, calm statement of the greatness possible to man. Yet with Mr. Cohen we are to think that a creature with such capacities and their concomitant desires is to be content with the miserable littleness of attainment possible to one brief life.

Life piled on life were all too little.

Has Mr. Cohen no sympathy with the "Ulysses" of Tennyson?

> That grey spirit yearning in desire
> To follow knowledge like a sinking star
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

Has he never had a desire to live beyond the ordinary years of man, or to wake up from time to time throughout eternity to see how the world fared, and whether his hopes for mankind were being realised? Is he so satisfied as to the future that he has no anxieties about it? Would he not care to enjoy its happiness, or to sympathise with its afflictions?

True or not, mankind do not think with satisfaction of Death as the end-all. "Blank oblivion" is an "abyss abhorred." The simpler aspect of humanity to it is well put in the *Elegy*:—

> For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
> This pleasing, anxious being e'er resigned,
> Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
> Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

T. D. ROBB.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, Touzeau Parris, "The Known Christ the Only True Christ." Tuesday, at 8.30, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, members' general meeting—election of officers and other important business; 9.30, social party. Tuesday, at 8, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "What has Become of the Devil?" Wednesday, at 8, C. Cohen, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?"

EDMONTON (Assembly Rooms): Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "What is Secularism?"

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, Freethinkers' business meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 36 Newington Green-road.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Bible Superstitions and Immoralities."

WEST LONDON (Athenæum Hall, Godolphin-road, Shepherd's Bush): Wednesday, at 8, Charles Watts, "Secularism: its Principles and its Triumphs."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Messrs. Scott, Carter, and others, "The Future of Religion."

WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stuart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Scientific Basis of Morals."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, Charles Watts, "The Perplexities of Christianity"; 7, "The Triumphs of Secularism in Modern Thought." 2.30, Conference of Midland Branches. Monday, at 8, at Bristol-street Board School, Charles Watts, "The Bible and Civilisation."

BLACKBURN: 8, members' meeting at secretary's house, 87 Penny-street.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): at 7, Mr. Thatcher, "The Genesis of Life."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): closed for New Year's holidays.

HECKMONDWIKE (Lombard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, meeting.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 2.30, Captain Monro, "What was Jesus Christ?" 7, members only—election of officers and other important business.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, J. Roberts, "The Design Argument."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 3, Lawrence Small, B.Sc., "Progress"; 6.30, "The Ethical Teachings of W. K. Clifford."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, R. Mitchell, "Is the Bible Account of the Origin of Man Credible?—a Reply to the Rev. R. Zeitch."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, readings and recitals.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business; 7.30, R. Chapman, "Ancient Philosophers—Zeno and Epicurus."

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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—NO. 2. SUNDAY, JANUARY 12, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PEACE ON EARTH.

THE Christians all over the world have been celebrating the birth of Christ. According to the fantastic stories of that probably fictitious event, which we find in the New Testament, a choir of angels came from heaven—or wherever else they reside, when they are at home—and regaled the ears of some theatrical shepherds with celestial music. Their song was of "peace on earth," and, after singing this delectable anthem, they "spread their sheeny vans for flight," and returned to the place where that ironical composition originated.

There *was* peace on earth for some time afterwards. Historians differ as to the character of Augustus Cæsar, but there is only one opinion as to his statesmanship. He ruled the Empire wisely, and kept the peace within its wide borders; and he did this with an army which would be regarded as ridiculously small in the Christian Europe of to-day. Augustus Cæsar was a mere Pagan. He died without knowing that God Almighty had become incarnate in a little Jew boy. He owed nothing to the Bible, as far as it was then written. His knowledge and wisdom were entirely natural, yet he managed the government of that colossal empire in a fashion which has scarcely, if ever, been equalled by any Christian monarch. The peace he kept was not the peace of God, but the peace of common sense.

Augustus Cæsar and the great emperors who succeeded him are now but names of "the mighty dead." The Roman Empire has long been dead and buried; and out of its tomb arose the Catholic Church, which, as was finely said by Hobbes, is but its ghost sitting throned and crowned upon its grave. Christianity triumphed over Paganism. A new Europe came into existence, broken up into many nationalities, each having its special form of Christian faith, its Church and priesthood. For many centuries the sway of Christianity has been supreme and (except theoretically) undisputed. And where is the "peace" which it was to inaugurate on this distracted and blood-stained planet?

Millions of soldiers are ready for war in Europe. Huge factories turn out tremendous guns, warranted to hurl shot or explosives seven or eight miles. Rifles are produced in myriads every year. Powder follows powder, and bullet follows bullet, in the competition of destruction. Battle ships grow bigger and bigger, carrying in their huge bellies the agencies for annihilating whole cities; and torpedo boats are every year becoming swifter and deadlier, so that the next naval engagement promises to be something over which the world may sicken.

The Christian nations of Europe hate each other. Not a particle of love is lost between any two of them. It is not affection, but fear, that keeps them from fighting. They dread the consequences of war. That alone prevents them from translating hatred into murder.

But if they dread war in Europe, they are free to gratify their taste for it abroad. The principal Christian powers of Europe are fighting and thieving all over the world. If you read their protocols and diplomatic correspondences, you would imagine that they were animated by the highest motives; in fact, that they were perfect Don Quixotes of cosmopolitan morality. They remind one of Byron's Lambro, who was

> The mildest-mannered man
> That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat.

But when you look at their deeds, you see they are partisans of the brotherhood of Cain and Abel. From one pocket they take money for the conversion of the heathen, and with money from another pocket they fit out expeditions to slay the heathen and steal their territory—especially when it contains gold, the love of which their sacred Book says is the root of all evil.

South America has a number of Christian states calling themselves Republics. Revolutions are nearly as common there as earthquakes, and savage butchery is the common rule in these domestic quarrels. Even the United States—the home of oppressed freedom, and all the rest of it—mean to be well in front in the race of warfare. The Republic is spending a hundred million dollars on fresh ironclads—and all the time people are living, or rather dying, in misery in New York, Chicago, and every other great centre of population.

The new year opens badly after the Christmas cant about peace and goodwill. The tension is so great that the raid of a few hundred men on the Transvaal very nearly kindled a blaze of war in Europe; and the way in which Englishmen and Germans are writing about each other, so soon after Christmas, shows the restraining and elevating influence of their common Christianity.

It is no answer to say that Christianity does not produce all this warlike fever, all this mutual hatred and malevolence. The fact remains that Christianity does not prevent it. This religion is a ghastly failure. "Ouida" is right in maintaining that, unlike many other religions, it has never taken any real hold upon mankind. It is an impossible creed. It aims at the stars, and hits nothing. For nearly a thousand years it has had the fullest opportunity of producing its natural effect upon the people of Europe. It has had wealth, privilege, and power; the services of myriads of trained preachers, and the absolute control of education. And so far as "peace" is concerned, its influence has been nil, if not positively a minus quantity.

Whether the future is to have a religion or not, it is certain that anything based on natural wisdom and human brotherhood would be better than Christianity. The religion of love is preferable to the love of religion. To promote it is a sublime undertaking; to make it prevail is the salvation of mankind. Meanwhile we have Christianity in possession of the field, barring the advent of a superior system. To destroy Christianity, therefore, is the supreme task of every real reformer. G. W. FOOTE.

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A MISERABLE BEING.

THEOSOPHISTS, in their re-hash of Hinduism, outbid the *post-mortem* promises of Christians, and offer their votaries nothing less than the expectation of becoming gods. This, as Mr. G. H. Pember, who holds that Theosophy is one of the devices of Satan in these latter days, notes, is the very same temptation as that held out to Eve. It has no attraction for me. If told that, by solemn concentration of will, I could jump to godhood at once, I would decline the experiment. I don't keep a god, and don't want to be one; I keep a dog, and that, at present, is sufficient responsibility for me.

If ever there was an unenviable being, I should say it was the orthodox deity. He has the whole responsibility of creation, and is apparently unable to help it in the slightest. At any rate, he does nothing, and he has had an eternity of idleness. Creation, as Cardinal Newman says, is, comparatively speaking, but of yesterday; it has lasted a poor six thousand years, say sixty thousand if you will, or six million, or six million million; what is this to eternity? Nothing at all; not so much as a drop compared to the whole ocean, or a grain of sand to the whole earth." And throughout eternity the Almighty has had nothing to do but contemplate the infinity of his own glory.

Cardinal Newman, who realises the incomprehensibility of his deity, speaking of his vast and eternal solitude, brought it in contrast with that of criminals driven mad by solitary confinement. He says:—

> "Which of us, or how few of us, could live a week in comfort by ourselves? You have heard, my brethren, of solitary confinement as a punishment assigned to criminals, and at length it becomes more severe than any other punishment; it is said at length to drive men mad. We cannot live without objects, without aims, without employments, without companions. We cannot live simply in ourselves; the mind preys upon itself, is left to itself. This is the case with us mortal men; now raise your minds to God. Oh, the vast contrast! He lived a whole eternity in that state, of which a few poor years to us is madness. He lived a whole eternity without change of any kind. Day and night, sleep and meal time, at least are changes, unavoidable changes, in the life of the most solitary on earth. A prison, if it has nothing else to relieve its dreariness and its hopelessness, has at least this, that the poor prisoner sleeps; he sleeps and suspends his misery; he sleeps and recruits his power of bearing it; but the Eternal is the Sleepless."

Poor God has no wife, companion, or friend. He is said to have a Son; but, then, the Son is as old as and, indeed, the same as Himself, so that even with the Eternal Ghost he cannot be said to have much company to spend eternity with. The highest of His creatures is infinitely removed from him, and can as little be his companion as the animalcules in water can be those of man. And then he has all the trouble of his creatures to attend to.

I am no pessimist. I admit things are improvable. But, looking back over the long course of human history, what do I see? It is a long red record of blood and tears. The mass of men and women have ever been slaves. But to read of the treatment of slaves and the tortures of martyrs brings agony to any sensitive nature. A callous Atheist cannot even think of what men, women, and children have had to endure without shuddering and tears. And God saw it all. He witnesses all the sins, sorrows, and sufferings of the world. He has to listen to the cries of despairing men, women, and children drowning in agony, while some brave Miranda cries:—

> Oh, I have suffered
> With those I saw suffer: a brave vessel,
> Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
> Dashed all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
> Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perished.
> Had I been any god of power, I would
> Have sunk the sea within the earth, or ere
> It should the good ship so have swallowed, and
> The fraughting souls within her.

God sees every crime committed—nay, in some sense, he is at the bottom of them all. He has to put up with all the stupidity of his creatures. He has to listen to the conflicting prayers of the farmer who wants rain, and the brickmaker who wants fine weather. He sees the wrangling of sects, the quarrels of religion; and, unless plentifully endowed with the saving grace of humor, must surely view the mass of his creatures with contempt, and long to abdicate from the government of a world which, in the eyes of Omniscience, is so sorry a failure.

The records of revelation conspicuously confirm this view. God creates man perfect, and he betrays his imperfection at the first temptation. What the Deity pronounced good he soon had to curse. Turning his creatures out of Eden did not suffice; nor did drowning all save one family. His own chosen people were always turning from him to other gods. When he sent his only begotten Son he was put to a cruel death—his own received him not. The Prince of Peace brought strife and religious wars in his train, and after all this time is still rejected by the majority of the human race, including his own particular people. 'Tis a pitiable record for Omnipotence.

"Oh," says the Christian, "all your flippant blasphemy is founded on the vain notion that you understand something of God." Upon what, then, I ask, are all religious teachings founded? I take simply the postulates which religionists assign to their deity, and speculate upon them after my own fashion. If I drive you to the confession that God is unknown, I ask how, then, can he be trusted? If nothing can be known of him, the only safe policy is silence. But, if the Theist forms God after his own image, and speculates as to his sentiments concerning mankind, why should not I do so also? Granted that God feels as man feels—which is the assumption of all theology—and the speculation of Nietzsche, that God died through a broken heart from compassion for the sufferings of his creatures, becomes feasible. Nietzsche would have a race of Uebermenschen step into the shoes of the defunct deity. But who are fit for the task? For myself, I would say, as I said at first: Not just at present, thank you; I've a dog to look after.

J. M. WHEELER.

CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE.

PROFESSOR N. S. SHALER, of America, has written an article in the *Homiletic Review* (U.S.) with a view of proving that "the conflict between Christianity and Science is a thing of the past," and that this result has been brought about through the influence of "the Christian religion, embodying, as it does, the motive of sympathy and the moral code that relates thereto."

It may be that the battle which for centuries continued between science and the Christian Church is over, simply because the Church has been thoroughly defeated in all her attacks upon the many strongholds of science. The cessation, however, of the fierce and protracted struggle is not due to the Christian love of peace, for theologians held on in their determined opposition to scientific discovery as long as they possibly could, and they only yielded when they found that the very existence of their Church was at stake. As Tyndall observes, "Against the benefits which religious associations have conferred upon humanity stands a vast debt of committed wrong." It is impossible to adequately describe the evil produced upon society through the persistent interference upon the part of professed Christians with the efforts of scientific men. In commenting upon the persecution of Roger Bacon by the Church, Dr. Andrew Dickson White writes: "Sad it is to think of what this great man might have given to the world had the world not refused his gift. He held the key of treasures which would have freed mankind from ages of error and misery. With his discoveries as a basis, with his method as a guide, what might not the world have gained? Nor was this wrong done to that age alone; it was done to this age also. The nineteenth century was robbed at the same time with the thirteenth. But for that interference with science, the nineteenth century would, without doubt, be enjoying discoveries which will not be reached before the twentieth century. Thousands of precious lives shall be lost in this century, tens of thousands shall suffer discomfort, privation, sickness, poverty, ignorance, for lack of discoveries and methods which, but for this mistaken religious fight against Bacon and his compeers, would now be blessing the earth..... Put together all the efforts of all the Atheists who have ever lived, and they have not done so much harm to Christianity and the world as has been done by the narrow-minded, conscientious men who persecuted Roger Bacon and closed the path which he gave his life to open" (*The Warfare of Science*, pp. 93, 94).

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Professor Shaler has the following pertinent remarks upon the nature of the battle that was waged by the Church against science: "On the side of the men of science it was claimed, in effect, that the interpretation of nature set forth in the tenets of the Church was unreasonable, or, at least, insufficient to account for the facts; on the other hand, the defenders of the faith claimed that the scientific view denied the inspired account of creation, deposed intelligence from its control of the universe, and destroyed the beliefs on which alone it was possible to found the moral conduct of the individual or the safety of the social order. The natural issue of these contentions, waged as they were with mediæval bitterness, was the institution of an enduring feud between the followers of the two interpretations of nature." A strong, and, we think, a justifiable, indictment is then made against the Church of Rome, which, we are told, "made free use of coercive methods in the suppression of scientific opinions."

The Roman Catholics, however, were not alone in their persistent opposition to scientific discoveries. The Professor says: "The Protestant Churches, though less imperious in their method, had their own effective ways of administering discipline to the men of the new interpretation. Social pressure to the point of ostracism was often used to defeat the activities of those who were suspected of heresy in their opinions as to the organisation of the world." This is quite true, for, as Draper states, "so far as science is concerned, nothing is owed to the Reformation.....The two rival divisions of the Christian Church—Protestant and Catholic—were thus in accord on one point: to tolerate no science except such as they considered to be agreeable to the Scriptures" (*Conflict*, pp. 215–217). Both Luther and Melanchthon condemned Copernicus, and, since their time, other Protestants have been equally bitter in their condemnation of men of science. Priestley, Lyell, Simpson, Darwin, Huxley, and others, have all been victims of orthodox bigotry. In 1864 certain Protestants in England drew up a declaration for the signature of scientific students, expressing "sincere regret that researches into scientific truth are perverted by some in our time into occasion for casting doubt upon the truth and authenticity of the Holy Scripture." In 1874 the Rev. Dr. Hodge denounced Darwin most violently, and said that his science was "a denial of every article of the Christian faith." Bishop Cummins, and a host of other "lights" of the "reformed Church," joined in this denunciation. Well might Dr. White write that "warfare against science is to be guarded against in Protestant countries, not less than in Catholic."

While differing but little from Professor Shaler in his indictment against professed Christians for their opposition to science, we take a decided exception to his claim that the victory of science is to be credited to Christianity. This is in no sense in accordance with facts, inasmuch as no one can cite any words ascribed to Jesus that express any sympathy with science or with scientific men. On the contrary, many of his dogmatic declarations are directly opposed to the great and essential principle that underlies all science—namely, free and unfettered thought—the unrestricted exercise of the human understanding. It is folly to talk, as the Professor does, of science and Christianity being "reconciled" because of its "embodying the motive of sympathy and the moral code that relates thereto." Is it not absurd to speak of sympathy as being the foundation of a system that was originally meant only for the lost sheep of Israel, a people having but little or no sympathy with the Samaritans, and no fellowship with the great unnumbered Gentile world? It is not, as the Professor seems to think, a question of policy or of interpretation that has to be considered in this supposed "reconciliation," but it would necessitate the harmonising of absolute contradictions, and the disposal of facts that are really antagonistic to Christian teachings. We allege that this has not been accomplished, and we fail to see how it ever can be; therefore, to talk about Christianity and science having been reconciled is to speak of an event that has never happened. There are two ways of ending a battle: the first, by the forces on the one side being beaten; and the second, by one side giving the battle up, thinking it impossible to win. Christians have adopted the latter plan, for the simple reason that they found themselves unable to overcome the batteries of science.

Christianity and modern science have always been, and are still, diametrically opposed to each other. Suppose men of science were to sincerely act up to the following Christian teachings: Pray without ceasing; take no thought for their lives; seek first the kingdom of God; love not the world; set their affections on things above; sell all they had, in order to be perfect, and place implicit faith in the prayer of supplication—we say, if scientists believed these New Testament injunctions, and consistently acted upon such a belief, what would become of their biology, geology, astronomy, chemistry, anatomy, and the other sciences? Demonstrated truths cannot be made to accommodate themselves to the fancies and conjectures of believers in Jesus, however sincere they may be. Assumptions that originated in ages of ignorance and superstition have nothing in common with the science of the present time. The human mind of the nineteenth century soars beyond the narrow confines of Christianity. Mental freedom will no longer be fettered with the delusion that reliance on Christ is "the one thing needful"; hence the leading men and women of thought are desirous to

> Seize upon truth where'er it is found,
> On Christian or on Heathen ground:
> The flower's divine where'er it grows.

CHARLES WATTS.

PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH ON THE BIBLE.

(Concluded from p. 11.)

PROFESSOR GOLDWIN SMITH has worse charges to bring against the Old Testament than the unhistorical character of its records. Such examples as the slaughter of the Canaanites, the killing of Sisera, the assassination of Eglon, the hewing of Agag in pieces by Samuel before the Lord, Elijah's massacre of the prophets of Baal, the hanging of Haman with his ten sons commemorated in the hideous feast of Purim, have, as Professor Smith points out, had a deplorable effect in forming the harsher and darker parts of the character which calls itself Christian. They are responsible, he says, "in no small degree for murderous persecutions, and for the extirpation or oppression of heathen races. The dark side of the Puritan character in particular is traceable to their influence. Macaulay mentions a fanatical Scotch Calvinist whose writings, he says, hardly bear a trace of acquaintance with the New Testament."

This is where Professor Smith runs a little off the rails. He would fain dissever Christianity from Judaism, ascribing everything that is meritorious to the former, and all that is repugnant to the latter. Yet nothing is more certain than that Christianity is founded on Judaism; that to Jesus and his apostles the Old Testament alone was scripture; that the peculiar claim for Jesus is that he is the son of the murderous and adulterous David. And the spirit of persecution which follows exclusive claims of divinity is countenanced by such texts as, "Those that would not that I should reign over them bring hither and slay before me"; "If any angel from heaven bring any other doctrine, let him be accursed"; "If any come unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."

The Jewish spirit of persecution, which Dr. Smith "scunners" at, was much intensified by the Christian doctrine of eternal hell. The text, "He that believeth not shall be damned," has caused more suffering and bloodshed than any cited by Mr. Smith from the Old Testament.

Many, too, of the objections raised by Dr. Goldwin Smith are as applicable to the New Testament as to the Old. He says, for instance: "The books of the Old Testament, and notably the historical books, are for the most part by unknown authors and of unknown dates." Exactly the same can be said of the Gospels. If Joshua cites the book of Jasher, Jesus himself appeals to the stories of Daniel and Jonah, and Paul treats the mythical story of the Fall as historical fact. If we are at liberty, as Dr. Smith urges, to reject the story of Moses and the Midianites, surely we may also reject those of Jesus cursing the fig-tree and sending devils among the pigs. Dr. Smith objects to the New Testament being bound up with the Old, as though its religion were the same. Yet, on the very first page of the New Testament, it will be found that all was done to fulfil prophecies found in the Old Testament. Proceed but a little further, and Jesus is made to say: "Think not I am come to destroy the law or the prophets:

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I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled."

"What is the Old Testament?" asks Mr. Smith. "It is the entire body of Hebrew literature, theology, philosophy, history, fiction, and poetry, including the poetry of love as well as that of religion. We have bound it all up together as a single book, and bound up that book with the New Testament, as though the religion of the two were the same, and the slaughter of the Canaanites or the massacre of the day of Purim were a step towards Christian brotherhood and the Sermon on the Mount. We have forcibly turned Hebrew literature into a sort of cryptogram of Christianity. The love-song called the Song of Solomon has been turned into a cryptogrammic description of the union of Christ with his Church. A certain divine, when his advice was asked about the method of reading the Scriptures, used to say that his method was to begin at the beginning and read to the end; so that he would spend three hours at least on the Old Testament for one that he spent on the New, and would read the list of the Dukes of Edom as often as he read the Sermon on the Mount. The first step towards a rational appreciation of the Old Testament is to break up the volume, separate the acts of Joshua or Jehu from the teachings of Jesus, and the different books of the Old Testament from each other.

"The language of the Jews was the same as that of the other inhabitants of Canaan, and it seems probable that their religion also was originally the same. This view appears more likely and more consistent with analogy than the supposition that the Jews, having set out with tribal monotheism, fell away from it to fetishism, idolatry, and to the worship of the powers of nature, with sensual rites. We are told, in fact (Joshua xxiv. 2), that the ancestors of Abraham served other gods. How, or by what influences, whether those of individual reformers like the prophets, or of general circumstance, the nation rose from fetishism and nature-worship to trible monotheism of an eminently pure and exalted type, seems to be a historical mystery. Higher than to tribal monotheism it did not rise; at least, it advanced no further than to the belief that its god was supreme in power as well as in character to all other gods, and thus Lord of the whole earth. He was still the God of Israel, and the Jews were still his chosen people. Judaism, therefore, never reached the religious elevation of some chosen spirits among the heathen, such as Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus."

Dr. Smith allows the influence of the Old Testament on the Gospel writers. He says: "The Evangelists, simple-minded, find in the sacred books of their nation prognostications of the character and mission of Jesus. Sometimes, as critical examination shows, a little has been enough to satisfy their uncritical minds" (see Matthew ii. 16; xxi. 5). Yet, as Dr. Smith admits, "no real and specific prediction of the advent of Jesus, or of any event in his life, can be produced from the books of the Old Testament." So that Christianity, built upon the Old Testament, is built on a false interpretation of it.

Dr. Smith says: "The American slave-holder could appeal to the Old Testament as a warrant for his institution." He knows that the slave-holder could, and did, equally appeal to the New, since Jesus, though surrounded by slavery, never denounced it, while Peter says: "Slaves (Δουλοι), be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward"; and Paul says: "Slaves, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh."

Dr. Smith, in conclusion, urges that, whatever other merits the Hebrew books may have, "the time has surely come when as a supernatural revelation they should be frankly though reverently laid aside, and no more allowed to cloud the vision of free inquiry, or to cast the shadow of primeval religion and law over our modern life." We entirely agree with Dr. Smith, and work to that end. But we extend the application of his principles beyond Judaism to the Christianity built upon it.

Mamma (to little daughter)—"Never forget to thank God for everything, my child." Child—"If I didn't like it, too?" Mamma—"Yes, always; everything is for the best." Child (running in an hour later)—"Mamma, thank God I've broke the new pitcher."

INGERSOLL ON VIVISECTION.

Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll comes out against vivisection in most emphatic terms. Being interested in the commendable work of the New England Anti-Vivisection Society, he has written an appendix to *Personal Experiences*, a book of which Phillip G. Peabody, A.M., LL.B., President of the Society, is the author. Colonel Ingersoll says in part:—

Vivisection is the disgrace and the shame of some of the sciences.

Sometimes it has seemed to me that cruelty is the climate of all crimes, and that generosity is the spring, summer, and autumn of all virtues. Every form of wickedness, of meanness, springs from selfishness—that is to say, from cruelty.

Every good man hates and despises the wretch who abuses wife and child, who rules by curses and blows, and makes his home a kind of hell.

So, no generous man wishes to associate with one who overworks his horse, and feeds the lean and fainting beast with blows. These acts are the evidence of a cruel disposition; of a narrow and ignorant hatred; of a nature without sympathy.

The barbarian delights in inflicting pain on his enemy, or on any living thing within his power. He loves to see his victim bleed. But the civilised man staunches blood, binds up wounds, and assuages pain. He pities the suffering animal, as well as the suffering man. He would no more inflict mortal wounds on a dog than on a human being. The heart of the civilised man speaks for the dumb and takes the side of the helpless.

A good man would no more think of flaying a living animal than of murdering his mother.

It is wonderful that it ever occurred to any human being to dissect any living animal; to so fasten a horse or a dog that he cannot resist, and then to proceed to cut him in pieces, for the purpose of ascertaining certain facts that by no possibility can be of real use to any human being. It is still more wonderful that anybody ever did this.

The man who cuts a hoof from a living horse is capable of committing any crime which does not require courage. Such an experiment can be of no use. Hoofs are not cut from living horses for the benefit of the animals. No case can arise in which it would be necessary or proper to cut away a hoof, any more than it would be proper to behead the animal to cure some disease.

Think of the pain inflicted by separating the hoof from the flesh. If the poor beast could speak, what would he say? The same knowledge can be obtained by cutting away the hoof of a dead horse. Every ligament can be ascertained, the anatomy understood, by practising on the dead. Knowledge of every bone and vein, of every cartilage and joint, can be obtained by the dissection of those who have ceased to feel.

"But," says the biologist, "we must dissect the living."

Well, millions of living animals have been cut in pieces. Millions of experiments have been tried. All the nerves have been touched. Every possible agony has been inflicted, and many volumes have been published, filled with the cruelties of these experiments, giving all the details and the results. People who are curious about such things can read these reports. There is no need of repeating such savage experiments.

It is now known how long a dog can live with all the pores of his skin closed; how long he can survive the loss of his skin, or a portion of his brain, or one or both of his kidneys, or a part of his intestines, or do without his liver, and there is no necessity of mangling thousands of other dogs to substantiate what is already known.

Of what possible use is it to know just how long an animal can live without food, without water; at what time he becomes insane from thirst, or blind, or deaf? Who but a fiend would try such experiments? And, if they have been tried, why should not all the fiends be satisfied with the report of the fiends who made them? Must there be countless repetitions of the same horror?

There are hundreds of places where living animals are dissected—dissected by experts in the presence of classes, and then mangled by students, to the end that they may become experts; and yet nothing new is found, nothing of importance is demonstrated. They all pursue the same infamous round, repeating the same cruelties again and

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again, in the same ways, and with the same results. Nothing is added to the knowledge of the human race that is of the slightest importance.

It seems absolutely certain that no natural young man ever saw, for the first time, animals being vivisected without having his pity excited, without being shocked—horrified. In order to enjoy these cruelties the natural feelings must be overcome, pity must be banished, and the heart must be hardened.

In a little while the vivisector takes no account of the pain he inflicts. He leaves the animal half dead and goes his way, knowing that the poor victim must suffer agonies beyond conception; and yet he does not care.

Is such a man fit to practise medicine? Is such a man fit to be called to the bedside of the sick? A man without sympathy, incapable of pity, caring nothing for the infliction of pain—can he be depended upon to lessen suffering, to sympathise with the afflicted? Or would he regard all his patients as he does the animals which he vivisects—simply from a heartless, scientific point of view?

These vivisectors claim that they have done a great deal for the science of surgery; and yet the best surgeons deny that they have in any way added to that science. But if they have, could they not have as well done it without pain as with it?

If the lower animals must be cut in pieces for our benefit, let us be merciful enough to render them insensible. And this can easily be done. No vivisectionist has ingenuity enough to frame a good excuse for not using anæsthetics. Neither can any vivisectionist give a good reason for trying the same experiment thousands of times. No good can be accomplished by hardening the hearts of thousands of students, by making them utterly careless of the pain which they inflict. It is shocking enough to read the reports of these experiments without trying them. It is horrible enough to know what has been done without doing it again.

I believe that it is the duty of every civilised man to do what he can to prevent the infamous practice of vivisection.

Every good man should insist that, if it is necessary, in the interest of science, to make experiments on animals, they should be rendered insensible to pain. And this, not only for the sake of the animals, but also for the sake of the men who make the experiments. Let us, if possible, save their moral natures, and keep them from becoming utterly heartless and infamous.

No good man can have the slightest respect for one who cares nothing for the agonies of the lower animals. No good man wishes for any information obtained by cruelty or by heartlessness. No good man wishes to live on the agonies of sentient beings. And no good man can, by any possibility, defend the vivisection of animals which have not been rendered insensible to pain.

A physician who practises or upholds vivisection without anæsthetics is unfit to have the care of the sick, and should not be trusted with the life or the welfare of any human being.

Let us do what we can to do away with this infamous practice—a practice that degrades and demoralises and hardens, without adding in the slightest to the sum of useful knowledge.

Without using profane words, words of the most blasphemous kind, it is impossible to express my loathing, horror, and hatred of vivisection.

A Judgment of God.

When Colonel Ingersoll was interviewed at Omaha in regard to the prayers of the Christian Endeavorers for him, he said: "It reminds me of an experience I had with a Pennsylvania clergyman. At one time I had a severe throat trouble, and the statement got into the newspapers that I had cancer of the throat. The clergyman took it upon himself to write me a letter, in which he said he had heard of my affliction and believed it was a judgment from God on account of my blasphemous utterances. I answered the letter, and told him he might be right. If it should develop that I had a cancer, as he said, it might be it had been sent by God as a punishment for my utterances. In that case I did not know as I should blame God very much, for if I was in his place I might be tempted to kill a man whom I could not answer. That settled the clergyman, and he subsequently wrote me a letter of apology."

AN HISTORICAL TRIAL OF PRAYER.

In 1588 the Spanish Government set out to invade England with an armed force, determined to strike an effectual blow for the suppression of Protestantism, and to annex that kingdom to the Spanish crown. Pope Sixtus V. had assigned that heretical province to his faithful Spanish liege. Portugal and all the maritime Catholic powers had joined their forces; warships were rapidly built; while soldiers from all over Europe rushed to the aid of the willing tool of the Church to crush a hated rival. The fleet, known as the Great Armada, consisted of 130 ships, the largest constructed in Europe to that date. More than 50,000 of the best disciplined troops in the world, known as the Invincibles, were shipped on board these vessels, to constitute the land force which was to destroy the English armies. It is said that every noble family in Spain sent one of its numbers to swell the mighty host of warriors. Queen Elizabeth had only thirty ships of the line to resist such a formidable attack. It was regarded by the authorities on each side that this contest was to decide the controversy between the conflicting religions for all time. The Pope called to his aid the heavenly powers. During the three years that preparations were going on prayers from every church, cathedral, and oratory importuned divine aid. Froude, in his admirable account of this expedition, says: "All pains were taken to make the expedition spiritually worthy of its purpose. No impure thing, especially no impure woman, was to approach the yards or ships. Swearing, quarrelling, gambling, were prohibited under terrible penalties. The galleons (large ships) were named after the apostles and saints, to whose charge they were committed; and every seaman and soldier confessed and communed on going on board. The ship's boys at sunrise were to sing their 'Buenos Dias' at the foot of the mainmast, and their 'Ave Maria' as the sun sank into the ocean. On the imperial banner were embroidered the figures of Christ and his mother; and as a motto the haughty '*Plus ultra*' of Charles V. was replaced with the more pious aspiration, '*Exsurgo, Deus, et vindica causam tuam*' (Arise, God, and avenge thy cause)."

The next day after leaving Lisbon, while every good Catholic was on his bended knees, a violent tempest struck the Armada, carrying down large numbers of the ships and all on board, while the others returned to port.

Refitting their ships, and adding others, with fresh recruits, they again set sail, the heavenly powers again and more earnestly importuned to favor the holy Church. A collision between the forces occurred in the British Channel. The invaders were repulsed, and sailed northward to avoid the English. They were met by another terrible storm, with adverse winds, which shattered much of their shipping. Only fifty-three vessels out of that immense Armada ever returned to Spain. The rest were captured by the English, or wrecked and sunk.

—*Progressive Thinker.*

INSANITY AND INSPIRATION.

"So complete is this identity between incomprehensible conduct and madness that amongst early nations the madman is supposed to be under the immediate inspiration and control of the deity, whose agency is always believed to commence where coherent and rational behavior terminates."—*Jeremy Bentham.*

In this passage, which occurs in the *Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion on the Temporal Happiness of Mankind*, issued under the name of Philip Beauchamp, by George Grote, from the manuscripts of Bentham, we have a clear elucidation of some of the most curious problems of religion. Sensible and orderly conduct is never ascribed to the supernatural. But let a person fast till he sees visions, and his ravings then have a chance of being taken as the utterances of some god. All the old prophets worked themselves up into some such condition of ecstasy. Isaiah walked naked for three years. This condition was so divine that, when Saul stripped himself naked, they said: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" In the circumstances related of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Hosea, John the Baptist, Jesus, Mahomet, Joan of Arc, Swedenborg, and others, physicians have found evidences of aberration and

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mental exaltation. They carried, at any rate, sail that would have been danger to any without ballast enough to bear it.

A madman strikes terror because his acts cannot be predicted. He may break out in any place. Now, if there be an infinite deity, the position of finite beings before him must be even worse than that before a madman. No one knows what he may do next. But the madman's power is limited while God is omnipotent. He may at any moment roll the heavens together as a scroll, and melt up the worlds with fervent heat. It is trusted he will not do so, at least just yet, because it is supposed he has regard for his creatures. But this is altogether to make him such another as ourselves. If he be infinite and inscrutable, no present course of well-being to us is a sufficient justification to conclude that it may not be in the divine plan to change and hurl us all to destruction. How can the pot predicate when the potter will smash it, or say why one is made to honor and another to dishonor? The more one looks at it the more one sees that Calvin's god is the only logical deity—or rather devil—after all. Every reason ever assigned to suppose that God may not act to us as a devil is a reason for concluding that there is no God at all.

BABBALANJA.

SILLY HYMNS.

THE New York *Sun* has an article on "Hymns that Lack Sense." Among them it notes the following :—

Hasten to some distant isle
In the bosom of the deep,
Where the skies forever smile,
And the blacks forever weep.

Another missionary hymn says :—

Go sound the trumpet on Judah's shore,
And say to Israel, weep no more ;
Israel, weep no more.
The blood that's shed for me and you
Can likewise cleanse a guilty Jew.

One of Charles Wesley's hymns begins :—

And are we yet alive
And see each other's face?
Glory and praise to Jesus give
For his redeeming grace.

Here is an example of the exclamatory hymn :—

Oh, for the pearly gates of heaven!
Oh, for the golden shore!
Oh, for the Sun of righteousness
That setteth nevermore!

Oh, for a heart that never sins!
Oh, for a soul washed white!
Oh, for a voice to praise our King,
Nor weary day and night!

As a specimen of derangement of similes take the following :—

His sheep shall return to the fold,
Shall build upon Him as a rock ;
Nor fear when the tempest shall blow,
And nothing the building shall shock.

And here is a nice one for the pietist who loves to wallow n the precious blood :—

Agonising in the garden
Lo! your Maker prostrate lies!
On the bloody tree behold Him—
Hear Him cry before he dies.

The *Sun* thinks the hymns need improvement. We think they are about worthy of the religion they represent.

The Bible.

The Bible is a library of old fictions, ghost and demon stories, doctored narratives, bloody codes of law, obscenities and fables, with here and there wise sayings and valuable pictures of ancient life. It contains various religions, and is the hardest to understand of all the books in the world. Thousands of books and commentaries have been published to explain it, and yet Christians generally know scarcely anything about it. They claim that every word of it is inspiration, even those spoken by Balaam's ass. They go to church so as to appear good, or to see their friends, or to show their clothes. Some of them would not have a friend in the world if they did not belong to some church.—*Dean Dudley.*

ACID DROPS.

EMPEROR WILLIAM of Germany is a "god-intoxicated man," in quite another sense than was Spinoza. He imagines himself to rule by the grace of God, and every maggot in his head is a tip from the Almighty. Such a personage is above the ordinary rules of courtesy, and even of common sense ; otherwise he would never have sent that telegram to President Kruger in the Transvaal. Emperor William as the knight-errant of freedom is a colossal joke. How many of his own subjects has he flung into prison for exercising their right of free speech on religion and politics! He has imprisoned Freethinkers for "blasphemy," and Socialists for "insulting the throne." Under his government, the German people are denied the very first right of free citizenship. And this is the gentleman who is in such a hurry to congratulate the Boers on maintaining their own rights in South Africa. Physician, heal thyself! is an excellent maxim ; and Emperor William will be well-advised to begin at home in his zeal for the rights of man.

Mr. Plowden, a London magistrate, has severely condemned some of the practices of the National Society for the Protection of Children from Cruelty. It appears that the officers of this Society are instructed to ask a number of questions, which Mr. Plowden said were silly and impertinent. "What," he asked, "had the question of the child's religion or its illegitimacy to do with its being treated cruelly? Such questions were indefensible or any ground whatever."

We are glad that this point has come out so clearly. And for this reason. Mr. Waugh, the head of this Society, who is a man of God, once backed up the Bishop of Chester in his infamous falsehood that the worst ill-users of children were working-class Secularists. We challenged him to produce his evidence, but he fell back upon the liar's refuge of "dignified silence." But as Mr. Waugh's officers ask questions about the religion of cruel parents, it ought to be easy for him to produce his evidence—if he has any. His continued silence, after Mr. Plowden's observations, can only be regarded as implying that he and Bishop Jayne lied together.

The "unsectarians" have won a great victory in the Cardiff School Board elections. That is to say, the Nonconformists have beaten the Churchmen. This is very interesting to Nonconformists. But when these gentlemen call themselves "unsectarian" they are impostors. They are really promoting Nonconformist religion in the Board schools under the disguise of religious liberty.

House-to-house visitation, to ascertain who goes to church, chapel, and Sunday-school, is carried on at Grays, as at some other places. It is to be feared that in small towns this method of proselytism may also be made the medium of persecution. The officious busybodies who carry on this visitation might often be benefited by a cold reception.

Christ-up-to-date Schlatter, the ex-shoemaker, ex-perpetual motion crank, and ex-bedlamite, has already attracted the attention of a greater number of people than ever heard of the Galilean in his day, and the amount of testimony published about him is much more voluminous than the Gospels. Still, the world waits to hear of one verifiable cure that he has effected. His case is valuable as exhibiting phenomena similar to those said to have attended the career of his predecessor nearly two thousand years ago, and as affording us a chance to judge how much truth there is likely to be in the older accounts. Taking advantage of the opportunity for comparison, we find that messiahs are very common clay, and that the problem which they raise is not whether they are inspired or uninspired, but whether they are lunatics or impostors.—*Truthseeker.*

There have been more arrests of Seventh-Day Adventists in Ontario for working on Sunday. Among those arrested was the pastor of the Adventist Church. He was working on the new church building. The opposition set fire to and burned three thousand feet of lumber put on the premises for the proposed church. Later, the good Christian enemies of the Adventists evidently came to the conclusion that it would be safer to attack their victims under the forms of law. Hence these prosecutions. The spirit that prompted the burning of the lumber was the same that led to the enactment of the Sabbath law.

The *Umtata Herald* says that an evangelist, who was asked as to the progress of the gospel among the heathen Kaffirs, reported that the result was discouraging. When he told them that God was greater than the Government, they replied : "Do not come here to tell us lies and try to impose upon us, we have eyes and can see for ourselves ; your God may be strong for aught we know, but we have never seen Him do anything, and He cannot be as strong as

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the Government which sends out troops of soldiers with strange and horrible guns, and builds gaols and court-houses, and spreads telegraph wires all over the country. We know what the Government is, but as for your God, we do not know anything about Him. When the Government or the chief tells us to go to church, it is time enough then to think about it; but don't you come here telling us lies. You may be a wizard for anything we know; be off!" The "heathen in his blindness" seems to have scored on this occasion.

The Russian Government has imposed on American missionaries in Western China, who prefer to cross into Russian territory, the condition that they shall not attempt to proselytise there. That is to say, the Christian government is sterner in this respect than the heathen one. Yet every Christian is ready to howl against Chinese intolerance, while that of Christian Russia is taken as a matter of course.

In American journals we see advertised "Salvation Oil." It is not pretended to cleanse from all sin, but to be an efficient embrocation. Salvation Oil is 25 cents a bottle, and comes really as cheap as the Salvation pills said to be offered without money and without price.

The Churches are bound to make themselves attractive or become deserted, so the secular spirit is invading even the old-fashioned puritanical kirks. The Rev. Farley Porter, a Presbyterian clergyman of Elba, N.Y., has astounded some of his parishioners by declaring that a house should be attached to the church where "games of billiards, cards, and dancing might be indulged in." He has gone still further in the same direction by suggesting that at the meetings of the ladies' aid society the game of euchre might be played occasionally without serious harm.

These are trying times for pulpiteers who are anxious to keep in the sensational swim. Congregations tire of political tirades; it is hard to make a stir with a new secular subject every Sunday. A few weeks ago a Michigan minister preached a base-ball sermon, having his church plastered over with paraphernalia of the game to adorn the occasion. Last week an Oakland, Cal., minister preached a sermon on "Wheels." He said the qualities required for a good Christian and a good cycler were the same. Both must be able to balance themselves perfectly, and both must be alert. Both must keep their lamps trimmed and burning, and neither can go on slippery places. He said he believed riding the wheel was pious, and the bicycle enabled a man to become a winged angel.

The New York *Sun* says that New York is a difficult field for lecturers, because no papers can be worked in their interest. Robert G. Ingersoll is still a drawing card, and Mark Twain will be able to get a paying house when he returns from the antipodes. Talmage can fill a New York Hall at a free lecture, but he can get no large audiences at a pay lecture.

The greatest invention of the age is announced from America. It is the work of a clergyman, whose class are not usually noted for discoveries of any kind. The design of the invention is unique. It is to enable those who partake of the Lord's blood to do so without risk of catching disease. The patentee is the Rev. P. G. Klingler, of Catassanqua. His idea, like all really great ones, is very simple. His communion cup has a double rim, the inner one moving round and cleansing that portion of the outer rim touched by the lips. He explained the device to his qualmish congregation, who have adopted it. What a pity that Jesus, who, with his disciples, did not even follow the customary practice of washing hands at meals, did not get a hint from the Rev. P. G. Klingler. As it is, he may dislike a novelty unsanctioned by his precedent. When some matter in connection with the sacrifice did not suit Jehovah, he was accustomed to send down fire upon the altar most expeditiously; and we would not be surprised if the Rev. P. G. Klingler should come in some fine Sunday morning and find nothing left of his new-fangled cup but a little solder and some melted metal in a puddle.

The *Irish World*, of New York, in an article on "The Irish Party and the Educational Question," shows how far religion overrides patriotism. It says, and with truth, that on the education question they are nearer the Tories than the Liberals. It reminds its readers that Lord Salisbury "believes in religious teaching in the schools. So also does his colleague in the Government, the Catholic Duke of Norfolk. Both are Tories, both are members of the present Government, and both are for giving State aid to schools in which religion forms part of the educational program." The *I. W.* believes in making alliance with the Tories for the benefit of religion, because "the Liberals are pledged to Home Rule," whatever happens. Mr. Patrick Ford is regarded by many Irishmen as a statesman as well as a patriot; but this attitude strikes us as a good deal like the endorsement of protection as a spite to England, who goes in for free trade.

Archbishop Corrigan writes in the *Seminary* on the story of "Our Lady of Guadalupe." It is said that the Virgin appeared three times to Juan Diego, an Indian neophyte, in 1531, and bade him make known to the Bishop of Mexico that she desired a church to be built on the spot, and that she would be a kind and loving mother to the poor Indians and to all who should invoke her aid. Afterwards Juan Diego found upon his cloak a beautiful picture of the Madonna.

The story must be true, for it is approved by the Holy See, and quite recently, "after a long and most searching examination, Pope Leo XIII. granted a new office and mass in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, by letters dated March 6, 1894. In 1754 Pope Benedict XIV. had already granted a similar favor, although the text relating to the apparition was not so explicit. In fact, hardly a Pontiff has sat on the throne of Peter during the past 250 years who has not accorded special favors to the sanctuary at Guadalupe." Protestants need not laugh. What better evidence have they for the miracles of the Bible?

Tennyson's successor in the Poet Laureateship is appointed. It is another Alfred—Mr. Alfred Austin. He is a respectable man of letters, and will be able to turn out the requisite supply of loyal and godly odes for a hundred a year. Swinburne and William Morris are much greater poets, but they are both heretics and Republicans, and they don't want the post. William Morris says "the Poet Laureate is merely a private servant of the Queen. Why shouldn't she choose just whom she likes? Why bother about it?"

The men of God seem ready to preach on anything, so long as they can only keep their pulpits and salaries. According to the *Phrenological Magazine*, March 8 is the anniversary of Gall's first lectures in Vienna, and "many metropolitan and provincial ministers have already consented to co-operate" in celebrating the centenary by "preaching phrenological sermons on that date." It is to be hoped that, after the sermons, these ministers will exhibit their bumps to their congregations.

There is one fact that ought to be noticed by these phrenological preachers. The great Darwin, who became such a complete sceptic, says that the members of a Phrenological Society to whom he sent his portrait declared that his bump of reverence was big enough for a dozen clergymen.

A scandal has shaken the Shaker community at Mount Lebanon as these Shakers have never shook before. Elder Daniel Evans, the head of the community, who has been thirty years a member, and is fifty-five years of age, has eloped with pretty Sister Mabel Franklin, who is thirty years his junior, and has been a book-keeper to the community and a full-fledged Shaker sister only a few months, but sufficiently long for the Elder's fondness to become manifest to all observers.

The four principles upon which the Shaker community is founded are: Virginal Purity, Christian Communism, Confession, and Separation from the World. Elder Daniel Evans, whose name in the world was Daniel Offord, but who assumed the name of Evans when he took the place of Elder Frederick William Evans a few years ago, has, it is feared, broken all four of the principles.

The Shakers are a wealthy, but not a growing, community, and consist of between two and three thousand members. As they are strict celibates, they have to recruit their members from the children or young persons outside, and many of these, like Mabel Franklin, leave the body after but a short acquaintance. D. M. Bennett, the founder of the *Truthseeker*, was one who sojourned there for a while. Their first settlement was at Watervliet, in 1776; the community at Mount Lebanon began in 1787, soon after the death of "Mother Ann Lee," who is believed to have been an incarnation of Christ; and here it owns considerable property.

In 1878 Mr. Hinds, of the Oneida community, estimated the wealth of the Shakers (then numbering about 2,400) at nearly twelve million dollars. Elder Daniel had control of considerable funds. He has several times visited other Shaker communities in various parts of the country, and it is hoped that he may yet return, confess his sin, and be received back into grace, having detached himself from that emissary of Satan—a smart, seductive young woman, who the Shakers say must have hypnotised him.

The Shakers say that they are the true disciples of Jesus, who lived a celibate life. They are Spiritists, and had "mejums" and communications with the spirit-world long before the

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Fox sisters started cracking their toe-joints at Hydesville. They say that the Shaker communities are founded on revelations first vouchsafed to Mother Ann Lee, and that they are the exact models of communities which exist in the spirit-world, where, of course, no elders are ever tempted by fleshly desires.

The good old Bible institution of polygamy has received another blow by the admission of Utah as one of the United States on the expressed stipulation that the ordinary marriage laws shall prevail.

A woman preached at the Methodist Church last Sunday evening. Gospel religion is ludicrously inconsistent. A female missionary goes rampaging abroad with an inspired New Testament in her handbag, and the blessed words of Paul buckling from her tongue; but when some of Paul's inspirations don't suit her own book, she puts her tongue in her cheek and swallows the unsavory morsels. Hear apostle Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35): "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak..... And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the Church." Also (1 Timothy ii. 12): "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Practically, the female missionary asserts that inspired Paul was a narrow-minded bigot who didn't know any better, and probably she is quite right. So she preaches the divine Gospel of Christ, who, when on earth, loved all the uneducated believers in him, and simply damned the more cultured listeners who didn't believe. The Christianity which awards hell-fire to every man who calls another man a fool, merely because the Pharisees applied that contemptuous term to the Nazarene; and which has been cursing generations of Jew "vipers" for the last 1800 years. The Christianity of the Book; of the Apostles who record their Master's promise to come down from heaven on clouds and rule the earth during their lifetime. And unless the pore heathen believe certain things set forth in the Book, whilst shutting their eyes and ears and minds to other things—viz., the test passages by which the Book's pretensions are revealed—they must follow their fathers to Sheol. Paul or no Paul, missionary teaching of that sort is deplorable in women, as in men.—*Sunday Times* (Calcutta).

The parishioners of Hoo, St. Werbury, near Rochester, have petitioned the Bishop of Rochester to transfer their vicar, the Rev. Percy G. Benson, to some other parish. They accuse him of disloyalty to the Church, and of preaching at certain of them from the pulpit. A number of influential parishioners have announced that they shall no longer pay the voluntary Church rate while Mr. Benson holds the living.

During a religious service in the Beckenham Congregational Chapel, at the close of last year, Mr. James Medwin, one of the deacons, suddenly fell forward and expired. There is no moral.

Church bells are not bad music when you hear them in the country at a distance of two or three miles—some people prefer ten miles to three. But in a town they are an infernal nuisance. Clang! clang! clang! And sometimes, when the bell is cracked, it is Clank! clank! clank! People may be ill, or tired out and trying to sleep, yet they cannot "silence that dreadful bell." It is ringing for religion, and is therefore a privileged nuisance.

We are glad to see the London *Star* denouncing the fine inflicted on costermongers for crying their wares on Sunday, while the Church is "allowed to cry its wares to the annoyance of thousands."

The appointment by the Bishop of Hereford of the Rev. Mr. Alexander, a young man of about thirty, who is Reader of the Temple, to the valuable Canonry of Hereford, over the heads of those who have been longer in the ministry than he has been in the world, is characterised as a scandal by a vicar who writes to the *Times*.

The criticism which we pass on Professor Goldwin Smith's article has suggested itself to others. Thus the *Nation* remarks: "One can but admire the serenity and security with which Mr. Smith turns from the Old Testament to the New. We fear his own tests of credibility would, if rigidly applied to the latter, land him in as serious difficulties as those he enumerates respecting the former; and he makes no allusion to the fact that the great critical battle-field is now precisely in the New Testament; that the methods and theories which have wrought such sweeping changes in our way of looking at the Old Testament are now being applied, with illuminating results, to the New."

The *Jewish Messenger* says: "Goldwin Smith drives a nail into Christianity when he decries the authenticity and utility of the Old Testament. Lop away the foundation, and what becomes of the structure?" Christians are slowly becoming ashamed of the barbarities of the Old Testament, but the sense that they lie at the basis of the New also, makes them chary of openly casting it overboard.

Humor is scarce in the Bible, but there seems a touch of jocularity in the statement that Moses, who killed the Egyptian, and gave orders for the slaughter of the Midianites, was "the meekest of all men." Our Christian journals follow Moses in their meekness. They are all for peace and loving kindness; still, the Christian nations really ought to go to war to avenge the Armenian blood upon the unspeakable Turk. Here is the New York *Independent*, a journal of similar influence to our *Christian World*, saying: "How long Salisbury? How long Emperor William? How long Lord God Almighty?" Such a climax suggests that Salisbury and William may well defer operations until the last-named power begins to stir.

The Rev. John Parmiter, M.A., rector of St. Mildred's, Canterbury, was found dead on the railway on Sunday morning, under circumstances which pointed unmistakably to suicide. The deceased had been in a depressed state of mind for some time past.

The New York *World* reports the discovery by M. d'Enjoy, in Cochin China, of a race of savages called Mois, some of whom possess a real tail. M. d'Enjoy says the vertebrate column is prolonged beyond the body by three or four vertebræ. This tail is said to be an object of pride as a sign of purity of descent.

Major-General Blaksley, in his new book, entitled *Footsteps of the Lion*, says there is a small town not far north of Mountserrat, where every respectable dog wears a black crape bow on his tail during Lent, and where all the animals, including the pig, are compelled to fast on Good Friday. It would be interesting to have these animals' opinion of religion. It would be unprejudiced, and probably original.

The late Bishop Harvey Goodwin, whose Life has been written by Canon Rawnsley, once preached a sermon in Westminster Abbey on the personality of Satan. Some one wrote to him on the subject, and he replied as follows: "Is Satan a person? Yes, I think he is. Certainly there is much in Scripture to make us believe this, and there are many facts recorded which it is hard to understand without attributing personality. But what do we mean by personality? Is it a personality which implies omnipresence? This can hardly be. Is he an inhabitant of this world only? and under what conditions does he walk the earth? Ten thousand questions may be asked which it is impossible to answer. The whole subject is a mystery, like the existence of evil itself."

There you have Sky-Pilotry naked and unashamed. Bishop Goodwin knew just as much about the Devil as any member of his congregation. At the finish he falls back on "mystery," which is the refuge of every clerical charlatan. The "mystery" simply means that the man of God cannot explain what he preaches.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The annual tea party and entertainment took place on Saturday evening, January 4. The school was very crowded, nearly four hundred people sitting to the tea. The success of this annual party is well known; it brings many old acquaintances together, and is much looked forward to.

The drama, *The Honeymoon*, was exceedingly well rendered, the principal characters being taken by Messrs. Henry Taylor, Thomas Anderton, John Barlow, and Henry Clough, and Misses Booth, Morton, and Harrison. All the different scenes were much appreciated by the audience, especially the scene in which the old-fashioned May-pole dance was executed. Incidental music was rendered by the Failsworth String Band. The entertainment is to be repeated on some Saturday in January.

On Sunday evening next the entertainment which was rendered by the children on Christmas Day is to be repeated. The annual private party is also to take place on Saturday, January 11.

What is man born for but to be a reformer—a remaker of what man has made, a renouncer of falsehood, a restorer of truth and good; imitating the great nature which embosoms us all, and which sleeps no moment on an old past, but every hour repairs herself, yielding us every morning a new day, and with every pulsation a new life?—*Emerson.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 12, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly, London, W.:—7.30, "The New Woman and the Bible" (with reference also to the later novels of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy).

January 19 and 26, St. James's Hall, Piccadilly.

February 2, Liverpool; 9, Glasgow.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—January 12 and 13, Bolton; 14, Blackburn; 19, Glasgow; 26, Edinburgh; 29, N.S.S. Dinner. February 2, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 3 and 4, Ipswich; 16, Athenæum Hall, London; 23, Manchester. March 15, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

R. KILLICK "prizes" Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past*, and is much pleased with our notice of it. This correspondent, who is a sturdy Freethinker of the fine old school, wishes us all success in the new year.

T. PERKINS (18 Brecon-street, Canton, Cardiff) wishes to know of any Freethinker in the district.

J. G. DOBSON.—Your lecture notice for January 5 was dated December 29, but it did not reach us till January 3, a day after the *Freethinker* was published.

A. E. DAVIS.—Thanks for cuttings.

W. CABELL.—We did not overlook the story of Jesus and the doctors in the temple. It is only told by Luke, and is obviously legendary. Amongst all the alleged questions and answers on that occasion, it is not said that a single one related to his supernatural birth. That would have "astonished" the doctors a great deal more than his "understanding."

R. FORDER desires us to state that the use of his name as publisher, in the announcement of a certain new journal, is entirely unauthorised. His name was used, not only without his sanction, but without his knowledge.

L. W. WILLIS.—The new Branch at Leeds is in process of formation. For information apply to J. Bradley, 6 Preston-terrace, Roundhay-road.

A CORRESPONDENT who had trouble in finding the place of Mr. Foote's lecture at Edmonton thinks we should state that the Assembly Room is at the rear of "The Eagle," and close to Silver-street Station on the Great Eastern Railway. Trains run every half hour, and cars from Finsbury Park pass the door.

T. DUNBAR.—Miss Vance has sent you ticket for the St. James's Hall lectures. Thanks for your offer to exhibit a bill. The best entrance to the Banqueting Room is in Regent-street. Should you bring a friend, and require another ticket, you can obtain one by applying to Miss Vance outside the hall.

J. HUDSON.—Cuttings always welcome.

W. TURNER.—We intend to deal with Tolstoi's new brand of Christianity as soon as we can find time for a careful criticism.

W. DYSON.—Mr. Foote is offering you a date.

H. LEES SUMNER.—It is our intention to give more portraits in the *Freethinker*.

H. BRIGGS (Derby).—We may take some opportunity of noticing *The Sign of the Cross*.

W. GRIMSHAW.—Glad you found our answer so satisfactory. Zola is a pronounced Freethinker. We did not know that Mr. Foote's imprisonment for "blasphemy" was mentioned in Cassell's *History of England*. Thanks for the reference.

L. JACKSON.—Coleridge was a joke as a systematic thinker, but all his prose writings, including the *Biographia Literaria*, abound in fine poetical flashes and felicities of expression. His literary criticisms are generally sound, and often illuminative. Now and then he is surprisingly acute on politics and social matters. His powers were extraordinary, but through constitutional indolence, arising from a lack of physical vitality, his rich genius largely ran to seed.

ANNUAL CHILDREN'S PARTY.—Miss Vance acknowledges: C. A. Watts, 10s. Mr. R. Forder acknowledges: C. J. Pottage, 5s.; R. Gibbons, 1s. 10d.; R. H. Side, 5s.; H. L. Sumner, 5s.; A Abbott, 2s. 6d.; J. Chamberlain, 2s. 6d.; C. Shepherd, 2s. 6d.; J. Mosenthal, 5s.; J. Edmonds, 2s.; Amigo, 5s.; West London Branch, 10s.; W. Gregory, 6d.

E. HOWARD.—Inserted, as it was a special occasion.

J. PARTRIDGE.—We wish the Midland Federation all success. If we might venture a word of advice, we should say, Don't expect too much, and don't cherish the idea of an elaborate organisation.

SHAREHOLDER.—We saw the newspaper paragraph. We have also seen the Official Receiver's printed Summary of the Debtor's statement and affairs. It is ridiculous to attribute R. O. Smith's bankruptcy to the failure of the National Secular Hall Society (Ltd.). He sold a concern for £3,000; of this he received £1,400, besides interest; finally he took back the thing he sold. He had therefore the party's money and his hall too. How this could make him bankrupt is, we imagine, hardly clear to any intellect less subtle than his own.

JOHN ROBERTS, 99 Saxony-road, Liverpool, is the new secretary of the Liverpool Branch, in succession to the late C. Doeg. Members and correspondents will please note.

PAPERS' RECEIVED.—Grays and Tilbury Gazette—Echo—Kentish Observer—Homœopathic World—Northern Weekly Leader—Freidenker—Truthseeker—Liberator—Two Worlds—New Age—Leek Times—Progressive Thinker—Figaro—Liberty—Isle of Man Times—De Dageraad—Secular Thought—Der Arme Teufel—Boston Investigator—Irish World—New York Public Opinion.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE'S lecture on "What has Become of the Devil?" drew a crowded audience to the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening, and the laughter and applause were quite phenomenal. Mr. Victor Roger made a first-rate chairman, saying just what was needed, with tact and fluency. Another collection was taken up for the local Children's Party.

Mr. Foote's attack on the West-end of London ought to be well supported by the metropolitan Freethinkers, who should also advertise the lectures amongst their Christian friends, and try to induce some of them to attend the meetings. It is not always that we can invite Christians to such a hall in such a neighborhood. St. James's Hall is easily accessible from all parts of London, which is a very distinct advantage. The entrance to the Banqueting Room is in Regent-street, not in Piccadilly. Those who come unprovided with tickets will find Miss Vance, or her deputy, outside, and thus obtain what they require.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes will be exhorting, in another part of the same building, while Mr. Foote is lecturing. It is to be hoped there will be no earthquake or other "act of God."

Mr. Charles Watts had a very pleasant day at Birmingham last Sunday. He received a most hearty reception from friends who had come from Derby, Leicester, Bilston, Smethwick, and other surrounding districts. His evening lecture "caught on," and at the conclusion he received quite an ovation, which he had to acknowledge three times. That staunch friend of the movement, Mr. Daniel Baker, presided, and made an excellent speech, in which he expressed his pleasure at the energy which Mr. Watts still retained All present manifested, by an unanimous vote, their gratification at the success of Mr. Watts's visit.

On Monday evening Mr. Watts lectured at the Bristol-road Board School. There was a splendid audience, including a large number of strangers. This lecture was a "free" one, under Mr. Foote's scheme, with which the Midland friends are delighted.

To-day, Sunday, January 12, and to-morrow (Monday) Mr. Watts lectures at Bolton; and on Tuesday he speaks at Blackburn. The two last lectures are given under Mr. Foote's scheme.

A meeting was held, according to announcement, at the Alexandra Hall, Hope-street, Birmingham, last Sunday afternoon. Twenty-five persons were present representing Midland Freethought Societies. Mr. Charles Watts, who was lecturing at Birmingham that day, was unanimously elected to the chair. A list of rules was adopted, and the following officers were elected:—Mr. Holland (Bilston) president; Mr. Taylor (Birmingham) treasurer; Mr. Partridge (Birmingham) secretary. Finally, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Watts for presiding. The proceedings throughout were conducted in the best spirit, and good practical work is expected from the new organisation.

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The occasion of unveiling an oil painting of Mr. Bradlaugh, executed by Mr. Wright, brought to the Bradlaugh Institute, on January 1, a large attendance of "the old guard," as well as of younger admirers of Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. George Anderson presided, and in the course of the evening gave some interesting reminiscences illustrating Mr. Bradlaugh's physical and mental powers and his scrupulous integrity. Excellent speeches were made by Messrs. Standring, Forder, Cohen, Moss, and Snell.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, in unveiling the portrait of her father, took occasion to mention the precautions she had taken to obtain from the nurses and doctor who attended him in his last illness certificates that he had not spoken on the subject of religion. She had since congratulated herself on having taken these precautions. In a letter received from Brisbane it was stated that the Countess Wachtmeister had given Mrs. Besant as her authority for the statement that Mr. Bradlaugh towards the end believed in a soul. Mrs. Bonner wrote to Mrs. Besant asking if she could give an explanation as to how such a mistake arose; but, probably owing to her absence from England, no reply had been received. One thing made Mrs. Bonner a little uneasy, and that was the fact that Mrs. Besant had told Mr. J. H. Levy in public that, if he willed, at that very moment he could speak with Mr. Bradlaugh.

Some of the succeeding speakers were apparently of opinion that Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner was over anxious on the subject, and that, as lies and calumny were Mr. Bradlaugh's portion in life, so they might be expected to continue. Mrs. Besant has herself left on record that Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions were unchanged in death. Nonetheless, we are glad to note that Mrs. Bonner inherits her father's regard for scrupulous truth, and the courage to face and expose falsehoods whenever they come to light.

We had the pleasure of a long chat with Mr. George Anderson a few days ago. Our readers will be glad to hear that he is in excellent health, and that he hopes to be present at the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner on January 29. Mr. Anderson has given us another £5 for the N.S.S. Benevolent Fund, £10 for Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, and £5 for a certain distribution of Freethought literature at meetings.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, January 29 (Thomas Paine's birthday). The tickets are four shillings each, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or from any London Branch secretary.

On Wednesday evening, January 1, Mr. Foote opened the course of free propagandist lectures under his new scheme at the Athenæum, Shepherds Bush. Owing to the very brief advertisement, and to the holidays, the meeting was not so large as it might have been, though it was quite large enough in the circumstances to be distinctly encouraging. No doubt the hall will fill up during the month. On Thursday evening, January 2, Mr. Foote opened another course of free lectures in the Assembly Rooms, Edmonton. There was a good attendance, and the lecture was warmly applauded. Mr. Foote will also deliver the fourth lecture of this course on January 23. The course at the Secular Hall, Camberwell, was opened by Mr. Watts on Wednesday, January 1. The majority of those present were strangers, who are just the people these courses of lectures are intended to reach.

On this (Sunday) evening the meeting of the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. will assume a novel form. The members of the Discussion Class are to conduct a mock trial, before a judge and jury, of the Primates of the Greek and Roman Churches, and Johannes Protestans as representing the "Reformed" Churches, on a charge of fraud and forgery, in that they have palmed off the New Testament as the Word of God. The four Evangelists, and the Apostles, Peter and Paul, are to be put in the witness-box, and their cross-examination promises to be a lively feature in the proceedings. The approach of the trial has created quite a flutter of expectant interest, and a good meeting ought to reward this maiden performance of the Discussion Class.

The *Nation*, which is the leading American literary journal, devotes a long article to the paper of Goldwin Smith on "Christianity's Millstone." It says: "The appearance of Goldwin Smith's article is a sign of the times. It is a striking thing that such a man as he should have written such an article; more striking still that it should have been published in a magazine of general circulation; most striking of all that its author should not have been immediately and bitterly assailed. Where are the polemics, where the religious passions and prejudices, of thirty years ago? In a style which, by its point and pungency, reminds one of the similar writings of Thomas Paine, he puts together some of the harder things to believe, and the still harder things to practise, in the Old Testament, and urges that it be cast off as 'a millstone on the neck of Christianity.' For such an article by such a man, so meekly received by the general public and the religious world, it would be hard to find a parallel."

The Ladies' Liberal League of America dates from 1892. Voltairine de Cleyre is one of the leading spirits of the League, which is of an advanced Freethought character.

The number of civil marriages in Scotland, as elsewhere, is decidedly on the increase. In Glasgow, in 1894, there were 677 united before the sheriff, while in 1895 the number increased to 749. This method may not fully satisfy the demand for fuss, but it is cheap, orderly, and sensible, and thus commends itself to the canny Scot.

Rafiuddin Ahmad writes in the *Fortnightly Review* "In Defence of Islam," replying to Canon MacColl and exposing his ignorance of Moslem law and his many errors in regard to the religion he criticises. He does not hesitate to characterise one utterance of the Christian Canon as "the worst example of presumptuous mendacity I have ever seen."

Mr. Joseph Symes's *Liberator* for November 30, just to hand, describes Australia as dreadfully hot, both crops and cattle being in a sad state for want of rain. Mr. Symes has been on a lecturing tour and hard at work generally. We are sorry to see that he is still in financial difficulties. Surely the Freethinkers in that part of the world will come to his relief. It is enough to keep a paper going from a literary point of view, without having to make up a weekly loss of money in addition.

The *Liberator* reprints Mr. Wheeler's article on "Some Christian Truths," dealing with a certain Christian Evidence advocate's false statements about Charles Bradlaugh, Lloyd Garrison, and the Anti-Slavery Movement.

De Dageraad for January opens with a good article on "Bibliolatry and Bible Belief," both of which appear to be rapidly declining even among the paid inculcators of Christianity in Holland, where we are pleased to note 82,000 people were bold enough to put themselves down in the census as of "no creed." Our friends of *De Dageraad*, by such publications as *The Contradictions of the Bible* and *Domine, Pastor, and Rabbi*, are doing capital work.

An Exhibition of Paine relics will be held at the Bradlaugh Institute, Newington Green-road, on January 29, 30, and 31. Many of the articles lately at South Place will be exhibited, and a number of others will be added. Persons with relics, pictures, coins, books, or pamphlets relating to Paine and his time are requested to communicate with R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street.

The 159th anniversary of Paine's birthday will be celebrated in Boston by a Convention of New England Freethinkers at the Paine Memorial Hall. Mr. S. P. Putnam will be present.

Excellent letters in support of Secular Education appear in the *Barnsley Chronicle*. One of the best is by G. W. Irving. Another by "Herberon Aubert" gives some telling quotations from Herbert Spencer.

The Blackburn Branch had a social reunion, including tea, on New Year's Day. It was so successful that a similar function has been arranged for Thomas Paine's birthday (January 29).

The South Shields Branch held their usual Soirée on Christmas Eve, in the Westoe-lane Board schools. About 100 attended, and spent a right merry Christmas. The Annual Social was held on New Year's Day. There were 120 present, and the gathering was a complete success. Mr. G. White arranged everything well, and Mr. D. Bow catered to everyone's satisfaction.

The Manchester Branch held its Annual Soirée on New Year's Day. A large number of members and friends assembled and took tea, after which there was an excellent entertainment, consisting of a performance by the Dramatic Society, music, and dancing. It was in every way a most successful function.

Mr. George Standring lectures for the Manchester Branch this afternoon and evening. It is a long while since Mr. Standring lectured in Manchester, and no doubt the local Freethinkers will take this opportunity of hearing him.

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LIVING BY FAITH.

We have often referred to the inconsistency of Christians, whose professions and practices are so widely different from each other; and we have always insisted that they ought either to live strictly in accordance with the teachings of Christ, or to repudiate them as being wholly impracticable, if not absolutely impossible, in the present age of the world. It has always appeared to us that the failure of the Church to obey the commands of its Lord and Master as recorded in the New Testament is conclusive evidence of a want of faith in the inspiration and the binding authority of that book; and, being of that opinion, we have not hesitated on more than one occasion to accuse it of gross inconsistency and transparent hypocrisy. While this may be true of the great mass of Christians, we are pleased to note an exception to this general proposition which has just been brought to our attention by the Boston *Globe* of Thursday, the 5th inst. According to a telegram from Chicago, Ill., published therein, a new sect of Christians, about fifty in all, has just been organised under the name of "Children of God"; and their fundamental doctrine is that work and money are not essential to happiness, and that by putting their trust in God all of their bodily wants will be provided for without labor on their part. The founder of this new Church is a Jew, who has forsaken his own religion, and has been preaching this new faith for several weeks; and, as a consequence thereof, he has made the above-mentioned number of converts thereto, who are now endeavoring to reduce it to actual practice.

As evidence of their sincerity, it is stated that they ask no alms, and even refuse to accept the money which they have earned. Whole families have deserted their homes to live in this remarkable community, being entirely dependent upon the bounty of Almighty God. The leaders of the new faith have established a "heaven," and are luring the simple-minded by promises of an easy life without work. The "Children of God" have their Chicago "heaven" at 5487 Madison-avenue, a two-storey building. The front of the building is used as a church, and the rear as a dwelling. They have a treasurer, who is expected to receive funds from some mysterious source. No collections are taken. There are three meetings on Sunday and two on week days.

Whatever may be thought of this new denomination of Christians, we think that it must be admitted by all that they possess at least one virtue of which other sects are utterly destitute; and that is, perfect consistency between faith and practice. It is quite evident that they really believe in a literal compliance with the commands of Christ, who, in his Sermon on the Mount, is reported to have said:—

> "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?
>
> "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt. vi. 25, 26).
>
> "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith?
>
> "Therefore take no thought, saying: 'What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?'
>
> "(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.
>
> "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 30-33).

We are pleased to know that at last the teachings of Christ are to be subjected to a practical test; and we shall await with much interest the result of this experiment. If these people actually succeed in living without work, that fact will accomplish more towards making converts to Christianity than all the combined efforts of preachers, evangelists, and missionaries have ever done in that direction. It will afford the greatest possible inducement for the unemployed, who are now suffering for the necessaries of life, to join this organisation, so that all their wants may be immediately provided for. We can conceive of nothing which will be of greater benefit to the cause of Christ than the success of this new movement; and that it has been so auspiciously inaugurated is a fact over which all true Christians ought to rejoice, as it will afford a practical demonstration of the truth of the religion which they profess, and will for ever silence the voices of their opponents.

If, however, this experiment should prove to be a failure, as we believe that it will, what, then, can be said by our Christian friends in defence of their faith, and with what reason can they expect it to be accepted by intelligent persons? For, if the precepts of Christ are incapable of being reduced to practice, they cannot have been inspired by infinite wisdom, and, therefore, are unworthy of respect by any class of people. That they are wholly incompatible with the welfare and the happiness of mankind is too self-evident a proposition to require argument in its support; and, therefore, we are compelled to regard the Christian religion as a totally irrational system of faith, which ought to be immediately rejected by all rational minds.

—*Boston Investigator.*

Surviving Paganism.

The curious dualism of the Anglian peasant, mentioned by Dr. Jessopp, who said, "That Providence is a bad 'un; first he took my missis, then he spoilt my taters, and now he's spoilt my corn; but I reckon there's one abev as 'ull put a stopper on him if he goes too fur," was illustrated by Mr. Gomme in an address to the Folk-Lore Society. He mentioned, in connection with still existing sacred wells, that a Scottish peasant, when he came to worship at the well, cried: "O Lord, Thou knowest that well would it be for me this day, an' I had stoopit my knees and my heart afore Thee in spirit and in truth, as often as I have stoopit them afore this well. But we maun keep the customs of our fathers." In like manner, there is still a superstition in Lancashire of a long journey after death. Of a man who died of apoplexy at a public dinner, one of the company remarked: "Well, poor John, God rest his soul. He has at last gone to his long rest with a belly full of good meat, and that's some consolation."

In a sermon preached by the Rev. W. Pemble, published in 1659, the case of a man is referred to who, being questioned touching his faith, replied that God was a good old man, and Christ a towardly youth; that his soul was a great bone in his body; and after his death, if he had done well, he should be put into a pleasant green meadow. This conception of the soul, as a bone in the body, is paralleled by a notion of the New Zealanders that a peculiarly sacred character attaches to the backbone. It is not long since one of the Peculiar People cited, in a court of justice, the passage, "Not a bone of his body shall be broken," as a sufficient answer to the magistrate's inquiry if they would send for a doctor in a surgical case.

Post-Mortem Salvation.

It is like this. A man comes to me and says: "There is a fortune for you that amounts to millions deposited in the First National Bank, that you can have by paying to me ten per cent. of it." I reply: "Good! I will go at once and draw the money and pay you the commission." "No," he says, "you cannot do that; the money will not be paid to you until after your death; but it is a sure thing for you then, if you pay my commission now." "Well," I say, "it is a good thing for my estate, anyhow, if true. I will go to the bank and ascertain the fact, and cheerfully pay your price for the information." "No," he says, "that won't do; you must take my word for it. There is great danger that you may lose it all by knowing too much. You must have faith that it is true—all safe as I tell you. All learning that goes beyond faith is dangerous." And so, if I am a fool or an ignoramus, I pay the commission, exemplifying the proverb, "A fool and his money are soon parted," and hug myself with the delusion that I am smarter and richer than the infidel who, from his great learning, refuses to believe in the promises of the Gospel sharp, who is now living high on the money he has fooled me out of.—*J. P. Richardson.*

Science and Supernaturalism.—Science has taught the race that the sequence of cause and effect is inviolable; that the order of the physical universe is rational; that creation is not an historical event, but a perpetual process; that there is no failure and no disorder in nature; and that, to approximate to anything like a right understanding of things, the persons, or, if I may coin the word, the *anthrocentric* point of view, must be abandoned.—*John Burroughs.*

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THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TURKISH QUESTION.

"I've just returned from Constantinople," said Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith, the author and artist, to a *Boston Herald* representative in New York, two or three days ago. "While there, I had an opportunity, through talks with Minister Terrell and two of the Sultan's aides, to learn all the inside facts about the Armenian atrocities. The whole matter has been grossly misunderstood. The root of the trouble lies in the missionaries sent out to Armenia from England and America. Instead of trying to help the people, they teach them that they are ill-treated, and sow the seeds of discontent and rebellion. They have started all the difficulty; and, when the blame is properly placed, it will rest upon their heads.

"We hear a great deal in this country about 'the barbarous Turk.' Now, I have travelled and painted all over the globe, and know pretty well the inhabitants of all countries; and let me tell you that I never met a more civilised, humane, intelligent, cleanly, pious, and chaste man than the typical Turk. He is quiet and respectable; he is pre-eminently kind and good to his family.

"See how humane the Turks are to animals. I don't know how many hundred thousand dogs there are in Constantinople, but probably there are fifty to each block. Every few minutes, if you are watching what goes on around you, you will see a Turk go over to a bake shop, buy a bit of bread, or something else that the dogs will eat, and feed them. Nobody owns these creatures. They have been common property for a thousand years, I suppose; yet, ugly and mangy as they are, they never go hungry. Nor do they ever suffer violence. Striking a dog in the streets of Constantinople means imprisonment for a year. Why, I've seen a team come along one of those narrow streets when a dog was lying in the way, and the driver would stop his donkeys and lift the dog out of the way, rather than run the risk of hurting him. I never saw anyone beat or kick a donkey in Turkey. The people recognise that these creatures are their faithful servants, and treat them kindly. The love existing between the Turk or the Arabian and his horse is proverbial.

"What have we in the way of religion to teach these people? Nothing. It's pure bumptiousness for us to try to convert' them. They neither want nor need our religion. They've got a better one of their own.

"Another point. What order of men are they whom the English and the American religious bodies send out as missionaries? If you have ever noted closely the students in our training schools for the ministry, you must have discovered that, as a class, they are far from representing the best, or even a very good, type of American manhood. Many of them are young men from country towns and villages who could not make a decent living in any other calling. They hear a sermon by some returned missionary who wishes to arouse interest in the country in which he has lived, and straightway they are called to labor in the same field. Such sermons are apt to take hold of the less intelligent and more impressionable men; and it is often the men who are not fitted to take high rank among the ministry in their own country who feel themselves drawn to work in a foreign land. The result is that we send out the most incapable specimens of our rural population—men of uncouth manners, who have learned a little Latin and Hebrew—the representatives of half-a-dozen religious sects, which are at constant war with each other about their creeds—to convert a cultured, courteous, pious, humane, temperate race, whose unified religion enters as much into the life of its members as does their business.

"Now and then we hear of some girl in a country town who thinks that she has a mission to do good to the heathen. She had far better go down to the factory in her own village and minister there; but no, there is no glamor about that. Imagining that she is a new Joan of Arc, our hysterical friend tells some missionary body all about it; and they send her over to Turkey. You can picture to yourself the amazement and the disgust with which the Turks regard such missionaries. Superb specimens of physique, they look upon these little wizened, dried-up, spectacled women with infinite contempt; just as they scoff at the idea of adopting a religion about which the various schools cannot agree.

"Well, colonies of such boors and cranks go over to Armenia and found schools. The children come to be taught, and eventually they join some one or another Christian church. They are pariahs as long as they live—marked boys and girls, branded men and women, who have lost caste among their fellows. What have they gained? 'Christianity,' you may say. Very true. But if they would lead pure and noble lives under the religion of Mohammed, how are they better off? We surely cannot believe that heathens who lead good lives according to their lights do not go to heaven.

"Pretty soon someone comes along and hits an Armenian on the head. The missionaries keep telling their converts and other people that the Turk did it. They tell them that they are abused, and stir them up to rebellion. The result is bloodshed, as you have seen. So far as can be learned, not one American missionary has been injured.

"But our missionaries and those sent out by the English can, if they will, do immense good. They can teach the races, among which they make their homes, to plough, to harrow, to make and to use tools, and innumerable other things in which they are far behind us. There is very little use to carry our knowledge of medicine to the Turks, because the latter are never sick. They are temperate in all things; they drink no wine (their religion forbids it); and they eat very little meat. Above all, they are the cleanest people on the globe. Your orthodox Turk bathes three times a day. When you enter a restaurant in Constantinople, the first thing they bring you is a bowl of hot water and some fresh tow to wipe your hands on. Then they bring you cold water and a fresh towel. Now, disease is bred by dirt and intemperance; and in the absence of these there is health.

"But, although Turkey is not one of the countries to which we can with advantage send missionaries with a knowledge of medicine, we can really benefit the Turks and the Armenians by teaching them the mechanical arts and agriculture. And in that direction lie our rightful activities in their behalf; not in the way of religion. For a people whom you can hardly induce to go to church once a week, save to hear a sensational sermon, to teach religion to a race who go gladly and enthusiastically to worship the Jehovah whom they believe to be behind the blank wall on the Mecca-ward end of their mosques, is the most arrogant bumptiousness."

A DIVINE JUDGE JEFFREYS; OR, WHY CHRIST DIED.

JEHOVAH rose up from his large easy chair,
In his mansion suspended high up in the air;
And his teeth he did gnash,
And he pulled his moustache,
And like an old trooper profanely did swear!

For he had some apples uncommonly fine,
Off which Eve and Adam were told not to dine;
Yet the male renegade,
And his spare rib—the jade,
Had wilfully Yahveh's commands disobeyed!

Now, he is an awfully touchy old blade,
And out of this molehill a mountain he made;
Although he well knew,
If the Bible is true,
What would happen, before earth's foundations were laid

And he'd played Eve and Adam a very mean trick,
For he caused them to be led astray by Old Nick;
Yet he both of them "cussed,"
Did Jehovah the Just,
And out of the garden they quickly were thrust!

And we, the descendants of Adam and Eve
(At least so we're told in "God's Word" to believe),
Their sin do inherit,
And richly we merit
Damnation in hell, when we die, to receive!

But he gives us just one little ghost of a chance,
From this tropical sentence, of de-liver-ance;
And he offers instead
A front seat when we're dead
In his "up-a-bove," golden-paved, heavenly manse!

For he ordained the murder of J. C., his son
(Who was really himself, for the two are but one);
And if we have belief,
Though of rogues we're the chief,
The above-mentioned murder for us will atone!

ESS JAY BEE.

VOLTAIRE'S ROMANCES.—One popular idea of Voltaire is that of a mere scoffer at sacred things, a ribald reviler of the best human sentiments. Another common notion of him is that of a cold sceptic, who subjected everything to the test of a narrow reasoning process; a man who cared nothing personally either for good or evil; who was all brain and no heart. If these romances fairly reflect the real nature of Voltaire, they exhibit the character of a warm-hearted, sensitive, undiscriminating man, who sickened over human suffering and human persecution, and who employed, with an almost reckless prodigality, against the enemies he hated most, the instinctive weapon of wit which served him best.—*Westminster Review.*

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BOOK CHAT.

The Open Court Publishing Company publishes a story called *Karma*, by Dr. Paul Carus, illustrated by Japanese artists, and printed on Japanese crepe paper. The same house will issue *Lovers Three Thousand Years Ago* (as indicated by the Song of Solomon), by Rev. T. A. Goodwin, D.D., who does not suppose that it is Christ's nose which is compared to the Tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus.

* * *

Mr. J. W. Gott, of Bradford, has published, in pamphlet form (2d.), a lecture on *The Future of Liberalism*, by Mr. J. M. Robertson, who advocates Old Age Pensions, and an Executive consisting of permanent heads of departments, acting under the supervision of parliamentary committees. These are the most important points of the lecture, but there are many minor points presented and argued with much ability. Mr. Robertson is safest when he is reasoning abstractly; in practical matters, involving personalities as well as principles, he appears to argue from wishes rather than facts. He is simply going against human nature in advocating the abolition of "the leadership." Leadership is a natural fact. Parties cannot help having leaders. The only real point at issue is this—whether it is better to let natural leaders play the part of free-lances, or to saddle them with responsibility. Mr. Gladstone may not have been an ideal leader of the Liberal party, but there was only one position possible for him when his party came into power, as was demonstrated by the logic of events on more than one occasion. Parnell was in his right place at the head of the Irish party, and the state of that party since his fall and death is an instructive commentary on the "evil of leadership."

* * *

Euripides the Rationalist: A Study in the History of Art and Religion, by A. W. Verrall (Cambridge University Press), according to the *Athenæum* reviewer, attempts to make out that the great Greek dramatist was a sceptic, who used the drama as a means of propagating the doctrines of Anaxagoras in safety. It says: "He was an Atheist in disguise, and when, for the plot of a tragedy, he borrowed a tale from the mythology, he took care to present it in such a way that the miraculous and, so to say, theological elements of it should be plainly discredited, and sometimes even flouted." This view is not accepted by the *Athenæum* critic, but there is no doubt that Euripides was above the current mythology, and did not scruple to occasionally let this be seen.

* * *

The *Daily News*, noticing *The Pirates' Paradise*, says: "No quarter of the world has exceeded Spanish America in crimes of diabolical cruelty, and in no quarter of the world have so many places been named after the Trinity, the Virgin Mother, the Savior, and the Saints. As the Chinese philosopher, Lao-tsze, says in his book of wisdom: 'Those who talk most about God know him least.'"

* * *

Canon Rawnsley's *Memoirs of Bishop Goodwin of Carlisle* recalls a story of a former Bishop Percy: "'Good morning,' said Bishop Percy to one of his clergy who was hoeing potatoes in his back garden. No answer. 'Nice day this.' 'I nivver said it wasn't!' was the surly reply. 'I am your bishop, you know.' 'The devil you are! Nivver clapped eyes on bishop befoor sin' I've been here,' was the unceremonious rejoinder."

* * *

The opening chapters of Zola's *Rome*, now coming out in *Le Figaro*, show it is intended for a serious study of religion and the social state. It may be supposed to be a continuation of *Lourdes*. The enlightened Abbé Pierre Froment goes to Rome, the city being described with graphic realism. He speculates and writes on the still great possibilities of religion if it will again become the advocate of the poor, and the Church become the leader of a Christian socialism. But we fancy, at the outset, that the enthusiast must receive a shock when the ideal of what religion should be comes to a spot where the influence remains so strong of what it actually has been in the past.

* * *

The editor of the *Open Court* has made a metrical translation of the best known and most important of the Xenions of Goethe and Schiller. The book will be artistically printed in the shape of an album, containing on each page one Xenion with its German original. In an introductory chapter the author gives the history of the Xenions, which are satirical epigrams having the form of distichs, of which the first line is a hexameter and the second a pentameter. He explains in this chapter, by metrical and musical diagrams, the peculiarity of this form of poetry, and portrays the salient features of the golden age of German literature in which Goethe and Schiller battled hard for the new conceptions and ideals which shape most of our thought and life to-day. "No poetry is quoted more frequently in Germany than these pithy aphorisms. They have become household words there, and deserve a place of honor in the literature of the world."

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

Possession by Devils.—We in England now hardly hear of demoniacal possession, except as a historical doctrine of divines. We have discarded from religious services the solemn ceremony of casting out devils from the bodies of the possessed—a rite to this day officially retained in the rituals of the Greek and Roman Churches. Cases of diabolical influence, alleged from time to time among ourselves, are little noticed except by newspaper paragraphs on superstition and imposture. If, however, we desire to understand the doctrine of possession, its origin and influence in the world, we must look beyond countries where public opinion has passed into this stage, and must study the demoniac theory, as it still prevails in lower and lowest levels of culture.—*Dr. E. B. Tylor*, "*Primitive Culture*," *ii. 142.*

God of Gods.—When, in the cuneiform inscriptions, we find Tiglath-pileser called "king of kings, lord of lords," we see that there is nothing exceptional in the title "god of gods, and lord of lords, a great god, a mighty and terrible"—a description which implies that the Hebrew god is one of many distinguished by a supremacy.—*Herbert Spencer*, "*Data of Sociology*," *sec. 202.*

Joshua and the Sun.—The mightiest miracle on record was wrought to enable a bloodthirsty people to avenge themselves on their enemies! *Credat Judæus Apella.* It is a wicked libel upon the God of Love to imagine he would interrupt the harmony of the solar system for the sake of a "great slaughter." It would be a devil's deed; and, therefore, in the name of the Father of all, Amorites as well as Israelites, we declare the legend false.—*Rev. T. Harley*, "*Lunar Science*," *p. 75.*

Is the Human Will a Chemical Agent?—Professor Ostwald, the eminent German chemist, contributes to the *Leipziger Berichte* a curious speculation, which he calls a "chemical theory of the freedom of the will." He regards the action of the human will as being precisely like the chemical process known as catalysis, in which an agent influences the time of a reaction without being itself affected. It is exactly thus that the human mind acts on matter, accelerating the chemical and mechanical processes associated with psychical activity without any expenditure of energy.

Christian Fetishism in Rome.—*Mutato nomine*, it is probable that there is as much sheer fetishism among the Roman populace now as there was eighteen hundred years ago; and if Marcus Antoninus could descend from his horse and ascend the steps of the Ara Coeli church about Twelfth Day, the only thing that need strike him would be the extremely contemptible character of the modern idols as works of art.—*Professor Huxley*, "*Science and the Bishops.*"

Christ and Humanity.—The result of Christ's slight regard for the ties of relationship is seen in the conduct of the monks and hermits, his ascetic disciples. Too often, in their pursuit of conditions believed to be necessary for their salvation, they were led into a cruel and selfish disregard of the feelings of those who loved them. Men, driven by terror into austerity and hardness of heart, refused to say farewell to a dying mother, or to look on a sister—for fear of pollution!—*J. F. Yorke*, "*Notes on Evolution and Christianity*," *p. 129.*

Obituary.

It is with the deepest regret that I record the death of W. McCleod, which took place on December 27, at the age of thirty-one years. The deceased was a member of the East London Branch of the N.S.S., and one who was steadily enthusiastic in his support of the Secular cause. Personally I had known him for some time as one who could always be depended upon when work was to be done, and I have often had to thank him for his support on occasions when the nature of the meetings called for something stronger than argumentation. Of a quiet and undemonstrative character only those who knew him personally could appreciate how thoroughly his opinions had been worked out, and how steadily he supported them. By his death the Secular party loses a valuable supporter, and the sincere sympathy of its members will be freely offered to his widow in her present bereavement. The interment took place at Woodgrange Park Cemetery on the 3rd inst. A short speech was delivered over the grave by myself. C. Cohen.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Banqueting Hall, Piccadilly): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The New Woman and the Bible"—with reference also to the later novels of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, W. Heaford, "The Dream of Immortality." Tuesday, at 8.30, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac"—II.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, adjourned general meeting—important resolution. Tuesday, at 8, social gathering.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, H. Snell, "Was Jesus Christ a Socialist?" Wednesday, at 8, W. Heaford, "The Dream of Immortality."

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, "The Principle of Population in Relation to Socialism."

EDMONTON (Assembly Rooms): Thursday, no lecture.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Gospel Lies and Follies."

WEST LONDON (Athenæum Hall, Godolphin-road, Shepherds Bush): Wednesday, at 8, C. Cohen, "What is Secularism?"

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, business meeting.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Living God."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, J. Veitch, "Does Belief in Immortality Affect Conduct?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, A. Holland, recitals from Shakespeare, Shelley, Tennyson, and others.

BOLTON (Spinners' Hall, St. George's-road): 11, Charles Watts, "Christian Evidences a Fallacy"; 3, "Theological Puzzles"; 6.30, "The Bible and Civilisation." Monday, at 7.30, "The Bible in Board Schools."

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Haslam, "Does Secularism Conduce to Morality?"

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 6.45, election of officers.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Cowie, "G. B. Shaw's *A Degenerate's View of Nordau*"; 6.30, Members of Discussion Class, "The Trial of the Witnesses; or, the Evangelists and Apostles at the Bar of History."

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Fryer, "Education *versus* Religion."

IPSWICH (G.E.R. Commercial-road): 7, members' meeting.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, C. Cohen, "Scepticism: its Meaning and its Value."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Millar, "Curiosities of Olden Times." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 3, George Standring, "Curiosities of the Church Prayer-Book"; 6.30, "The Church *v.* Humanity."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, A. Aarstad will lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, members' meeting; 7, W. Dyson, "Religion and Socialism—a Criticism of Miss E. Stacey." Wednesday, at 8, members' and friends' social dance.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, music and readings.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—January 9, Edmonton; 12, Leicester; 15, Shepherds Bush; 19, Sheffield; 20, Hoyland Common; 21, Huddersfield; 22, Cleckheaton; 28, Heckmondwike; 26, Manchester. February 2, Newcastle; 5, Chester-le-street; 9, Newcastle; 12, Chester-le-Street; 16, Newcastle; 19, Chester-le-Street; 23, South Shields. March 1, South Shields; 8 and 15, Glasgow.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—January 16, Edmonton; 26, Leicester. February 2, Balls Pond.

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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—No. 3. SUNDAY, JANUARY 19, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

GOD'S OPPORTUNITY.

RELIGION lives upon the past. It is like our aristocracy; it did great things—long ago. Its achievements are capitalised, and it now subsists on dividends. Here and there, in ignorant, sequestered parts of Europe, it still performs wonders; but these, like Highland second-sight, disappear with the advance of civilisation. It is also alleged that great rogues are converted at revival meetings; but, somehow or other, the rogues are not diminished in number. Moral miracles of this kind do not affect the general statistics of vice and crime; and let argument do its worst, there is no appeal against figures.

In its garrulous old age, religion prattles of what it did in its lusty youth. It speaks of marvels, of heroism, of preternatural exploits. "Once upon a time" is the burden of its reminiscences. To doubt the accuracy of its memory is a species of blasphemy. If you press for some evidence, religion gives you a long record—written by itself; and it thinks this should be taken as conclusive.

The God of religion falls under exactly the same reproach. He manifests the same supinity now, and yet he has such a brilliant ancient history. It reminds one of Heine's mordant witticism on Alfred De Musset, whom he described as a poet with a promising past.

God used to be extremely busy. He was here, there, everywhere, all over the shop. Nothing was too great for his power, nothing too little for his attention. His providence was like the elephant's trunk, which picks up a pin or pulls down a tree. Now he was making a world; anon he was manufacturing holy hair-oil for Aaron. Now he was creating whales; anon he was turning clouds of dust into lice. Now he was thundering laws from Mount Sinai; anon he was giving directions for candle-snuffers. Now he was slaughtering myriads of Assyrians by one magical stroke; anon he was saving the life of a poor woman in a famine by endowing the food in her larder with a miraculous power of self-multiplication.

Now all these things are over, as Virginius says in Macaulay's ballad. Jehovah has retired from active business. Nearly two thousand years ago his son visited this planet to give the firm a fresh start. He performed many wonders and laid in a large stock of miracles, upon which the Church has been trading ever since. But he did not remain at the earth branch-office. He soon went home again. And although he promised to return shortly, he has not arrived up to the time of our going to press. He is terribly behind date—like all the gentlemen who represent him. "Lo he comes!" they sing, with most damnable iteration; but it is always a false alarm; and nobody, except a few Second Advent cranks, ever thinks of looking up.

It is really time, however, that Jesus Christ came again, or that God the Father bestirred himself. Thomas Carlyle, with all his inherited piety, complained to Mr. Froude that "God does nothing now." And has not Mr. Swinburne, the poet, in his splendid and sonorous *Hymn of Man*, warned the priests that they must really stimulate the God of their faith into some activity? He bids them call upon him, as the priests of Baal called upon their deity in that famous contest with Elijah. "Cry aloud!" he exclaims, "for the people blaspheme." Is even his hatred cold—the hatred that was manifest in the fires of hell? And what has become of his loving kindness, which gave the elect the joys of heaven, while the heretics roasted under their very noses? The poet declares that God is "smitten," his "death is upon him."

> And the love-song of Earth, as thou diest, resounds through the wind of her wings—
> Glory to Man in the highest! for Man is the master of things!

All very well, Mr. Swinburne; but any good Christian will tell you that your blasphemy will meet with due punishment in the lake which burneth with brimstone and fire. You have missed the Poet Laureateship (if you wanted it!), you accursed infidel! And it has fallen to the lot of a good Catholic, though a poor poet (Banjo-Byron, Browning called him), who finds that godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of the life that is to come.

Seriously, however—for we *can* be serious—it may be suggested that the Christian God should give some sign of his existence. We are not going to take out a watch, and give him five minutes to strike us dead, as so many "infidels" have done—in religious tracts; for, in the first place, he may have something else to do just then; and, in the next place, we don't want our own funeral to swell the budget of Christian Evidences. Our proposals are less extreme, and less illogical. Let us submit a few, by way of sample.

Jesus Christ raised from the dead a man called Lazarus, but nobody took much notice of him. It is not recorded that anyone asked him a single question as to what he saw and heard while he was dead. For any useful purpose, except perhaps to his own family, Lazarus might as well have stopped in the tomb, and (to descend to New Testament language) gone on with his "stinking." It was a wasted resurrection.

How much more efficacious would be the resurrection of (say) Charles Bradlaugh! To begin with, there is no doubt about his death. His daughter is still living, and so are the doctors and nurses who tended him in his last illness. The undertaker could add his affidavit. Testimony could be given by hundreds of people who saw the coffin lowered into the grave at Brookwood. Newspaper accounts of the funeral could be produced. And lastly, so long a time has elapsed *since* the funeral, that it is reasonably certain that he is really dead. Well now, does anyone doubt that the resurrection of Charles Bradlaugh would be a triumphant vindication of Christianity? We should all know him again. He was no common man. You could not mistake him for anyone else. And if he came amongst us again "in his habit as he lived," and told us that he had been in the presence of God, and seen Jesus Christ, and learnt that the Christians were right and Iconoclast was wrong; would not this settle the hash of "infidelity" for ever? Would it not rouse the very indifferents, and turn mere acquiescence into positive and ardent faith?

Our first proposal, therefore, is that God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Ghost, or all of them together, should raise Charles Bradlaugh from the dead. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of resurrection. It will be too late when all the witnesses are dead. Let it be done now, while they are all living. Let Bradlaugh arise, and God's enemies be scattered!

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

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PROGRESS OF FREETHOUGHT.

When David Hume lay dying in Edinburgh, near one hundred and twenty years ago, he amused himself with reading *The Dialogues of the Dead* of the witty Freethinker Lucian. Alluding to the excuses there made to Charon for desiring not to enter his ferry and cross the Styx to Hades, he diverted himself by imagining what he himself could say and the answers he might receive. The usual excuses as to money, houses, and lands could not apply; but he thought he might ask for time to improve his works for a new edition. "But," said he, "Charon would answer: 'When you have seen the effect of these you will be for making other alterations. There will be no end of such excuses; so, honest friend, please step into the boat.' But I might still urge: Have a little patience, good Charon; I have been endeavoring to open the eyes of the public. If I live a few years longer, I may have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition. But Charon would then lose all temper and decency: 'You loitering rogue, that will not happen this many hundred years. Do you fancy I will grant you a lease for so long a term? Get into the boat this instant, you lazy, loitering rogue.'"

Very soon after this little *jeu d'esprit* the great philosopher died, as his physician, Dr. Black, reported, "in such a happy composure of mind that nothing could exceed it." Superstition was then so rampant that crowds went to his grave in the Calton burying-ground in the expectation of seeing the Atheist's body snatched from its last resting place in a blue flame. The seed he had sown did not bear fruit at once; as he saw full well, the downfall of the prevailing system of superstition was a work of centuries. But the work has been going on—Freethought has become more open and aggressive. Men like Paine, Bentham, Mill, Shelley, Carlile, Greg, Newman, Bradlaugh, and Huxley have upheld its standard, and there is now no country—not even Russia—wherein the prevailing superstition of Christianity is preached, where there are not also men challenging or undermining that superstition. Freethought is firmly based among all the educated classes in France, and in Germany it cannot be dislodged by all the persecution of the divinely-guided Emperor. In Catholic lands every Freemason's lodge is a protest against priestcraft, a place for the dissemination of belief in the brotherhood of man, irrespective of race or religion—a wider, nobler doctrine than that of exclusive Christian salvation.

There is not a colony now where Freethinkers are not engaged in the task of converting the Christians. In America Colonel Ingersoll is a champion who alone suffices to spread consternation in the Churches, and against whom they have vainly matched their ablest men. A Boston minister recently declared that Ingersoll had two million followers in the United States. In India only the non-Aryan races are converted into rice-Christians. Moslems, Brahmins, and Buddhists alike contemn the idea of salvation through the blood of a dead Jew. To some extent they retort on Christian missions and seek converts among Christians. Like the Christians themselves, they often seek to accommodate their faiths to modern science, and if they give up their ancestral creeds they turn to secular humanitarianism rather than to any exclusive schemes of salvation in another world. China will have nothing to do with Christian missions; but, as its millions become educated, they take to the Secularism of Confucius, who declared that we should not talk of death until we understood life, nor concern ourselves with spirits until men were known.

In Japan, that England of the East, where a free, happy, courteous, and patriotic people have made astonishingly rapid progress in all Western arts and sciences, it was definitely decided that, while many European institutions could be copied with advantage, its religion should be left severely alone. So far as the old faiths—whether Shintoism or Buddhism—are breaking up, they are replaced, not by Christianity, but by Secularism. Here is what W. E. Curtis, the long-time correspondent of the *Chicago Record*, says:—

> "In almost every school-house is found an infidel. The works of Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, and other authors of the same sort, were translated into the Japanese language as soon as the Bible. Reprints of many scientific works of the controversial sort can be purchased in any bookstore for less than they cost in England. There are weekly and monthly publications devoted to the discussion of scientific topics, which are not only open, but able, antagonists of the Christian faith. It is from them the missionaries meet with the greatest opposition and discouragement. One of the native faculty of a Christian university, founded by the prayers and the contributions of the pious people of the United States, and managed by the American Board of Foreign Missions, himself a graduate of Yale College, has recently renounced the Church that pays his salary, and is now making frequent public addresses that would do credit to Colonel Ingersoll."

The evolution philosophy, the views of Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and Haeckel, have spread over the civilised world. Even in the Churches many have given up the old belief in special creation, and, after studying science, are forced to exclaim, "Thou hast conquered, O Darwin!" So in the domain of criticism. The views for which Paine and Voltaire were reviled now find utterance even in the pulpits, and men like Drs. Driver and Cheyne are teaching the younger generation of theologians to abandon all the old positions.

The Churches are everywhere changing their attitude towards the traditional system of Christian doctrine. Wondrous squirming and wriggling go on in the endeavor to accommodate the new truths of science to the old assumptions of sky-pilotage. In educated circles the creeds are discarded. We have from the preachers, instead of the doctrines and articles of belief which they are pledged to teach, a lot of gush about the pure and simple gospel, the Christianity of Christ, etc.—phrases used to cover up the fact that they are dispensing new wine out of the old bottles.

The inspiration of the Bible is given up. Professor Goldwin Smith writes of it as the millstone round the neck of Christianity. Few now-a-days could be found to argue that the books of Samuel are any more inspired than the books of Shakespeare. The doctrine of the Trinity is kept out of sight, or resolved into nebulous metaphysics. Hell is unmentioned to ears polite. Satan is superannuated, and the whole scheme of salvation is shifted from dependence upon belief in the Fall, or reliance upon the blood of Christ, to imitation of a great ideal—though the ideal offered never appeared in the character of husband, father, or citizen.

Large organisations, immense enthusiasm, and enormous wealth are devoted by the Christian Churches to bringing the heathen to Christ. The heathens are heathen, and usually remain so; but where among the Christians is to be found a single follower of Christ? Christianity is but lip profession. All its distinctive doctrines are melting before the sun of reason, and all that is wanting for the triumph of Freethought is moral courage, organisation, and the sinews of war. The Churches are strong, not because of vital belief in their teaching, but because of their endowments and the air of respectability given by an influential past. When the indifferent and time-serving desert them, they will be empty indeed. Meanwhile open and avowed Freethinkers who stand the brunt of the battle with superstition, if, like Hume, they cannot expect to see all at once the entire collapse of the prevailing superstitions, may at least see them gradually fall into decay, and have the assurance that time is working with them, and that their labors are not in vain. J. M. Wheeler.

CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY.

Christians frequently boast that their religion has a trustworthy history, and that the essentials of their faith are based upon records about whose accuracy there can be no reasonable doubt. For instance, a leading canon of the Church recently wrote in one of our monthly reviews that, if we credit history at all, we must accept *Christian* history; by which he meant the alleged writings of the Apostles. He then declared that there is stronger testimony for the resurrection of Christ than there is for the coronation of Queen Victoria, or for many of the battles fought during the early part of the present century. This is a fair sample of the orthodox method of jumping at conclusions. For, even if the term "history" is applied to the writings of the New Testament, its records are of an exceedingly

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doubtful character, as we have frequently shown. But there is no parallel between the supposed resurrection of Jesus and the coronation of Victoria, and the fighting of battles during the early part of the present century. Many persons, doubtless, are still alive who witnessed these nineteenth-century events, while we have never read of anyone who asserted that he saw the Resurrection take place. Besides, there is nothing contrary to human experience in coronations and in battles, but for a dead man to come to life would be opposed to all our knowledge of natural law.

To us it seems a confusion of terms to apply the word "history" to the writings of the Apostles, to those of the Fathers, or to those of any of the officers of the Church. The principal work these Christians did was to give the world vague and contradictory records of (to say the least) unreasonable beliefs and improbable events. Such records, if produced for the first time to-day, would not be considered of any historical value whatever. It is true that the writings of so-called Pagans were once designated "scriptures," but that term was applied to all literature, irrespective of its character. The difference between sacred and secular writings has long been established, and a distinction is invariably recognised between ancient history and Christian revelation. When we read of "scriptures" being given by the inspiration of God, we don't understand that it is meant that such literature was the same in its nature and purpose as the histories given us by Greek and Roman writers. Why, then, should the writings of Christians be classed as "history," from which they are so clearly separated by their character and purpose? A collection of doctrines and accounts of ceremonies, which were adopted by a church or a sect, is not history in its true sense. Buckle, in his *History of Civilisation*, approaches the Greek idea of the term, which was a record of facts based upon an examination of their nature and force. Polybius writes thus: "Truth is the eye of history; for, as an animal deprived of sight becomes incapable of performing its natural functions, so, if we take away truth from history, what remains will be nothing more than a useless tale." Vain imagination and fantastic ideas do not furnish materials for history in the proper sense of the word. These creations of fancy belong to allegory, to fiction and fable, which form the beginnings of a nation's record. But, as Diodorus Siculus observes: "What was useful for the life of man was not found out at the beginning." This is discovered only by experience in the realms of reality, which Christian "history" seldom touches.

Is it not strange that the principal historians of the first century are silent as to Christians and their faith? For instance, Plutarch and Strabo, who lived and wrote soon after the alleged advent of Christ, are both silent upon the leading events recorded in the Gospels. These eminent historians travelled much, and were most assiduous in collecting current information. They give accounts of many prodigies, marvels, and supposed supernatural events, and the fact, therefore, that they make no allusion to the most striking incidents of the New Testament can be reasonably accounted for only by the supposition that they had not heard of them. We are aware that it has been asserted that Plutarch had a knowledge of the existence of Christians; but the Rev. Dr. Langhorne states that "nothing of Plutarch's is now extant" which justifies such an assertion. Moreover, it must be remembered that, when seeking for guidance, Plutarch did not go to Jesus, but to the Stoics and to Socrates. It may also be mentioned that four hundred years later Boethius, who studied the same old Greek authors as Plutarch did, wrote on *The Consolations of Philosophy*, but he did not refer to Christianity. This is significant, because it is often alleged that the consolations afforded by the Christian religion excel those imparted by Greek and Roman philosophy. Had Boethius known of the Christian faith, doubtless he would have made some allusion to it. Granted this is but negative evidence in our favor; it, however, has its value, nevertheless.

Livy (book xxiv., chap. 10) gives a good sample of Christian "history" when, relating certain matters the truth of which he cannot vouch for, he says: "Numerous prodigies were reported to have happened this year; and the more such were credited by the simple and superstitious people, the more such stories multiplied." This explains why so many foolish tales originated, and were perpetuated, in the primitive days of Christianity. Evidently, in the early history of the Christian faith, the fabulous predominated, superstition precluded the dignified use of reason, and the belief in supernatural agencies rendered the proper recognition of natural powers impossible. We are not now concerned as to how the Gospels originated; our desire is to inquire if the most important events mentioned therein bear the marks of historical accuracy. That they should do so is, in our judgment, necessary to entitle Christianity to be regarded as an historical religion.

Grätz notices that, although Josephus gives the most trivial details of the proceedings of Pilate, he nowhere alludes to his dealings with Jesus of Nazareth, or to Christianity. We may understand his want of interest in new doctrines, but we fail to discover any reason for his omitting all reference to the great trial in Court, and its marvellous attendant phenomena, if such events occurred as stated in the Gospels. Josephus even reports street rows and minor conflicts with "the powers that be"; but he takes no notice of the judicial examination, condemnation, and even crucifixion of one who is said to be the Son of God. Dio Cassius, who devoted twenty years to collecting evidence for his *History of Rome* down to the eighth year of the Emperor Severus, does not mention Christianity or the Christians. Mr. W. Addis, in his *Christianity in Rome*, confirms the fact of the omission by this learned man. Then there was Philo, who visited Rome A.D. 39, and wrote on *The Logos* after the manner of Saint John; but he does not mention Christianity. We do not overlook that subsequent writers, such as Suetonius, Tacitus, and others, are supposed to have made some vague reference to the Christians. But these writers are too late to speak from personal knowledge. The events to which they are said to have referred occurred, if at all, certainly not less than thirty or forty years before either Suetonius or Tacitus wrote. It does not appear at all improbable, to those who are acquainted with the forging propensities of the early Christian Fathers, and with the habit of interpolation indulged in by the primitive theological writers, that the passages in the latter writings referring to Christianity were inserted at a later period.

The doubtful character of what is termed Christian history may not affect the conclusions of those persons who accept without question whatever the Bible or the Church asserts; but those thinkers who exercise their faculties, irrespective of theological considerations, may recognise the importance of pointing out the fact of the silence of impartial history upon some of the most prominent events that have influenced the minds of professed Christians during the past eighteen hundred years. In the interest of truth, we consider that this aspect of Christian propaganda deserves the serious attention of all men who profess to be the teachers of historical accuracy. If it can be shown that the conclusions at which we have arrived are erroneous, let it be done by all means; but this can be accomplished only by the production of absent evidence. It is not a subject of faith or mere belief, but one of fact and demonstration. If the existence of Christ is regarded simply as an "ideal," encouraged to gratify emotional desires, let it be so stated; if, however, he is alleged to have been a real character, then the silence of independent writers in the first century should be accounted for.

Personally, we think it possible that at that particular period a person named Jesus might have lived, for that was not an uncommon name; but we have failed to discover sufficient evidence to justify us in believing that the Christ of the Gospels ever existed. He appears to us as a purely imaginary character, which was drawn by theological fancy, and has been handed down through the indifference and audacity of the clergy, and the ignorance and credulity of their followers. To us, as Secularists, it matters not whether Christ was a reality or a myth; the good that is associated with his name did not originate with the Christian era, and we accept it as the common heritage of the human race. Finally, belief in him either as a real or a mythical personage will not save us from the ills of life, for experience has proved that such salvation can come only by the wise and persistent use of mundane agencies.

CHARLES WATTS.

There is in every village a lighted torch, the schoolmaster; and a mouth to blow it out, the parson.—*Victor Hugo.*

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THE FATE OF RELIGION.

RELIGION must die. What! do you doubt it? Look and see. Look at the long roll of gods, dead gods, and say if the gods are not all as mortal as men. Chronos, Saturn, Jupiter and his court, Neptune, Dis, Mercury, Charon, Wodin, Thor, and all the gods of our own race, are dead. Even the Devil is dead, with all his innumerable host.

And Elohim, Jehovah, Elshaddai, Adon, Baal, Jesus, are as dead as the deadest god ever worshipped. Yes, and Mary and all the saints are equally dead.

The names of some of the gods remain, but so altered that their owners would not know them. A few mourners, we may say, linger round their graves and chant their praises; and a few people in asylums and on the road to them still believe in the gods and saints, just as others believe in fairies, pixies, etc.

Yes, religion is dying. The churches are getting very worldly in belief, as they have ever been worldly in practice. They are glad to drop the old jargon. Hell is gone, and Heaven is out of sight and attracts no one; the Judgment Day is a thing to jest with, Gabriel's trumpet is a phrase to amuse, the resurrection is a laughing-stock, and the Devil's dungeon now hardly frightens children.

The clergy themselves jest, when alone, upon the most sacred subjects; and they merely put on airs and manners when in the pulpit or performing their mummery before the people.

Bah! the people are opening their eyes. They are beginning to see that those holy drones who renounce the world and follow the example of Penniless Jesus are just the parties who live in the greatest luxury, have the finest buildings, the best clothes, and the least worry in life. The people see that the clergy do not believe their own professed creeds and dogmas; and the stuff that drove our fathers half mad with fright will tickle our children as the queerest rubbish ever known.

All the tending and care in the world cannot keep religion alive—impossible. The clergy will galvanise the old carcase into some sort of movements yet in order to raise the wind; but even that must grow less and less successful.

The Dissenting bodies are doomed for a certainty. Their position is too illogical; they are neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. The Anglican Church will hang together until the State refuses all further supplies, and then die a lingering death. The last to die will be the Popish sect, because her people are the most stupid of all. Her priests have studied and learnt to perfection the art of robbing their dupes of all manhood and womanhood, and turning them into docile slaves. But even this is being reversed. Each generation believes less than the former one; and the priests are compelled to permit this; if they object, their salary will suffer.

It is inconceivable that even Papists can go on believing the absolute rubbish which makes up their creed—the primacy of Peter, the unbroken list of popes, the visions of saints, the existence of Purgatory, the wafer turned into Christ's body, etc. In spite of priests and lackadaisical parents, in spite of themselves, the dupes of Popery must grow more sceptical with each advancing generation, until the stuff is dead.

No doubt some people look with alarm, or even horror, upon a time when gods and ghosts shall be no longer believed in, when dogmas and nonsense shall no longer sway mankind. I do not. To me the prospect is a bright one.

Are we the worse, the less moral, the less happy, for having lost all faith in the older gods? Have we degenerated, or have we risen, in growing out of old pagan creeds? Has the death of pagan dogmas left us without any moral guide, or with a worse one than our distant fathers had? Let fact and reason say.

Shall we pay our debts less readily, or kill or rob our fellows the readier, because we cannot believe the Nursery Tales of the Bible? How does the story of Eve's origin from a rib (or tail) of Adam affect our character? Shall we grow less moral because we have learnt to despise the praying rakes and cutthroats of the Bible, and do not altogether admire Mary Magdalen and the Prodigal Son, the highest types of New Testament saints?

Will our sons be less pure because they despise the polygamous saints of the Bible? our daughters less chaste or modest because they don't care to imitate the Misses Lot, Tamar, Ruth, Esther, and Mary, the unfaithful sweetheart of Joseph? What say you, grasping priests and insolent pretenders to a divine commission to gull mankind?

When people once awake to the clear truth that morality is essentially and exclusively a this-world affair, they will also understand that other-world elements and considerations can only disturb and paralyse human conduct, and corrupt morals. They will find abundant proof of this in the history of religion—especially the Bible religion.

When people are sufficiently educated to see the truth of this they will help us to cart away the theological rubbish-heaps about, so as to give the future generations a clear field for the full development of their nobler character.

In the meantime we hard-worked and ever-fighting soldiers must fight on. There is to be no rest for us till the last rest comes. It is a battle to the death with superstition that must be our lot. Amen.

—*Liberator.* JOS. SYMES.

THE MAGI.

BY rendering the Greek word, *magoi*, by "wise men" (Matthew ii. 1), our translators have partially concealed the fact that the name designates them as astrologers or oriental soothsayers. The same word in the singular is rendered "sorcerer" in Acts xiii. 6. Such men were held in high estimation for their ability to cast horoscopes and read signal events about to happen in human affairs from the movements of the stars; it is clear that the narrative of the visit of the magi to pay homage and tribute to the infant Jesus presupposes the highest admiration, on the part of the evangelist, for this pretended wisdom.

The appearance of the star which led the magi to Bethlehem is represented as a supernatural occurrence. It is described in terms which cannot be applied to any known astronomical phenomenon; and it is, therefore, a throwing away of time to inquire whether at or about this time there was or was not some conjunction or transit of stars, or some appearance of a comet. We may give all due weight to the assertion of Kepler (confirmed in the main by Pritchard) that a remarkable conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn occurred three times in the year 7 B.C., and that Mars joined them in the spring of 6 B.C.; and yet we may affirm that neither this conjunction nor any comet could be the phenomenon described in Matthew. Neither stars nor comets will appear to point to or to stand over any definite spot; and if we go so far as to grant that the occurrence of Kepler's conjunction in the constellation Pisces, supposed by some astrologers to be connected with the fortunes of Judea, may have turned the thoughts of the magi to the Judæan capital, it is impossible to reconcile it with the language of the text: "And lo, the star [not stars], which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was." To do this, it must have been a body far within the reach of the earth's attraction, in which case its light would have been extinguished by falling to the earth before the magi could have fairly started on their six-mile journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Hence, as Farrar admits, "the immediate applicability of this [Kepler's] phenomenon to the Gospel narrative is now generally abandoned."

To admit that a meteor, an evanescent star, or the conjunction described by Kepler, is to be identified with the star of the evangelist is to admit that the evangelist or his authority has distorted the facts almost beyond recognition, and made a miracle out of a natural event; and, *ipso facto*, to discredit in advance whatever other remarkable circumstances out of harmony with the rest of our knowledge he may have to relate.

The star, then, was miraculous; and the magi having seen it, and recognised it as the star of the King of the Jews, calling it "his star," God must, according to the narrative, have wrought an event which was perfectly certain to strengthen the belief of the magi, of Herod, of the priests, and of the Jews generally, in the truth of the pseudo-science of astrology.

But, aside from the miracle which always indicates the

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myth, there are other reasons for regarding the visit of the magi under the guidance of the star as unhistorical. "Why," asks Thomas Scott, "were the magi brought to Jerusalem at all? If they knew that the star was the star of Christ, and were by this knowledge conducted to Jerusalem, why did it not suffice to guide them straight to Bethlehem, and thus prevent the slaughter of the innocents? Why did the star desert them after its first appearance, not to be seen again till they issued from Jerusalem? or, if it did not desert them, why did they ask of Herod and the priests the road which they should take, when, by the hypothesis, the star was ready to guide them?"

"The Jews," says Dr. Geikie, "had already, long before Christ's day, dabbled in astrology, and the various forms of magic which became connected with it.....Everywhere throughout the whole Roman Empire, Jewish magicians, dream expounders, and sorcerers were found. 'The life and portion of children,' says the Talmud, 'hang not on righteousness, but on their star.' 'The planet of the day has no virtue, but the planet of the hour [of nativity] has much.' 'When the Messiah is to be revealed,' says the book Sohar, 'a star will rise in the east, shining in great brightness, and seven other stars round it will fight against it on every side.'"

The very fact of the universal belief that extraordinary events, especially the birth and death of great men, were heralded by appearances of stars, and still more of comets, or by conjunction of stars, is of itself sufficient to account for the existence of a narrative of a peculiar star heralding the birth of Jesus. Some astronomical phenomenon may have aided in the formation of the legend, but the superstition of the age would have created the legend without such assistance. If we are to believe the legends, the births of Abraham and Moses among the Hebrews, of Yu and Laoutsze among the Chinese, of Buddha and Rama among the Hindus, and of the Roman Cæsars, were all heralded by stars. A certain Jew who, in the reign of Hadrian, gave himself out as the Messiah received from the celebrated Rabbi Akiba the surname of Bar-Cocheba, or "son of a star," and caused a star to be stamped upon the coinage which he issued.

It is not unlikely that the form of the legend in Matthew was influenced by certain passages from the Jewish scriptures, such as that which predicts that a star shall come out of Jacob (Numbers xxiv. 17), and others which speak of the glory of the Lord rising upon Israel, and nations coming to the light and kings presenting their treasures as tribute (Isaiah x. 3–6, Psalm xxii. 10). "Such images signified the future splendor of the people of Israel; but the Christian reader applied them to the Messiah Jesus, and, because their fulfilment could nowhere be shown in the known public life of Jesus, they sought to find a place for it in the obscurity of his pre-historic childhood" (Pfleiderer).

—*Independent Pulpit.* C. L. ABBOTT.

A BOOTHITE ORGIE.

IN the Temperance Hall there have been many gatherings of a remarkable character, but it is doubtful whether any demonstration ever held on the premises was more emotional and weirdly impressive than a midnight gathering convened there last night by the chief of the Salvation Army, "General" Booth. The very scum of Melbourne had been invited to this meeting—drunkards, thieves, and irreclaimables generally of both sexes, and they had all been told they were expected to "bring a friend." It was given out as an inducement that sympathy would be offered them, and helpful words which would aid in their reform. Certainly a very mixed crowd responded to the call, containing all the elements mentioned; but it is to be feared the very large majority of the class who were wanted remained away. A large proportion of those present were apparently of a different class from those who were to be benefited by the demonstration. Army officers and Salvation lasses thronged the place dressed in uniform. A well-known barrister occupied a front seat in the centre of the hall, and around the wings and in the balcony were at least four members of Parliament, including a representative of the Upper House and the gentleman who moved the abortive vote of want of confidence on Tuesday. A promising penitent of that character of course could not be overlooked. Nothing was done until 11.30 p.m. Then, amidst cheering, waving of hats, and musical jubilation provided by a brass band, "General" Booth and his staff filed on to the platform. Hymns, the burden of which was a call to salvation, were sung excitedly, and then the "General" delivered an address suited exactly to the mental attitude of the people he had proposed to deal with. He pleaded with them in all forms of logic, wheedled and coaxed them to abjure their evil ways and become self-respecting, well-doing members of the public. "When you have become saved," said he, "and have had a wash and a shave, you won't know yourselves; and, instead of being a walking nuisance and a blight wherever you go, you will be looked upon as an angel. Are you going on as you are? Are you not sick of the Devil's service?" he asked. "You don't get much satisfaction out of it. Only aching bones after a little excitement, which is like thorns crackling under a fire." He added that there was forgiveness for all, and it did not matter whether a man was the blackest sinner in Melbourne, the army would be friendly to him and help him if he would only come forward and pray to God. Finally, after an argumentative talk to the strange gathering, in that peculiarly ingratiating, cogent fashion of speaking of which he is a master, he worked up the feelings of many to a strong pitch of enthusiasm, and then invited converts to step forward and kneel at the seat of mercy. Two or three shocking sinners, who had recently repented, had been previously observed wrestling on their knees with every sign of mental agony, tempered with divine inspiration, and no sooner had this request been made than others joined them. A fine young woman, dressed in startling green, was amongst the first to succumb, and she was received by the sisters of the army with manifestations of the liveliest joy. Immediately afterwards an intoxicated ruffianly man joined the fold. He had been interjecting a good deal during the "general's" speech about having recognised that warrior of the Lord in the Whitechapel-road. After he had writhed in the anguish of a contrite spirit on the floor for some time, he sprang up and demanded to shake the "general" by the hand, declaring that he was saved, and asking the "general" to hunt up an old chum of his in London to tell him the news and promote his conversion. Frantic old men thronged to the mercy seat, and middle-aged women weeping, in maudlin or sentimental fashion, according to their moods, until half-an-hour after converts had been first invited to come forward there were observable thirty kneeling figures groaning and gesticulating in repentance, whilst throughout the crowded hall soldiers and citizens, to its very confines in the shadowy depths under the balconies, sang deliriously joyful hymns. Still, the member of Parliament who moved that vote of confidence motion remained unmoved. Momentarily the throng of converts was getting larger when our representative left at 12.30 a.m. The hall was then still packed with people to the extent of leaving hardly standing room. The calls demanding of sinners that they should accept salvation were being reiterated with unflagging zeal, and a powerful man, who had been overwrought by his feelings, was being carried out in convulsions between six stalwart army officers and two policemen.

—*Melbourne Age* (*November 28*).

Christian Re-union.

"United Christendom" is a miasma arising from the morass of orthodox dogmatism. About all of the religious sects have intimated that a grand re-union of the Church of Christ would be very desirable; but they have made the great mistake of attempting to define the terms of that re-union. The Roman Catholic Church says that it is a glorious idea, and mildly suggests Papal infallibility as the nucleus about which all may cluster; the Episcopal Church is entranced, and hopes that everyone will recognise the succession of bishops; the Baptist Church is delighted, and will see to it that the water-mark is on every page of the universal creed; the Presbyterian Church hears therein tidings of great joy, and gives assurance that the supply of foreordination and universal damnation is ample for all; and so it goes on to the end of the catalogue. "United Christendom" will be possible when fairy tales are constructed by mathematics, and clergymen's sermons are verbal diamonds in matrices of logic—in other words, *ad Kalendas Græcas.—Boston Investigator.*

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THE PARSON'S GHOUL-BOARD;

OR, THE PARSONS SWORE A FEUD.

Tune—"The Phairshon swore a feud
Against the clan Mac-Tavish."

THE parsons swore a feud against the men of science,
And all that are imbued with honest self-reliance;
They know they cannot cope with men who have their senses,
And so they fix their hope on babes ere thought commences.

A scientific truth needs no predisposition
In mind of man, or youth, to yield the fact admission;
The truth will force its way, resulting in conviction,
And in the mind will stay, in spite of interdiction.

But parsons know their creed cannot appeal to reason,
They therefore mould and knead the brain in childhood's season:
They have, of course, to live, and wish to live by preaching;
But people will not give who don't believe their teaching.

Now, each unbiassed brain repudiates their preaching,
And so they strive to gain control o'er infant teaching;
They know they dare not wait till brains have started thinking,
For then 'twould be too late to practise mental blinking.

All progress they detest, and, though they cannot foil it,
They always do their best to do their worst to spoil it;
They prowl around our schools, and when they make a capture
They grin like ghastly ghouls, with godly glee and rapture.

But fear their bosoms fills, despite their frequent rallies;
The sun has lit the hills, and soon will light the valleys;
They know their end is near, for, lo! the day is breaking;
The shadows disappear, and all to light are waking.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

THE Young Men's Christian Association at Melbourne has often rejoiced over the troubles of our old colleague, Mr. Joseph Symes. But it appears from the newspaper report that the Y.M.C.A. has itself come to grief. Its head (or what serves the purpose) was turned by the land-booming and speculative mania, and it went in for the erection of a monster pile of buildings at a cost of £100,000. When the boom burst, the Y.M.C.A. was unable to meet its obligations, and it was sold up and turned into the street penniless.

Mrs. Blaikie, speaking at an Edinburgh meeting of the British Women's Temperance Association, said there would be no social revolution until there had been a great revival and ingathering into the churches. Then the social revolution is a long way off—longer than Mrs. Blaikie will wear bonnets or drink ginger-beer.

Kirkintilloch Parish Council has had to exempt the Parish Church minister from paying poor rates. One member said it was scandalous for a minister of religion to shirk his share of such a burden, while another argued that ministers who don't pay rates should be dealt with like paupers, and struck off the voters' list.

The Glasgow School Board's idea of appointing an inspector of religious instruction is resented by the Teachers' Association. Six reasons are given against having such an official. We suspect there is a seventh reason, which is *not* given—namely, that the teachers dread the prying of an official into their orthodoxy.

The Edinburgh Burgess Golfing Society has decided by 108 votes to 96 to allow Sunday golf on its ground. The Sabbatarians are not asked to play themselves, but only not to interfere with the liberty of others. Nevertheless, they are in a great rage, and many of them are seceding.

Mr. R. Souttar, M.P., lecturing on the Armenian question at Dumfries, quoted the supposed letter of Christ to Abgarus in Armenia, and said: "I don't know why the letter should not be a genuine one." Mr. Souttar cannot know much of criticism, only he might ask himself the question: Why, if genuine, is it not in the New Testament?

A minister called Price has just died at Ilfracombe. He was ninety-two. It was a long while to keep out of heaven, but he has had to go there at last.

A great many clergymen, more especially those located in the country towns, where their congregations are not liable to be very well informed, have a mean and contemptible habit of attributing crimes and wickedness to Freethinkers by inference, when they dare not do so openly and directly. A favorite method of describing the conversion of an infidel is to assert that, after the sinner received Christ into his heart, he let go this bad habit, threw aside that vice, cut off this wicked indulgence, avoided that sin, etc., etc. Thus the minds of his hearers are insidiously poisoned, and false impressions find lodgment as easily as a snowflake falls upon the ground. Open warfare and sturdy blows are preferable to fighting in ambush and thrusts in the back.—*Boston Investigator.*

The Rev. J. M. Fitzgerald, suspended pastor of the Catholic Church at Charlotte, New York, who is under indictment and awaiting trial charged with burning several buildings on which he held insurance policies, and also implicated in the burning of the parochial school of his former parish, has added to his notoriety by assaulting his servant girl.

Bailie Burt was the victim of false appearances in the Northern Police-court yesterday morning. It was an assault case, and there appeared as a witness on behalf of the accused a merchant of the Northern district—a man of the highest standing, and prominent in church matters. He said the accused bore a most exemplary character, was a regular and zealous attender at the mission, and in no sense a man of war or violator of the peace. The Bailie was duly impressed; other witnesses were heard, and the case was found not proven. Then Superintendent Sutherland quietly handed up the list of previous convictions against the accused, and its dimensions and items simply staggered Bailie Burt. His Honor remarked that the statements of the merchant had decidedly influenced him, but if he had only known of this little *billet-doux*—well, there was no knowing what might have happened.—*Glasgow Evening News.*

The Rev. E. Gough, pastor of the Congregational Church at Barrowford, Lancashire, revives the Gnosticism of the first century, at the risk of receiving the curse of those who deny that Christ came in the flesh. In an address, reported in the *Burnley Gazette*, he says: "We believe that the Gospels, and all those portions of Scripture which narrate miraculous incidents, are inspired moral history, but not literal history. We believe that what is said in the Gospels of the birth, miracles, death, and resurrection of Jesus all refers to what takes place in man's nature. Hence we believe that the so-called *Lives of Christ* which are current in the land, while setting forth good morals, are but religious romances, having no foundation in outward fact, and being, in some cases, Unitarian in their drift. In like manner, we hold that visits to Palestine, with an idea of seeing Christ's birthplace, are but a species of relic-mongering, and prompted by an historical delusion."

Mr. Gough further says: "A time will come when men will cease to believe that he who upholdeth all things by the word of his power was ever carried as a helpless infant in the arms of a literal woman, or ever went to a literal wedding as we might go, or ever ceased for three and thirty years to be the mighty indwelling Savior who hears and answers prayer." No doubt an ideal Christ would evade some Christian difficulties. But why has Christ's Church always taught a literal founder?

Plenty of lies are told about Colonel Ingersoll. The latest *canard* is in the *Daily Chronicle*, as follows: "Our New York correspondent says it is reported that Colonel Ingersoll, the notorious Agnostic, has signified his intention to abjure his more aggressive anti-Christian theories by joining what is called the People's Church. This queer institution has its headquarters at Kalamazoo, Michigan, and seems to be conducted on the plan of a benevolent club. The leader and pastor of the church, which has no creed in the accepted sense, is a Miss Dartlett." We attach no importance whatever to the report, as our American exchanges show Ingersoll is lecturing as aggressively as ever. Possibly he may lecture for the Labor Church at Kalamazoo.

The Rev. Mr. Shaw, of the Jews' Society, makes a good calamity howler. He says the coming of Christ is near at hand. He knows it because you cannot take up a newspaper without seeing the fulfilment of the prophecy that there shall be wars and rumors of wars. We wonder at

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what era in the history of the world this wondrous prophecy was not fulfilled. But Mr. Shaw has something stronger than this. The Jews, he says, are going back to Jerusalem. When they are all there we shall begin to think there is something in it.

"We hope, we believe," says the *Methodist Times*, "that it is not too late to save the British Empire." That's good news, anyhow. We are reprieved for a bit. But we must "humble ourselves before God" if we wish for final pardon and safety. Let us pray!

"That rash and revolutionary spirit which does not see in the existing social order a great work of the providence of God, and that unprogressive spirit which does not recognise that better things are to be looked for as the purposes of God unfold, are both to be avoided."—This is from President Waller's new year's greeting to the Methodists. It is about as nutritious as a mouthful of sawdust.

There has been a suicide in St. Peter's, at Rome, some unfortunate cutting his throat at High Mass. The Pope was much shocked, and ordered re-benediction at once, with a view, we suppose, of preventing the suicide's spirit having any influence on the congregation.

Father Fletcher, the head of the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, announces that he is going to Rome, to lay before his Holiness an account of the work accomplished by the Guild. If Father Fletcher states the facts accurately, the poor old Pope may be undeceived in his expectation that England will speedily become the patrimony of St. Peter.

The Roman Catholic population of the United Kingdom is estimated at nearly five millions and a half—namely, England, one million and a half; Scotland, 365,000; and Ireland, 3,549,956.

As a matter of fact, while there have been some gains to the Catholic Church by the conversion of a few wealthy people, who have enabled showy churches to be built, there has been a considerable and increasing leakage in its working-class population. The proportion of Catholic marriages—one of the best tests—shows that, instead of increasing, they are actually declining in numbers.

There is no doubt that Ritualism has been advancing, and that Rome hopes in the long run to profit by it, for the sacerdotalism and ritual it countenances have their consistent and fitting resting-place in Rome. But Ritualists are not logical, and the advance of Ritualism is often actually a hindrance to the Roman propaganda.

The Catholics think their chance has come for a dip in John Bull's pocket, and are loudly demanding for their schools "additional, substantial, and permanent support from the public funds." If John doesn't see that this is really a demand for the endowment of religion, he must be very short-sighted.

A lot of nonsense is talked about parents' rights to have their children educated in the religion they prefer. Nobody objects to this, if they are so taught at the parents' cost. What Catholic would be willing to make provision for the children of Freethought parents being taught their parents' views upon religion? The truth is that the mass of parents are only concerned in their children receiving a sound secular education, fitting them for the duties of this life. If they require religious instruction, it is absurd to suppose there are not ample opportunities. The talk of parents' rights comes, not from parents, but from clericals, anxious that public time, public money, and public buildings shall be used to further their interests.

The *Nottingham Daily Express* contains a long account of an interview by a deputation with the Carlton School Board. Mr. J. Bell, speaking for himself and the other two members of the deputation—Messrs. T. Bexon and W. Russell—said that they had applied for the use of the school for a lecture, but the caretaker had refused to let it without consulting the Board. "What is the subject?" asked the Rev. J. Greenlaw. Mr. Bell said it was "Humanity's Gain from Unbelief." This brought up the Rev. H. E. Field, who spoke of the use of the Board school for such a lecture as a "prostitution." The vice-chairman, however, took a different view. He believed in the Gospel himself, but he did not believe in stifling free opinion, and he thought the public school should be open to every orderly section of the ratepayers. Thereupon the Rev. H. E. Field made another speech, full of bigotry and folly. He was followed by the Rev. J. Greenlaw, who took the opportunity to say something about Thomas Paine. "With almost his dying breath," said Mr. Greenlaw, "he exclaimed: 'I would give worlds if I had not written the *Age of Reason*!'" "No!" ejaculated Mr. Bell. "He said it in Paris," replied Mr. Greenlaw. "He didn't die in Paris," said Mr. Bell. But that didn't matter. He didn't die in Paris; nor, in fact, for some years after he left France to settle down again in America. Still, he breathed a few dying breaths there—we presume by way of anticipation.

Fortunately, these amiable and accurate men of God, who are professionally opposed to any "unsettling" of the people's minds, were defeated. Five voted against them, and the school room was granted for the proposed lecture. The only remedy open to the men of God is to engage the school room for an opposition lecture; or, better still, let them turn up at the Freethought lecture and expose the "hollowness of infidelity."

There is to be a new Anglican bishop in Japan, under the title of Bishop of Osaka. His funds will be supplied from England, there being no likelihood of their being forthcoming from any native converts for a long time to come.

The *Record* says, anent the success of *The Sign of the Cross*: "We are willing to believe that the drama may have been written and launched with an honest wish to work no harm to faith; but the stage is not the place for the treatment of religious subjects." Yet there was a time when the Church sought to utilise the stage for that purpose. The objectionable thing now is, that the stage cannot be kept under clerical control.

The change in the relations between Church and stage is emphasised by the greater liberties now taken by the latter institution with religion. In Mr. Henry Jones' new play one of the scenes is laid in the interior of a church, as indeed was also a scene in Mr. Pinero's *Lady Bountiful*.

Mr. Herbert Burrows has been lecturing before the South London Ethical Society on "Socialism and Science." We have read the report of it in the *South London Mail*, and we find it in one respect like the peace of God—it passes all understanding. Mr. Burrows gave scraps from Ruskin, and digs at those dreadful people, the Materialists; and, finally, he wound up by informing the audience that "outside the world of our five senses there lay a universe much more wonderful and beautiful than the one in which we lived." Perhaps there is; but as you have to go out of your "senses" to find it—and may not find it then—it is just as well to stay where you are.

London has nearly 6,000,000 inhabitants. It stretches 14 miles from north to south, and 17½ miles from east to west. It has 7,500 miles of road, 702 railway stations, and 780 miles of railway-line. Every month 900 new houses are erected. What a tin-pot place is Heaven after London! Just read the book of Revelation, and judge for yourself.

The value of £100 of tithe rent charge for 1896 will be only £71 9s. 6¾d., the commutation being lower than ever before. The average value of £100 of tithe rent charge for the sixty years which have elapsed since the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act is £98 8s. 9¼d.

There is, it appears, a sect in America known as Sanctificationists. The first intimation we have of their existence is the following: "The Rev. Harry Dishon, a Sanctification preacher, was fined $8, at Rowland, Ky., in Lincoln County, for using obscene language. The fine was suspended on his offer to leave the town and never return."

Some little while ago the Perfectionists were much talked of in America. They believed that by grace they were made perfect, and above all law. Marriage was one of the ordinances done away with by Christian liberty, and the Perfectionists believed in, and practised, community of women, which Dean Swift said was the common centre to which all religious fanaticism tended.

According to a recent dispatch from Louisville, Ky., a bloody encounter occurred at a church near Manchester, Clay County, Ky., the other Sunday, which resulted in the death of one man, the fatal injury of three, and the wounding of two others. Such occurrences as these are so common as to attract but little attention; but what would be the result if this sort of a disturbance should occur at a meeting of infidels? It would undoubtedly be the theme of the clergy for years to come, and would point a moral to thousands of sermons from Maine to California. Isn't it surprising how orderly these raving infidels manage to be at their meetings? —*Boston Investigator.*

Rev. George J. Low writes in the *Open Court*: "Does the Christian Church realise the change of front in all secular learning which has taken place in the last half century? Does she ever consider that some adjustment is required in her teachings, to adapt them to that change of front? Does she ever think of the mischief resulting from a Bourbon policy of learning nothing and unlearning nothing?" Oh yes, Mr. Low; the Church usually realises on which side its bread is

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buttered, and the question how to retain hold over the minds of the ignorant without incurring the contempt of the educated is troubling it sorely, as your own writing is evidence.

Here is what Ingersoll says: "Destruction is our only course. Reformation is a hospital in which the new philosophy exhausts its strength in nursing the old religion."

The Rev. C. F. Aked, pastor of the Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, says that American journalists are insufferably vulgar and unconscionably inaccurate. They had the audacity to report one of his sermons with the headline, "The Rev. C. F. Aked in Love with the New Woman." Mr. Aked doubts whether shorthand is known amongst American reporters, who rely, he says, upon their memories for one-tenth of what they write, and upon their imagination for the remaining nine-tenths.

A Japanese paper states that the villagers of Hanke, in the prefecture of Kochl, have been "honored" with the sum of 100 yen by the Imperial Household department for their unusually good conduct as a body. Their record is a long one. For over two hundred years, says the journal in question, perfect friendliness has reigned among them, and neither quarrels nor law-suits have occurred. No crime of any kind has been committed, and whenever calamities have overtaken them the villagers have helped each other, and have not troubled the authorities. The village contains 80 houses, and between 400 and 500 inhabitants. None of the vices practised in Christian communities are known in Hanke. Evidently the missionaries are sadly needed to convert these wicked heathen from the error of their ways.

Are the heathen everlastingly damned? This momentous question has again been raised in missionary circles by reports that missionaries in Japan absolutely refuse to preach the blessed gospel of damnation, which, they say, is an obstruction to the spread of the gospel. But the societies at home cannot afford to let the salvation of the heathen be preached, for then the question may arise: If the heathen can be everlastingly saved without Christianity, why take it to them and give them a greater chance of damnation by rejecting it?

This question, some few years ago, was brought before the American Board of Foreign Missions, which decided that no missionary should be selected who believed in future probation. They know that it is the hope of saving the poor heathen from hell that makes the foolish people who subscribe for missions shell out their cash. But if any people need a missionary among them, it must be these very Christians who believe in a God that makes millions of people who never hear of his divine revelation, and then damns them for their ignorance. It is safe to say that no "heathen in his blindness" holds a more stupid or barbarous religion than this.

Some people think the old dogmas are dead, but the missionary instructions and practice show that the dogmas which are kept out of sight at home are put forward in their crudest form abroad. There is no safety against the revival of a superstition but to exterminate it. The lukewarm reformers who say, Leave the disintegration of religion to time, remind us of the orthodox deity who allowed four thousand years to pass after the Fall before he thought of sending a Redeemer.

Christian ministers, as a rule, do not like debates. A fresh proof of this has just arisen at Leek, where a debate is to take place in March between Mr. Foote and the Rev. W. Howard. This gentleman has been favored with a round robin protest from his Nonconformist "brethren" in the Lord's vineyard. It has been published in the *Leek Times*, and we are violating no confidence in publishing it in the *Freethinker*:—

"Leek, December 13, 1895.

"To the Rev. W. W. Howard.

"Dear Mr. Howard,—We are deeply pained that you have arranged for a public debate in Leek, in the early part of the year, with Mr. G. W. Foote. Believing, as we do, that injury rather than good is calculated to result from such controversy, we feel that, in the interest of our young people and of our churches generally, we ought to indicate to you what our feeling is with regard to the course you have thought fit to pursue. You will believe us when we say that our words are not dictated by any unbrotherly feelings towards yourself. With kind regards, we are yours very truly,

"James Cooke,
"W. Aylmer Stark,
"R. W. Russell,
"Thos. E. Brigden,
"H. V. J. Angel
"(Secretary)."

Mr. Howard, who is remarkably afflicted with the itch of scribbling, answers "My dear brethren" in a letter filling a column of small type. In the course of it he says: "I was forced into what has taken place." But only a few weeks ago he boasted that he had forced Mr. Foote into the debate, Mr. Howard has evidently a convenient memory; or, rather, an *in*convenient memory, when he puts so much into print.

Months elapsed before Mr. Howard would come to the scratch. When he did so Mr. Foote was engaged up to the end of February, and could not visit Leek before March. With characteristic modesty and good taste, Mr. Howard hints that this unavoidable delay is due to cowardice on Mr. Foote's part. We advise the reverend gentleman to keep his courage for the combat.

The clerical-ruled libraries of the United States have taken a stand against the Woman's Bible, which they either taboo or put on the shelves for reference only, not allowing it to pass in general circulation. It is doubtful if this sort of boycot will prevail in the long run, especially as the women's papers take considerable interest in the production. The *Catholic Mirror* (of Baltimore) says: "No good Christian woman will give it countenance"; but the *Woman's Tribune* (of Washington) says: "Gleams of new truths or clearer interpretations of long-accepted statements will reward the unprejudiced reader."

Our bishops do not seem to adhere to the interpretation of 1 Timothy iii. 2 and Titus i. 6, held by the Vicar of Wakefield in common with the Primitive Church—viz., that they prohibit second marriages. His lordship of Liverpool has, we believe, entered three times into the holy estate of matrimony, and the Right Reverend Father-in-God, Dr. John Wordsworth, lord bishop of Salisbury, who is on the shady side of fifty, is now spending his second honeymoon, at Rydal, with a young lady who is his junior by over a quarter of a century. This, of course, is not being "unequally yoked."

The Rev. Septimus Buss, Vicar of Shoreditch, one of the working clergy, who lives among his parishioners in East London, writes to the *Daily News* on the shameful perversion of the funds of St. Katharine's Hospital. "St. Katharine's by the Tower" has its hospital comfortably located in Regent's Park, at the other end of London. Mr. Buss mentions that one of the "brothers" took his £300 per annum from the hospital, let his house of residence, and occupied himself with a chaplaincy abroad. He claims that the building should be restored to the East-end, and the "brothers and sisters" ought to live and work there.

Scarcely had the jingle of the coppers in the collecting-plate at the City Temple ceased on Sunday night when the Rev. John Robertson intimated that he was £5 short, which he wanted made up that night. He proceeded: "Is our friend the dentist here?" pointing to the gallery; "well, I want 10s. from him; send it down. Is our friend Bailie —— here? I want 10s. from him; send it down. You people will make up the rest at the close." Truly an extremely voluntary process.—*Glasgow Weekly Herald.*

Public Opinion, of New York, reviewing "The Woman's Bible," says: "This book is not, in fact, a 'bible' at all, in the common meaning of the word, but merely a collection of disconnected comments on such passages of the Scriptures as refer in some way to woman, and especially passages that represent woman as inferior to man. Inasmuch as the Old Testament abounds in such passages, the commentators find plenty of texts. The bulk of the work is from the pen of Mrs. Stanton, who comments for the most part in a vein of sarcasm and ridicule, while her co-workers appear generally to write in sober earnest. Much of the comment is, from the unorthodox standpoint, reasonable and even strong; but much of it also is prolix, rambling, and pointless."

This able, and usually impartial, review concludes by saying: "Suppose every band of reformers should undertake to weed out of the Bible everything that seemed to stand in the way of their particular reform. The Prohibitionists would perhaps begin by expunging the narrative of the miracle at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee; and where the various other bodies of reformers would begin and end nobody can say." But we suppose the object of Mrs. Stanton and her colleagues is not to weed anything out of the Bible, but to show what a barbarous man's book it really is.

A special hymn was produced in connection with prayers for Ingersoll—

We offer prayers for his conversion;
May he be baptised by immersion.

The Colonel says he takes his baptism this way regularly every morning. He has no belief in the efficacy of sprinkling.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 19, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Regent-street, London, W.:—7.30, "The Sign of the Cross" (*apropos* of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play).

Wednesday, January 22, Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell:—8, "The Curse of Creeds."

January 26, St. James's Hall, Piccadilly.

February 2, Liverpool; 9, Glasgow; 16, Hull.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—January 19, Glasgow; 20, Kilmarnock; 21, Paisley; 22, Greenock; 23, Motherwell; 24, Cambuslang; 26, Edinburgh; 27, Stockton-on-Tees; 29, N.S.S. Dinner. February 2, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 11, Wellington Hall, Islington, London; 3 and 4, Ipswich; 16, Athenæum Hall, London; 23, Manchester. March 15, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London.

A. M. NASH.—We intend to write a little book on the Church of England. There is no end of misconception as to its position and rights. As a matter of fact, it is a creature of the State. Benefices are not private property; they are held in trust, and the owner of the trust property is the nation, which has a perfect right to deal with that property in any fashion it pleases.

LOUIS LEVINE (Charleston).—Thanks. We exchange with the *Blue Grass Blade*. Salut.

H. B.—Paper received with thanks.

H. H. H.—B.C. simply means Before Christ. The custom of reckoning from the birth of Christ is only about a thousand years old. Glad to know you were "delighted" with the St. James's Hall lecture. We note, but dare not reproduce, your compliments.

J. LAW.—The Northampton Freethinkers are very slow in the matter of propaganda. They are always going to do something, but they never begin it. We shall have to send someone down to see what *can* be done.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Per R. Forder: A. King, jun., 8s.; South African Admirers (Kimberley), 7s. 6d. Per C. Cohen: Two Leicester Friends, 10s. each.

H. O. SCHOFIELD.—Miss Vance will attend to the business part of your letter. Mr. Foote will gladly visit Newark to lecture for the new Branch. He will write you.

J. G. DOBSON.—It is good to see that you are stirring up some of the clergy at Stockton. Mr. Foote has written offering you a date.

H. L. SUMNER.—Cuttings received with thanks.

J. T. BLANCHARD.—See "Sugar Plums." We hope you will succeed in arousing interest in social questions. The public mind has to be agitated in many directions. It has a great tendency to go to sleep.

G. REDBOROUGH.—(1) We do not know the address of the contemplated mosque in London. Perhaps the editor of the *Crescent* (one of our exchanges) will see this paragraph, and supply the information. (2) Pleased to hear you enjoyed Mr. Foote's lecture at St. James's Hall "immensely." We note your wish for a lecture on John Davidson.

H. C.—Thanks for your good wishes and cutting.

DANIEL BAKER.—Delighted to receive a birthday greeting from a grand old veteran like yourself.

H. C. S.—Shall appear.

W. A. TURNER.—We are not responsible for the statements of other writers in other journals. We adhere to the statement in our own article. The birth of Christ was commemorated on different dates by various sections of the early Church. It was in the second half of the fourth century that the twenty-fifth of December was made orthodox.

TRUTH (Plymouth).—If the major passage in Josephus is a forgery, the minor passage about "James, the brother of Jesus who is called Christ," falls under the same condemnation. You are quite wrong in saying that the genuineness of this passage has never been questioned or even suspected. Some orthodox writer has apparently misled you.

W. H. WOOD.—Glad to hear that you were so highly pleased with Mr. Watts's lectures at Birmingham, and that you think highly of Mr. Foote's lecture scheme.

F. W. THORRINGTON.—Mr. F. C. Conybeare, M.A., is, we believe, the authority for the statement that an Armenian MS. mentions a cave as the locality of the virgin birth. The same statement is made in the *Gospel of the Infancy*, in the Protevangelion of James, and in Justin Martyr.

J. M. R. (Glasgow).—Thanks for cuttings, etc.

D. MCINTYRE.—We have handed your order to Mr. Forder. Please send to him direct in future, at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

E. D. H. DALY.—Your batches of cuttings are always welcome.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Nottingham Daily Express—Leek Times—South London Mail—Camberwell Chronicle—Blue Grass Blade—Boston Investigator—Fur Unsere Jugend—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Lucifer—Liberty—South Shields Free Press—Burnley Gazette—Morning—Corner Stone—Newcastle Leader—New York Public Opinion.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE'S first lecture at St. James's Hall drew an excellent audience. The room was well filled, though not crowded. There were many counter attractions in the neighborhood, including the Sunday League concert at Queen's Hall. The lecture itself, on "The New Woman and the Bible," appeared to be highly appreciated; not the least so by the many ladies who were present. Some questions were afterwards put by Mr. Oswald Dawson, of the Legitimation League. The lecturer's answers did not satisfy Mr. Dawson, but they seemed to satisfy the great majority of the audience.

Mr. Foote's second St. James's Hall lecture will be given this evening (Jan. 19). Its subject is "The Sign of the Cross," apropos of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play which is winning the applause of the clergy, and attracting church and chapel-goers who regard ordinary plays as "sinful."

The Edmonton course of free lectures, under the President's scheme, winds up on January 30, when Mr. Foote lectures on "The Truth About the Bible." Next week's lecture has had to be changed from Thursday to Wednesday, and Mr. Heaford occupies the platform instead of Mr. Parris. Mr. Foote winds up the Camberwell course of free lectures on January 22 (next Wednesday), his subject being "The Curse of Creeds." We hope the hall will be filled with residents in the locality. On Tuesday, January 28, Mr. Foote opens another course of free lectures (also under his scheme) for the Islington Branch, at Wellington Hall. Mr. Watts, Mr. Parris, and Mr. Snell follow him in this course.

Mr. Charles Watts had three good audiences at Bolton last Sunday. Friends came from Rochdale, Darwen, and other surrounding districts. There was no discussion. On Monday and Tuesday evenings Mr. Watts lectured at Bolton and Blackburn under Mr. Foote's scheme. On Monday evening a special resolution was passed thanking the President of the N.S.S. for introducing his scheme of free week-night lectures. We are glad to hear that Mr. Watts was in his best form in all the five lectures.

To-day, Sunday, January 19, Mr. Watts lectures three times in Glasgow. He will also speak every night during the week under Mr. Foote's scheme. Among the places Mr. Watts will visit are Kilmarnock, Paisley, Greenock, and Motherwell.

For the convenience of friends from a distance, tea and light refreshments, at a moderate charge, will be served in the intervals between Mr. Watts's lectures to-day (Sunday).

At Kilmarnock, immortalised in Burns's most terrific satires upon orthodoxy, there has been no public lecture on Freethought for more than ten years. Paisley has had more frequent ministrations of the "means of grace," and now that it possesses a young and enterprising Branch is likely to keep itself well in evidence. Motherwell and Cambuslang are both *in partibus fidelium*, where Mr. Watts will be breaking absolutely new ground.

"The Devil's Doom" was the subject of Mr. A. B. Moss's lecture on Sunday evening at New Brompton. He (Mr. Moss, not the Devil) had a capital audience.

We announced last week that the Bradlaugh Club and Institute was arranging for a Paine Exhibition on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, January 29, 30, and 31. The charge for admission will be sixpence, but members of the N.S.S. will be admitted at half price. The committee "appeal

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to all Freethinkers who possess copies of old editions of Paine's books, or pamphlets, cartoons, portraits, lampoons, etc., relating to him, and to his political and Freethought work, to lend them for the occasion. The greatest care will be taken of all articles lent, and they will be safely returned to their owners immediately after the closing of the exhibition."

Mr. H. O. Schofield has obtained sixteen members for a Branch of the National Secular Society at Newark. Others wishing to join should communicate with him at 31 Barnby-street. Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts will both lecture for the new Branch at an early date. It is believed that a good hall can be secured for the purpose.

Mr. J. T. Blanchard, who has been lecturing for some of the London N.S.S. Branches on social subjects, which he treats very thoughtfully, discoursed last Sunday evening for the East London Branch on "The Population Question in Relation to Socialism." He was opposed by Mr. Lyons, who is well known amongst East-end Socialists. It was afterwards arranged that a set debate should take place between these two gentlemen at the "King's Arms," Mile-End-road (near Beaumont-street), on "Will Socialism or Neo-Malthusianism More Benefit the English People?" No doubt the discussion will attract a good audience.

Mr. H. J. Barter has taken the secretaryship of the Plymouth Branch. He is just the man to push forward the movement in the three towns. The Branch holds its next meeting at the Democratic Club, Whimple-street, on Sunday, January 26, at 7. Music and readings will follow the business, and we hope there will be a good attendance. Mr. Foote is pressed to visit Plymouth again shortly, and he will try to accept the invitation. It is also possible that he may hold a debate there with a well-known Christian representative.

An article on "Babylonian Law Tablets," in the *Echo* (Jan. 14), shows that as far back as 539 B.C. women pleaded their own cases before the High Court in Babylon. Yet we are often told that it was Christianity which did so much for the emancipation of woman.

Mr. Thomas Tyler argues in the *Academy* that the author of the book of Ecclesiastes, which all critics agree is far later than the time of Solomon, although the author pretends to be that monarch, really was acquainted with the Ethics of Aristotle—not that he necessarily had a MS. before him; oral communication may have sufficed.

We were pleased to notice a manly, sensible leading article in the *Boston Investigator*, deprecating the idea of any war between the United States and England, and declaring that the only possible justification for war is self-defence in case of an attack by a foreign foe. When the easily-excited Jingo spirit threatens to carry people out of their senses, it is fitting that Freethinkers, whatever their politics, should put in a cool word for the claims of reason and humanity. The *Truthseeker* also writes for peace; and E. C. Walker, in *Lucifer*, says it is very important that Freethinkers put themselves, and keep themselves, on record in regard to the barbarism of war.

The *Camberwell Chronicle*, noticing Mr. Foote's recent lecture at the Secular Hall in that district, says: "Dealing with the question in his usual incisive manner, his remarks were frequently applauded by a crowded audience, and the solitary note of opposition raised at the end of the address was quickly demolished by a few rapier-like thrusts from so skilled a debater."

On Tuesday, January 21, Mr. Frederic Harrison lectures on "The Rights of Men and the Rights of Animals" at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street. Mr. Harrison will offer "The Ethical View." Next month Mr. Foote will deal with the same subject, giving "The Secularist View." Admission is free.

The *Blue Grass Blade* is holding up its head again in Cincinnati, and is as sprightly as ever. Brother Moore, writing on the Bacchanalian character of Christmas, says it is the same old drunk. Catholics and Protestants get drunk to honor Jesus, just as the heathen used to do to honor Bacchus; the principal change induced by the new religion being that the Christians get drunk on whisky, while the heathen got drunk on wine.

A good many of our readers are more or less acquainted with Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*. A brief account of this author appears in Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death-Beds*. He was a great traveller, a man of wide reading, of strong intelligence, and of brave character. The book which chiefly made him famous is a wonderful panorama of human evolution, and its final chapter on Religion is remarkably able, and no less remarkably outspoken. This chapter has been reprinted in a thirty-two page pamphlet by Mr. George Anderson, under the title of *What Christians Believe*. The price is threepence, but of course Mr. Anderson does not wish to make any profit. His object is to get some thousands of copies into circulation, as he considers it of very great value if the general public can only be induced to read it. Branches of the N.S.S. or individual members who will assist in circulating it should write to Mr. Anderson, at 35a Great George-street, Westminster. On receipt of twelve penny stamps, with an addressed halfpenny wrapper, he will forward six copies and pay the additional postage. Larger numbers in proportion. Mr. Anderson has not told us so, but in special cases of distribution we dare say he will forward larger quantities at a reduced rate. He does not give them away quite gratuitously, because he does not want them to be wasted.

Mr. Symes, who always has his eyes open for the interests of the party, reprints from our columns Mr. Wheeler's notes on Infidel Abolitionists, Garrison and the Bible, etc.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, takes place at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, January 29 (Thomas Paine's birthday). Mr. Foote, who presides, will be supported by Mr. Charles Watts and other well-known Secularists. The tickets, four shillings each, can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or from any London Branch secretary. We hope there will be a large gathering.

"HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED."

THE last revision of the New Testament leaves out the last five verses of the last chapter of Mark, because they are thought to be interpolated.

This, then, takes out of the New Testament the famous sixteenth verse of that chapter, that says: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

In the church in which I was once a clergyman that was the most quoted verse in the New Testament; and, indeed, it is the most important one.

But, strange to say, on the supposition that Jesus ever uttered it, it is not mentioned by any other of the evangelists. Some scoundrelly priest, finding that there was no argument or demonstration by which people could be made to believe the Christian religion, stuck that into the New Testament to frighten people into the Church, so that the priests could get their money. That last clause, "he that believeth not shall be damned," is the most doubly-damned sentence that ever was penned. It has caused more misery to humanity than all the religion in the Bible has caused happiness.

That one sentence has been rung into the ears of the people through centuries past, and has made thousands and thousands of people insane with fear and die with horror and trembling; and yet, after all this, we are informed by the last revisers of the New Testament that it was not found in the New Testament as at first written.

But it serves the purpose of the priests and preachers of this day to have it there, and, though they know it does not belong in the Bible, they are not going to tell the people any better; for they know, if they get to admitting that some parts of the Bible are spurious, the people may begin to inquire into the truth of all of it, and that would be dangerous.

Then the passage is such a good one for Christian bigots to use when they want to vent their spleen on infidels.

Thus "One by one the roses fall." C. C. MOORE.

Why I do not Admire Christianity.

Because it is not original.
Because it has been extended by conquest and blood.
Because Christian countries are not more moral than others.
Because it has opposed science and education.
Because it shuns argument and investigation.
Because it is founded on fiction and dreams.
Because it is not founded on justice.
Because it sanctions capital punishment.
Because it teaches that belief is better than works.
Because it teaches reverence and fear.
Because it teaches prayer and flattery.
Because it teaches miracles and wonders.
Because it denounces human nature as evil.
Because it accepts the Jewish Jehovah.
Because it teaches the divinity of Jesus.
Because it teaches a bad God—or Devil.
—*Boston Investigator.*

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LECTURING NOTES.

On January 1 I commenced my new year's propaganda under Mr. Foote's scheme, by lecturing at Camberwell. There was a large and enthusiastic audience, and one of its most pleasing features was the number of strangers present. They gave rapt attention, and a few of them came to me at the close of the lecture and acknowledged that it was the first Secular meeting they had ever attended. Herein lies the potency of Mr. Foote's scheme. Admission to the lectures being free, inquiring minds attend to learn what our views are, thought upon our principles is evoked, and an increase of members to our various branches is the result.

Having lectured twice in Birmingham on Sunday, January 6, under the auspices of the local branch, I spoke the following evening under Mr. Foote's plan. The hall was filled, and the greatest interest was manifested by the intelligent audience. Many were the expressions of approval at the new departure made by the President of the National Secular Society, and the hope was general that he would receive sufficient financial support to enable him to carry on the present propagandist activity throughout the entire year.

On Wednesday, January 8, I lectured at the West-end of London under the same plan, and through its agency I am this week speaking in Bolton and Blackburn. Next week I visit Scotland and Stockton-on-Tees. Other places wishing me to give week-night lectures under this scheme should write me at once.

While at Birmingham I presided at the Conference held to form a federation of the Midland Societies. All present were really earnest to extend Secular propaganda, and they thought that now Mr. Foote's plan was in force a good opportunity presented itself to do more useful work in the Midland districts. Personally, I wish them all success in their laudable efforts; but I would remind them that, to carry out the program they decided upon, constant attention and persistent labor will be required.

I am looking forward with great confidence to the results of the present year's work, and I hope to be able, at the Annual Dinner of the London Freethinkers, which is to be held at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, January 29, to give ample reasons for believing that my expectation will be realised. I sincerely hope that all who appreciate the increased activity now going on in our movement will rally on that occasion, as it will be one of the most important gatherings of the year.

Charles Watts.

THEY RUN! THEY RUN!

When Wolfe, the conqueror of Quebec, lay in the agonies of death on the battlefield, he heard the exclamation, "They run! they run!" "Who run?" faintly asked the dying chief. "The enemy," replied one of the mourning circle. So it is with the expiring cycle of time. In its last hours it is hearing the cry, "They run! they run!" on every side. The enemy, the forces of ignorance and superstition, that erstwhile held full sway, are already on the run. Not long since their aggressive career was arrested, and they were thrown on the defensive, in spite of themselves. Had they remained passive in that attitude, they might have held out indefinitely; but in an evil moment for themselves they issued from their entrenchments, and dared to justify themselves by argument, force no longer being available. From that moment they were lost; and to-day they are already on the run. The Catholic Church bows down before Darwin, and tries to cover its defeat by protesting that some one of the hair-splitting casuists called "The Fathers of the Church" accepted and taught his doctrine of evolution long before. It would seem as though one of the most distinguished and authoritative of the said "Fathers" was the father of lies himself. Among the Anglican clergy one of the great modern canons—Fremantle, I think—in a controversy held some few years since with the late Dean Burgon, an ecclesiastic of the good old style, said we must remould and recast our old conceptions of "God"; and then proceeded to wipe out the deity with whom we had all been familiar in our youth. Recently, as has been shown in *Secular Thought*, the Rev. H. R. Haweis, who could easily have given Athanasius points in the matter of theological conundrums, has taken up, among others, the question of the incarnation. The result is, that he makes confusion worse confounded, and leaves Christ shorn of all his divine attributes, and cuts the foundation from under the feet of the Christian who believes in the efficacy of the Crucifixion. Evidently we are getting into the region of the Sun-myth, and the whole story of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus will be one day held and accepted as a great moral or religious allegory, invented and propagated with the laudable wish and idea of turning mankind to higher and nobler pursuits than those they appear to have been engaged in at the time of his reputed appearance upon earth.

The worst enemies of the so-called Christian religion could have wished for nothing better than these recent admissions and changes of base. The Catholic Church, with characteristic dishonesty, shifts the boundary marks to new ground, so to say, in the night, and then pretends in the day that they were always there. It is an old dodge, often played, but getting at last played out. The Protestant, to show that he is abreast of the times, rushes into the street proclaiming that he has found the solution of the puzzle, and propounds another as insoluble as the previous one. But with these trumpet blasts they are only bringing down the walls of their own Jericho. Let them blow away, and before long the Freethinker, the Secularist, and the Agnostic may enter in and take possession without the trouble of forcing the gates. It is too late in the day to be pulling up the plants of the old beliefs by the roots, and then expect them to take root again and produce fruit (*i.e.*, big contributions, good salaries, and good times generally for the clericals) as of old. The African savage has infinitely more awe and veneration for the hideous old idol carved out of the trunk of a tree handed down to him by his ancestors than for any new-fangled deity in polished brass produced by a Birmingham factory. And so the modern clerical will find with his modernised Christ and his new conception of God. But what else can he do? The old ideas and old beliefs do not square with modern knowledge, and, as a consequence, with modern thought. With the decline of faith the ceremonials and doctrines that had once a real meaning to the faithful can no longer be regarded in the same light. Man's nature does not allow of it, as daily experience in other matters shows. Once shatter an old ideal, an old belief, in no matter what, or whom, it never can be the same thing again, no matter how much one may try to repair it or set it up again. How many people would go to Rome to kiss the Pope's toe if, instead of wearing his robes and tiara, he were seated in St. Peter's chair in a pair of light tweed pants, a white vest, blue frock coat, and stove-pipe hat? The thing would be too ridiculous; the most devout worshipper would explode with laughter long before he got within kissing distance of the venerated pedal digit. There was a time when people drank old-crusted port believing it to be real, natural old-crusted wine; now that everyone knows that the "old" crust can be rapidly and artificially produced, one may drink the wine all the same, but with serious mental reservation on the matter of the crust.

To the Freethinker, the signs of the times are full of cheer; and none contribute so much to that cheerfulness as the clericals themselves. Their rage, their denunciation, are all gratifying symptoms that they are losing ground, and know it. The worst thing they can do for themselves is to try and keep up the old beliefs under the new conditions; the next worse thing is to try and propagate new beliefs under the old conditions. They have no alternative between these two—and in either case they are bound to fail. Their hope, of course, is in the young; hence their determined efforts *per fas aut nefas* to obtain control of their education. But even the young can be made to think; and they are not, we may be sure, inattentive spectators of the struggle going on about them. They should be encouraged in their curiosity, and be got to ask questions about it. This would give opportunity to explain, and in that way the first seeds of knowledge would be planted in the ready soil of their young minds, and would bear fruit in due season. G. F.

—*Secular Thought.*

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"SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES."

[Written in reply to an admonition from a friend that it would greatly benefit the author to search the Scriptures.]

"SEARCH the Scriptures," and you'll find
Anything to suit your mind.
If you wish to have a spree,
Or would marry two or three—
Yea, a thousand, more or less—
"The Book" will tell you how, I guess.
If to murder you're inclined,
God will justify your mind,
And will sanction all you do—
If "The Church" is in it too.
If you'd like to cheat the blind,
Bunco those of feeble mind,
Sacrifice your only daughter,
Cause men's blood to flow like water,
Rob the helpless, aid the rich,
"The Scriptures" give examples which
Will show you so well how to do it
That God will help you safely through it.
Or, if you would be forgiving,
Kindly, helpful, cheerful, loving,
You will find superb example
That will give incentive ample.
"Search the Scriptures!" Yea, so do,
But search *other books* so, too;
And, whatever good you find,
Let impregnate all your mind—
Separating good from evil,
Not by aid of "God" or "Devil,"
But by knowledge purely human
Gained by every man and woman.
By prefixing "D" to "evil"
You don't make a fiercer Devil,
But another "o" in "God"
Gives it meaning high and broad.
So, when you "The Scriptures" search,
Don't let superstition, "Church,"
Or any fear of "Holy Wrath"
Tempt you out of truth's straight path;
But let reason, sound and true,
Guide you in whate'er you do.

Here's the moral to my rhyme:
Use your life while yet there's time;
Enjoy yourself; treat all men well;
And then, while here on earth you dwell,
You'll know hereafter, come what may,
You lived for life, and not decay.

—*Liberty.* W. W. C.

BOOK CHAT.

SOME time ago we called attention to the parable of the Three Merchants, which appears in the Jain sacred book entitled Uttaradhyana (lecture vii.), translated in *The Sacred Books of the East* (vol. xlv., p. 29). The parable closely corresponds to that of the Talents found in Matthew xxv. 14 and Luke xix. 11, but has still greater resemblance to the version of the parable as it appeared in the Gospel according to the Hebrews. In his translation of the Jain Sutras Dr. Hermann Jacobi says: "Taking into consideration (1) that the Gaina version contains only the essential elements of the parable, which in the Gospels are developed into a full story, and (2) that it is expressly stated in the Uttaradhyana, vii. 15, that 'this parable is taken from common life,' I think it probable that the parable of the Three Merchants was invented in India, and not in Palestine." Two conclusions can clearly be drawn from this instance—viz., that tales originating in India did find their way into our Gospels, and that the earlier form thereof appeared in the lost Gospel according to the Hebrews.

* * *

In Divers Tones is the appropriate title of poems by Joseph Whittaker (Wolverhampton: Whitehead Bros., King-street). The first, longest, and most striking piece is "The Storming of Heaven," which represents the damned as capturing the celestial city and hurling God and his angels down to hell, only to find themselves in worse torture, for now their doom was "To be idle when labor was living, to be spoiled of all dreams and desires; and, dead to life, live on for ever, in sight of Hell's far-away fires." Meanwhile God and his angels fashion a new and improved heaven out of hell itself. Following this come "A Socialist's Creed," "The Worker's Prayer," "The Worker's Song," and other pieces, all showing an earnest humanitarian spirit. The "Sonnets," and a little piece entitled "Ichabod," are real and touching poetry; and, indeed, the whole book is beyond the average of what is called minor poetry.

Mr. C. L. Abbott, who has written some excellent articles on the Higher Criticism in the *Independent Pulpit* and the *Freethinkers' Magazine*, and whose paper on "The Magi" we reprint in this issue, holds that Jehovah is the final form of an old Accadian deity. He traces the word to Yahweh, of which he holds the "yah," preserved in the names of Isaiah, Elijah, etc., to be the earlier form. It is so preserved in the Psalms. Now, the Chaldæan god Ea, the god of life and knowledge, who is king of the rivers and the gardens, is pronounced the same as Yah; and this Ea is to be traced to the early Accadian period. There is evidence in the Bible itself that Baal and Ashtoreth worship took place in the temple of Yah, and it is probable that in the struggle for existence among the gods Ea, who was the lord of laws, came out atop.

* * *

Mr. B. Dobell, the editor of *The Poetical Works of James Thomson* ("B.V."), publishes on January 21 a six-shilling volume of Thomson's prose essays, entitled *Biographical and Critical Studies*. It will include articles on Rabelais, Ben Jonson, Blake, Shelley, Browning, Hogg, Wilson, and others. It is hoped that the issue of this volume will lead to the publication of a complete collection of the author's prose works, which exhibit the same high qualities as his poetry. We hope to notice the volume at length in an early issue.

* * *

Two other publications are announced by Mr. Dobell for the same date. First, *Human Documents*, studies of prominent living men and women, treated in relation to special functions within our civilisation, by Arthur Lynch, a writer whose ability is known to many Freethought readers. *The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus*, translated by Thomas Taylor, and shown to be the invocations used in the Eleusinian mysteries, comes as the second of the series of reprints of Taylor's famous translations.

* * *

Dr. Adolf Brodbeck, of Zurich, has put out a pamphlet on *The Life and Teaching of Buddha* (Leben und Lehres Buddha's), which indicates how much Christianity is Judaised Buddhism.

* * *

Reviewing as it is sometimes done:—"Here," says the *Westminster Gazette*, "is an extract from a printed postcard received by the publishers of a certain popular book two days ago. We suppress the names: '———, editor of ——— *Magazine*, would feel particularly obliged if the manager would favor him with a copy of their newly-published work, ———, for a *favorable* review in this and other papers.' The italics are ours. It only remains to add," the *Westminster* continues, "that the editor in question is a parson."

The Sacredness of the Oath.

Recently my son found himself appointed, by will, sole executor to a deceased lady, and he was duly sworn, at Somerset House, to carry out her bequest. The will contained instructions to sell a certain house by public auction or private contract, and, after deducting all expenses attending the sale, the proceeds were to be given to a certain legatee. The legatee, however, desired my son to convey the house direct to her without a sale. This my son refused to do, as he had sworn to comply with the directions given him by the will. The legatee then employed a solicitor, who threatened, and said that, if my son did not agree to convey the house without a sale, he would incur great personal expense. My son then decided to employ a solicitor, to advise and protect him. The solicitor, on considering the case, said: "This is one of those cases no one can predict what a judge would determine. He may say, 'Sell the house by all means, as directed,' or he may say, 'Convey the house without sale.' I advise you to allow me to prepare an affidavit, to place before a Chancery Judge, for his directions." This was agreed to on both sides. After about a fortnight my son was informed that the judge had directed that the house was to be conveyed direct to the legatee without a sale, thus *seeming* to say: "Never mind your oath, nor your God. I say convey the *house* direct; that's enough." J. J.

FEW great men have existed of whose history we have so unsatisfactory a knowledge as we have of that of Jesus. How much more clear and distinct, beyond all comparison, is the figure of Socrates, which is four hundred years older. It is true, indeed, that of the history of his [Socrates'] youth and education we likewise know but little; but we know accurately what he was in his mature years, what he attempted and what he effected. The figures of his disciples and friends stand out before us with historic clearness; with regard to the causes and course of his condemnation and the facts of his death we are perfectly informed.—*Strauss.*

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FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

All religion is paradoxical to reason. God hates sin, yet sin exists. He is omnipotent, yet evil is not overcome. The will of man is free, or there can be no guilt; yet the action of the will, so far as experience can throw light on its operation, is as much determined by antecedent causes as every other rational force. Prayer is addressed to a being assumed to be omniscient, who knows better what is good for us than we can know, who sees our thoughts without requiring to hear them in words; whose will is fixed and cannot be changed. Prayer, therefore, in the eye of reason, is an impertinence.—*Froude.*

I am sorry to know that honest men, who are quite intelligent on all other questions, and who quite naturally yield to doubt in all other things, are positively thrown into a panic when a doubt respecting any religious matter presents itself to their consciousness. So absolutely have the creeds enslaved men that they feel afraid to use their reason, and dread the possible consequences of the use of their own senses! Can any degradation be deeper than that? Ordinary tyrants can intimidate men as far as actions are concerned; but it requires the wicked priest to intimidate them as to thought and belief. And how utterly wicked must that tyranny be which treats the natural, honest workings of the mind as sin! Yet men permit the mongers of that holy sham to prate of morality, while their system is the *most immoral* thing to be anywhere found. It is horrible! Let us do our uttermost to destroy priestly tyranny.—*Joseph Symes.*

Force is no impelling god, no entity separate from the material substratum; it is inseparable from matter, is one of its eternal indwelling properties. A force unconnected with matter hovering loose over matter is an empty conception—*Moleschott.*

That our principle [that of liberty], however baffled or delayed, will finally triumph, I do not permit myself to doubt. Men will pass away—die, die politically and naturally; but the principle will live, and live forever. Organisations rallied around that principle may, by their own dereliction, go to pieces, thereby losing all their time and labor; but the principle will remain, and will produce another, and another, till the final triumph will come.—*Abraham Lincoln.*

Wherever bibliolatry has prevailed, bigotry and cruelty have accompanied it. It lies at the root of the deep-seated, sometimes disguised, but never absent, antagonism of all the varieties of ecclesiasticism to the freedom of thought and to the spirit of scientific investigation. For those who look upon ignorance as one of the chief sources of evil, and hold veracity, not merely in act, but in thought, to be the one condition of true progress, whether moral or intellectual, it is clear that the biblical idol must go the way of all other idols. Of infallibility, in all shapes, lay or clerical, it is needful to iterate with more than Catonic pertinacity, *Delenda est.—Huxley's Essays, vol. iv., p. x.* [*Oct. 9, 1893*].

PROFANE JOKES.

Editor—"What proof have you there?" Assistant—"That stuff you sent up yesterday—those epigrams, 'The Sermon on the Mount.' Shall we run it this week?" Editor—"Sure." Assistant—"Copyright by the author I suppose?"

Miss Priscilla Vane (of Chicago)—"And what is your brother doing, Lord Temple?" Lord Temple—"I fancy my brother will take orders when he leaves Oxford." Miss Vane—"Oh, why don't you tell pa; he would send him on the road for his firm right away, without waiting for a diploma."

"What do you think of this previous-existence theory?" "I know it to be supported by facts. For instance, I know a woman only thirty years old who often thoughtlessly tells about things that happened thirty-five years ago."

"The late editor's wife is something of a humorist." "Indeed?" "Yes; took a line from his original salutatory and placed it on his tombstone." "What was it?" "We are here to stay."

In Westminster Abbey, says a contemporary, there is a large marble tablet in memory of a famous bishop. It is a bas-relief, representing the bishop—a portrait—in the agony of death, sinking into the arms of an allegorical female figure, presumably intended for the angel of death. It is said that an aged couple from the country were being shown around the abbey, and, pausing long before the tablet, the old lady remarked to her husband: "That's a good likeness of the bishop, but," regarding the angelic personage attentively, "it's a very poor one of Mrs. ——. I knew her very well, and she didn't look like that."

BE CONTENT.

Said the parson, "Be content,
Pay your tithe-dues, pay your rent;
They that earthly things despise
Shall have mansions in the skies;
Though your back with toil be bent,"
Said the parson, "Be content."

Then the parson, feasting, went
With my lord who lives by rent;
And the parson laughed elate,
For my lord has livings great.
They that earthly things revere
May get bishops' mansions here.

Be content! be content!
Till your dreary life is spent.
Lowly live, and lowly die,
All for mansions in the sky.
Castles here are much too rare;
All may have them—in the air.

T. Maguire.

"Word of God"—Perhaps!

In point of fact, everything is true in a book which is divine in its origin. In such a book there must be no contradictions, since two contradictions cannot at one and the same time be both of them true. Now, the attentive study which I gave to the Bible, read in the light thrown on it by German exegesis, while it revealed to me historical and æsthetic treasures, also proved to me that it was, no more than any other ancient book, free from contradictions, inadvertences, mistakes. There are to be found in it fables, legends, traces of a wholly human authorship. It is no longer possible to maintain that the second part of Isaiah is by Isaiah. The book of Daniel, which all who are orthodox attribute to the time of the captivity, is an apocryphal work composed in the year 169 or 170 before "Jesus Christ." The book of Judith is an historical impossibility. The ascription of the Pentateuch to Moses cannot be maintained, and to deny that several portions of Genesis have a mythical character is to be compelled to treat as narratives of events which actually happened, the accounts, for instance, of the terrestrial paradise, of the forbidden fruit, of Noah's Ark. But you cannot be a Catholic if on a single one of these points you depart from the traditional statement. What becomes of the miracle so very much admired by Bossuet, Cyrus named two hundred years before his birth? What becomes of the fifty weeks of years on which are based the calculations of Bossuet's *Histoire Universelle*, if the portion of the book of Isaiah in which Cyrus is named was actually written in the time of that conqueror, and if the pseudo-Daniel was a contemporary of Antiochus Epiphanes? According to orthodoxy, it is obligatory to believe that the books of the Bible are the handiwork of those to whom the titles attribute them. The mildest Catholic teaching respecting inspiration forbids the admission that the sacred text contains any pronounced error, or any contradiction even in matters which concern neither faith nor morals.—*From Ernest Renan's "Souvenirs."*

No Russian at the Last Supper.

Apropos of the annoyance of the passport system in Russia, a story is current among Russians upon whom allegiance to orthodoxy sits lightly, and which they may tell to a stranger if they think there is no police agent within hearing. It runs as follows:—When Jesus, with his disciples, had sat down at table to their last supper, one of the disciples remarked that every nationality but the Russian was represented, and suggested to Jesus that one of that nation should be secured. Jesus observed that Russia was a long way off, and that it was rather late, just as they had taken their seats, to bring a man from such a far country. On this the disciple remarked that he (Jesus), being almighty, could create a Russian, and pointed to a lump of earth on the floor as suitable material out of which to make one. Accepting this idea, Jesus touched the clod of earth with a staff and called a Russian into existence. Hardly had the newly-created Muscovite been on his feet an instant when he held out his hand towards Jesus, and in a loud voice demanded, "Where's your passport?" Turning to his disciples, Jesus said: "Why, here have I been wandering about the country for the last thirty years, and was never asked for a passport until I made this fellow. What am I to do with him?" "Oh," said one of the disciples, who seemed to know something about Russia, "give him ten kopecks and tell him to go away."

And then they went on with their supper. And this is how it came about that Russia was not represented at the solemn event.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Banqueting Hall, Piccadilly): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Sign of the Cross" (*apropos* of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play).

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, George Standring, "What Freethinkers have Done for Humanity." Monday, at 8.45, general meeting of members to pass rules. Tuesday, at 8.45, social party. Wednesday, at 8.45, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac"—III.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, R. Shaw opens discussion on "Secularism." Tuesday, at 8.30, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 6, tea and soirée. Thursday, at 8, G. W. Foote, "The Curse of Creeds."

EDMONTON (Assembly Rooms): Wednesday, at 8, W. Heaford, "Christianity or Secularism: Which?"

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Christian Idols."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, J. Ellis opens a discussion on "Materialism."

WEST LONDON (Athenæum Hall, Godolphin-road, Shepherds Bush): Wednesday, at 8, A. B. Moss. "A New Age of Reason."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "I thy God am a Jealous God."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, G. Spiller, "The Power of Habit."

WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stewart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 7.30, members' meeting—important business.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, W. J. Ramsey, "Funny Tales from the Bible."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, see advertisement in the *Mail* and *Argus*, Jan. 18.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Leon Dorné, A.K.C., "Are there Three Persons in the Godhead?"—a reply to the Rev. M. Logan. Committee meeting after lecture.

CAMBUSLANG: 8, Charles Watts, "The Bible and Civilisation."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."

CLECKHEATON (Co-operative Hall): Wednesday, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Morality."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, Charles Watts, "The Science of Life from a Secular Standpoint"; 2.30, "The Perplexities of Christianity"; 6.30, "The Religious Man."

HECKMONDWIKE (Lumbard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, reading from *The Merchant of Venice*. Thursday, at 8, at the Minor Co-operative Hall, C. Cohen, "The Teachings of Jesus Inadequate and Anti-social."

HUDDERSFIELD (Friendly and Trade Societies' Hall, Room No. 5, Northumberland-street): Tuesday, at 7.45, C. Cohen, "What Think Ye of Christ?"

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Smith, "The Brotherhood of Man in Religion and Practice."

KILMARNOCK (Large Temperance Hall): Monday, at 8, Charles Watts, "The Fall of Man and the Atonement: Theological Delusions."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, H. McNeill, F.S.S., "Bimetallism; or, Justice between Man and Man."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, L. Small, B.Sc., will lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Robert Law, F.G.S., "The History of Life upon the Globe."

MOTHERWELL (Lower Town Hall): Wednesday, at 8, Charles Watts, "The Defects of Christianity."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 7, a lecture.

PAISLEY (Tannahill Hall): Tuesday, at 8, Charles Watts, "Does Death End All?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, C. Cohen, "Science and Man"; 3, "Christianity and Woman"; 7, "The Origin of Man." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business; 7.30, C. H. Reynolds will lecture.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—January 19, Sheffield; 20, Hoyland Common; 21, Huddersfield; 22, Cleckheaton; 23, Heckmondwike; 26, Manchester. February 2, Newcastle; 5, Chester-le-street; 9, Newcastle; 12, Chester-le-Street; 16, Newcastle; 19, Chester-le-Street; 23, South Shields. March 1, South Shields; 8 and 15, Glasgow.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—Jan. 22, Shepherds Bush. March 1, Balls Pond.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—January 26, Leicester. February 2, Balls Pond.

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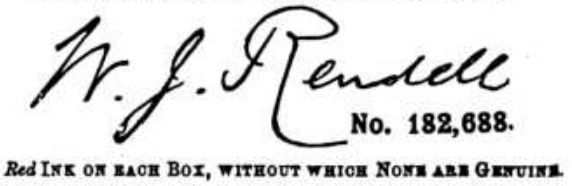
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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—No. 4. SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

DEMOCRACY AND RELIGION.

I HOLD that there is a fundamental diversity between the spirit of modern democracy and that of old religion, despite certain features of Christianity which it has in common with Buddhism, such as its appeals to the poor of the earth and its recognition that all are made of one blood. To a student of past history this incompatibility will be clear. The fundamentals of religion are based, not on human liberty, but on authority. In my *Footsteps of the Past* I have pointed out how gods grow from the ghosts of chieftains and of medicine men; how Church and State develop side by side; how gods which once were tribal evolve into gods of gods when, with large monarchies, the ruler claims to be king of kings and lord of lords; and how the large empires paved the way for the so-called universal religions.

Religion is based on fear. Where Nature is stern and men cruel, religion is strong. As men by association overcome their sense of helplessness, the solidarity of the tribe, of the nation, and of humanity becomes the binding principle of conduct. As man's life becomes less perilous and more comfortable, his religion becomes subsidiary; more attention is given to the earth and less to the skies. Every mitigation of religion comes from the increased attention given to improving the secular position of mankind. What changed the arbitrary and ferocious Jahveh of the Old Testament into the lollipop-giving Santa Claus of the Universalist? It was the diminished influence of fear; the hard-won conquest by man over the destructive powers of nature. It is this which differentiates the religion of savages from that of the civilised, and substitutes benignant Buddha for sanguinary Shiva; the love of sweet Jesus for the wrath of Jahveh. This, too, differentiates the spirit of modern democracy from that of subordination to spiritual and temporal pastors and masters.

Democracy, or self-government, is possible only with the evolution of a certain amount of peace and comfort; and it is safe to say its doctrines have grown, despite the conservative forces of religion. It owes more to Thomas Paine than to the Bible. The scriptural doctrine of government is that of a theocracy. God is a sovereign; man his subject. God's will is paramount. His arbitrary injunctions must be observed without question. As it is a maxim of monarchical law that the king can do no wrong, so it is a maxim of theology that God must be implicitly obeyed. Man has no more right to complain if elected to damnation than the clay has to question the potter why one piece is put to honorable use and another cast aside. God is especially depicted as having his peculiar people, his favorite rulers and prophets. "It is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Even the carpenter's wife's son compares God to a prince who rewards profitable slaves, but casts others into outer darkness, and orders "Those mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." The twelve apostles were promised that they should sit on twelve thrones judging the tribes of Israel. Paul enjoins us to submit to the powers that be, and Peter inculcates "Fear God, honor the king."

Said Charles I., when the death of Lord Northampton was commended to his sympathy: "Is it not enough for him that he has died for his king?" No service to Deity can suffice to accord rights to his subjects. Salvation can never be from our merits, but from his grace; and, however badly he uses us—even to the extent of dooming his sensitive creatures to eternal torments—it is vain to rail against Omnipotence. So blessed be His name for aye!

Could the Czar of Russia, that feeble imitation of his Divine Master, hear every word uttered in his dominions, he would be continually surrounded with an incense of praises. Curses, if they arose, would never be loud, if deep. The natural attitude towards an omnipotent, omniscient being is one of fear. His ministers, whose lives are devoted to exalting his name, are supposed to be his favorites; while unbelievers, who seek to efface the fear of his authority, must expect to receive the most dreadful torments. Such a being is like an earthly tyrant, who esteems only those who contribute to the maintenance of his power, and visits with the severest punishment those who question his authority.

Calvinism has always seemed to me the most consistent of creeds. If God is a sovereign, man is a slave. If God created and fashioned us, he can do with us as he pleases. If he is infinitely remote, he may be infinitely different. No present favors can ensure us against future displeasure. How many mothers have treasured some babe as the choicest gift of God, only to see it snatched away by disease?

God's method of government is arbitrary, and, consequently, anti democratic. Just as, when crimes were done in ancient times, the chieftain who suffered demanded satisfaction, and did not care whether the precise offender suffered so long as he obtained payment—a kind of morality which still satisfies Christians in their dealings with the Chinese—so God required vengeance, and was not particular who suffered so long as he got it; visiting the sins of the fathers on the children, to the third and fourth generation, and even accepting the blood of his own innocent Son as a ransom for many. What more confidence could anyone place in such a being than in an insane despot?

The representation of sin as a debt, and the revival song,

> Jesus paid it all—
> All the debt I owe,

reflects a far-off government policy and a barbarous tribal morality, which arose when the sense of individual responsibility was weak. Christianity itself is a system of favoritism. It proclaims that there is no salvation under heaven save in the name of Christ. It is true it offered its salvation to women and slaves as the best way of spreading the faith, but it made no effort to ameliorate their earthly lot, and it left the heathen to the horrors of hell fire. Why, then, should we go back over eighteen hundred years for the ideals of to-day?

Democracy has new ideals. It demands liberty for every man, woman, and child to expand their nature to the uttermost. Disputing the fact of hereditary rule, it must thrust aside the fiction of apostolical succession. The Church is built on authority, with no better basis than old figments and frauds. Democracy has no worse foe than the dogmatism which coerces reason under the pretence of divine authority. The spirit of religion is the spirit of dependence on the arbitrary will of an irresponsible being. The spirit of democracy is the spirit of independence, conscious of personal worth, power, responsibility, and dignity. It changes the centre of gravity from a throne above to a throne within; our "bosom's lord," o'er which neither God, king, nor prince can finally prevail. It substitutes the teacher for the priest; work for prayer; conduct for creed; and the republic of man for the kingdom of God.

J. M. WHEELER.

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EVIDENCE: REAL AND IMAGINARY.

PROBABLY the vast majority of orthodox Christians accept the belief in Christianity without studying the nature of the evidence which induces them to do so. They adopt this faith as a legacy from their predecessors, without making any inquiry as to whether or not any reason exists for their becoming the recipients of a ready-made belief. Hence, a faith that originated in ages of ignorance and superstition is transferred from one generation to another simply because its evidential value has never been properly tested. Just as thousands of persons go to church Sunday after Sunday for no other reason than that they had attended such places from their infancy, so by many Christianity is professed because it was taught them in early life, at a period when they lacked the desire and ability to investigate why they were induced to accept the belief. This will account, to a large extent, for what is termed "the extensive profession of Christianity"; for, as experience has shown, it is a difficult task to eradicate from the human mind the impressions made in the morning of life. The clergy know this, therefore they are always anxious to have the control of the education of the young, in order that the infant mind shall be imbued with the influence of theology. If the first inculcation of religious teaching were reserved for the age of maturity, there would doubtless be a great falling off in the number of Christian adherents.

Of course, some professed Christians are so as the result of thoughtful consideration of what they regard as evidences of the truth of their faith. But even these believers frequently mistake for real evidence that which is purely imaginary. In order to clearly distinguish between the two it is necessary that a person should be free from all prejudice and preconceived inclinations. If, in entering upon the investigation of any subject, the mind is biassed towards any one special conclusion, that very fact would prevent a fair estimate being formed as to the true nature of the evidence necessary to support any deduction that may be arrived at. This is particularly the case as regards the study of Christian evidences, inasmuch as the students have been trained to believe, frequently before examination, that the Christian claims are true. Moreover, the penalty threatened for arriving at a conclusion adverse to the truth of Christianity is so severe that it is likely to sway the judgment in the process of examination. It is folly to exclaim, "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," if it has been decided what is "good" before the endeavor to "prove" commences. Besides, the belief in Christianity is fashionable, and to reject it often means pecuniary loss, and is attended by social ostracism, which are important factors that affect the estimation as to whether evidence is real or imaginary.

That at least two kinds of evidence exist must be admitted. Take, for instance, geometry and history. The axioms of geometry are self-evident, and its propositions are capable of demonstration; while history *may* be trustworthy, but its truth is only probable. Every extraordinary event related in history is open to the objection that it may not be true. As to whether our own observation or that of another is the more trustworthy depends upon the question of competency—that is, which is the better qualified to discern what is true. Supposing a belief depends upon the interpretation of the universe, in that case those who know most of it, through studying its manifestations, would be able to furnish better evidence as to its nature and potency than those who had devoted but little study to the subject. The same may be said of a belief founded on history. If we have the testimony of known competent observers of the events they record, we are likely to get trustworthy evidence; but if we have conflicting accounts of writers, who relate, in contradictory reports, extraordinary events of which they had only heard, we cannot rely upon their statements. This is one reason why we do not accept the New Testament as being historically accurate. Most of its writers record marvellous events which were told them, and no indication is afforded that these writers ever attempted to verify what it is said they heard. It is not here contended that we are justified in objecting to believe in events simply because we cannot understand them; but the fact remains that our belief in such events must be influenced by the nature of the testimony which they can command.

To some the position here taken may appear but the A B C of credibility; but to us it seems of the utmost importance, as it involves a question too little studied by acceptors of evidence. Christians may have their "convictions," or "assurances of faith"; but both depend upon evidence either real or imaginary. They speak of "faith," but this *must* rest upon evidence either true or false. Those who dispute this should ask themselves: "Why have I a faith?" Surely it was obtained by some intellectual process, however defective its character. Even if faith is based upon trust, or hope, or wish, these are all connected with the functions of the mind. Faith *above* reason can have no evidential support, for it would be above the very faculty which is absolutely necessary to all evidence. Theologians, apparently, do not recognise this fact, hence they urge that those doctrines they teach, which are thoroughly unreasonable, are "above reason"; while the truth is, they are *contrary* to reason, and therefore have no claim upon us.

Let us now consider what justifies us in disbelieving any statement, teaching, or proposition submitted to our attention. We may not believe either through the entire want of evidence, or in consequence of its insufficiency; but to justify disbelief it is necessary that the reasons against the truth of any particular allegation should be stronger than those in its favor. Frequently, if we inquire into the particulars of any extraordinary event which is said to have happened, we shall find reasons, from its very character, to doubt its occurrence. In describing the marvellous, persons are apt to give erroneous descriptions of what really took place. For instance, an example of this is given when people speak of those who are thought to be dead "coming to life." The fact is, the report in such cases is based upon the mistake of supposing that the individuals who "came to life" had been really dead. No number of witnesses to this imaginary restoration would disprove the mistake made as to the parties being dead. The general observation of mankind makes the mistake probable, and the coming to life improbable, for the reason that, according to human experience, when persons are really dead they remain so. It is quite possible that a thing may be true that does not accord with our personal experience; but whatever is opposed to all general experience, and contrary to known natural laws, we submit, may be reasonably disbelieved, in spite of attestations to the contrary, by whomsoever made. An accurate and unbiassed opinion can result only from the free exercise of the critical spirit. Those who have witnessed apparently extraordinary phenomena in the presence of average observers must have noticed their utter incapacity to form a correct judgment upon such events. Persons who readily understand ordinary events become thoroughly incapable of weighing evidence in reference to the wonderful and the marvellous. Take the case of ghosts: unbelievers never see them; they do not appear in houses inhabited by Freethinkers. We agree with Büchner: "There never has been, and never will be, a real apparition which could make us believe or assume that the soul of a deceased individual continues to exist: it is dead, never to return" (*Force and Matter*, p. 198). "That the soul of a deceased person," says Burmeister, "does not reappear after death is not contested by rational people. Spirits and ghosts are seen only by diseased or superstitious individuals" (quoted by Büchner, *ibid*).

In reference to the extraordinary elements in Christianity, some of them are of such a nature that it is quite impossible to obtain evidence in their favor—such as the Virgin birth, the raising of the saints from their graves, the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the resurrection, and the ascension. Not one of these theological figments can be substantiated by evidence that would be admitted as conclusive proof in any of our law courts. They appear to us to be mere dogmas, which originated in the fertile brains of some of the leading "lights" of the Church. To us it seems a waste of time and energy to seek for corroborative proof of that which never had any objective existence that is subject to the ordinary laws of evidence. Christianity is based, not upon that which is capable of demonstration, but rather upon faith, sentiment, and often unjustifiable inference.

CHARLES WATTS.

Truth is the child of Time.—*Immanuel Kant.*

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QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

"How came you to be an Infidel?" This is a question that we have been asked over and over again, and we suppose it will be asked time and time yet again. Speaking for ourself, we answer, By reading, studying, and preaching the Bible. If we had not been a preacher, perhaps we would have continued to be a Christian. We were taught to believe in the Bible from our childhood, and, although there were many things about it that our sense of justice revolted at, we believed it to be a divine inspiration, and, therefore, in some mysterious way correct. But, in the course of time, our duty was to expound its mysteries to other people, and where, in trying to do this, we put it to a rational test, the conviction that it was only a fallible book of human origin grew upon us, until there was no honorable escape from open and avowed Infidelity. We reached this by a long, painful struggle that ended in the sacrifice of much that we had honestly attained by our sincere devotion to the Church. Our experience and observation lead us to fear that many preachers have realised what we did as to the truth of the Bible, but they have not been willing to make known their real convictions and accept the social consequences of revolt. The Bible is its own best interpreter, and we cannot understand how any rational person can read it with careful attention and not discover its manifest fallibility. We think it likely that many have discovered this, but from mercenary motives refuse to make it known.

In our opinion, no book has made more Infidels than the Bible, and our advice to any honest thinker who wishes to know the truth about this much-abused and misused book is to read it and give it a chance to speak for itself. Test it by rational processes just as you do other books, and if you are thoroughly honest with it and with yourself you will become an Infidel. Reverence for the Bible as a divine inspiration is generally fastened upon people, as it was upon us, in their childhood. If children are let alone until they learn to reason logically, you can never convince them that the Bible is anything more than a human production. The method of the Churches is to fill the minds of children with a superstitious awe of the Bible before they are old enough to read it critically, and many go through life believing it without ever subjecting its utterances to anything like a rational test.

. . .

Another question we are often asked is, whether or not we are as happy now as when we were a Christian. To which we invariably answer, Yes; and more so, though this is not to say that we are perfectly happy. This is not a good world to be happy in. We do not understand how any good person can be happy in the perpetual presence of so much pain, anguish, and sorrow as confronts us every day of our lives.

As a Christian, we were taught that in the world to come there is a heaven for such as believe in Jesus, and a hell of fire and brimstone for those who cannot. When we believed in Jesus, and therefore supposed (for we were never sure of it) that we would get to heaven, we were overwhelmed with the thought that the great majority were destined to an eternal hell. Now, we submit that any person who can look this fact in the face and then be happy is without a heart that can be touched with human woe. It is to us a source of satisfaction and pride to be able to say that we were never happy as a Christian, and it was our unhappiness at beholding such a possibility that drove us into the Christian ministry. As Liberals, we believe in one general condition for all who have lived in this distracted and diseased world. We do not know that there is another life, but we feel sure that if there is we will all have as good a chance for happiness there as we have had here; and if there is no such life, then death will be a merciful relief to us all, and one condition will be the end of life. We have never seen the day, either as a Christian or an Infidel, that we would not prefer an endless sleep to life eternal, if only one soul is to be eternally tormented in a Christian hell.

Perfect happiness is an impossibility in this world, unless it be to heartless beings; but, with the appalling threat of eternal punishment removed, we have found life a thousand times more endurable, and we believe that, if all men were rid of religious superstition, virtue would have a better chance. With virtue there would come a disposition to be just; justice would remove much of the evil with which we are surrounded, and in a world where everyone could have a home with food, raiment, and health, perfect happiness would be possible.

. .

"What advantage has the Infidel or Liberal over the believing Christian?" we are sometimes asked.

It is something of an advantage to be rid of the superstitious fear of an angry and revengeful God, and the hell into which he is supposed to be going to damn most of his earthly creatures. There is also an advantage in being free to think as one can, and to speak as one thinks. Why should we go through life fearing a myth and dreading a doom that has no warrant of reason or common sense? Besides the mental freedom he enjoys, the Liberal loses nothing of moral worth. All the avenues to a good, upright, and honorable life are as widely open to him as they are to the Christian, and thirteen years of experience have taught us that as a Liberal one can better reconcile himself to the natural conditions and environments of life, and thereby derive more pleasure from living.

. . .

"But do you not sometimes doubt the correctness of your position?" say some. Because Christians go through the world doubting at every step, they imagine that Liberals must be harassed in the same way; but our experience is that they are not. The fundamental principles of Liberalism are as demonstrative as the problems of Euclid. He who is true to himself and his fellow man can have no doubt as to his own moral integrity. Virtue brings to everyone its own reward, and when a man knows that he is honestly following up the convictions that have come to him through the exercise of his reason, there is no room for doubt. The Liberal accepts nature as all-in-all, and makes the best he can of life, feeling well assured that no harm can come to him that is not common to the race. He is in no sense exempt from the common weakness of the race, and commits many blunders; but through all he is constantly sustained by an unwavering purpose to do the very best he can with the opportunities that he has.

. . .

"What motive have you for doing good?" say some. To this question we always feel like asking in reply, What motive have you for eating and drinking? If one never hungered, he would often neglect to eat. Doing good satisfies nature in the well-regulated character that is as real as physical hunger or thirst. A hunting dog will pursue the game, and a moral man will do good. If well born and well taught, men love to do good, and only wish they could do more than they do. Is it possible that men do good only through the fear of hell or the hope of heaven? We do not believe this. We know it is not true. If we would enjoy life, we must help others to enjoy it. He who loves freedom should seek the freedom of others. Self-preservation and self-respect beget in us a love of virtue, and supply every needed motive for doing good; and the really good man will do good regardless of future rewards and punishments.

J. D. SHAW.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

Sayce and Moses.

Professor Sayce is particularly indignant at what he calls the "cocksureness" of his opponents; but his own arguments in support of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch do not by any means savor of extreme caution. The reasoning on which he chiefly relies would appear to be somewhat as follows: Literary culture existed in Egypt and some other countries before the time of Moses. Therefore, the Israelites must at that time have practised the art of writing. Therefore Moses must have written something. What Moses wrote cannot have been lost. Therefore Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Q.E.D. It must be admitted that this reasoning presents the appearance of a rather top-heavy erection. At every point an assumption is made which is, to say the least, disputable. It is strange that Professor Sayce should need to be reminded of a conspicuous example which would alone suffice to overthrow his argument. What fact is more certain than that the Founder of Christianity himself left no writings behind him? Yet the Jews in the first century of our era were undoubtedly a "literary people."—*Professor A. A. Bevan, in "The Contemporary Review."*

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THE BACKBONE OF CHRISTIANITY.

As proof that Christianity is the true religion, a minister in Cleveland recently cited the rapid spread of the gospel in the twelfth century. He held that, because it was first preached to the obscure and lowly, people without means, it was proof of the truth and divine origin of the Bible.

Now, what is the sum of the teachings of Christianity? From first to last man is either coaxed with sweetmeats, or threatened with a red-hot poker. Had Christ taught (presuming he ever did teach anything) that he was the son of God, and that men should practise virtue for virtue's sake, it is doubtful if we should ever have been cursed with the Christian religion.

There would be nothing to gain; the average man would have reasoned, and he would have been content to go his way. But when it became known that this God, who controlled everything, held out such glittering inducements, many joined the ranks for what could be gained. The Christian religion took advantage of some elements of human nature which made it possible to advance rapidly. Those same elements exist to-day, and are being taken advantage of right along.

These elements are childish, for they are stronger and more pronounced in children; but the average man possesses a very large share. If it is childish now, what must it have been eighteen hundred years ago? Promise a child some reward, especially if it frees him from a little labor or a few hours from school, and you have an ideal Christian until the bribe is paid. Promise a child a sound thrashing, or threaten him with the "bogie man," and his behavior will be excellent until his fears are allayed.

Now, this desire for reward or gain, and this fear of punishment, are what gave Christianity its start. The more ignorant a man is, the greater the element of childishness in his make-up. No man will work for nothing. He must have reward or promise of reward. No man will pick up a red-hot iron willingly.

What contempt is shown a man who will not work? What stress the pulpit-pounders lay on the fact that you *don't have to work in heaven!* That is the key to the whole thing.

There are some natures that can be controlled only through fear of punishment. Hell-fire has been prepared for this class. Was there ever a fake put on the market which promised something for nothing but thousands of gullible people bit at the bait? Credulity and the inborn longing for a toilless and careless life are the groundwork of Christianity. Many savage traits still exist in our natures, and this religion offers mysticism and superstition in new cloaks, and the gaping crowds swallow it as they swallow Barnum's mermaid and the fire-eater.

This minister, continuing, said that merely living for gain was not life. The savage in Africa manages to satisfy his wants, but we would hardly call that life. That is true enough, but why didn't he finish? He should have said that savages everywhere have some form of religion, some god, and they have to knuckle down one way or another. Of course their ideas and methods are crude, but then they are not themselves civilised and refined. This god idea is nothing but a savage idea developed and changed in form. It has not yet been civilised out of all of us. Now-a-days Christianity is a business qualification, and ninety-nine out of a hundred Christians are such for cash, except when scared. When the Christian approaches death, the "bogie" which has been used to frighten him all his life, he makes about the same effort to appear righteous before his God as an untidy house wife does to appear neat when company comes unannounced.

As a sample of the beauty in the Christian religion, I want to tell about a missionary whom I once heard lecture. He had spent many years among the Indians. In the course of his lecture he showed two large pictures—one represented the Indians as the missionaries found them, the other as they left them. The first showed a group of Indians gathered about their wigwams, which were erected on the bank of a stream; the women were busy, and the men were mending canoes, making arrows, etc. An air of peace and prosperity was everywhere. The second picture represented a group of miserable-looking beings in ill-fitting clothes, cleaning fish on a dock. Great heaps of fish were piled about them. "This," said the missionary, "shows how we found them, in ignorance, and without a knowledge of God. That shows how we left them, working for their living."

This failed to convert me, for I think I would prefer the prosperous, wild, free life, and the smell of flowers, to a knowledge of God, a pile of fish, and a miserable existence. I'll venture to say the missionaries never promised them this when they went among them.

The educated man who places truth above ambition cannot swallow Christian doctrines. Did two persons ever tell the same story alike? Well, suppose Christ did say anything at all; how much exaggeration would be added while that saying travelled one hundred miles in those days, or these either? The chances are that Christ never claimed to be the Son of God. The honor was thrust upon him, and it got him into trouble. If he said a sensible thing, the ignorant who heard it thought he must get his wisdom from a higher source. They never gave him credit for knowing anything. He was merely a mouth-piece.

The preachers tell their flocks that Christianity made possible the virtue and civilisation that now prevail. If they will reverse the statement, they will tell the truth. It is the evolution and development of life that has made Christianity possible. When the God idea is cultivated out of our natures, along with some other relics of savagery, Christianity and its bloody record will disappear.

—*Truthseeker.* G. H. LONG.

HELL.

IF Christianity were only stupid and unscientific, if its God were ignorant and kind, if it promised eternal joy to believers, and if the believers practised the forgiveness they teach, I, for one, should let the faith alone.

But there is another side to Christianity. It is not only stupid, but it is malicious. It is not only unscientific, but it is heartless. Its God is not only ignorant, but infinitely cruel. It not only promises the faithful an eternal reward, but declares that nearly all of the children of men, imprisoned in the dungeons of God, will suffer eternal pain. This is the savagery of Christianity. This is why I hate its unthinkable God, its impossible Christ, its inspired lies, its selfish, heartless heaven.

Christians believe in infinite torture, in eternal pain.

Eternal pain!

All the meanness of which the heart of man is capable is in that one word—Hell.

That word is a den, a cave, in which crawl the slimy reptiles of revenge.

That word certifies to the savagery of primitive man.

That word is the depth, the dungeon, the abyss from which civilised man has emerged.

That word is the disgrace, the shame, the infamy of our revealed religion.

That word fills all the future with the shrieks of the damned.

That word brutalises the New Testament, changes the Sermon on the Mount to hypocrisy and cant, and pollutes and hardens the very heart of Christ.

That word adds an infinite horror to death, and makes the cradle as terrible as the coffin.

That word is the assassin of joy, the mocking murderer of hope.

That word extinguishes the light of life and wraps the world in gloom.

That word drives Reason from its throne, and gives the crown to madness.

That word drove pity from the hearts of men, stained countless swords with blood, lighted faggots, forged chains, built dungeons, erected scaffolds, and filled the world with poverty and pain.

That word is a coiled serpent in the mother's breast, that lifts its fanged head and hisses in her ear, "Your child will be the fuel of eternal fire."

That word blots from the firmament the star of hope, and leaves the heavens black.

That word makes the Christian's God an eternal torturer, an everlasting inquisitor—an infinite wild beast.

This is the Christian prophecy of the eternal future:—

No hope in hell.

No pity in heaven.

No mercy in the heart of God.

R. G. INGERSOLL

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FREETHOUGHT IS FOR PEACE.

"A war with England would be a blessing to this country, as it would 'square all accounts.'"

SUCH is the foolish utterance of a Kansas paper. Had it been the cry of a Christian, we should not have been surprised; but coming as it does from a man who calls himself a liberal, it is amazing, and most painful. We have no accounts to square with England, or with any other country. We have no cause for war with them. The intelligent Freethinkers of the world stand for solidarity, and are unalterably opposed to robbing the people and slaughtering multitudes of them because individuals in one country have injured individuals in another country. Talk about a war "squaring accounts"! It is the language of purblind savagery. War squares no accounts. Given a war with England, and who or what shall "square accounts" with the murdered soldiers of both nations, with the cripples, with the sorrowing fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, children and lovers of the slain? Instead of war squaring accounts, it opens millions of accounts that can never be squared by the guilty Jingoes who clamor for it, or by the guilty rulers who launch it, or by any others. It is very important that Freethinkers put themselves, and keep themselves, on record in regard to the barbarism of war. No small part of the moral strength of the Freethought party in England is due to the fact that the representative men and women of that party and its journals have protested against the "unjust wars by England waged." Bradlaugh, from the beginning of his career and to its close, never failed to demand fair play for the tribes and nations with which England's "statesmen" and rapacious tradesmen were constantly embroiling the nation, and he truly represented the party whose elected chief he was for so many years. While primates of the Church were blessing the weapons and minions of wholesale murder, Bradlaugh and his co-workers were doing all they could to put reason and arbitration in the place of the national duel. Now English Freethinkers can point to that comparative record, and with it shame the Christian apologists who falsely claim that the Church alone makes for civilisation. It should be equally possible for the Freethinkers of the United States to thus conclusively answer their opponents. In the ante-bellum days the Christian Church in this country dared not antagonise the barbarism of slavery, lest it should "hurt the Church." It was a short-sighted and disastrous caution, for to-day the Freethinker finds this cowardice one of the most effective stones to throw at the ecclesiastical organisations. Let us bear this lesson in mind, lest, not heeding it, our successors be truthfully told that we dared not protest through the press and upon the platform against the barbarism of war—dared not rebuke truculent jingoism.

—*Lucifer.* E. C. WALKER.

Obituary.

M. FLOQUET, the French senator, who died at Paris on January 18, left directions for a private and non-religious funeral. In the days of the Empire he was one of the boldest and steadiest of Republican propagandists, and after the death of Gambetta it was hoped that he would be able to take his friend's place. But Floquet was rather the orator than the statesman, and shone most in opposition. His duel with General Boulanger, to whom he said that "at his age Bonaparte was dead," made him famous.

DIED, at his residence on Friday, the 17th inst., James Willis, aged thirty-eight years, from that scourge of the human race, consumption. He was brought up in the Christian fold, and when he heard Mr. Charles Bradlaugh for the first time in Newcastle he was so delighted with him that he said if he had wealth he would travel about the country listening to all his lectures. From that time he was a true and consistent Freethinker. His health broke down about three years ago, and for the last six months he had to discontinue work. He suffered much, but bore his lot with great fortitude, like the true, brave, honest man that he was He was buried at Preston Cemetery, North Shields, on Sunday.—THOMAS THOMPSON.

"Know thyself" was written over the portal of the antique world. Over the portal of the new world, "Be thyself" shall be written.—*Babbalanja.*

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

THERE'S a play being acted just now on the stage,
'Tis entitled *The Sign of the Cross*;
And in London it seems to be getting the rage,
Does this wonderful *Sign of the Cross.*
Now, you're all well aware, if this play you would see,
At the theatre door you must part with a fee;
But free gratis, if you will accompany me,
I'll show you the sign of the Cross!

Do you see that big church with a "pub" by its side?
Now the two are a sign of the Cross,
And you'll find them together throughout the world wide—
Yes, you'll find this great sign of the Cross.
For the fact is, and doubtless to you it seems queer,
That in all "heathen" lands where the Christians appear
They erect their big buildings for Bible and beer—
Yes, they set up this sign of the Cross!

For a moment just look at that foul, reeking slum,
'Tis a hideous sign of the Cross;
Its inhabitants drown all their mis'ry in rum,
Their condition's a sign of the Cross.
For a tree by its fruit is in all cases known;
Christ has reigned all these ages—the fruit here is shown;
And with facts such as these, if you're honest, you'll own
That this slum is a sign of the Cross!

There's a placard outside that news-shop, you'll observe,
'Tis a terrible sign of the Cross;
For it states what with horror should thrill every nerve,
Does this blood-curdling sign of the Cross;
It announces that England's "preparing for war,"
That the Christians are arming to shed Christian gore,
As too oft in the past they have shed it before,
For bloodshed's a sign of the Cross!

ESS JAY BEE.

A MEMORY.

WE dragged her out of the tiny lake. Her eyes had closed for ever. What a pretty spot it was! The ripples on the water's surface tenderly lifted the pure white lilies, and the film of bright green weeds resting on the water looked like a carpet for fairy feet. It seemed sacrilege to tear her sweet body from those depths—depths so dark as to appear bottomless.

Here, far from sound of voices, far from clangling bells and rattling wheels, she had sought eternal calm. Mayhap her final deed was quiet unplanned—unthought of until she drank in the soporific air; saw the inviting softness of the pool, the soothing shade, the sombre colors; felt the solemn calm, and, spawned from Nature, she, child of that infinite mother, went back to her bosom and nestled in its loveliest nook.

Who shall blame her? Where is he who dares condemn? She asked not for existence. It was thrust upon her. She did her little best; she worked, and loved, and suffered—in brain and body how she suffered! Her travail now is over. Her cheeks will no longer drip with scalding tears; her loyal heart has done fluttering like a caged robin; her fingers will no more bleed to earn food—bread to keep going her poor life, and the lives of the fruit of her love. Yes; who shall blame her? Look at the worn face, still lovely in outline; regard those sunken eyes, those wisps of fingers. Disease, born of penury, had had her in its grip. She could struggle no longer. Her babes were starving. She wandered from the sight—she was no more use to them. She sought loneliness. She found it, and under placid wavelets, and nodding branches, and floating flowers she closed her tired eyes and extended her weary limbs—for ever.

A. G.

A Christian nation has never had the slightest respect for the rights of barbarians; neither has any Christian sect any respect for the rights of other sects. Anciently, the sects discussed with fire and sword, and even now something happens almost every day to show that the old spirit that was in the Inquisition still slumbers in the Christian breast. . . . If Christ, in fact, said, "I come not to bring peace, but a sword," it is the only prophecy in the New Testament that has been literally fulfilled.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

We have never witnessed the construction of a world. We only perceive the everlasting flux and reflux of phenomena, the ceaseless pulsation of nature and life, evolution, transformation, birth, death, and birth again. But Nature herself is dumb as to her whence or whither.—*Professor W. Knight, "Aspects of Theism."*

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ACID DROPS.

Lady Henry Somerset has given up poor drunken Jane Cakebread, who has been so many times before the London magistrates. Jane was taken to the Home at Reigate amidst a great blowing of trumpets. The Christian method of reformation was going to work wonders. But the patient has given so much trouble that they are glad to get rid of her. She is now certified to be insane, and science will have to take her in hand, when perhaps it is too late.

Amelia Mary Payne, an elderly maiden lady, is doing twenty-one days' imprisonment for disturbing "divine service" at a Clapham gospel-shop. She had been summoned several times for the same offence. No doubt the poor woman is demented, and it would be better to keep her out of the church than to send her to prison.

Charles Wilson, a Yaxley laborer, has been fined twelve-and-six for smoking in church at a Watch Night service. It was a dear smoke, and the poor fellow has our sympathy. He is a little in advance of his age. By and by the churches will all have smoking-pews, probably in the gallery.

"Deadheads" are plentiful in America. They are gentlemen who go to theatres or travel by rail without paying. There are some of the fraternity in England. "Base is the slave that pays!" said Pistol, and we may therefore call them Pistolians. This sect appears to include the Rev. Arthur W. Griffiths, of Tottenham, said to be the sub-editor of a religious newspaper, who has been fined £10 and £3 9s. costs (or three months' imprisonment) for travelling on the Midland Railway on three different occasions without having paid his fare, and with intent to defraud.

The Rev. John Andrews has been adjudged to pay a Shrewsbury tailor named Hamilton £350 as damages for the abduction of his wife. Mrs. Hamilton used to play the organ and assist the reverend gentleman in his mission. This holy work became stronger than her love of her husband, and her two children and the man of God and his assistant have transferred their mission to Canada. The judge, in directing the jury, said the case was "a very shocking one."

Some pious busybody has been seeking opinions upon hymns. The Prince of Wales says that his favorite hymn is "Nearer, my God, to Thee." Mr. Herbert Spencer has no favorite hymn. He says that he was made to learn hymns as a penalty when a child, and, consequently, "the feeling associated with that penalty became a feeling associated with hymns in general."

We hear that, in answer to the widely-circulated inquiry as to "Hymns which have Influenced Me," Mr. Booth puts down "For Me, Me, Me"; Lord Burton puts down "Glorious Beer"; Dr. Parker, "Not for Joseph"; Mr. H. P. Hughes, "Bring forth the Golden Lyre"; and Mr. W. T. Stead, "'E dunno where 'e are."

The Rev. J. Tristram, minister at Holloway Chapel, attended at the Wirksworth Police-station, and obtained police protection for the chapel, there being a squabble there every Sunday, after the collection, as to the disposal of the funds. The chapel is heavily in debt, and some of the congregation want their interest paid.

The Rev. Alfred John Blagden, vicar of Tweedmouth, ascribes his bankruptcy to getting into the hands of money-lenders. He gave, on one occasion, a bill for £55, payable in three months, in return for £35, unaware, he says, that he was paying about 400 per cent. It seems the poor man was bled dry by the leeches, to whom he turned the other cheek, until he remembered that relief might be found in the Bankruptcy Court.

The following story, which is going the rounds, about Barney Barnato, has possibly been in print already—it certainly ought to have been if it has not—but it is so good that, at the risk of being told "chestnuts," we cannot help giving it here. Two months or so ago a country parson wrote thus to Barney: "My aim has always been investment, not speculation; when your bank came out I regarded its shares as an investment, and purchased four hundred of them at four pounds, sinking my little all in them, and a good deal more. They have now fallen to two pounds, and I am undone. I cannot face my parish as a bankrupt. What am I to do? I throw myself on your mercy." Barnato was deeply moved by this appeal, and replied that he would buy back the shares at four pounds. On receipt of this reply the worthy parson promptly wired his broker: "Buy four hundred shares Barnato Bank stock at two pounds, and send them round to Barnato Brothers, who will give you four pounds for them." Of such are the Children of Light!

The editors of the *Methodist Times* and of the *Methodist Recorder* have been exhibiting their Christian feelings towards each other. A letter from Mrs. Hugh Price Hughes, soliciting a shilling for the West of London Sisterhood, and asking each recipient to write two similar letters to friends, came under the notice of the *Methodist Recorder*, which said: "Anybody receiving one of these 'snowball' letters will render a public service by putting it into the fire." Mrs. H. P. Hughes writes that she "cannot understand in the least the disrespectful terms in which you describe a method of helping the work of Christ"; and Mr. Curnock, the editor of the *Methodist Recorder*, retorts that this method is condemned by all good people, and that, if Mrs. Hughes's example were followed, "it will become an intolerable nuisance, and, in all probability, a facile instrument of fraud." Now the editor of the *Methodist Times* complains that the editor of the *Methodist Recorder* has gone out of his way to attack his wife.

"Ex-Monk Widdows" is laboring in the Lord's vineyard again at Norwich. *Daylight* of that city writes: "I have a lively recollection of twitting him on one occasion with his hypocrisy, when, with a disgusting and blasphemous expression, he said: 'Jesus Christ is a —— good thing for me; I made seventeen quid out of him last week.'"

The *All Saints' Weekly Gazette*, of South Shields, is a poor sheet, hardly fit for a pipe-light. The vicar and editor seems, like the advertising butterman, desirous of undercutting his rivals, for he makes the following notice prominent: "The Marriage Fees at All Saints' are 8s. 6d., including banns and marriage lines. At the Register Office, we understand, they are 9s. 7d. Moral: Be married at church." We understand that the registrar's fees in London are only 7s. 6d. But there is a better reason for marrying at the register office. The women do not have to make any false vows of obedience. Moral: Do not be married at church. Keep the parson's finger out of the pie.

"Mohammedanism was propagated by the sword" is an observation frequently made by Christians, who are unaware how largely the extension of their faith was achieved by the same instrument. Carlyle pertinently asked how Islam got the sword? We notice in our American exchanges, while the general papers have been indulging in tall talk, the Freethought papers have all been for peace. The *Moslem World*, which is the organ of Islam in America, has the following: "A standing army is a standing shame to the nation that maintains it. A man with a musket on his shoulder or a sword by his side has to be supported by the man with a hoe or a hammer in his hand. War robs not only the present generation, but the unborn. It is every way a curse. The trade of butchering men is the worst that man has ever learned."

The *Dog-Owners' Supplement to the Bazaar* calls attention to a scare against dogs in the United States, and cites the following from a monthly Christian publication on "The Dog Question": "Now, my boy or girl, whichever you are," runs the concluding passage, which contains the moral of the whole, "drop this nonsense about dogs. They are demanding valuable time that should be employed in teaching such as you. A dog cannot love you. You cannot love a dog. Naught beside a divine soul can love or be loved. *Chloroform your dog, and take to reading your Testament.*" The pious writer well illustrates that rabies is not confined to the canine race.

The *Morning Leader* notices that, in spite of the dog being the friend of man—his most faithful servant, who will stick to him through thick and thin, and mourn over him when dead—the term "dog" is used throughout literature as one of reproach. "The Bible," it says, "is peculiarly rich in such references. Dogs are distinctly ruled out of heaven, and in very bad company too. When St. Paul wishes to denounce false apostles because of their impudence and greedy love of sordid gain, he calls them dogs. Both Solomon and St. Peter refer to backsliders as dogs returning to their vomit. David and Isaiah between them use the word dog or dogs as synonymous with the Devil, persecutors, and false teachers."

Protestant street-preachers are still harassed at Sligo. On Sunday there were serious disturbances, and the police found it necessary to charge disorderly mobs.

Sunday is not a *dies non* in India. The law has ceased to recognise it as such. The prohibition of 1852 against officials making over or assuming charge on a Sunday has been modified.

Some Chinamen who were called as witnesses in a New York court last week took the Bible oath, saying that it was binding on their consciences. One of them, Charles Tong Sing by name, who is Christianised, said he knew he should drop dead in the court-room if he deviated from the

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exact truth after swearing on the Bible. Having been so sworn, they proceeded without more ado to give utterly contradictory and irreconcilable versions of the same story; and Charlie Tong Sing demonstrated his ability to outlie the whole lot. This shows the hopeful sign that, while Chinamen are obtuse in some respects, Christian example is not lost upon them altogether.—*Truthseeker.*

In a Natal paper there is a mission story in the form of an interview with a young man named J. C. Hancock, who, fired with religious enthusiasm, joined an industrial mission started in East Africa. The mission has about a dozen stations in Nyassaland, and Hancock went as missionary about eighteen months ago. He alleges that misleading reports were sent home. An appeal, he says, was made for a considerable sum of money to enable the mission to carry on its industrial work, and it was said that at the station with which he was connected there were two hundred acres of coffee, whereas there were not more than five or six acres.

Several people who thought matters were not right reported this to the home supporters of the mission, and a young man was sent out from England to investigate. At first he found that the official reports from the mission were misleading, but after he had spent some time with one of the local leaders he changed his mind, and took home a statement accounting for every penny spent, and certifying that everything was satisfactory. That, says Hancock, is false, and he asserts that the people at the head stations prefer money-making to mission work. He also says that when he and another missionary were down with fever they were neglected by the managers, and that some of the missionaries drink to excess. He appears to have hinted that even worse things than these were done, in the remark: "There are a good many things I am ashamed to tell." The name of the mission is not given, but it is a Protestant one.

The Rev. S. Fletcher Williams repudiates "The Apostles' Creed" in the *Echo* (January 17). He says very truly that "its name is delusive; it is not the Apostles' Creed. They knew nothing about it. It was not composed until after their time." He further points out that the Creed is a Roman Catholic document, and comes through the Catholic Church. But as much can be said for almost the entire body of Christian literature.

Brother C. C. Moore is inquisitive, and wants to know when God created hell and the Devil. He says: "The Bible explains that when God had gotten through the job of creating, and was fixing to take a good rest over Sunday, he looked over the whole job and said that it was 'good.' If he had made the Devil at that time, did God say that the Devil was 'good,' and where in the hell was the Devil, and what in the hell was he doing, that we don't hear anything about him until we find him getting into hogs and women away down in the days of the New Testament?"

The Rev. H. R. Haweis has been lecturing on "Christ in the South Seas." It appears, however, that it was Mr. Haweis's grandfather who introduced Christianity in that quarter. Christ had given them over for hundreds of years to semi-starvation, savagery, and cannibalism; but unto him be all the glory for the change to clothes, consumption, gin, and gospel.

The Palace of the Popes at Avignon is now used as a barrack, but ten million francs are to be raised to transform the place into a museum, illustrative not only of its own history, but also that of the surrounding region.

The six apartments in the Vatican kept for the private use of Roderic Borgio, Pope Alexander VI. (1492-1503), a successor of St. Peter, who, Mosheim says, was destitute of decency and shame, have long been closed, or used only for stores. They, however, contain valuable pictures by Pinturicchio, which the present pontiff thinks should be thrown open to the public.

The *Monthly Letter* of the Protestant Alliance mentions among the doctrines taught in the day schools of the Church of England: "Prayers for the Dead; Idolatry; Confession of Sins to an earthly priest; Priestly Absolution; Monastic and Conventional Institutions; Baptismal Regeneration; and the Sacrifice of the Mass. These are doctrines for which Protestant England is now paying. Dissenting children are forced into Church schools, and the Conscience Clause is but a sham protection; and the clericals are working their hardest to get extra grants for their sacerdotal schools, where they hope to teach children to grovel in the confessional at the feet of the priest in Absolution."

In the case of the venerable T. S. Castell, the archdeacon of Demerara, whose body was found in the Serpentine, evidence was given that the archdeacon suffered from nervous depression. The jury returned a verdict of "Found drowned."

George E. Macdonald writes in the *Truthseeker:* "If I had noted it in time, I might have sent to Mr. Conway's Paine Exhibition in London a copy of the Lancaster, Pa., *Intelligencer and Advertiser* of October, 1800, containing this advertisement:—

Just Published,
And for Sale by the Printers,
AN INVESTIGATION
Of the falfe, fabulous, and blafphemous
Mifrepresentation of
TRUTH,
Set forth by *Thomas Paine* in his *Age of Reason,*
Dedicated to the Protection of the United States of America.

By A DELAWARE WAGONER.

Also dedicated to the Protection of the U.S.

I wonder if anyone now living ever saw a copy of A Delaware Wagoner's 'Investigation.' I think the man probably drove a mule team."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* has been publishing an account of "A Canadian Lourdes," the Shrine of St. Anne on the St. Lawrence, at the little village of Beaupré. The *Pall Mall* tourist saw no miracles, but he heard a lot of those who had heard of most extraordinary ones. These *coups d'états celestes* are always granted only to ignorant, out-of-the-way populations.

In a hotel the other evening the conversation turned to the subject of faith cures, magnetic healing, and the laying on of hands. One gentleman related his experience at the famous shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré, near Quebec. He vividly pictured the great array of crutches, splints, bandages, and the like, that were cast aside by the afflicted after experiencing the marvellous cures. "Why, gentlemen," said the narrator, "the blind were made to see, the halt were healed, and the paralytic threw away his wooden support." "I don't doubt it," said a gentleman present. "I was in Canada a few years ago, and witnessed the cures made by a magnetic and faith physician there. Why, the main hall of his place was filled with humps that he had prayed off the backs of hunchbacks. Each hump was labelled with the owner's residence and date."

Professor Cook, the representative of the New York State Colonisation Society in Liberia, says that, in their eagerness to prove their usefulness, many missionaries are making negro converts by the easy process of buying them at three dollars a head, and then forcing or persuading them to join the Christian Church. "If only the good work goes far enough," says Professor Cook, "we shall have regulation slave raids, towns burned, people slaughtered, and children carried away," to satisfy the demand for negro converts.

Christianity is such a civilising influence. Fifty years ago, in the United States, Christians could take any negro women they pleased and breed slaves. Now, when the negroes attempt to follow suit, they are hunted down, lynched, and burnt alive.

The pious people of America adopt much the same tactics to obtain their ends as their brethren in England. A big petition was got up in favor of Bible reading in public schools, and a large number of the signatures were of Sunday-school children, a class which, in England a dozen years or so ago, were much interested in excluding Atheists from Parliament.

The Rev. G. Moore, vicar of Cowley, is in continual hot water with his parishioners, and at the Parish Council was called over the coals for remarks made in the *Cowley Parish Magazine.* The administration of certain charities appears to be in dispute, and the Charity Commissioners are to be asked to decide the matter.

The "Irish Volunteers" enrolling in the United States, under the Clan-na-Gael, are, according to the *Progressive Thinker*, really the Pope's army, and more likely to be employed to enable the Romish Church to gain control in the States than "to free Ireland," or make a raid into Canada. Since Cleveland's message the recruiting of "Irish Volunteers" has been very active, and president Roderick J. Kennedy boasts that they can soon raise fifty regiments, though he refuses to say where the money comes from. The *Progressive Thinker* says: "The cry of Ireland is a mere blind—dishonest, treacherous; in a word, Romanist." It warns patriotic Americans to beware of the designs of Rome and her armed cohorts.

The *Progressive Thinker* says: "Not long since a convent in San Francisco was burned down, and from the basement were brought forth 700 guns—quite an object-lesson as they

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lay piled up on the sidewalk. Then, again, it is reported that there are not less than 500,000 able-bodied Romanists ready for military duty in the various military auxiliary societies of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States."

The Rev. W. Osborne, of Zion Baptist Church, Chatham, is witnessing the truth of Spurgeon's text, "Resist the deacons, and they will fly at you." Dissension arose from some pulpit references. The deacons remonstrated, and the man of God applied to them the words of Isaiah (xxx. 9), "This is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord." The deacons say that if this had been said outside the coward's castle they would have had the law of him or punched his head; and eighty members of the congregation support them in protesting against "a wicked abuse of the pulpit." The deacons have published a statement in which they say: "We are refused all arbitration, and we know of no explanation of the charges made against us personally, nor against the Church, which has been so shamefully reviled by its minister." The next chapter in this painful quarrel is awaited with religious interest.

The Bishop of Hereford, under the pressure of public opinion, has cancelled the appointment of the Rev. Mr. Alexander to a canonry in his cathedral. The *Church Times* says: "Our sympathies entirely go with Mr. Alexander, who has had a prize withdrawn just when it appeared within his grasp. The Bishop's ignorance of Church law, however, appears to us quite characteristic."

The *Church Times* has been denouncing the bench of bishops for upholding Erastian principles on marriage, and even puts the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop King, the very High Churchman of Lincoln, into its black list.

The Ninth Correctional Tribunal of France gave judgment in the libel case brought by Mdlle. Lucie Claraz, of Fribourg, in Switzerland, against the journal, *Le Diable au Dix Neuvième Siecle*, for publishing an article in which plaintiff was described as a devil-worshipper, who procured consecrated hosts from the Catholic churches for purposes of desecration at the "Black Masses," celebrated by the votaries of Satan. The court gave judgment in favor of Mdlle. Claraz. The journal was sentenced to a fine of 100 francs, with the same amount for costs, and was ordered to insert the decision of the court in its next issue.

Principal Caird is delivering the Gifford lectures at Glasgow this year. The lectureship was intended by Lord Gifford to be open to all, including "reverent Atheists"; but the broad and flabby kind of Christian has chiefly been in evidence. The good Scotch, however, are not satisfied, because Principal Caird is delivering the lectures, which might be dangerously secular in spirit, on the Sabbath afternoon.

The *Church Times*, reviewing the Rev. A. H. Sayce's *Patriarchal Palestine*, says: "Unhappily Professor Sayce has allowed his zeal for the traditional belief in the composition of the books of the Old Testament to get the better of his discretion in at least two particular instances." One is the case of the three kings mentioned in Gen. xiv. 1, where the Professor considers a dubious reading of a tablet of *circa* 450 B.C. evidence that Genesis xiv. was written *circa* 1500. The second instance is his strained identification of Ebed Tob with the mythical Melchizedek. The *C. T.* says that *Patriarchal Palestine* bears marks of hasty writing and an uncritical readiness to accept evidence that makes for the author's preconceptions.

The Rev. W. W. Hopkins, of St. Louis, says the Church property of that city exempt from taxation is worth forty-eight millions of dollars. Fully one-half of that property, he says, is not used for Church purposes, and a large part is held under various shifts for speculation. This is pretty generally the case with the Churches throughout America. They acquire real estate during the infancy of a town, hold it without taxes, allow it to increase in value by public and private improvements, wrung by unjust legislation from the people; then they pose as the world's benefactors, while making other people pay their rightful contribution to the State.

The Rev. Madison C. Peters, pastor of the Bloomingdale Reformed Church, New York, in discussing the question, "Is New York a Christian city?" gave the following facts as reported by the *Boston Herald*: "In 1840 we had in New York one Protestant Church to every 2,071 of the population; in 1850, one to every 2,777; in 1870, one to 2,480; in 1880, one to 3,048; in 1890, one to 3,540."

The Denison (Texas) *Gazetteer* says: "The two Methodist preachers, Revs. Harmon and Wimberly, who went on a regular jamboree in Galveston last summer, during the Christian Endeavor Convention, were expelled from that Church at the Brenham Convention. Wimberly took time by the forelock, and, cutting loose from the Methodists, joined the Baptist Church." There is nothing like taking to water after a "jamboree."

A correspondent of the *English Churchman* again makes the statement that, for the benefit of those Church of England clergymen who have a doubt as to the validity of Anglican orders—that is, doubt if the Holy Ghost properly got into Queen Elizabeth's bishops—a Church of England clergyman went on the continent and got consecrated a bishop by a consecrated bishop of the Catholic Church, and is now reconsecrating Ritualistic clergymen who have any qualms of conscience as to whether they are members of a real priesthood.

The Pope is said to be preparing another letter on the reunion of the Church—be it understood, under Papal supremacy. The heads of the Greek Church have replied very ungraciously to his last letter, speaking of "false apostles coming in the guise of sheep."

Speaking of the political junction of "Bible and Boer," the *Independent* says it protests against such an "incestuous union." The adjective implies that they are closely related.

The *Sunday Companion*, which, we understand, is issued from the same office as *Paddock Life*, tells good little children where they can find God, or, at any rate, God's name. All they have to do is to procure a good telescope and point it at the planet Mars, look for the canals in Mars, and there it is. In case it is not quite clear, they are given the word of "a student of astronomy at Washington, who is also a prominent Oriental scholar"—though a nameless one, who saw there the Hebrew word, "Shaddai," which was God's name before he was christened Jehovah. It's a pity that when God was about it he did not make it a little more intelligible.

Mr. Gladstone is by no means up to date in religious matters, or he would hardly consider an edition of the works of Bishop Butler as an adequate defence against the Scepticism of this age. Butler's works certainly stand out on the Christian side by their thought and fine feeling; but Mr. Matthew Arnold long since pointed out, in his paper on "Butler and the Zeit Geist," that the Bishop's arguments directed against the Deists of his own time do not meet the intellectual difficulties of this.

A certain steamship company in New York, in consequence of the demand for free passes and cheap rates from "ministerial-looking" men, has had the following Biblical quotations printed:—

"Thou shalt not pass."—Numbers xx. 18.
"The wicked shall no more pass."—Nahum i. 15.
"None shall ever pass."—Mark xiii. 30.
"Though they roar, yet can they not pass."—Jeremiah v. 22.
"So he paid the fare and went."—Jonah i. 3.

Applicants for free trips are, according to the *Christian World*, shown these selections, and, as a result, either give up begging or "pay the fare and go."

A Yorkshire Yarn.

Dr. Guinness Rogers tells a good story of the late Dr. Miller, at one time a very popular Congregationalist preacher. Being overtaken one night in a violent rainstorm on a Yorkshire moor, Dr. Miller accepted the hospitality of a good-hearted Yorkshireman, who equipped him with a suit of clothes while Dr. Miller's garments were drying in the kitchen. The preacher was coming downstairs after donning the borrowed clothes, when the housewife came out of another room. She had the family Bible in her hand, with the intention of inviting the doctor to read a portion from the Scriptures before retiring. Mistaking Dr. Miller in his borrowed garments for her husband, she lifted the family Bible and banged him on the head as he walked in front of her down the stairs, exclaiming: "Sithha, tak' that for askin' him to staay all t' neet!"

Formerly we were told of the soul of man, which was endowed with a separate, and almost isolated, existence. To-day we discover that what was called the soul or spirit of man is an excessively complex thing, a collection, an agglomeration of faculties, each of which requires to be studied separately. They are, of course, intimately associated; no activity can manifest itself in one without every other responding to the call. But each possesses its own life, each its own centre of activity—the organs. And, instead of being the science of the psychic faculties appertaining to the individual as a whole, psychology becomes a study of the separate functions of which the life of that individual is composed.—*P. Kropotkin.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 26, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Regent-street, London, W.:—7.30, "The Sign of the Cross" (*apropos* of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play).

Tuesday, January 28, Wellington Hall, Upper-street, Islington, at 8, "The Truth About the Bible."

Wednesday, January 29, London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, Holborn Restaurant, 7.30.

Thursday, January 30, Assembly Room, Upper Edmonton, at 8, "The Truth About the Bible."

February 4, Bolton; 5, Blackburn.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—January 26, Edinburgh; 27, Stockton-on-Tees; 29, N.S.S. Dinner. Feb. 2, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 9, Camberwell; 11, Wellington Hall, Islington, London; 3 and 4, Ipswich; 16, Athenæum Hall, London; 23, Manchester. March 1, Camberwell; 15, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London.

J. K. Maagaard.—Your poem has merit, but evidences an inadequate command of the English language. You write English prose excellently, but to compose good verses, in any language, you must be master of its subtlest idioms.

H. W. Jones.—Glad to hear you had such a good meeting, and such a good collection, on Mr. Watts's visit. Mr. Foote is visiting Blackburn on Feb. 5, Bolton having taken Feb. 4.

T. E. M.—Will consider and advise you.

Thornton.—The *Echo* paragraph was very absurd. Colonel Ingersoll has been interviewed by the New York *Sun* since the Christian Endeavor people prayed for him, and the interview was reprinted in our own columns. He is still unconverted, and is constantly lecturing against Christianity. Of course, his conversion would be "interesting"—from the *Echo* standpoint, but it has not yet occurred.

Parsifal.—Next week.

J. Michael Jones.—Not exactly *left out*, but the New Revisers state in the margin that the second half of the last chapter of Mark is not found in the earliest manuscripts.

J. W. Gott.—Our compliments to yourself and Mr. Grange, whom we were sorry to miss seeing on our last visit to Bradford.

T. Birtley.—Next week. Glad to hear the cause is making steady progress at Chester-le-Street. Mr. Foote will not forget you towards the end of February.

R. S. House.—Pleased to know your Conversazione on Sunday at Camberwell was so successful.

J. M. Headley.—(1) Many figures relating to Voluntary Schools have appeared in recent numbers of the *Freethinker*. Look through the "Acid Drops" for the last nine or ten weeks, and consult the references given in them. (2) The only thing we can suggest is to obtain the School balance-sheets from subscribers. (3) The "Woman's Bible" is an American publication. (4) Mr. Holyoake's book is in two volumes, price 7s.

J. F. Hampson.—Glad to hear Mr. Watts had good meetings at Bolton, and was never in better form. Also that you thoroughly approve the President's lecture scheme.

T. Ollerenshaw.—Nothing unusual. It is what the sky-pilots do everywhere. The President's lecture scheme is the most successful thing in the movement. All that is wanted is more money.

J. G. Warren.—Thanks for East London Branch's balance-sheet. Thirty-seven lectures, and the clearing off of all old liabilities, make a fair record for 1895.

T. Searle.—Answer next week.

J. Saunderson (Jarrow) is glad to know Mr. Foote is going to write a little book on the Church of England, as such a book "is much needed."

A. Wheeler.—Much obliged, of course; but we do not intend to advertise the little conspiracy. Its only importance is the importance we might be foolish enough to give it.

W. J. Lowries.—Thanks for the pamphlet, etc. No doubt the subject is of much importance, but we really have not time to investigate it at present. In any case, it would not surprise us to learn that professional etiquette stood in the way of medical reform.

Vigilant.—(1) If the Free Library refuses your free gift of this journal for the Reading Room, you can only appeal to the Committee by letter. If the Library is under the Town Council, you might subsequently try to raise the question through one of the Councillors. (2) "B. V.," the initials used by James Thomson, are the first letters of "Bysshe Vanolis." Bysshe was one of the pre-names of Shelley, and Vanolis was the anagram of Novalis, a German poet whom Thomson admired.

E. H.—(1) It was the late Bishop of Lincoln who objected to cremation because it would weaken the popular belief in the resurrection of the body. (2) We have already answered your question as to the Puritans and liberty. (3) There is an Anti-Vivisection Society in London.

E. D. H. Daly.—Thanks.

J. W. T.—Good in other respects, but the versification is crude.

T. H. Cooper.—Shall appear.

Charles Daviss.—It was a mistake on the Chairman's part, excusable enough in the circumstances, and it was immediately corrected by the lecturer. The announcement *before* the lecture, that those who chose to go could use their tickets on the following Sunday, was quite in order. But those who stayed to hear Mr. Parris, after this notice, could hardly expect to use the same tickets again. Mr. Foote is not in a position to *give* them a lecture by Mr. Parris, and an hour or so at St. James's Hall—the bare rent of which is five guineas, to say nothing of other heavy expenses. This should satisfy your orthodox friends. Of course we understand *your* position in the matter.

A. P. Elvidge.—Will see whether we can get you the information.

Loyal members of the Finsbury Branch of the National Secular Society, with the several new members who have recently joined, are requested to meet at the Club and Institute Union, near the Holborn Town Hall, on Monday evening (Jan. 27) at 8. Mr. Foote will attend and address the meeting. A new secretary will be appointed, and arrangements made for an active propaganda on Clerkenwell Green during the summer.

Papers Received.—Kent and Sussex Courier—Oxford Times—Crescent—Freethought Ideal—Liberty—Truthseeker—Northern Daily Telegraph—All Saints' Weekly Gazette—Isle of Man Times—Newcastle Chronicle—Freedom—Worker's Friend—Nya Sanningar—Sunday Companion—Metaphysical Magazine—Leek Times—Monist—Blackburn Times—High Peak News—Globe—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—De Dagerasd—Clarion—Islamic World.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

SPECIAL.

It was a miserable disappointment to me not to be able to keep my engagement at St. James's Hall last Sunday evening. I had been unwell for some days, but I kept at work, and hoped almost against hope that I should be "all right" on Sunday. I was very ill, however, on Saturday night, and the next day it was impossible to get out of bed. Happily, however, I am rapidly recovering, and there is not the slightest reason to doubt that I shall be able to lecture at St. James's Hall this evening (January 26), when I hope to face a crowded audience. Of course it may seem a little egotistical to chatter about one's health in a public journal, but I have many friends all over the country, to all of whom I cannot write, and I do not want them to be unnecessarily alarmed. It is true that no article appears from my pen in this week's *Freethinker*, but that is only because rest is necessary as well as care. G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, takes place next Wednesday evening, January 29 (Thomas Paine's birthday), at the Holborn Restaurant. Mr. G. W. Foote will preside, and will be supported by Mr. Charles Watts and other well-known speakers. We also hope to see Mr. George Anderson present. Vocal and instrumental music will be provided, as usual, after the dinner, which is sure to be excellent and well served. The tickets are four shillings each, and should be obtained, if possible, by Monday morning, so that the Holborn Restaurant people may know how many to provide for.

A large audience assembled at St. James's Hall on Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Sign of the Cross," *apropos* of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play. Unfortunately,

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however, Mr. Foote was ill in bed with a nasty cold, which developed into a sharp bronchitis. Some strangers, who had come specially for this lecture, left the meeting with the assurance, given by Mr. A. B. Moss from the chair, that their tickets would be available on the following Sunday. The greater part of the meeting remained and listened to an instructive discourse by Mr. Touzeau Parris, who very kindly took Mr. Foote's place at a few hours' notice.

Mr. Foote is rapidly recovering, and (barring accidents) will certainly be able to fulfil his engagement at St. James's Hall this evening (January 26). He will lecture upon "The Sign of the Cross," a subject which is of immediate interest. The third lecture on Shakespeare can be included in the next course.

Mr. Foote's breakdown has necessarily entailed extra expense in connection with these St. James's Hall meetings. It is to be hoped, therefore, that his London friends will do their best to crowd the hall on this last night of the present effort.

Mr. Charles Watts had three capital audiences last Sunday in Glasgow, the largest he has had in that city for some considerable time; and they were as enthusiastic as they were large. There was a good gathering of friends from surrounding districts, and it was encouraging to see so many ladies present. After the evening lecture a unanimous vote of thanks was passed to Mr. Foote for introducing his lecturing scheme, and the Scotch friends were anxious to assure the President of the N.S.S. that he has their entire sympathy and co-operation.

Mr. Watts is lecturing all this week in Scotland under the new lecturing scheme, and next week he will give an account in our columns of his week's propaganda in breaking fresh ground.

To-day, Sunday, January 26, Mr. Watts lectures twice in Edinburgh, and to-morrow, Monday, in Stockton-on-Tees. The latter lecture will be under Mr. Foote's scheme.

Brother Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, who is an ex-reverend himself, says of the Rev. G. O. Barnes, one of the most famous of Kentucky preachers, who has some readers and admirers in this country: "If he could live about twenty-five years more, I think he would be a good infidel." Barnes admits that "about seven-eighths of all that Ingersoll said is true. Brother Moore says: "'Brother' Barnes said the God of the Old Testament was an infamous character, and he said so many other hard things against the Jew God that he almost shook my faith in religion."

The *Monist* for January opens with a most able and interesting article "On the Part Played by Accident in Invention and Discovery," by Professor Ernst Mach. The French biologist, Ribot, writes on "Pathological Pleasures and Pains"; the German biologist, Weismann, on "Germinal Selection"; and the editor gives a long dissertation on "Chinese Philosophy," with diagrams and illustrations. Dr. Carus's paper deserves study, and is one to which we shall return.

The Jubilee number of the *Daily News* reminds us that its originators were all progressive spirits, among whom the names of Dickens, Forster, Harriet Martineau, and W. J. Fox stand conspicuous. It upheld in the old days the cause of free speech, and freedom from taxes upon knowledge; but it may be doubted if it has made the stride forward that might fairly have been expected in fifty years.

Judge Emden, of Lambeth County Court, has had notices conspicuously posted in the court-room calling attention to the provisions of the Oath Act, permitting the elevation of the hand instead of kissing the greasy Bible cover. And he has instructed the officers of the court also to tell witnesses that they need not kiss the book unless they think fit. In all the cases heard since the judge's action the witnesses have availed themselves of the Act. If judges would also let witnesses know they need not swear at all, affirmations would soon become general.

The *Globe*, which is largely a lawyers' paper, says: "It seems likely that the Scottish form of swearing will become more and more popular in our courts, as medical science succeeds in convincing people that it is dangerous as well as unpleasant to kiss the uncleanly court Testament."

Mr. Joseph Collinson directs the attention of readers of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* to Mr. Foote's "strong and sensible" pamphlet, entitled *The Shadow of the Sword*.

The Swedish Freethought organ, *Nya Sanningar*, gives, in its last number, an excellent likeness and biography of Ernst Heinrich Haeckel, the author of *The History of Creation*, etc. The other contents of the journal are varied and interesting, and Mr. Petrus Asplund is to be congratulated on the appearance of his paper.

The Paine Exhibition at Ball's Pond lasts for three days, from January 29 to 31 inclusive. The majority of the exhibits at South-place will be on view, with others, including the table Richard Carlile used when in Dorchester Gaol. Mr. Conway, Mrs. Bonner, Mr. Standring, and others, will speak each evening.

The Glasgow Branch holds its annual social meeting in commemoration of Robert Burns and Thomas Paine to-day (Sunday) at 6.30 p.m. Tickets 6d. each. There ought to be a grand gathering of Glasgow "saints."

Lord Byron's "Cain" is to be given at the Imperial Burg-theatre in Vienna, along with a fragment by Schiller, before the end of the present month. A correspondent states that some objection has been made by the clergy to a Scriptural subject of the kind appearing on the stage, even when it is taken from a classical author; but the rehearsals continue all the same.

Mr. Mayhew, the Radical candidate for the borough of Wandsworth, made a speech at the Town Hall last week, in the course of which he said he desired to see "education untrammeled by religion, religion untrammeled by the State, and the State untrammeled by the peers."

Mr. J. M. Headley is once more a candidate for the Yarmouth School Board. His program is advanced in all directions, and, as it includes Secular Education, the Yarmouth Secularists might do worse than "Plump for Headley."

Mr. A. F. Bullock, of Bath, calls our attention to the fact that a half-day excursion is run from the West of England (Bristol, Bath, etc.) to London on January 29, the return ticket being four shillings. The train leaves Bath at 2.6, and returns from Paddington at 12.40. This would enable some West of England friends to attend the Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant.

Mr. J. W. Gott and Mr. John Grange, of Bradford, are visiting Todmorden to-day (Jan. 26), in order to give support and stimulus to the new Branch there. They have taken a hall and done the printing at their own risk, and we hope they will draw to Todmorden on this occasion a number of Secularists from the surrounding districts.

Ancient and Modern Methods.

The New York *Sunday News* contrasts the methods of the Church of to-day for making converts with that of two centuries ago. Discoursing on the recent attempt of the Christian endeavorers to convert Colonel Ingersoll by prayer, it says: "Two centuries or less ago Mr. Ingersoll would not have been reasoned with or appealed to. He would simply have been tortured until life was extinct in his wretched body, and would then have been roasted in a slow fire with pious deliberation. Such was the treatment universal in Christendom of all who dared doubt the established faith. In these days the thousands of good Christians who now pray for him would have looked upon his dying agonies and rejoiced and triumphed. What a wonderful change! what a glorious improvement has come upon human nature in those two centuries!"

There are those who would turn the dial of time backward, and revive that good old period when the clergy, in their secret chambers, passed upon the lives and liberties of the people, from whose cruel verdict there was no appeal. God in the constitution means a restoration of the rule of the Church.

How to Help Us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

"Ask, and it shall be given you."—JESUS CHRIST.

I SAW a ship upon the sea;
Clear was the sky, and bright
The sun shone o'er the still cold deep,
With calm reflected light.

The sky was changed, and darkening clouds
Swept o'er its surface like a pall;
The mariner looked round, and said,
"The Lord have mercy on us all."

The wind's deep sighs grew to a moan,
The billows heaved and fell;
"There'll be a storm, there's no mistake;
I know these signs too well."

The wind went whistling through the sails,
To rags and tatters torn;
The good ship flew before the gale,
And laughed the waves to scorn.

She creaked, and groaned, and trembled—
The seas came bounding in:
It seemed as though the battle then
Was for the waves to win.

Some sailors swore—the children cried,
Most men and women prayed
To Him in heaven, who made them all;
Whom winds and waves obeyed.

"Speak peace, be still, and lead us safe
To those we love, O Lord on High";
The answer came: the thunder pealed,
And lightning flashed across the sky.

"O Lord, who art so merciful,
Look down upon us from thy throne;
Our children need us for their bread:
Save us!—'Thy will be done.'"

His will was done, and on the rocks
The good ship foundered in the night
And mangled bodies lined the shore,
To please his gentle sight.

And starving orphan children,
And widows wan and pale,
Will tell how prayers are answered
When God has made a gale.

H. C. S.

When?

When have Infidels founded Inquisitions to torture men into belief?

When has Infidelity afflicted mankind with twelve centuries of woe, most fitly described as "The Dark Ages"?

When has Infidelity carried on religious wars like the "Crusades"?

When has Infidelity slaughtered fifty million people as the Mother Church has?

When have Infidels murdered the teachers of our race, as Christianity did Hypatia, Bruno, Vanini, Servetus, and many others?

When have Infidels vented their spite upon the dead by digging up and burning their bodies?

When have Infidels begun, on St. Bartholomew's Day, and massacred seventy thousand of their fellow-men in one week?

When have Infidels persecuted the Jews?

When have Infidels sold "Indulgences"?

When have Infidels set up the worship of bones, hairs, rusty nails, "wood from the true cross," and other relics?

When have Infidels burned holes in Quakers' tongues, and dragged old, bedridden women from their couches, and hung them as witches on the evidence of little children?

When have Infidels opposed comforts and refinements, such as the introduction of stoves, carpets, chandeliers, violins, and organs into churches?

When has any Freethinker ever characterised fire, marine, and life insurance, and the setting up of lightning rods, as "challenges to God Almighty"?

When have Infidels decried the use of anæsthetics in obstetrical cases as "an impious attempt to escape the curse" denounced against all women in Genesis iii. 16?

Tommy—"Paw, what does the paper mean by practical Christianity?" Paw—"Practical Christianity is the kind that does not interfere with a man's business."

Strauss.

The *Echo* (January 14) says: "The six hundred letters of David Friedrich Strauss, written to divers friends, which have been collected by one of them, Herr Eduard Zeller, the well-known historian of Greek philosophy, into a volume, *Ausgewählte Briefe*, published at Bonn, show that Strauss may be classed among great letter writers; but they do not reveal anything more of the man than is to be found in his works. His life was in his brain, and his thought took definite shape early in his life. At thirty he had fulfilled his destiny, finished his task. He was hardly twenty-seven when he published his *Life of Jesus*, and a few years later he sent forth another work as remarkable—a history of dogma—in which he shows how dogmas are born, grow, and die. Strauss was a dialectician. He had the genius of analysis. Faith in his hands is reduced to grey ashes at the bottom of a crucible and a wreath of thin smoke above. He used to say it was Plato who introduced belief in eternal life to the West. The philosopher who dared to put men face to face with Death without disguising him was Epicurus, and Strauss preferred the last chapter of the history of Atticus, by Cornelius Nepos, to the Phædo. His mind was as clear as crystal, but it was cold as ice. From his youth he believed that man was all reason. He never discovered the knowledge that comes through love. But he showed in death, as in life, that the pillow of the doubter may be as soft as that of the believer."

Buddhism.

The Buddhists number 400,000,000, or one-third of the human race.

Buddha lived about 600 to 700 years before our era. Buddhists do not believe in any god or gods as being pleased or displeased by the actions, and as assigning the actors their future condition by way of punishment or reward.

The very idea of a God as creating, or in any way ruling, the world is utterly absurd in the Buddhist system.

God is not so much as denied, he is simply not known.

Contrary to the opinion once confidently and generally held, that a nation of Atheists never existed, it is no longer to be disputed that the numerous Buddhist nations are essentially Atheist, for they know no beings with greater supernatural power than any man is supposed capable of attaining to by virtue, austerity, and science; and a remarkable indication of this startling fact is to be seen in the circumstance that some at least of the Buddhist nations—the Chinese, Mongols, and Tibetans—have no word in their languages to express the notion of God.

The future condition of the Buddhist, then, is not assigned him by the Ruler of the universe; but his actions determine it by a sort of virtue inherent in the nature of things, by the blind and unconscious concatenation of cause and effect.

—"*Chambers's Encyclopædia*"; *article*, "*Buddhism*."

A Premium on Sin.

Sin is defined as a violation of a law of God. Any act in disregard of his will is a sin. The offence has been divided into venial and deadly; but all sins, whether trifling or mortal, are offences which alienate the transgressor from the favors of high heaven, and subject him, according to orthodox teaching, to endless woe. But, however hardened the sinner, numerous his crimes, or malignant the offence, he is told: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins; not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world" (see 1 John i. 1, 2).

From this it seems the Son of God, the very Father himself, lately incarnated in flesh, becomes an attorney for the vile sinner, and, more, offers himself as an atonement for the offender's guilt.

Sin is represented as pleasurable. How often we hear from the pulpit: "He rolled the sweet morsel of sin under his tongue." When death stares the guilty wretch in the face, and he sees the end near, like the dying thief on the cross he believes, and hears the glad announcement: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Paddy was making his escape with a stolen pig. The owner, catching a sight of the rascal in his flight, shouted: "You will go to hell for that."

"And, faith," Pat replied, "I'll take the whole brood on those terms."

Pat knew his salvation was assured; for he had divine authority that Jesus will be a propitiation, an atonement, for him, and will be a special advocate in his behalf when reckoning day comes. Paddy's case is identical with that of the whole Christian world, and explains why the penitentiaries are overflowing with "the ransomed of the Lord."

—*Progressive Thinker.*

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BOOK CHAT.

An American publisher announces the forthcoming appearance of Hall Caine's *Life of Christ* this summer. This is a surprise, for the author has long and persistently refused to consent to its issuance. The life was written twenty-six years ago, with the idea of having a story of Christ as vivid and personal from the point of belief as Renan's is from the point of unbelief. But Mr. Caine was not satisfied with his work, and refused to let it be printed, though in 1894 one firm tendered him £3,000 for the copyright.

* * *

It is announced that the widow of "Stepniak" will publish a biography of her husband. It will doubtless contain many interesting and stirring incidents which will be new to the public.

* * *

The Primitive Hebrew Records in the Light of Modern Research, by W. St. Chad Boscawen, is issued by Eyre and Spottiswoode; price 5s. This work is a detailed textual comparison of the Hebrew and Babylonian legends of the Creation and the Flood, and as such will be of considerable value to the student. Smith's *Chaldean Genesis* is now more or less out of date, and the present volume aims at giving the latest information upon the subject. We might observe, however, that in a work of this class the Babylonian epic poem of the Creation, discovered by Mr. George Smith, ought to have been translated in full; and we are somewhat surprised to see the unplaceable so-called "Legend of Kutha" put forward as a Creation legend. The writer professes to have in view the establishment of "the authenticity and *faithfulness* of the Hebrew records," whatever that may mean. But, as he clearly shows that the Hebrew stories were originated by the heathen Babylonians, the question of their "authenticity" is not important. The work contains several good photographs which have nothing to do with the text, and would have been much more valuable with a good index.

* * *

Hebrew Unveiled: Some Affinities of the Hebrew Language, by Arthur Hall (Asher & Co.; 1s.), is a *brochure* in confirmation of the views of McCurdy and others, that early Aryan and early Semitic speech were allied. In the good old days, when everything was supposed to come by revelation, Hebrew was held to have been the language spoken by God to Adam, and by the Devil to Eve, in Paradise. All other languages were to be traced to it, or to the confusion of tongues at Babel. This view has long been relegated by philologists to the limbo of exploded errors. Mr. Hall frankly says as much. None the less, he does show considerable affinities between Hebrew and the Indo-European languages, which, at any rate, until Hebrew is definitely traced to its earliest forms, seems to us possible to be accounted for by borrowing on both sides. The Jews, like the Phœnicians before them and the English now, were a travelling and commercial people, who gathered up and also distributed language as well as other commodities. What is called Rabbinical Hebrew and Chaldee shows this process in ancient times. Yiddish, at first a colloquial jargon of Hebrew, German, Polish, Russian, and English, but which is gradually taking literary shape in newspapers and books, illustrates the process in our own day. Probably Hebrew is easiest "unveiled" by studying it from this end, where affinities are most certain.

* * *

The Life of Cardinal Manning, by E. S. Purcell, is a very one-sided biography, but it helps to show the influences that made one of the most intense and narrow ecclesiastics of his day. He said that when he was four a cousin "told me that God had a book in which he wrote down everything we did wrong. This so terrified me for days that I remember being found by my mother sitting under a writing-table, in great fear. I never forgot this at any time of my life, and it has been a great grace to me, and kept me from the greatest dangers." He thus prided himself upon retaining the most puerile superstitions. His first recollections of school included "trying to think what there was before the world was made"; but, instead of seeing the barrenness of such questions, he satisfied himself with the stereotyped answers of orthodoxy.

* * *

Manning told the following story: "As a boy at Combe Bank, Christopher Wordsworth, late Bishop of Lincoln, and Charles Wordsworth, late Bishop of St. Andrew's, were my playmates. I frankly admit I was very mischievous. The two Wordsworths and I conceived the wicked intention of robbing the vinery. The door was always kept locked, and there was nothing for it but to enter through the roof. There was a dinner party that day, and there were no grapes. This is probably the only case on record where three future bishops were guilty of larceny. Were we punished? No, we were discreet. We gave ourselves up, and were forgiven." These and other bishops might be forgiven, were such larceny the worst crimes of which they have been guilty.

* * *

Mr. Purcell, who is of course a good Catholic, tells us how Manning, with the leading men of the High Church, were in 1838 actively engaged in resisting the attempts of the State in favor of a national system of education. The future cardinal went about preaching against this effort of Liberalism, and the matter was deferred till 1870. Mr. Purcell adds: "Against the godless system of education Manning from first to last was the most consistent and uncompromising opponent."

* * *

Manning, disappointed of hopes of preferment in the Church of England, went over to Rome after a long and serious illness. "How can I ever bless God for this sickness," he wrote; "without it I should have died eternally." So that, had not sickness brought him to Rome, he believed he would have been damned, despite his previous opposition to State education. It appears that Manning's appointment as archbishop was not popular at first with his co-religionists, and there was a good deal of friction between Manning and Newman. Manning went in for the whole hog, including the bristles, of infallibility.

* * *

A mutual friend, an amateur in photography, had made a very unflattering presentment of Manning. "Do I look so cunning?" was his surprised comment. A story he never shrank from telling was of a sculptor who had once attempted his bust in Rome. During one of the sittings, as he was discoursing of phrenology, Manning made him point out on the head he was modelling the supposed seat of various organs and qualities. At last Manning had asked him where was the seat of conscience, upon which the sculptor had stalked across the room, and, touching a certain part of the sitter's head, remarked: "That's where it ought to be."

* * *

The Gospels as Historical Records, published by Williams and Norgate, is, according to Mr. Voysey, who has recently given a discourse upon it, to be compared to *Supernatural Religion*.

* * *

Messrs. Smith and Elder issue a new edition of Mr. Ernest Hart's *Hypnotism, Mesmerism, and the New Witchcraft*. In its revised form the work will contain additional chapters on "The Eternal Gullible," and a note on "The Hypnotism of Trilby."

* * *

Professor C. H. Cornill, of Königsberg, who is vouched for by the editor of the *Open Court* as an orthodox Christian, says in his work on *The Prophets of Israel*: "We know absolutely nothing about Moses. All original records are missing; we have not received a line, not even a word, from Moses himself, or from any of his contemporaries; even the celebrated Ten Commandments are not from him, but, as can be proved, were written in the first half of the seventh century, between 700 and 650 B.C. The oldest accounts we have of Moses are 500 years later than his time."

* * *

If Zola's representation of the cardinals and their *entourage* in *Rome* is at all correct—and he is a man who has kept his eyes open—we should think that a single frank, brave Freethinker of any nationality should be able to defeat all their wily machinations. The Catholic Church appears to be a good deal like the Bourbons; it learns nothing and forgets nothing. True, it has to move with the motion of the earth, but it is manacled beyond deliverance by the dead weight of its own past. A liberal and enlightened Papacy, such as dreamt of by the abbé Pierre Froment, would be an anomaly. It cannot forget its temporal power, and it is always plotting to undo the work of September, 1870.

* * *

Sham Liberal Catholics, like St. George Mivart and W. S. Lilly, are looked on with suspicion at the Vatican, and the former soon got his knuckles rapped when he ventured to write on "Happiness in Hell." The true Vatican feeling seems represented in Zola's Cardinal Boccanera, who says that, even if its enemies are right, and Catholicism has to die, it should expire in its integrality without making any concessions or modifications. "*On ne sauve pas les vielles maisons, dans lesquelles on met la pioche, sous prétexte de les réparer. On ne fait qu'augmenter les lézardes.*" ("One doe not save old houses by digging at them under pretence of repairing them. One only increases the crevices.")

In sober truth, whatever homage may be professed, or even paid, to real or supposed mental superiority, the general tendency of things throughout the world is to render mediocrity the ascendant power among mankind.—*John Stuart Mill.*

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"God Bless our Home!"

In a remote country district a lady, locally described as "one of the boarders," chanced to call at a most unpretentious farmhouse. On the parlor wall, hanging in most conspicuous place, she saw the announcement :—

"ICI ON PARLE FRANCAIS."

She was surprised, and no doubt her face betrayed her feelings. Why should French be spoken in this out-of-the-way place? And, if spoken, why should the fact be published?

The old farmer came to her relief.

"Waal, yes, most folks looks kinder befuzzled at that," he said. "Sometimes they stares at it, an' don't dassent ask no questions. Mother bought it of a man that brought things round to the door to sell—not ezzactly a peddler—kind of a book agent he called hisself. And as soon's mother set her eyes on it, and the agent told her what the words was, nothin' would do but she must hev it. She's kinder pious, mother is."

As the visitor's mystification was only increased, the old gentleman went on, a twinkle in his eye: "Ah, I see you can't read 'em nuther. Neaw, I thought you city folks knowed furrin words. Waal, I'll tell yer. Them words jest means, 'God bless our home.' That's what the agent said. Neaw, yer wouldn't 'a' thought it, would yer? And I dunno myself, but it's kinder brought a blessin'. Mother says it hes."

A Godless Town.

The good people of Wapella County have engaged Dwight L. Moody and two other evangelists to convert the inhabitants of Eddyville to Christianity, reports a correspondent at Ottumwa, Iowa, U.S.A. It is said they do not believe in the existence of God or hell, decline to take an oath or attend a church service. Evangelists have invaded the town and labored for weeks without gaining a single convert; but when Robert G. Ingersoll lectures the entire male population turn out, laying aside everything else to hear the famous speaker. City officers-elect have been known to refuse to take the ordinary oath of office because it contains the sentence, "so help me God." At present fully two-thirds of the business men of the town are unbelievers. Eddyville has a population of 1,500. Last summer Billy Sunday, the evangelist, held a series of meetings there, lasting an entire week, and he failed to get a single convert. He remarked that he had never before preached in a town with so little success. Major Broderick, foreman of the Wapella County Grand Jury, adjourned that body the other day in order that he might hear Ingersoll lecture.

Renan's Library.

Madame Calmann Levy, widow of the publisher, has come to an arrangement with M. Ary Renan and Madame Psichari with a view to purchasing the bulk of the library of their father, which she intends to present to the public. The Renan family, says the *Daily Telegraph* Paris correspondent, had received offers from Boston, Chicago, and Frankfort; but it is now definitely arranged that the books are to go to the National Library, the Government having accepted Madame Calmann Levy's offer. The manuscripts and printed works annotated by Ernest Renan have already, in accordance with the terms of his will, been deposited in the National Library, and in a few weeks, or even days, the remainder of his books, with a few exceptions, will be at the service of the public. The exceptions are the books presented to Renan by his contemporaries. These will remain in the keeping of his family. The library purchased by Madame Calmann Levy consists of 5,516 volumes. The catalogue is divided into two parts, the first comprising the Oriental and Biblical tomes. They deal with Eastern antiquities, the origin of Christianity, Northern Africa, Islam, India, Central Asia, the extreme West, and the classics. In the second part are volumes relating to general history and philology, philosophy, politics, literature, and science. M. Ary Renan, the artist, says that his father was passionately fond of these books, among which he moved daily. He filled his apartments with them, and when he lived in the Rue Vaneau he annexed six servants' rooms on the top story of the house to his own flat, so that he could have space to arrange and classify his numerous volumes.

I believe that the man [killed by lightning] and the gnat [killed by a swallow] are in the same predicament. If the death of neither man nor gnat is designed, I see no good reason to believe that their first birth or production should be necessarily designed.—*Darwin.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

HEAVENLY INCENDIARISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You will perhaps kindly inform me if there are any Fire Insurance Offices in heaven, as I am not quite certain, but rather inclined to think there are, judging from what often takes place here on earth, as we frequently read of persons, who are heavily insured, setting their own houses on fire, and, when detected, not only forfeit the Insurance premium, but are sometimes punished for endangering other people's property. We also often read of God Almighty destroying his own houses with lightning. Now, Sir, I cannot conceive what object he has in view, unless it be that these doomed churches are insured in heaven. If you cannot give a definite reply, you will perhaps kindly consult your Old Friend, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who is, I presume, well versed in heavenly matters.

T. DUNBAR HARRIS.

CRIMINAL LAW AND PRISON REFORM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In view of the acknowledged need of reform in our Criminal Law and Prison System, the Humanitarian League is starting a special department to deal with that subject. The organising secretary is Mrs. C. Mallet, to whom communications should be addressed at 132 Cromwell-road, London, S.W. The help of all sympathisers is invited, and any contributions received will be devoted wholly to this branch of the League's work. Mrs. Mallet is prepared to give a lantern lecture on the Prison System before any Club or Institute that may desire it. H. S. SALT, *Hon. Sec.*

PROFANE JOKES.

In the world's great field of battle,
In the bivouac of life,
You will find the Christian soldier
Represented by his wife.

"Allers seems to me," said the grocery oracle, "that after ole Jim Bilwallop hez put in Sunday tellin' the Lord that he is the orneryest ole cuss on earth he puts in the rest of the week tryin' to see if he can live up to it."

"I don't know as I dare say yes," she said, in response to his proposal; "clergymen's sons, you know, are proverbially bad." "Yes," he replied, with eagerness, "but then my father isn't much of a clergyman."

A well-known German-American citizen of Harmony Garden, a suburb of Atchison, often talks to his dog. Last week he was overheard to thus address the animal: "Mein tog, there is a great difference from you und me. Now, ven I gets up in the morning I has to vash mineself und dress mineself und bring in der kindling before I can get a bit of breakfast. But it's different mit you. Youst as soon as you git up all you has to do is to stretch, und den somebody gifs you a breakfast. Vell, you play all tay, but I have to vork, vork all der vile; you youst haf fun. Vell, the time vill come already ven you haf to die, und den, mine tog, dat is all of you; but it is different mit me, I haf to go to hell yet."

The Scotch clergy are not quite the little god almighties they were once considered to be. The *Baillie*, of Glasgow, thus comments on one of these good men, who doubtless considered he was only doing his duty: "In a certain Free Kirk in one of our southern suburbs there was a 'magic-lantern' entertainment, in which the juveniles of the district took a natural interest, intent on nothing more than a little enjoyment. Among those who attended was a boy of about ten years, who, although his father is a 'heretic,' was allowed to join a few of his playmates at the entertainment. At the close of the latter the boy was requested to 'remain behind,' which he did, very much 'down in the mouth,' as his companions, whose parents, I suppose, were regular hearers, were allowed to run away and play themselves. Left alone with his inquisitor, the boy had a sad time of it. He was asked 'if he was saved,' or something to that effect. The reply not being apparently satisfactory, he was told that if he wanted to be a good boy he must not play at football or cricket, or any such 'sinful games,' but set his mind on higher things! He was then 'dismissed with a blessing.' No wonder the boy went back to his mother in tears. These being noticed, he was questioned, and told the above story. Can cases of this kind, your Honor, not be treated under the Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children?"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Banqueting Hall, Piccadilly): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Sign of the Cross" (*apropos* of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play).

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7, H. Snell, "Life of Bradlaugh" (with limelight illustrations). Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, at 6, Paine Exhibition.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, musical and dramatic entertainment. Tuesday, at 8.30, dancing.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Roman-road): 8, Sunday-school; 7, annual general meeting.

EDMONTON (Assembly Rooms): Wednesday, at 8, G. W. Foote, "The Truth about the Bible."

FINSBURY (Club and Institute, Clerkenwell-road): Monday, at 8, meeting of members of N.S.S.

ISLINGTON (Wellington Hall, Almeida-street): Tuesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote, "The Truth about the Bible."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "I thy God am a Jealous God."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Henry McNiel, "Bimetallism; or, Justice between Man and Man."

WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stewart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 7.30, meeting of members and friends.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, W. H. Whitney, "An Hour with Ingersoll."

BLACKBURN (Venetian Hall, Darwen-street): Thursday and Friday, at 7.30, C. Cohen will lecture. Wednesday, a social party at the Spinners' Institute, St. Peter-street.

BRADFORD (Unity Lodge Room, 33 Sunbridge-road): Monday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity: Is it True?"

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, W. Matthews, "Robert Burns."

CARLTON (Board Schools): Monday, at 7.30, J. Hooper, "Humanity's Gain from Unbelief."

EDINBURGH (Labor Hall, 50 South Bridge): 2.30, Charles Watts, "The Perplexities of Christianity"; 6.30, "The Religious Man."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Cassells, "Social Reforms, Ideals, and Methods"; 6.30, Burns and Paine soiree.

HUDDERSFIELD (Friendly and Trade Societies' Large Hall): Tuesday, ball, supper, and entertainment.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Hilditch, "Historical Christianity: a Reply to Mr. Hendy."

IPSWICH (G.E.R., Commercial-road): 7, members' meeting.

KEIGHLEY (Co-operative Hall): Tuesday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Christ's Teachings Indequate and Anti-Social."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 11, Touzeau Parris, "What is Truth"; 6.30, "Sin Against God an Impossibility."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Ernest Newman, "Life in Ancient Greece."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "Voltaire"; 3, "Christianity and Medical Science"; 6.30, "Freethought and Morals."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 3, monthly meeting—urgent business; 7, Mr. Clair, "The Sign of the Cross."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 8 and 7, select entertainments; collections for hospitals. Wednesday, at 5.30, tea, soiree, and ball (for members and friends) in honor of Thomas Paine's birthday.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting; 7.30, J. Henri, "Ancient Architecture."

TODMORDEN (Sobriety Hall): 3, John Grange, "Education: True and False"; 7, "Christianity or Secularism: Which is the Better for Man?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—January 26, Manchester. February 2, Newcastle; 5, Chester-le-street; 9, Newcastle; 12, Chester-le-Street; 16, Newcastle; 19, Chester-le-Street; 23, South Shields. March 1, South Shields; 8 and 15, Glasgow.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 1, Balls Pond.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—January 26, Leicester. February 2, Balls Pond.

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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—NO. 5. SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

PURIFICATION.

THIS Sunday (February 2) is kept in the Church as a solemn festival of purification, in memory (so it is said) of the humiliation of a certain Jewish virgin, who, having given birth to a male child without a human father—whose father, indeed, was God, and himself God—nevertheless went to the temple, in accordance with the Mosaical law, to be purified from the stain which her motherhood had brought upon her.

The law of God, given through Moses in the twelfth chapter of Leviticus, deliberately pronounced the woman who continued her kind to be unclean and impure. For three-and-thirty days she was allowed to touch no hallowed thing, nor to come into the sanctuary, if she had borne a son. But, if her offspring proved to be female, she was doubly impure—"she shall continue in the blood of her purifying three score and six days." An atonement was necessary, and, of course, an offering to the Lord, or the priest. The regulation was: "She shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle dove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest"—who doubtless liked roast lamb and pigeon pie. If too poor to bring a lamb, "then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean."

The whole purport of priestly legislation, Jewish and Christian, is a slur on motherhood. The most holy and beautiful of human relationships is stigmatised as sin, and the burden of atonement thrown on the woman. In the old ceremony of the "Churching of Women"—that is to say, permitting them to re-enter the holy building after their "defilement"—the woman had to stay outside the church porch until the priest came with holy water to re-consecrate her. In our present Church of England Service the woman has to prostrate herself upon her knees, and "must offer accustomed offerings."

This story of the purification certainly tends to throw suspicion upon that other of the Immaculate Conception. If Mary believed her offspring was of the Holy Ghost, why should she atone for it as for an ordinary sin-begotten child? The angels had announced the extraordinary birth from heaven. The shepherds are said to have "made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds" (Luke ii. 17, 18). Yet Mary takes her doves to the temple, as if to throw dust in their eyes, and those of Joseph, her husband. Although rich enough to come up from Nazareth to be taxed, and despite the gifts of the Magi and the adoration of the shepherds, she failed to present a lamb, but took two pigeons, which, perhaps, were appropriate to the paternity.

Purification was followed by presentation. Thus we are told: "And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord." Here was another barbarous custom. As in early savage tribes all the offspring were at the disposal of the chief, so Jehovah affirmed that the first-born males of men and beasts are devoted to him. In accordance with that claim, the first-born males of the beasts are duly sacrificed, and it is only by special permission that the claim to the first-born of men is waived, and it is enacted that they may be redeemed (Exodus xiii. 12–15). As Professor Huxley asked: "Is it possible to avoid the conclusion that immolation of their first-born would have been incumbent on the worshippers of Jahveh, had they not been specially excused? Can any other conclusion be drawn from the history of Abraham and Isaac?" As in that case the injunction was for sacrifice, but a ram was permitted to be substituted, so the lamb, and afterwards money, offered for redemption, was a continual witness to the Lord's claim. Here is a similar difficulty: If Joseph and Mary believed in the angel's visits and the miraculous conception; if they knew their child to be of divine, and not of human, origin, they must have felt, not only that the payment of a ransom was not needed, but that to offer it was to mock Jehovah. Neander, whose Jewish training showed him this difficulty, endeavors to mitigate it by saying that "it would be natural to suppose that Mary must have hesitated, and laid her scruples before the priests for decision, before she could make her mind up to perform these ceremonies." It was a delicate question to lay before priests, and Neander goes on to say: "Mary did not venture to speak openly of these wonderful things." But how, unless she spoke openly, could the priests understand her scruples? The evident fact is that the narrative of Mary's purification, and of the circumcision and redemption, shows that his parents knew of nothing wonderful about the birth of the child.

The Christian feast of Purification—or, as it was known in the Catholic times, "Candlemas"—is a substitution for the Pagan Lupercalia, which was regarded both as a feast of purification and as being intended to render the females fruitful. The blessing and burning of many candles at this time was a survival from gross Pagan practices. The Mass was actually performed for the candles, and, says Brady, they "even offered up petitions to the waxen creatures themselves, that they would, 'in the name of our Lord and the Holy Trinity, etc., etc., repel, extirpate devils,' and so forth."

Pope Innocent, in a sermon on Candlemas, quoted in *Pagano Papismus*, inquires: "Why do we in this feast carry candles? Because the Gentiles dedicated the month of February to the infernal gods [the deities beneath the earth], and as, at the beginning of it, Pluto stole Proserpine, and her mother, Ceres, sought her in the night with lighted candles, so they at the beginning of this month walked about the city with lighted candles; because the holy fathers could not utterly extirpate this custom, they ordained that Christians should carry about candles in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Thus, what was before done to the honor of Ceres is now done to the honor of the Virgin."

Brady tells us that this feast was also known as the *Wives' Feast*, from the excessive feasting with which the churching of women was celebrated by the gossips.

Like the other festivals of Christianity, Purification Day betrays its Pagan origin, and shows traces of underlying barbarism. In nothing is this more evident than in the slur cast on women who fulfil the most evident and natural function of their nature. What worse can be said of a faith than that it treats as essentially unclean the holy office of motherhood?

J. M. WHEELER.

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GOD'S OPPORTUNITY.

(Concluded from p. 33.)

HAVING raised Bradlaugh from the dead, and set him preaching Christianity—supposing there were any need for preaching, in addition to his presence—the Lord might next proceed to convert Ingersoll. We have already said that we do not know how this could be done, but omnipotence should be equal to anything, and one more mystery is nothing in a religion which is full of incomprehensibilities. Up to the present the prayers of the Christian Endeavorers for Ingersoll's conversion have been utterly futile. The great Freethought orator gives them credit for good intentions, but smiles at their simplicity. He says he is less a Christian than ever, if there are degrees in negation. But when the Lord begins business with Ingersoll, and clears the field of all the little kneeling Christians, we may expect a startling issue. Though he wrestled as stoutly as Jacob, the "infidel" would be finally subdued; and what a shout would go up from all America when the godly could say of him, as they once said of Saul, "Behold he prayeth."

Our next suggestion is that God should do something for the Armenians. *How* he should do it is difficult to determine—that is, difficult for us; but he is omniscient, and a know-all God ought not to be staggered by such a trifle. There is one method which is obvious, and perhaps feasible, though it involves a tremendous miracle. It is perfectly clear that every male Armenian who is murdered, and every female Armenian who is worse than murdered, suffer in consequence of the political jealousies of their European co-religionists. The great Powers hate each other more than they love mercy. They permit atrocities which they might easily prevent, because they all know that any one of them that interfered would certainly thieve all it could lay hands upon in the process; and each exclaims, "Let murder and outrage continue, sooner than you shall steal before me!" Now in this state of things there is a fine opportunity for God's interposition. Let him fulfil that aged prophecy about "goodwill toward men." Let him fill the hearts of the Christian nations of Europe, if only for once, with an ardent love of justice and humanity. Then the great Powers would be united on behalf of Armenia. They would speak the united word of omnipotent effect, the Shadow of God at Constantinople would instantly submit, murder and outrage would immediately cease, and the world would at last know that there was a God of some real use to mankind.

This astounding miracle of a just and generous Europe might be followed up by the Reunion of Christendom. Switzerland picnics, and trips to Rome and Jerusalem, are unable to achieve this desired consummation. It requires something more than human power to harmonise the household of faith. "How these Christians love one another" was said a long time ago, when they were few and feeble, and had to hang together to avoid hanging separately. They stood then back to back. As soon as they were numerous and strong enough, they stood face to face, and they have been quarreling and fighting ever since. Century after century a state of things has prevailed, in which the bitter *mot* of Swift's is all too terribly true, that most men have just religion enough to make them hate each other. Yet it was promised by Jesus Christ that his disciples should be one with him, as he was one with the Father. Well, let him keep his word, or let the Father keep it for him. The voice that stilled the raging billows of the Sea of Galilee should once more cry "Peace!" to the mutual animosities of Christendom.

On the whole, however, we rather hope that this Reunion will not take place in our time. Christian divisions have been very useful to the Freethinker. They furnish him with a perennial argument against the divine claims of Christianity. They also assist him in his efforts towards self-preservation. While the Christians worry each other he stands a chance of surviving. When they are reconciled he is likely to be devoured.

It would also have a great effect on "infidels" if the sky-pilots were suddenly to be endued with humility and self-denial. If all the bishops, for instance, declared that God had warned them to renounce wealth and abandon their palaces; if they unanimously agreed to live in two rooms on thirty shillings a week; would it not be difficult for "infidelity" to oppose such powerful Evidences of Christianity?

We may be told, of course, that God will not work miracles to convince Atheists. But is this fair? He worked a multitude of miracles long, long ago, to convince persons who were by no means slow of belief. Why not repeat the performance when it is vastly more requisite? It will not do to say the Atheist is obstinate in his incredulity. He is a man, and not a monster. He is subject to the common laws of human nature. His intelligence works in spite of his will. He cannot help being swayed by facts. He is unable to resist the force of evidence. It is absurd to affirm that he would only smile if the words "There is a God" were written in fire on the vault of night. The first night the words are visible the Atheists will certainly be startled. Most of them will think of going to church next Sunday.

A less heroic measure would be the fulfilment of the promises made in the last chapter of Mark. Jesus Christ promised that those who believed in him should drink poison and caress serpents with impunity. The divinity of the Church should therefore be demonstrated. After the sermon (or before it, if he is long-winded) every minister should drink a dose of prussic acid—not prepared in the vestry. It might be tried first on a hopelessly diseased cat, just to show there was no deception; and if the minister survived *his* dose, it would be better evidence than the liquefaction of the blood of Saint Januarius. Further, the clergy (in accordance with another promise in Mark) should go into the hospitals and heal the sick with oil and prayer. This would be rough on the doctors, but it would be grateful to the sick; and if missionaries with this healing power (to say nothing of the poison and serpent tricks) were sent amongst the heathen, the whole world might be converted to Christianity in less than a hundred years.

We might pursue this subject much farther, but what we have written may suffice. All we have to say in conclusion is this—that if the things we have suggested are too strong, we should be satisfied with something weaker to begin with. It would make "infidels" pause if Christian Evidence lecturers were to display a hatred of lies and libels.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE CHURCH AND EDUCATION.

THE truth of the familiar phrase, that "history repeats itself," is being amply verified in the present attitude of the Church towards education. The clergy have always been persistent opponents of the Secular instruction of children. When in 1839 the first grant of £30,000 was proposed by the Government for educational purposes, Canon Wray and the Rev. Hugh Stowell headed an organisation in opposition to it; and in 1843 the English Dissenters resisted, and threw out the Government Factory Educational Bill. The same kind of antagonism was manifested by the Church party towards Mr. Forster's Bill of 1870, the object of which was to establish Board schools throughout the kingdom. The clergy saw that the success of this measure would mean the death-blow to their monopoly of the sham education which was then being imparted to the rising generation. It is true that in 1870 some of the Nonconformists pleaded boldly for secular education; for instance, Mr. Winterbotham exclaimed in the House of Commons: "What did the Nonconformists want? I avow it frankly, *secular education*. A national system of education for a people who do not agree, or who will not admit they agree, in their religious opinions, must be secular." This, at least, was consistent; but contrast such language with the advocacy of the Nonconformists of to-day, who are among the most determined opponents of a national system of secular education.

They are content with what is called the "Compromise," which is as unjust as it has proved useless in its operations. It entirely ignores the rights of thousands of Agnostics and Secularists, who are in no way recognised. This "compromise" was proposed by the Tory leader of the House of Commons on March 8, 1871, and it provides that in all Board schools "the Bible shall be read, and there shall be given such explanations and such instruction therefrom, in the principles of morality and religion, as are suited to the capacity of children.' Now, is not such a provision absurd upon the very face of it? Of course it is left to the

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teacher to decide as to the nature of the "explanations and instructions" that are to be given, and also what is "suited to the capacities of children." Thus power may be placed in the hands of an orthodox bigot that may prove most injurious to the youthful mind. Besides, this "compromise" has entirely failed to secure harmony, as is shown by the repeated squabbles in the School Board meetings, and the present clerical conspiracy against Board school education. The fact is, as Mr. Gladstone and the Rev. Joseph Parker have stated, the real settlement of the question can be found only in the establishment of a system of secular education. The clergy have their churches, wherein they can impart religious instruction; the schools, supported by the money of the public, must not be made a training ground for superstition and vain speculations.

Upon what is the present clerical conspiracy against Board schools based? It is this: First, that they injure the voluntary schools; and, secondly, that they impose a heavy pecuniary burden upon the public. Now, these complaints come from the supporters of Church schools, which have increased in numbers since 1870 from 6,382 to 11,897, and which in 1894 received grants to the amount of £2,732,000. Besides, the Church has wealth enough, if it were wisely used, aided by voluntary subscriptions—which it ought to command if its schools are really conducted upon the voluntary principle—to provide for the instruction of the children under its control. The editor of the London *Daily Chronicle*, of November 20 of last year, writes: "Let it be remembered that they [the supporters of Church schools] are the State-selected and State-favored body, receiving yearly for ecclesiastical uses between six and seven millions of State money and property. Turning to their official year-book, it will be found there stated that the voluntary gifts of this immensely wealthy body amount to about five millions annually for all religious and educational purposes. To these sums has to be added their share of the money voted by Parliament under the Education Acts for the maintenance of elementary day schools; a sum covering more millions, the product of national taxation." In spite of these facts, the advocates of voluntary schools complain of the pecuniary burden which the taxpayers have to bear in supporting Board schools. It appears to be overlooked that, if the demands of the Church party for additional grants are complied with, that "burden" will be considerably increased. Let us grant that the cost of our national education is great; but the expense of providing for our criminals is the less in consequence; for, in proportion to the increase of true education, crime decreases.

The voluntary method has had its trial, and has proved a complete failure; if it had been successful, there would have been no need for Board schools. Before 1870 the Church schools had it nearly all their own way, and what was the result? Only about six per cent. of the population received the very imperfect instruction then imparted. Mr. Forster, in introducing the Education Bill in 1870, said: "It is calculated that in Liverpool the number of children between five and thirteen who ought to receive an elementary education is 80,000; but, so far as we can make out, 20,000 of them attend no school whatever, while at least another 20,000 attend schools where they get an education not worth having. In Manchester—that is, in the borough of Manchester, not including Salford—there are about 65,000 children who might be at school, and of this number 16,000 go to no school at all.....As a Yorkshireman, I am sorry to say that, from what I hear, Leeds appears to be as bad as Liverpool; and so also, I fear, is Birmingham." Now, such was the state of things before Board schools existed, when the opponents of secular education had an opportunity of showing what they could do. Why, at that time there was not one school in "the swarming region of Whitechapel, and many other equally poor and populous regions of London, much less in country towns and agricultural parishes." This is stated in *Cassell's History of England*, which adds: "The consequence was that the condition of the agricultural population was as debased morally as it was destitute physically in the almost total absence of education, the very funds granted by pious testators for this end being embezzled by the clergy or squirearchy." A noble record this, truly, of educational effort under Christian rule!

Of course we are not opposed to voluntary education—the more of it the better; but, if additional grants from the public treasury are to be made to Church schools, it must be upon the understanding that the extra grants shall be utilised to increase the efficiency of the schools, and not to save the pockets of those who boast about the superiority of the voluntary method. Moreover, all schools receiving financial aid from the public ought to be, and must be, under the control of the public. We are upon the eve of an important educational crisis, and it is the duty of all Secularists to carefully watch the doings of the Tory and clerical alliance during the next few months. After years of hard fighting we have deprived the Church party of the control they once had over the minds of the rising generation; be it our duty to struggle to the bitter end to prevent them regaining that control. Further, Secular parents should make it a point on all occasions to withdraw their children from school during the giving of Bible lessons. Let parents remember what Professor Huxley said to the School Board when he was a member thereof. His words were: "What I ask, and what I have a right to ask, and what you as honest men must grant, is this: that these tender children shall not be taught that which you do not yourselves believe."

CHARLES WATTS.

SECULARISM IN SCOTLAND: PAST AND PRESENT.

EVER since the time of the Reformation there has been some measure of Freethought in Scotland, as even the ultra-orthodox Dr. McCosh—the McBosh of Huxley—admits in his partisan *History of the Scottish Philosophy;* but in a country where the fierce zeal of the people gave the clergy practically untrammelled power any public avowal of heresy was naturally dangerous, as was proved by the judicial murder of the poor lad Aitkenhead; by the Scottish Presbyterian clergy in 1646; and by their determined but futile attempts to bring even so powerful and well-protected a heresiarch as Hume before an ecclesiastical tribunal. It is to Hutchinson, Professor of Moral Philosophy in Glasgow University, one of Hume's contemporaries, that we owe the introduction of Latitudinarianism into the Scottish Church. This movement, at first academical, took some decades to ooze out to the "common people"; but in Burns's day it had reached the market-place in the form of the famous controversy between the "Auld Lichts" and the "New Lichts"—representing, respectively, Ancient Orthodoxy and New Knowledge, which inspired some of Burns's most poignant satires. The acclamation with which these were received shows that even then there was a considerable leaven of Freethought working amongst the Scottish people, and there is no doubt that this would have spread rapidly but for the panic legislation against liberty of the press and of speech, passed during the height of the great reaction which followed upon the first French Revolution. One of the most precious enactments of the recrudescence of barbarism which marked that agitation was the extension to Scotland of the Acts 9 and 10 of William and Mary, the infamous Blasphemy statutes, with an important addition marking the legislators' nice sense of the superior sanctity of the Scotch, and their consequently greater repugnance to blasphemy. While in England the maximum sentence for that offence is three years' imprisonment, in Scotland the penalty is from seven to fourteen years' *transportation*. The rigor with which George the Third's penal code was enforced was illustrated by the numerous trials for "sedition" during the closing years of the last, and the opening decades of the present, century. It was actually an indictable offence to lend to a friend copies of Paine's *Rights of Man* or *Age of Reason*, and that he had done this formed one of the gravest charges against the gifted but luckless Muir.

It is surprising that, under these adverse circumstances, Freethought should have made any headway at all. That it did so was due, in part, to the conflict between Orthodoxy and moderation, and to the extensive, although probably clandestine, circulation of the excellent translations of the works of Voltaire and Rousseau, issued, during the lifetime of the authors, by Urie and other Glasgow and Edinburgh publishers, and also of the widespread diffusion of Paine's writings. We reach the beginnings of organised Freethought in the first years of the third decade of the century, when the "Zetetick Society of Edinburgh" produced its *Shorter Catechism for Explaining to the Young and Ignorant the Principles of Atheism*, for the publication of which, and the

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sale of Richard Carlile's *Republican*, in 1824, James Affleck was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, and ordered to find security for five years, under a penalty of £100. Affleck only averted transportation by tendering a plea of guilty, and making an abject apology. From this time forward we have records of virtually continuous Freethought propaganda in Dundee, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, as will be seen on a reference to the old volumes of Carlile's *Republican* and *Lion*, G. J. Holyoake's *Reasoner*, Robert Cooper's *London Investigator*, and the later Secularist organs.

I am not disparaging the status or service of Edinburgh or Dundee when I say that Glasgow has always been well in the forefront of the Freethought movement in Scotland. The West of Scotland is proverbially more advanced in political and religious thought and life than the rest of the country. There is a legend, sacred to the local sermon and religious tract, about a certain "Hell-fire Club," the Atheistical members of which assembled at "the witching hour of night," to gyrate like dervishes, yelling all the while, "There is no God! There is no God!" In my salad days that picture used to have an awful fascination for me. I understand the feeling now. It was the natural response to the titillating stimulus that picturesque fiction always begets. When we get beyond the nebulous atmosphere of myth and legend, we discover that the first Freethought Society in Glasgow was a namesake of, and sister to, the Edinburgh Zetetick Society. The Glasgow Zeteticks did one good piece of work, through the agency of "Anti-Theos," whose examination of Gillespie's *Argument for the Existence of the Lord God* is a really clever and forcible performance. To the "Zeteticks" succeeded the "Universal Community of Rational Religionists," an offshoot from Owenism. This body erected a spacious meeting-place, which—"to such base uses may we come at last"—is now a Catholic chapel. In the heyday of their prosperity—when overflowing meetings were the rule—crowds of gaping bigots used to line the streets near the hall, to behold what manner of men these Atheists were. It was under the immediate influence of the Owenite view of education that the Glasgow Secular School took its rise. It enjoyed a prosperous career, and turned out many pupils who were a credit to its methods, and a blessing and honour to the society in which they moved. Some of them still survive, in a green old age, whose memories of a school-life free from the burdens of Bible and Catechism, and the Solomonic rigor of the traditional pædagogy, are amongst their fondest possessions. The Owenite phase merged into "The Eclectic Institute," which had various homes. It was under the auspices of the "Institute" that Mr. Bradlaugh first came to Glasgow, and during its *régime* Charles Southwell, G. J. Holyoake, R. Cooper, J. Barker, and Mrs. H. Law frequently lectured and debated in Glasgow and the neighboring towns. Some years after the formation of the N.S.S. the title of the Glasgow Society was changed to "The Eclectic and Secular Institute," and finally to "The Glasgow Secular Society," which, with the addition of "and Branch of the N.S.S.," is the name it now bears.

Glasgow has borne a good share of the brunt of Secularist propaganda and defence in Scotland within the last twenty years. It rendered yeoman service to Mr. Bradlaugh all through his heroic Parliamentary struggle, and when old Mr. Ferguson was prosecuted for selling the *Freethinker* in 1885, with the aid of Mr. Foote, and backed by the Secularists of Great Britain, the Glasgow Branch procured the quashing of the magistrate's sentence, and elicited an expression of opinion from the judges of the Supreme Court which will have the effect of preventing similar prosecutions for a long time to come. It is, therefore, specially gratifying to me to know that Glasgow so worthily sustained her good record by contributing liberally to Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, of the wisdom and utility of which I have just had striking proof.

During the week ending January 25, Mr. Charles Watts lectured under the scheme at Kilmarnock, Paisley, Motherwell, and Camberslang. It will be for him to give his impressions of the week's work, from the lecturer's point of view; but as one who took some part in promoting the meetings, and as an eye-witness of the series, I should like to testify briefly to their great importance and unqualified success. Much of the latter was due, of course, to Mr. Watts's personal effort and influence. He was in capital form throughout, and his lectures were models of exact and lucid reasoning, concise and connected statement of fact, and persuasive eloquence. Old friends protested that they had never heard him to such advantage, and new hearers were full of his praises. I have had a large experience of audiences, and can safely affirm that I have seldom seen more intelligent or attentive gatherings than those which Mr. Watts addressed at the places named. This was notably the case at Motherwell, where the meeting consisted largely of alert-looking young men, who evidently followed the lecture with the keenest interest. There can be no doubt that Mr. Watts's meetings at Kilmarnock, Motherwell, and Camberslang will have the immediate effect of exciting lively local discussion and speculation as to the character of Secularism; and if those places are visited shortly by other special lecturers, the material will soon be forthcoming for the constitution of branches.

The most decisive proof of the practical value of Mr. Foote's scheme is found in the fact that, but for its existence, I should not have been able to get up meetings at all. The local organisers of them were in every case working-men, who simply could not have faced the responsibility of meeting the expenses, *plus* a lecturer's fee. It was the assurance that the scheme relieved them of the latter obligation that cleared the way for action. I am glad to report that, all through, the arrangements were most efficient, and that the local friends worked with the greatest enthusiasm and energy for the success of the meetings. At Motherwell no collection was taken, the local Secularists having agreed to defray the expenses themselves. At none of the other places, in spite of the good attendance, did the income quite cover the outlay. But for the scheme, this meant that the local friends would have been obliged to make a special box to fee the lecturer, or send him away unpaid. In the first case, there would be no disposition to repeat a costly experiment; and in the second, the lecturer could not afford to return.

The next great advantage of which the scheme gives promise is that of extending and strengthening Secularist organisation. Many years ago, writing in the *National Reformer*, I declared that even in remote Highland villages Freethinkers were to be found, while in the large towns they were to be computed by tens of thousands. Subsequent observation satisfies me that my estimate was well within the mark. What, then, is wanted to bring all these incohering atoms into combination? Obviously, some well-contrived and sedulously-sustained plan of propaganda and edification. In the smaller towns Freethinkers may be unknown to one another, or there may be many in a transitional state, who lack full and exact information as to the principles and policy of Secularism. A public meeting brings everything to a focus; introductions are effected, and misconceptions cleared up. We in Scotland have long been anxious to establish a Federation of the Scottish Branches, but have hitherto failed to devise the means appropriate to that end. In Mr. Foote's scheme we possess, in my opinion, a first step towards that "consummation devoutly to be wished." In the first place, the provinces must be worked up thoroughly, and as many new Branches as possible started; while Branches in the large towns which are languishing will need tonic treatment. Then, when this preparation has been made, the "psychological moment" for co-operation between the Branches will be easily divined. This project depends, of course, on the continuance of Mr. Foote's scheme, and that again on the amount of support it receives from the party at large. Surely, in view of what the scheme has actually achieved, and of the rich promise that it holds out of wider usefulness, all Secularists ought to befriend it to the utmost of their power.

Superstition and bigotry die hard, but they are dying. I have been very much struck with the comparative ease with which halls were obtained, and other arrangements carried on, for Mr. Watts's meetings. Thirty years ago, in the same places—with the exception of Paisley—there would have been serious difficulty in procuring a meeting-place, and it is not likely that any local printer would have risked doing the bills, etc. Now there is no sensible hitch in these respects; and the lecturer, instead of being hooted, mobbed, and pelted with decaying animal and vegetable products, is treated with an almost disappointing deference and amenity. But let no one flatter himself that the danger is over, and the need for the war upon Unreason past. Education is doing much to sap the foundations of orthodoxy, and spread abroad the spirit of fraternity; but so long as the Secularist is technically—and sometimes actually—

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an outlaw, so long as religion is entrenched within its strongholds of State-bestowed privilege and fortified with the armaments of sinister social influence; so long must we fight unyieldingly and unceasingly. An endowed Church and unrepealed Heresy Laws are a perpetual menace to liberty. In the event of some insensate reaction, they would certainly be used as engines of persecution; and we do not know the hour when perchance the blustering wind of religious fanaticism may kindle into a fierce, devouring blaze the now smouldering fires of the Moloch of superstition. We shall never be safe until they are utterly extinguished; but in the meantime we will be fairly content if we can prevent any active combustion in the sullen, smoking pile. J. P. GILMOUR.

"ACTS OF GOD."

IT is the duty of people who accept the dogma that "God governs in the affairs of men" to give the world some system by which catastrophes due to supernatural intervention may be distinguished from those which are referable to natural causes. Until they do this, we shall never know when to ascribe an event to divine displeasure, and take warning accordingly, or when to look elsewhere for an explanation. The phenomena in themselves afford us no guide. Here is an incident which has enjoyed the publicity usually accorded to such things:—

"HIS DEATH AN ACT OF GOD.

"Bridgeport, Dec. 14.—Judge John B. Douglas, who drew up the writ for the arrest of the Rev. Dr. Joseph Pullman, who denounced Jane May, the actress, from the pulpit last Sunday, died of heart failure to-day.

"The news of his death spread rapidly about town. Some of Dr. Pullman's sympathisers pronounced the sudden summons a retribution. Some said it was an act of God, meted out as a warning to lawyers against issuing body writs for the arrest of clergymen."—*New York World*, Dec. 15, 1895.

Obviously, the significance of the foregoing is that the deceased, by his act, incurred the wrath of heaven, and that death was sent as a warning to other judges not to draw up writs for the arrest of clergymen. The penalty proves the enormity of the offence. Now, if we are to take death in such instances as sure proof that God disapproves of the particular act with which it is associated, what inference shall we draw from the following?—

Dayton, O., Oct. 7.—The Rev. Dr. Longstroth dropped dead in the pulpit of the Wayne-avenue church yesterday while conducting services.

Lockhart, Texas, Oct. 22.—Rev. A. J. Potter dropped dead at this place while preaching. He fell in the pulpit and died instantly.

Worcester, Mass., Oct. 24.—Rev. William Gordon, of Michigan City, Ind., dropped dead last evening while attending prayer meeting at Grace Methodist Episcopal Church.

Chicago, Oct. 23.—Ephraim I. Bond died while kneeling at his bedside in morning prayer yesterday.

Brooklyn, Nov. 24.—Margaret Farell, an aged widow, left her home at about six o'clock yesterday morning to attend early mass in St. Agnes's Church. She was prostrated with heart failure while the services were in progress, and expired just as an ambulance arrived.

The Rev. Samuel Y. Lum, a retired Presbyterian clergyman and missionary, residing at Rutherford, N.J., was struck and instantly killed by an express train on the Erie Railway at that place.

Brooklyn, Dec. 16.—Harvey Doolittle, a war veteran, aged sixty-five years, dropped dead last night while on his knees at prayer just preceding the services in St. Peter's Episcopal Church.

New York, May 4.—Mrs. Hannah Kimbrook was among the exhorters at the Salvation Army Hall in Newark Thursday night. She had thanked the Lord for the favors he had granted her, and sat down. A moment later she shrieked and fell to the floor dead.

New York, Dec. 30.—Andrew P. Rogers, class leader of the Bedford-street M. E. Church, complained of feeling ill directly after entering the class meeting-room yesterday morning. A physician was summoned, but he died immediately.

Mitchell Station, Ala., July 28.—Services were being conducted in a negro Church near here to-day when the report of a pistol rang out and the preacher, Eli Williams, fell dead in his pulpit, the ball having entered his heart.

Hartford, Nov. 17.—Mrs. Mary Howe, of Putnam, was burned to death while reading her Bible last night. She went to her room with her Bible, as was her custom. In some way she upset the lamp, and her clothing took fire. She died on the following morning.

The theory in the case of Judge Douglas, of Bridgeport, as has been pointed out, is that he brought death upon himself by doing that which was displeasing to the Almighty. We, of course, cannot disprove this; but if it is asserted as a fact to be used in subsequent syntheses, how will its asserters dispose of the other facts cited? And while resting in the conclusion that God punishes those who commit acts displeasing to him, will they assent to the related inference that such acts as are not rebuked by him are to be regarded as pleasing in his sight?

We ought to feel justified in believing that God, having said, "Thou shalt not kill," would, if he were present, arrest the arm of the murderer before it had delivered the fatal blow—that he would stand between the victim and the assassin; but there is no instance of his ever having done this. Again, since he has directed his ministers to preach to all nations, we might naturally suppose that he would protect them in doing so. The record of his missionaries slain in China, in Turkey, and elsewhere, shows how baseless is such a hope. But if he does not take the pains to shield them from his enemies, surely he does not smite them himself! Read of the deaths of the Rev. Dr. Longstroth, the Rev. A. J. Potter, and the Rev. Mr. Gordon, as told in the dispatches we have reproduced, and then, with the case of Judge Douglas in mind, account for them on any other hypothesis than that he does so smite them. Give us some organon by which these deaths may be distinguished from the miraculous, so that those who feel impelled to follow the example of the deceased clergyman and preach, or of the deceased worshippers and pray, may know whether or not they are rushing upon certain destruction. It may be unsafe to generalise on a basis of nine deaths for worshipping to one for drawing up a writ; but the data at hand certainly do not indicate that the lives of those who put their trust in God are any safer than the lives of those who do not. His visitations are impartial and indiscriminate.

The God who thus conducts himself—totally insensible to the needs of his worshippers, allowing their worst enemies to trample them unrebuked, and himself visiting them only with sudden death—is the deity habitually addressed in prayer by millions of Christians. We don't believe that any such being exists outside the imaginations of the persons who so address him. We believe that the death-dealing powers attributed to him are the gift of their own malice, and that when these Bridgeport Christians say that God inflicted capital punishment upon Judge Douglas for issuing a body writ for the arrest of the Rev. Dr. Pullman, they thereby only indicate what they would do themselves if they had the power they ascribe to their deity.

—*Truthseeker.*

Bishop Whipple, of Minnesota, says that the Dakota Indians once held a war dance near a mission house. He went to Wabasha, the chief, and said: "Wabasha, you asked me for a missionary and teacher. I gave them to you. I visit you, and the first sight is this brutal scalp dance. I knew the Chippewa whom your young men have murdered. His wife is crying for her husband; his children are asking for their father. Wabasha, the Great Spirit hears his children cry. He is angry. Some day he will ask Wabasha, 'Where is your red brother?'" The old chief smiled, drew his pipe from his mouth, and said: "White man go to war with his own brother in the same country; kill more men than Wabasha can count in all his life. Great Spirit smiles, says: 'Good white man! He has my book. I love him very much. I have a good place for him by-and-bye.' The Indian is a wild man. He has no Great Spirit book. He kills one man; has a scalp dance. Great Spirit is mad, and says: 'Bad Indian! I put him in a bad place by-and-bye.' Wabasha don't believe it."

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THE NATURAL BASIS OF MORALITY.

THROUGH many centuries of experience man has learned that some actions conduce to human happiness; that others cause unhappiness. One class of actions is called right, the other is called wrong. The only criterion by which we can ultimately decide as to the moral quality of acts is the effect they produce for or against human well-being. Hence, utility is the standard and test of virtue and goodness. "The moral law" is a generalised expression for all those actions which have the approval of our highest judgment. In external nature there is no reign of moral law, no trace of moral sensibility. Only in the conscious mind do we final moral law, and there it is a conception of an order, made by abstracting from character and conduct, and combining in an ideal sequence all those moral qualities which experience has taught us are advantageous to the race.

The useful comprehends, of course, among other components, the pleasurable, the ornamental, the beautiful, art, poetry, music, love, and passion, as well as printing presses, steamboats, telegraphs, and sewing machines. Our ideas of duty become more correct with advancing culture, because it enables us to understand more fully our relations to our fellow men and to the external world, and to perceive the result of certain lines of action and courses of conduct, by which we learn what is involved in those general principles and precepts which have descended from the early and comparatively uncultured periods of human history.

Life has been evolved and sustained, in a perpetual conflict it is true, yet primarily, by actions which are accompanied by pleasurable sensations. Were it possible for a race of animals to seek pleasure in injurious actions, and to avoid beneficial actions as painful, such a race could not fail to become extinct very soon. It is certain that, under such circumstances, no race could come into existence. It follows that our knowledge and practice of virtue—the sum-total of acts that conduce to our well-being—have been attained by the desire for happiness.

Experience has taught men that some acts which are pleasurable for the moment are, under some circumstances, ruinous in the end; that others, which are painful for the time, are ultimately the source of great happiness. It has also taught that acts which may be a source of pleasure to the individual, if he can enjoy it without reference to others, may be against the happiness of the community, which in tribal, and much more in civilised, life is the main consideration. The community, which once was but a tribe, has extended till it includes the entire human family; and the theorem of the utilitarian philosophy, broadly interpreted, is that those actions are right which are best adapted to promote the well-being of all mankind.

Undoubtedly man has a moral sense called conscience. It does not teach us what is right and wrong. In two individuals, indeed, it may approve acts diametrically opposite in moral quality. It is not "the voice of God." Its decisions depend upon the views which are held, and these upon inherited character, education, and circumstances. Still, this moral sense is *à priori* in the individual, although acquired by the race. I hold with Mr. Spencer when he says: "I believe that the experiences of utility, organised and consolidated through all past generations of the human race, have been producing corresponding modifications, which, by continual transmission and accumulation, have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition—certain emotions responding to right and wrong conduct, which have an apparent basis in the individual experience of utility."

The moral sense is the highly-complex product of human culture. Although intuitive in civilised man, there is every argument that the case admits of in favor of the view that it is the result of acquirement in the race. We have here, in its application to the moral sense, a complete reconciliation of the old sensational theory of Hobbes and Locke and the transcendental theory of Liebnitz and Kant, each of which contained an element of truth and an element of error.

If a man is just, honorable, and noble, he is so, not because behind all his acts and decisions is a metaphysical entity called "the will," which acts uninfluenced by motives, but because he is so constituted, or he has been so influenced by his education and surroundings, that his desires and aversions determine his actions in accordance with just, honorable, and noble principles. The harmoniously-developed and truly moral man is he with whom the performance of an act that is right, far from involving a struggle, is easy and pleasant, whatever sacrifice it demands. The sense of coercion, the feeling that the act must be done, gives way to a cheerful readiness and desire to do what is right.

"Conscientiousness," says Herbert Spencer, "has in many outgrown that stage in which the sense of a compelling power is joined with rectitude of action. The truly honest man, here and there to be found, is not only without thought of legal, religious, or social compulsion, when he discharges an equitable claim on him, but he is without thought of self-compulsion. He does the right thing with a simple feeling of satisfaction in doing it, and is, indeed, impatient if anything prevents him from having the satisfaction of doing it."

Naturalism gives prominence to what admits of no dispute—that we must all leave behind us the influence of our thoughts and deeds, which will go on in the great general life of mankind. Man lives not for himself alone, nor for those simply who claim his attention during his personal existence, but as well for the millions that come after him to receive for a heritage whatever contribution, material or psychical, he has made to the progress of the race. Every human life, from the least to the greatest, leaves traces of its existence which, in one form or another, must last while the race endures. Who that is moved by lofty considerations can fail to find in this great truth an impulse to a noble life?

B. F. UNDERWOOD.

—*Secular Thought.*

ACID DROPS.

"TWIXT the Two Millstones" is the title of a story which is running through the *Methodist Times*. It is all so delightfully simple—just suited to the taste and intelligence of Methodist readers! There is a beautiful Christian character, of course; and equally of course, an ugly Atheist character. The latter's portrait is painted in this fashion: "There were about fifteen men and boys in all. One of them, to whom all gave precedence, was a tall, thin, wiry-looking man, grey-headed and grim-visaged. His eyes were grey and cold, and his expression was cynical, deepened by a crafty kind of smile, as if he knew a great deal more to everyone's detriment than he meant to declare. This was the old workman Cartledge had spoken of as 'Shakeshaft.' Whether or not this was his real name, or only a nickname, no one knew; but it was the only name he was known by at Cartledge and Brown's. Shakeshaft ruled the shop, and had done so from time immemorial. He was head spokesman, when one was needed. He was treasurer and head of their little trade club, for the braziers here were at that time in no general trade union, mainly through Shakeshaft's influence, who, though a stern Radical, did not believe in general unions. These, he maintained, only enabled a few lazy officials to fatten without work. He was also their chief authority upon all public questions, the men taking their opinions from him with only one or two exceptions. One of the exceptions was Hobson Baines, who preferred to think for himself, and generally thought differently from Shakeshaft upon all questions alike, whether industrial, political, or religious. Shakeshaft read *Reynolds's News* and the *Weekly Dispatch* through every Sunday—the *News* in the morning, and the *Dispatch* in the evening. These furnished him with texts for the whole week following. He had been a Chartist in his early youth, and was a Republican as well as a Radical now. He was fond of dropping in to hear Bradlaugh at the 'Hall of Science' in Old-street, on his way home to a street off Bath-street, City-road."

"Shakeshaft" once "baited" a poor apprentice who "still showed some respect for the beliefs of his father and mother"; but Bill Baines gave him a dreadful licking, and he sang small afterwards. Bill Baines died in due time, but Hobson Baines (his son) still made it warm for the Atheist. He argued down "Shakeshaft," and "in that shop, at least, Bradlaugh's superficial attacks upon Christianity were thoroughly exposed." Perhaps they were, and perhaps they wer'n't. But this, at least, is certain—that the writer of this pious story, the Rev. S. E. Keeble, never, to our knowledge, went to the Hall of Science and answered Bradlaugh *himself*. He found it easier to reply to Bradlaugh's "superficial attacks" at a considerable distance.

"The eight days' mission in Craven Chapel," says the *Methodist Times*, "is now progressing with encouraging

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results. Mr. Price Hughes preaches every evening at eight. There have been conversions, some of them of extraordinary interest, every night." *Extraordinary interest!* Does this portend a new Atheist Shoemaker?

The *Daily News* Paris correspondent states (January 25) that strenuous attempts were made by the clergy to bring back M. Floquet on his death-bed to the Church in which he was piously reared. The Cardinal Archbishop of Paris sent word through a Basque relative of M. Floquet—M. Etcheverry, ex-Deputy—that he wished to be allowed to pay a visit to a dying man. Madame Charras, sister of Madame Floquet, received the message. She said that her brother-in-law's well-known views had not altered, and that she must keep out everyone coming with the intention of effecting a change. Madame Larre subsequently backed up the Archbishop. She has two sons in the Church. One is Curé of Ste. Eugénie's Church at Biarritz, and the other Vicar of St. Jean-de-Luz. Their sister is mother of the Abbé Bodin, Vicar of Notre Dame de Plaisance in Paris. After the Archbishop's offer had been rejected, an Abbé presented himself at M. Floquet's. Doctor Debet told him that he must bar the door against him. Later on a fresh attempt was made by another priest, but with no better success. M. Floquet was long afraid that he would be laid siege to in his last days. He carried about on him for some years a paper directing that should he fall ill or die suddenly he was to be treated as a Freethinker, and given a funeral as such. Madame Floquet is a Protestant.

"Who discovered America? Historic facts prove that God intended this country to be colonised by a Christian people."—*Rev. Dr. McAllister, Editor of the "Christian Statesman."* Catholics discovered America, and if that fact had any prophetic significance it meant that "God intended this country to be colonised" by a Catholic people. But Dr. McAllister is trying to humbug his readers. Not he nor any of us knows the first thing about what God "intended." If there is any such deity as the one alluded to, we can only hope that his intentions are honorable, and let it go at that. —*Truthseeker.*

The Rev. James A. West was arrested on the streets of this city a few days ago for improper behavior in public. His denomination is not given in the report of the arrest, and his conduct affords no clue to it.—*Truthseeker (New York).*

The Rev. William M. Ritchie, of Asbury Park, N.J., has been circulating the report that the Rev. Howard T. Widdemar, of the same place, is too gay for a minister of the gospel; that he gets into girl scrapes wherever he goes, and that he is not regularly ordained. Widdemar sued Ritchie for $5,000 damages as a slanderer, and recovered $750. The Rev. Mr. Ritchie persists in his charges, and will appeal.

The Rev. Henry Sandwith, a Yorkshire clergyman, shot himself near Basingstoke. It is not believed that he was afflicted with Atheism, which, according to Talmage, is the principal cause of suicide.

Brother C. C. Moore, of the Cincinnati *Blue Grass Blade*, has been in the ministry, and this is what he says of the Christianity of the day: "There is nothing in the world that is so breeding hypocrites and liars as religion is. The Christians do not care at all whether a man really believes their religion, if he will only be enough of a hypocrite and liar to pretend that he believes it; and the whole country is full of people who are members of churches and secret societies just for the same reason that it assists them in business."

Voltaire said "Mustapha does not believe, but he believes that he believes." We wonder if even as much as this can be said of the ordinary Christian, who asserts himself quite sure that Jesus rose from the dead, but will privately express qualms as to the story of Jonah and the whale.

Inquisition into religious views has, it is commonly supposed, died out in the public service. The clergy, however, attempt it wherever possible, and especially in the case of teachers. The Reactionaries on the London School Board now propose to ask the teachers: "Do you regularly attend a place of worship on Sundays?" a question which has nothing to do with their teaching qualifications, and is insolently in opposition to the spirit of the Education Act. If the teachers are ready to submit to this sort of thing, we should say they are wanting in pluck and self-respect—qualities far more essential for the teaching of the young than religion. The old Test Acts had far more ground of justification than this new inquisition.

Mgr. Izmirlian, patriarch of Armenia, estimates the number of recent forced conversions from Christianity to Islam at 50,000.

Thomas Phillips and Lady Llanover established at Llandovery, in Carmarthenshire, a "Welsh Institution," the intention and object of the founders being instruction and education in Welsh language and literature. The *Daily News* says: "During the most palmy days of the school's history 'the primary intent and object of the founder was faithfully observed.' It was only when the present Bishop of St. Asaph succeeded to the wardenship that the pious founders' wishes, though scarcely thirty years old, were ignored." It remarks on finding the Bishop of Asaph, that energetic upholder of the Establishment, setting the fashion in diverting endowments to other purposes than those intended by the pious founders.

At Luiz, in Austria, where Catholics and Protestants have long lived in harmony, the bishop suddenly ordered that Protestants should no longer be given burial in the common churchyard. The Protestant clergy refused to enforce this injunction, not seeing any reason for changing what had been right for so long. The Governor supported the bishop, but the Mayor and Town Council have protested, and religious animosity is aroused.

The Leavenworth *Herald* is opposed to the folly of sending missionaries to convert the heathen in foreign lands, when there are heathens to be found in almost every town and hamlet in our own country. We are by no means a Christian nation, and, until we are, what folly it is for us to attempt to Christianise the world.

It is related that Benjamin Franklin read the manuscript of Paine's *Age of Reason*, and advised the author against publishing it, using the famous warning, "Don't unchain the tiger." Franklin died in 1790, and the *Age of Reason* was not written until 1793, so that Franklin's advice must have come in the form of a spirit communication; but it is, nevertheless, regarded by the Church as good enough material for Sunday-school history.

Professor G. D. Herron, writing in the *Arena*, says: "The Nicene Council, from which the Church received its theology, was so shamelessly immoral, so without sense of right and human honor, as to outrage even Constantine's sense of ethical decency—and he, although styled the first Christian emperor by Church fables, was avowedly Atheistic in both morals and intellect, a character that might stand as the historic incarnation of the political genius of evil." We notice that Professor Herron always uses Atheistic as synonymous with base. It is, however, absurd to suppose Constantine was an Atheist. He was a Superstitionist, influenced by the sign of the Cross and baptism.

Young women ushers are an attraction held out in some American churches to catch the hoary-headed sinner and keep the would-be prodigal son within the fold. The racket works for a time, but the novelty soon wears off, and the girls may yet have to don the new woman's garb in the blessed cause.

The Ritualist organs are still crying out at the bishops because they obey the law of the land rather than the law of the Church, and permit the re-marriage of divorced persons. The *Tablet* mildly tells them that if they take Cæsar's pay they must obey Cæsar's rules.

Who was Azazel the scapegoat? This is the momentous question now agitating the American religious journals. The diversity of interpretation is illustrated by the fact that some hold that Azazel was Satan, and others that he was a type of Christ.

"Francis Jay" writes in the *Open Court*, of Chicago, on "The Holy Spirit, the Female of the Godhead." "F. J." fancies the Rev. Mr. Schultz, of Royersford, Pa., is to be credited with the sublime thought, which "F. J." works out not very decently in connection with the story of the Immaculate Conception. But Joanna Southcott and Mother Ann Lee were both before the Rev. Mr. Schultz, and the Ghost is spoken of as feminine in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, perhaps the earliest of all the gospels.

The Rev. Philip Fletcher, Grand Master of the Guild of Ransom, has been lecturing on the conversion of England before a select audience of dignitaries in Rome. It seems the Guild looks to prayers, pilgrimages, and processions as the plate of p's that will bring England to Rome.

The New York *Sun*, which is distinguished by its anti-English feeling, says that either the Pope or the Czar would be good enough arbitrators in the Venezuela dispute, but the Pope would be an ideal one. That officious old gentleman is said to have offered his services—declined with thanks.

The Rev. J. S. Balmer, of Blackpool, has undertaken to discourse on "What is Christianity?" His definition appears to have been largely negative. "Christianity," he said,

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"was not of this world, neither was it controlled by this world. It was not subject to military control, to political power, or to Cæsar's sceptre." From what little we know of history, we should say Mr. Balmer's Christianity had never been in the world at all.

The Salt Lake *Herald* says of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism: "Beyond all question, the number of those who revere his name and memory as a prophet and a witness for God is constantly increasing." The prophet Joseph is a good instance of how easily a reputation may be achieved when the appeal is made to religious fanaticism.

It is proposed to establish an International Moslem Union, having headquarters at Calcutta, with the special intention of bettering the condition of Moslems. Among things proposed are weekly lectures to young Moslem ladies behind a curtain, and accompanied by a *chaperon*, given by gentlemen of age and character. Despite the reservation, the proposal shows the influence of new ideals.

The bones of St. Stephen, the proto-martyr, are still knocking about, and have been taken by Bishop McDonnell from Rome to New York to confirm the faith of the faithful in the latter city. These bones are by no means the greatest curiosity now in America. In Canada they have a portion of St. Ann, the grandmother of God; the prepuce of the infant Jesus used to be in more than one church; and among holy relics were the breath of St. Joseph and the tail of Balaam's ass.

A pious Methodist lady used to say: "Praise the Lord, I've lost my husband and my only boy; I've got the rheumatics, and lost all my teeth but two; but, praise and bless his holy name, they are opposite to each other." This spirit of being thankful for extremely small mercies is strongly exhibited by Professor A. C. Armstrong, in the *Methodist Review*. It is true science has been in antagonism, but then Huxley is dead, and Balfour and Kidd are living. He says: "If the Old Testament records seem in danger from a disintegrating attack, which must radically alter the view hitherto taken of them by the Christian world, it must be remembered that the New Testament writings, passing through the same fire of criticism, have been found to stand the test much more successfully than appeared possible in the early days of the controversy." So let us sing to the praise and glory of God.

In an article on the Calendar, in the *Secular Almanack for 1896*, attention was called to the absurd position of Russia dating twelve days ahead of the rest of the world. The official organ, *Novoe Vremya*, has written on the advisability of adopting the new Calendar, but sees the difficulty that any change will be regarded as an act of sacrilege by the pious peasants. A suggestion has been made that, to carry out the reform with as little friction as possible, each of the long months should be docked of a single day. This would effect a change within two years. In England, when eleven days were knocked off at once, some stupid people complained of being defrauded of so many days of life.

Professor Garvin, Disciple or Campbellite, suggests that, to avoid confusion, the name of his denomination be made "Kristyun." He says it is quite possible for one to be a Kristyun and not a Christian.

Dr. T. Mitchell Prudden, in the *Popular Science Monthly*, says: "In its primitive phases medicine brought gods and men into close relationship, and led constantly to religious conceptions. It was, in fact, not a science, but a religion. The early priests were physicians, the primal gods were gods of healing, and their temples were hospitals."

The Chovevi Zion, or Lovers of Zion, have been holding a meeting at Glasgow. Mr. Prag, of London, who addressed the Zionites, complained that Jews did not shell out properly. If every Jew contributed a shilling per year, they would soon get possession of all the land of Palestine, and all the Jews in the world would be able to go and live there, and show a model State to the world. But is there room in Palestine for all the Jews on this planet? And would they go there if there was? We guess not. For the present, we dare say that gentlemen like Mr. Prag will know what to do with the subscriptions.

The Rev. Dr. Judson, Secretary of the American Board for Foreign Missions, defends the missions on the curious ground that objections to them are fatal to the whole Christian scheme. Nothing is more certain than that Jesus claimed to be the only savior of mankind; as Mr. Judson says, "He is the Redeemer and Lord of all the nations and generations of the earth, and that 'of His kingdom there shall be no end.' If Christ was mistaken upon these fundamental points, so that the effort to carry out his purposes and build His kingdom in all the earth is absurd and fruitless, His authority as teacher and His power as Redeemer are at an end." Thus does he lightly put aside all questions as to how Christians would stand Moslem or Confucian missions, if they were carried on as Christian missions are among the heathen. Virtually he says, "Our creed is divine, so we can do as we like."

According to the official census, the Methodist Church in the United States possesses $132,140,179 worth of property, which yields no return for the protection it receives from the community. The *Truthseeker* says: "The total value of all Church property in the country probably reaches two thousand millions, yet we exempt it from taxation—that is, we add its tax to the tax on secular property."

The Rev. Philip O'Brien, Vicar of Camden Parish Church, Camberwell, went on a missionary tour in Lancashire, where it is to be presumed there is an extra supply of "heathen" to be converted. On returning to his own parish, the reverend gentleman heard with grief and amazement that the Camberwell Board of Guardians had refused to send a vote of condolence on the death of Prince Henry of Battenberg. One member of the Board, a wretched Radical named Foster, had actually said that there was no more cause to sympathise with the Queen than with any poor mother-in-law whose son died in the infirmary. This disloyal language was stigmatised by the Camberwell man of God as deplorable and disgraceful. Let us hope that fire from heaven will not fall upon the Camberwell Vestry. Let us also hope that the Rev. Philip O'Brien will cool down. Whether he does or not, we dare say it will make very little difference to Camberwell, and still less, if possible, to the British Empire.

The Chester-le-street Branch of the National Secular Society has been holding its meetings at various members' houses, one of them being the residence of Mr. Newrick Richardson. On hearing of this his landlord, Mr. James Harrison, who is a Wesleyan bigot, has informed Mr. Richardson by letter that these innocent meetings must cease, or the house will have another tenant. "I would not be guilty of countenancing infidelity," he says, and he is "resolved to please" the Being he "worships." We venture to suggest to Mr. Harrison that his solicitude about God Almighty is rather gratuitous. It is quite possible for Omnipotence to stop "infidel" meetings at Mr. Richardson's house without troubling Mr. Harrison. Are there no thunderbolts in stock?

Dr. Allbutt, of Leeds, committed the heinous offence of writing a *Wife's Handbook* and publishing it at sixpence. Seven-and-sixpence would have been all right. But *sixpence!* It was quite shocking. So the British Medical Council struck him off the register. However, he continued to call himself a doctor as before; and for this offence the Medical Council has spent a hundred pounds in prosecuting him. The Leeds Stipendiary Magistrate inflicted a comparatively slight fine and small costs. After this, we presume, the British Medical Council will leave Dr. Allbutt to the judgment of his own patients, who are quite able to decide whether his services are of any use to them. After all, if a doctor settles your hash in three visits, there is very little consolation in knowing that his name is on the register of the British Medical Council.

A Preacher's Flirtations.

I know a brainy young minister, a fine preacher and a spiritual man, who kept himself popular for a long time with the maidens of his church, and, reflexly, with their mothers, of course, by a method which I consider reprehensible.

It might be termed the inspiration method, and this is about the way in which he manipulated it. One of his inspirations gave me the facts, so they are perfectly reliable: "Ah, Miss Blanche, good morning. I was glad to see you in the pew yesterday; I can always treat my theme better when your face is before me. I trust you will not be offended when I say that it acts upon me as a—in fact, you are—ah—a great source of inspiration to me."

Of course, any girl would be flattered to know that she was a talented preacher's inspiration, and would begin to consider her qualifications as a preacher's wife. Unfortunately, the preacher had about a dozen such inspirations scattered about in the pews, and it so happened that they one day chanced to compare notes, with results rather uncomplimentary to the unfortunately susceptible man.

What is science? To see the absurdity of the prejudice against it, we need only remark that science is simply a higher development of common knowledge; and that, if science is repudiated, all knowledge must be repudiated along with it.—*Herbert Spencer*, "*First Principles*," *sec. 5.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 2, Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street, Liverpool:—11, "What has Become of the Devil?" 3, "The Sign of the Cross," *apropos* of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play; 7, "How and Why was Jesus Born?"

Tuesday, February 4, Co-operative Hall, Bolton, at 8, "What has Become of the Devil?"

Wednesday, February 5, Venetian Hall, Darwen-street, Blackburn, at 7.30, "The Curse of Creeds."

February 9, Glasgow; 16, Hull; 23, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—February 2, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 3 and 4, Ipswich; 9, Camberwell; 11, Wellington Hall, Islington, London; 16, Athenæum Hall, London; 23, Manchester. March 1, Camberwell; 15, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London.

K. SYKES.—By all means leave them alone to meet their own fate. Thanks all the same.

W. C. DORKING sends us 5s. for the N.S.S. Children's Party.

W. GRANT.—Darwin's chapters on the Physical, Mental, and Moral Evolution of our Race, in the *Descent of Man*, are models of terse and vigorous exposition. Read them carefully, follow out the subject by means of the references in the footnotes, and you will soon command a good view of the whole subject. You will find, on the religious side, a great deal of valuable information in Mr. Wheeler's *Bible Studies* and *Footsteps of the Past*.

E. J., jun.—Your verses show promise, but need polish.

T. SEARLE.—The Revised Version of 2 Kings xix. 35 and Isaiah xxxvii. 36 reads: "And when men arose early in the morning behold they were all dead corpses." The Douay Version is: "And they arose in the morning, and behold they were all dead corpses." R. Young reads: "And they rise early in the morning, and lo, all of them are dead carcases." Pay your money and take your choice, but never make nonsense of the Blessed Word. See, for construction, 1 Kings xiii. 27.

C. WRIGHT.—(1) Always pleased to receive good jokes. (2) The Bull of Pius V., deposing and excommunicating Queen Elizabeth, is entitled "Regnans in excelsis." "He that reigneth on high committed the Church unto Peter, and his successor the Roman Pontiff," etc., are its first words.

G. CROOKSON.—Glad to hear that Mr. Cohen "had a good audience and gave a good lecture" at Barnsley. Mr. Foote intends writing on "The Sign of the Cross." Why do you speak of yourself as "an obscure individual"? We have known you for many years as a loyal friend of the movement.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND.—L. H. (per R. Forder), £1.—This fund should be closed for the present year. The committee appointed by the last N.S.S. Conference (Messrs. G. Anderson, C. Watts, R. Forder, and G. Ward) appealed for £100 for the current year, in order to save the President from absolute loss in attending to the Society's affairs. About £75 has been subscribed. The other £25 ought to be made up immediately.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Per R. Forder: S. Hampson, 2s. 6d.; L. H., £1. Motherwell, 1s. 5d.; Painter, £1.

F. A. DAVIES.—See paragraph. We hope the Lambeth Branch will be recruited in strength by the experiment.

J. M. HEADLEY.—We note that you have withdrawn from the Yarmouth School Board candidature, as a compromise has been effected, and some of your supporters pressed you to retire instead of throwing the expenses of an election upon the ratepayers. You protest against this avoidance of an appeal to the people; but the only effectual protest is forcing on the appeal. We say this without any reflection on your judgment or courage. Of course you understand the local circumstances better than we do.

J. G. DOBSON.—Pleased to receive your glowing account of Mr. Watts's visit to Stockton-on-Tees. The presence of ladies at our meetings is specially welcome.

W. WILSON.—It would be difficult and costly to arrange for a lecture there without local assistance.

JOHN JONES.—Thanks for the cutting and your interesting letter.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: T. Thornett, 5s.

T. LANSDELL.—We note the postponement.

W. DYSON states that the Barnsley Branch, at its annual meeting, decided to hold a general meeting on the first Sunday in every month.

PAINTER.—Thanks for your further subscription to the Lecture Scheme. Your advice is good, and shall be followed as far as possible.

PARSIFAL.—Mr. Watts says it was Canon Fremantle, in the *Contemporary Review*. A pamphlet on missions would certainly be useful, but Mr. Foote has not time to write it at present. Society business makes such inroads upon his time. The Church pamphlet, or rather volume, will probably be written during the summer. Your other suggestions are worth considering.

ATHOS.—The 1613 Bible may be worth a little. The other books are of no particular value.

WHITELL (Hull).—Your signature is smeared, and we are not sure that we have it correctly. Ingersoll has not replied to Father Lambert. No one in America expects him to do so. The objections to the Confessional are obvious enough. All priests are men, and a strange man ought not to be able (under the cloak of religion) to ask all sorts of questions about "secret sinful thoughts" of other men's wives and daughters. Even if there is nothing wrong physically, there is morally, in such a proceeding. The wife who confesses commits a kind of spiritual adultery with the priest, who soon becomes her real lord and master. Some of Ligouri's works are translated into English, but not those you have in mind.

H. LEES SUMNER.—Mr. Foote is better, but has still to be careful. Your advice is excellent, but Mr. Foote's occupation involves extra risks. He takes what precautions he can, and his health is generally first-rate.

THOMAS REYNOLDS.—Nothing new in it. Prophet Baxter has often been exposed in the *Freethinker*.

A. W. ORR.—Will insert it in our next issue, probably with Mr. Watts's reply.

G. L. SISMAN.—A good story, but it appeared in our columns some years ago.

G. KERSLEY.—Mr. Foote will answer any relevant question after his address at the Memorial Hall. It goes without saying that he will deal with the subject announced. Sorry to hear you were dissatisfied with Mr. Frederic Harrison. He is a powerful rhetorician, but we never formed a high estimate of his intellectual powers.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—New Age—South Shields Free Press—Clarion—Literary Digest—Peterson's Magazine—Woman's Life—Paisley Mirror—Progressive Thinker—Free Review—Literary Guide—Huddersfield Examiner—Liberty—Blackburn Times—Liberator—Two Worlds—Open Court—Worker's Friend—Der Arme Teufel—Monist—Metaphysical Magazine—New York Public Opinion—Islamic World—Crescent—Blackpool Herald—Chat—Freedom—Eastern Morning News—Newcastle Chronicle—New York Christian Advocate—New York Tribune.

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

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

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

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

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

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SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a fine audience at St. James's Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Sign of the Cross." He was still a little hoarse, and rather weary from insomnia, but he managed to get through his task to the evident satisfaction of the meeting, which was very lively and enthusiastic. Mr. A. B. Moss attended again and took the chair. This ends the course of lectures at St. James's Hall, but the experiment will probably be repeated in April. It is beyond doubt that much advantage to the movement will be gained by a continued attack upon the west end of London.

Mr. Foote is visiting Liverpool again after a rather long absence. He lectures three times to-day in the Oddfellows' Hall. Elderly friends, who have previously complained of this hall being very cold in the winter, will be glad to hear that it will be made warm and cosy on this occasion. Mr. Foote's subjects should attract large audiences. In the morning he will ask, and as well as he can answer, "What has Become of the Devil?" His afternoon subject will be "The Sign of the Cross," *apropos* of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play, which caused a great stir when it was produced in Liverpool. In the evening the question for consideration is, "How and Why was Jesus Born?" Before the lecture Mr. Foote will give a rendering of Tennyson's "Rizpah." Surely this is a good bill of fare for one day.

Tuesday and Wednesday evenings will be devoted by Mr. Foote to free lectures at Bolton and Blackburn, particulars of which will be found under Lecture Announcements. On the following Sunday he will deliver three lectures at Glasgow, and during the whole of the following week he will be delivering free lectures in South-west Scotland, at

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Dunoon, Paisley, Greenock, Motherwell, etc. Sunday, February 16, is engaged for three lectures at Hull. There again the admission is free, as, owing to the terrorism of the Chief Constable, it is impossible to obtain a hall in Hull for Sunday lectures with a charge for admission.

The Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, nearly opposite Store-street, has been taken by Mr. Foote for two Sunday lectures in February by Mr. Charles Watts. Reserved seat tickets, at sixpence and one shilling, can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or from the secretaries of N.S.S. Branches in the western and south-western parts of London. We hope these reserved seats will be all filled by Freethinkers. The back part of the hall will be set apart for "free admission" seats and standing room. Mr. Watts opens this evening (February 2) at 7.30, his subject being "A Plea for Unbelief." His second lecture will be given a fortnight later, on February 16.

Mr. Charles Watts was taken ill some weeks ago, and unable to lecture at Ipswich. This entailed a loss upon the Branch, and Mr. Watts has undertaken to give two free lectures on Monday and Tuesday (February 3 and 4), in the Co-operative Hall. We hope the Ipswich friends will do their utmost to bring the general public to these meetings.

Mr. Charles Watts had his usual good audiences last Sunday at Edinburgh, where he lectured afternoon and evening. He met with a hearty reception from both audiences.

Mr. Watts brought his eight days' tour to a close last Monday evening at Stockton, when he lectured to a crowded meeting, which was exceedingly enthusiastic. The tour has been most successful, and the good results of Mr. Foote's lecturing scheme have been very gratifying.

On Tuesday, February 19, Mr. Foote delivers an address, under the auspices of the Humanitarian League, on "The Rights of Men and Animals." He will give "The Secularist View." Other speakers before him have given the Theosophical, the Church, the Ethical View, etc. The address will be given in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, near Ludgate Circus. Admission is free, and opportunity given for questions and discussion.

Mr. A. B. Moss took Mr. Foote's place at Camberwell on Wednesday, January 22. There was a good audience, and Mr. Moss's lecture gave great satisfaction. Mr. Forder took Mr. Foote's place at Islington, and Mr. Heaford at Edmonton. Though recovered from his illness, it was necessary to give his chest and throat a good rest before plunging heavily into platform work. Mr. Foote intends to make up for the breakdown in a month or so.

The Wood Green Branch sends us its financial statement for 1895. At the end of last year there was a small balance due to the treasurer, who has now a few pounds in hand. The Branch has organised 76 outdoor lectures and 15 indoor lectures during the twelve months. This is certainly very creditable. We wish the gallant Wood Green Branch still greater success in 1896.

The Lambeth Branch has engaged the lecture hall of the North Lambeth Liberal and Radical Club, 108, Westminster Bridge-road, for a course of Thursday night free propagandist lectures. Mr. W. Heaford opens next Thursday, February 6, with a lecture on "Christianity as a Guide to Conduct." We hope the local Freethinkers will give the fullest publicity to this course of lectures, and try to induce their Christian friends to attend them.

A meeting of the members of the Finsbury Branch of the N.S.S. was held on Monday evening, with a view to its re-organisation. Mr. Foote attended and addressed those assembled. Mr. Bater was elected president, Mr. Harry Brown secretary, and Mr. Leat delegate to the Executive. Arrangements are being made for a vigorous propaganda on Clerkenwell Green during the summer, in which the Branch will have the President's fullest support.

Mr. H. Snell will lecture at the Battersea Secular Hall this Sunday evening (February 2), his subject being "Charles Bradlaugh: Atheist and Reformer." This lecture will be given with limelight illustrations, and will doubtless be entertaining and instructive. Admission is free, and there should be a crowded audience.

The Stockton-on-Tees Branch will have a social gathering next Thursday (February 6). Refreshments and a pleasant entertainment will be provided.

The Finsbury Park Branch holds its annual general meeting to-day (Feb. 2), at 3.30, at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute. Members should turn up in full force on this occasion. It is intended to make preliminary arrangements for an exceptionally vigorous open-air propaganda in the district during the summer.

Members of the National Secular Society should all have a copy of the *Secular Almanack*. It is edited by Messrs. Foote and Wheeler, and contains a lot of useful information, besides items of general interest. It is published at the low price of threepence, and all profits on the sale accrue to the Society. The new issue of the Almanack has sold better than the previous one, but there are copies left still, and we should like to see them all cleared out.

The Annual Children's Party committee have decided to hold this year's gathering in the large Concert Hall of the Club and Institute Union—next door to the Holborn Town Hall. It will take place early in March. Funds are urgently needed, and Miss Vance will be happy to send Collecting Cards to friends applying for them. A postcard is a sufficient application.

Mr. George Anderson finds he can send cheaper by parcel-post than by book-post. He will, therefore, send post-free to any applicants, for circulation, copies of Winwood Reade's *What Christians Believe* (6d.), or Mr. Charles Watts's *Claims of Christianity* (6d.), at the following rates: One copy, 2½d.; ten copies, 1s. 8d. Freethinkers who want to spread the light among the "heathen" (Christians they call themselves) should write to Mr. Anderson at once for a supply of these well-written pamphlets. Address, 35A Great George-street, Westminster, London, S.W.

The *Free Review* for February says: "*Footsteps of the Past* is a study of superstitions which will carry conviction to any honest inquirer. It is written in the true spirit of scientific history, and it is the work of an earnest thinker and scholar of well-deserved repute." The *Literary Guide* also gives a full notice of the book, under the title, "The Savage Roots of Religion," and pays Mr. Wheeler some high compliments.

Anatole France, who takes the *fauteuil* of Alexander Dumas at the French Academy, is, like his predecessor, a Freethinker, his views being, however, shown rather by delicate satire than by pronounced opinion.

There is always a good selection of scientific news and notes in the *English Mechanic*, while the queries and answers show the varied and up-to-date information of the numerous contributors.

The January number of the *Freethought Magazine* appears with a new cover. It gives a good account of "Mrs. Stanton, the Woman's Bible, and the Clergy," and reprints Mr. Foote's article on "Praying for Ingersoll." The *Freethought Magazine* is now published at 213 East Indiana-street, Chicago. The subscription price is $1.50 per annum.

The *Freethought Ideal* also has a new heading, "Without God, Ghost, or Devil," and a new editress, Laura Knox, 327 South 3rd-street, Arkansas. This cheap little paper is semi-monthly, and only 50 cents a year. We trust it will be well supported.

We have frequently been asked whether Colonel Ingersoll had said anything in rebuke of the Jingo fever which has been, and to an unfortunate extent still is, raging in America. This question can now be answered. The *Daily News* of January 23, in the course of a letter from its New York correspondent, contained the following: "Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, a politician and public speaker of national reputation, who has been travelling throughout the West, says: 'I have talked with a great many people about the Venezuelan question, and find almost in every instance that they condemn the President. I feel, and find that nearly everyone agrees with me, that his message was unwise, uncalled-for, and altogether a mistake. It is no business of ours. When Venezuela and the British have a dispute about a boundary line, let them settle it themselves. I do not think the President is going to get much sympathy for his action. We are a patriotic people, and will fight for what is just, honorable, and necessary; but this thing was not our quarrel, and there was no use going into it in a blundering way. I think the storm is over, and that we shall hear little more about the whole matter.'"

This is exactly how we expected Ingersoll would speak. It is replete with common-sense and directly to the point. It sums up the whole matter. There is really no more to be said upon the subject.

We are grateful to the *Daily News* for having Ingersoll's words flashed across the Atlantic and printed in England. But why on earth does it call him a "politician"? Ingersoll has no love for the word or the thing it designates. "A statesman," he has said, "wants to do something for the

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people; a politician wants the people to do something for him."

"Public speaker" is also good in the *Daily News* description. Public speaker *on what*? Aye, there's the rub! Our Nonconformist contemporary did not like to tell its readers that the man who uttered those wise words was "the boss infidel of America," as Christians are fond of calling him. Had the words been uttered by a man of God, the *Daily News* would have taken care that he was recognised as "Rev.," so that the full credit might accrue to religion. But "Mum's the word" when there is any prospect of advantage to "infidelity."

Ingersoll has been "travelling throughout the West." How beautifully vague! What has he been travelling for? Why, to preach the Gospel of Freethought. Night after night, in town after town, he has been lecturing to thousands of people against the Bible and Christianity.

The *Progressive Thinker* says: "One must *hear* Ingersoll to get the full benefit of his works. To read them is not enough; for while in doing so one may be charmed by the broad and liberal thought and the brilliant rhetoric of their author, he yet fails to catch the personal magnetism, or to be uplifted to the matchless oratory of the man, which is *felt* by all who listen to his words."

INGERSOLL.

THE following specimen of what an American illustrated magazine finds to say of the minister of the Gospel of Freethought may be interesting to our readers: "Some ill-advised Congregationalists and Church societies have been advertising Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll pretty extensively lately by organising themselves into praying committees for the conversion of the famous infidel's soul. Apart from the ludicrous aspect of this measure, it is hardly a politic one, for, if the prayers have no effect, and the Colonel remains as great an unbeliever as ever, the faithful will be somewhat shaken in their trust in the efficacy of prayer. Liberal church people are in favor of letting heaven work out its own plan for the salvation of the Colonel's soul. They most decidedly discountenance the absurd measures proposed, which can serve only to advertise the Colonel and his lectures. Colonel Ingersoll has devoted his life to unbelief, and has made a large income by it. He also practises as a lawyer, but the bulk of his income is derived from his lectures and his books, most of which are attacks on all existing forms of religion. Yet Ingersoll is not an Atheist. He has never denied that there is a Supreme Being. He is too intelligent a man for that. He does not believe there is one. He does not believe in the God of the Christians, or in the Jehovah of the Jews. His god is Nature, whose work his eye can appreciate. Doubtless there are many thousands of good people in this country who are fully persuaded that Ingersoll is a very wicked man, an unfit associate for respectable persons. There could be no greater misconception. In private life, in the bosom of his own family, Ingersoll is the most moral, the most upright of men, the best of fathers, the best of husbands. Nowhere throughout this broad land can be seen a more happy, better-conducted home than that of Robert G. Ingersoll. Ingersoll has his faults. He is often reckless in statement; he sometimes distorts passages in quotations for theatrical effect; his similes are often in questionable taste. Yet, arrayed against these trifling peccadilloes, what sincerity of purpose, dogged obstinacy, beautiful oratorical power, brilliant flow of language, poetry of expression! Ingersoll would have been a far greater man in any other path of life than in that he has chosen. Religion has been his fad and his hobby. It has been a barrier to his greatness. But for that Ingersoll might have become President of the United States."—"*Peterson's Magazine*" *(N.Y.), January, 1896.*

A good instance of downright matter-of-fact Christian prayer was the following:—A maiden lady of limited income used nightly to pray to the Almighty for a "competency," concluding as follows: "And in case, O Lord, thou shouldst not be aware of what I mean by a competency, I mean £400 a year, payable quarterly in advance!" No deity, however obtuse, could possibly misunderstand this.

LIBERALISM.

A LIBERAL is a person who wants more liberty in religious matters than we have at present in the civilised world. He wants the liberty to believe in, and preach, one God or no God; a good life on earth, followed by eternal happiness or eternal forgetfulness. He does not want the liberty to believe in, and preach, eternal suffering after death, because he has that privilege already.

Liberalism is the result of the tyranny of the old Churches in power. New Churches and small Churches are liberal enough in their views. But the big, old Churches are as tyrannical as any monarchy on earth.

Human nature is the same both in religion and politics, and the man who would enslave the mind would also enslave the body.

The fact that a man who is an Infidel may live happily with a wife who is a Christian, or that a mother never wishes to torture her children because they do not believe in her religion, proves that Liberalism is possible where people really love and respect one another.

The best way to make people liberal is to make them friendly. And the best way to make them friendly is to make them intelligent.

As a rule, a man is narrow-minded or broad-guaged according to the amount and variety of his reading and thinking.

Reforming the world is a long, perhaps an endless, task; but it can be improved, and, unless it is reformed by science, it will certainly be deformed by superstition. Eternal vigilance on the part of Liberals is the price of Liberalism. Tyrants never sleep, or at least never cease seeking power. And if Liberals ever weaken, they will be attacked and torn to pieces by ignorant victims of superstition.

There are still enough knaves in the world to preach monarchy and Theism, and there are still enough fools on earth to listen to their words.

There is no king who can rule the American people with an iron rod, and there is no God who has ever tried to take away freedom from the human brain.

People can't suffer without nerves, and they could not long have nerves in any such nerve-destroying place as hell. Therefore the fear of eternal torture in a lake of fire and brimstone is a foolish fright. But if it were not foolish it would not be Christian preaching. "For after that, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. i. 21).

In man's future ideal world there is no death. This proves that death is generally considered a curse. Man is saddened not only by death, but also by the fear of demise. Perhaps a world where eternal life reigned would be much more satisfactory than our world. Nevertheless, if we had to live always, we might grumble because we could not die. Such questions could be settled only by experience, and there is no way of getting experience in such matters.

Liberals should not try to destroy the hope of immortality; they should only wish to see it put among the wild ideas where it properly belongs. This hope doubtless gives some pleasure to some people, and if it did not develop from hope to belief, and then to lunacy, it would be a blessing instead of a curse to the world.

A Materialist is a person, generally a man, who does not believe in any kind of ghost, either holy or common. Women are too artistic to be philosophical, therefore they are more interested in the beautiful than in the true. Men and women are about equally interested in the reformation of the world, but they expect to bring about this reform in different ways—men by prose, and women by poetry. Man is by nature a Materialist, and woman a spiritually-minded creature. The world would be too dreary without poetry, and too fanciful without prose.

Atheism is the doctrine that the universe gets along somehow without a boss; that it runs itself to the best of its poor ability. An Atheist sees much around him to excite disgust, such as the prolific nature of dogs and cats, especially polecats; but he sees nothing to inspire awe. He believes that man is the awfulest of all beings, as well as the highest of all intelligences.

Christianity is the doctrine that an infallible God made man in his own image; that this living likeness fell from grace through the influence of a talking snake; that the human race became so wicked that their maker repented of

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his work, and decided to destroy the whole family; but, repenting of this repentance, the Lord saved Noah and wife and their three sons and their three wives; that the Lord, failing to reform the race through Noah, then for the third and last time tried another plan; he sent his only begotten son to preach to a part of the world for three years, and also to leave in his place many other preachers who could increase and multiply as long as people could feed them and clothe them, and find time to listen to them talk. Christianity is also whatever the preachers say it is to those that believe. Thus it is Catholicism to the Catholics, and Protestantism to the Protestants. It is a mass of nonsense to some other folks.

If there is a road from earth to heaven, people ought to have the same amount of proof of it as they have of the existence of a railway from Waco to 'Cisco. The railway companies of the world have proven the existence of their lines so plainly that people could not help believing in them, even if otherwise disposed. Some of us fail to see why the Lord should want people to buy tickets to heaven over a way that commences nowhere except in the human head, and ends at the same place. If there is any such place as heaven, there ought to be a line of balloons ascending and descending all the time, so that we might know that there is such a town, just as we know there is such a city as London, England.

There would be no trouble in getting explorers to ascend to heaven, and to relate, by photographic views and phonographic music, all the wonders of the Celestial City. It is wrong to require people to believe in a road to any place when there is not even a cow-trail in sight leading that way, or in a water way when there is not even a mud-hole in that direction, or in an ærial passage to heaven when there is nothing in the way of a station after leaving the world nearer than the moon—and this planet is two hundred and forty thousand miles distant.

A Liberal is one who believes in free speech, because truth has a great deal to gain and nothing to lose by disputation. He is generally Materialist, Spiritualist, Agnostic, or some other man in the minority. Most men believe in not only bodily, but mental, slavery, provided they can be the masters. As a rule, only the slaves and those who can't be slave-holders are opposed to slavery. People ought to be morally sublime enough to love those who differ from them on matters so purely speculative as religion and politics; but man, as a rule, is not specially in love with any kind of opposition.

If we were all born and bred alike, we would all think alike; but some people are naturally so sceptical that they require more proof of God and immortality than Christianity can give, and some are so credulous that they are surprised that everybody does not believe in God and immortality. Therefore the necessity of Liberalism.

Human cussedness is not the result of Christianity. But Christianity is the result of human depravity.

Our preachers doubtless preach for money, but then they would preach for food and old clothes and glory, as they do in India, if they could not get any higher price for their talk.

The fact that so many believe in baptism by immersion shows that people are more easily scared into the water with their clothes on than chickens or turkeys. Naked savages should not object to this kind of sacrament; but the inhabitants of cold countries should go down into the water only in diving bells. They can be buried under the water more safely and deeper thus than in any other way.

Anyone superstitious enough to believe in baptism by immersion is too superstitious to be happy. If such an one should see the new moon through brush or over the left shoulder, he would be unhappy for a month.

—*Independent Pulpit* (Texas). E. L. MERRILL.

How to Help Us.

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

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

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

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

ETERNITY.

WHERE is Eternity? More mischief is done by the use of vague, unmeaning terms and phrases than by almost anything else. All quacks understand this, and act upon it. The word "eternity" is one of them. How many millions of millions have the holy quacks not realised in solid cash by using the words "time" and "eternity" in contrast! We are now in time, say they; very soon we shall be in eternity. The humbugs! We were never out of eternity, and shall never be in eternity any more fully than we are at this moment. Time is one, duration of things does not change; time is eternity unbounded, and eternity is time.

Two poor men joined the East Indian army and went to the East. One of them died there, and the survivor, on his return to England, called on the aged parents of his dead comrade. They asked for their son, of whom they had heard nothing since he left.

"Ah, poor fellow!" replied the survivor, "he's gone to eternity."

"What place is that, John?" inquired the wife of her husband.

"I suppose it's some place in the East Indies," replied he.

I heard this anecdote in early life told as an illustration of the dense ignorance of people as regards spiritual things. But, in truth, the reply of the old man was as good a reply as the old woman could have obtained from Dr. Carr, Dr. Goe, or the very wisest man in all the world. Eternity is nowhere, for eternity never existed. It is mere time that never began, and will never end. But that is nothing to us; we began, we shall end. It is nothing to the fish whether the ocean be infinite or not, nor to the bird whether the atmosphere is the one or the other. To us it matters not whether time may end in a thousand years or continue without end, for we shall never reach its limits.

If people would reflect upon this and kindred subjects, the clergy would lose half their power for mischief, and none of their power for good. The people require to emancipate themselves from the wicked witchery of churchy words and phrases, the bewildering, cheating jargon that forms the stock-in-trade of Pulpit Quack and Co.

—*Liberator.* J. S.

FROM BABES AND SUCKLINGS.

THE teacher of the infant class at the Sunday-school, to interest the little ones, had begun to tell the story of the fall of man, when a mite of a girl was heard to exclaim, half aloud, "Oh, I'm so tired of that story about the Adamses."

Little Freddy (to his elder brother for the seventh time)—"Are you asleep, Tom?" Tom—"If you don't shut up, I'll lick you good. How the Dickens do you suppose I can say my prayers when you are yelling at me all the time? You've got as much sense as a last year's bird nest."

Mamma—"How thankful you should be, Johnnie, that you live in a peaceful era. The early settlers in Massachusetts always took a gun with them when they went to the meeting-house." Johnnie—"And did the minister make his sermon real short, so's they wouldn't shoot?"

Mother—"Bobby, the minister is coming to take tea this afternoon. You must behave yourself at the table." Bobby—"All right; but if you don't give me the biggest piece of pie I'll tell the minister that dad went fishing last Sunday and didn't have no cold."

"Why don't you ask a blessing at your house, Tommy? Don't you thank the Lord for what you eat?" "No, ma'am; we don't have to. We pay for what we get."

Child—"Do you think we will have a thunderstorm to-night?" Mother—"No." Child—"Then I needn't bother saying my prayers. I'm only afraid of thunder."

Another child asked for a light in her bedroom. She was told that God would take care of her. "Well, God or no God, I'm afraid," was her reply.

Dr. Cuyler tells the story of a little boy, the son of Presbyterian parents, who was asked the catechism question, "What is the chief end of man?" and gave this answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God and annoy him for ever." And the dear Lord is so easily annoyed.

Sunday-school Teacher—"You knew your lesson perfectly this time, Tommy." Tommy—"Yes'm. Pa said he'd let me go fishing this afternoon if I didn't miss any of it."

Mamma—"Well, dear, did you enjoy yourself at church?" Charlie—"Oh, yes!—and papa shut his eyes and prayed through his nose the whole time."

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NEW DISCOVERIES AT BABYLON ARE AGAINST THE BIBLE.

THE United States minister at Constantinople has recently reported to our Government that he has examined into the results of the recent scientific explorations at Niffer, in Mesopotamia, the town being on the site of ancient Babylon, the place where the people undertook to build a circular stairway so high that they could just walk right up into heaven and get some golden slippers and a harp and go to plunking it, without having to die and wait for judgment day; and they came so near doing it that the Lord had to come down to stop their scheme by changing their language. Originally they all spoke Hebrew, but the Lord fixed it so that they could not understand each other, and when a brick-mason yelled "more mort" the hod-carrier thought he wanted a chew of tobacco, and pulled out some Kentucky "long green" for him.

The result was that the contractors threw up the job, like the whale did Jonah; and, with their new languages, they scattered everywhere. The Irish all got to be policemen, the French started dancing schools, the Dutch opened beer saloons, the Yankees made wooden nutmegs and sharpened shoe pegs on both ends to adulterate threshed oats, while a lot of them that were overlooked, and did not get any new language, still talked Hebrew and opened clothing stores.

The remains of this old city of Babylon were found sixty feet down under the present surface of the ground, and enough writings in Hebrew, Mandic, Arabic, and Syrian have been found that are capable of translation to make sixty volumes in English; and a list of Babylonish rulers beginning 2838 before Christ is given.

The account says: "The religion, government, habits of life, and, to a great extent, the customs of men who lived 4,000 years before Christ, are revealed by the inscriptions." So that, if we accept Archbishop Usher's chronology of the Bible, the very first year Adam went into the gardening business he had to watch his water-melon patch with a shot gun to keep the boys and niggers from stealing them at camp-meeting time.

The account also says: "Many hundred vases, tops, weapons, instruments, and household objects in bronze, iron, and clay have been turned up, which illustrate the conditions surrounding the human race, in that part of the world, nearly 6,000 years ago." So that old gag about how Cain got his wife is easily answered, by saying he collected some of the old man's bills for vegetables and went to a fashionable watering-place, and, showing that he belonged to one of the first families of his part of the country, picked out his summer girl and married her like other young fellows do.

The account goes on to say: "Thus far, 20,000 inscribed tablets of clay and stone have been unearthed. On these are written promises to pay debts, deeds, contracts, and a record of all important public and private events." But the astonishing part, on the supposition that the Bible is true, is that we hear of no allusion to the famous story of the Tower of Babel; and these histories, written right there on the spot, that record ordinary public and private matters, say nothing about the most wonderful of all the stories recorded in the Bible.

We know the history of the origin of languages. We know, for instance, that the English language originated by William the Conqueror having tried to make his Saxon subjects talk Norman French; and any man of good sense and a fair education knows that that whole story about the Tower of Babel is a bigger lie than Joe Mulhatton's biggest; and yet there are thousands of intelligent men, who claim to be honest men, who make their livings by preaching that that Bible is true.

For the ignorant, who have not access to these sources of information, I have all sympathy; but your educated priests and preachers are the biggest liars on earth, and I want to see the day when they will be compelled to make their livings by some honest labor, or be put in gaol as vagabonds and vagrants.

If religion were simply a harmless superstition, we might stand it; but the shines that Christianity is cutting up in China and Armenia, and in Kentucky and Tennessee, and Georgia and Texas, by its murders of the heathen and the imprisonment of men like Harman and Wise and me, because we do not believe their superstitious stuff, make religion *hostis humani generis*, a snake in the grass, upon the head of which every honest man should put his heel.

—*Blue Grass Blade.* C. C. MOORE.

The best provision for a happy life is to dissect everything, view its own nature, and divide it into matter and form; to practise honesty in good earnest, and speak truth from the very soul of you. What remains but to live easy and cheerful, and crowd one good action so close to another that there may not be the least empty space between them.—*M. Aurelius Antoninus, Med. xii. 29.*

BOOK CHAT.

THE New York *Sun* (Jan. 4), noticing Hierophant Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, is particularly struck by a picture "Representing the Partial Evolution of the Double." It says: "The partial evolution of a double consists, as well as we can make out, of the explosion in somebody's pockets, and in his hat, and all about in the immediate vicinity of his person, of a large number of the most animated sort of fire-crackers. Mr. M. A. Oxon, the devoted gentleman who is undergoing the experience with his double that is indicated in this picture, will receive, we are sure, the keenest sympathy of every beholder. His own impression must have been that the volcanic disturbance at Krakataua was being repeated for his benefit, and we are confident that every humane person will hope that he had on an asbestos overcoat."

* * *

The Theory of Human Progression, by Patrick Edward Dove, which has been reprinted in America, anticipated nearly half a century ago the views of Henry George as to the single tax. Dove was a sort of broad Christian, but he finds the foundation of all error to be superstition, and those countries in the worst state where superstition abounds. He says: "According to law in England, the Episcopalian Church is the true Church; truth, according to law, is in the Thirty-nine Articles; the bishop is not only a churchman, but a legislator, a member of the supreme Parliament, and a ruler in the State. But, in another part of Britain, the Church of England is not the true Church; it is a scandalous hierarchy, because, of the northern part of Britain, the Presbyterian Church is the true Church; truth, according to law, is the Confession of Faith, and the bishop, so far from ever being entitled to reverence, is a vile intruder on the equal rights of his brethren."

* * *

February *Free Review* opens with an article on "The Outlook in France," by an English Radical, who argues in favor of graduated income-tax, which is *sur le tapis* there. He thinks Socialism will go on gaining ground in France, as it is doing in Germany. G. E. Macdonald, writing on "Queen Victoria's Grandson," displays the irritation naturally excited by the insolence of William of Germany. "Some Reminiscences of Stepniak," by R., being a testimony to character, would have been better signed in full. Mr. Wheatley continues his exposure of "Salvation Army Charity," which looks very much like the exploitation of the poor in the interest of the huge trading firm of William Booth. "M. Secundus" writes a very able paper on Sabbatarian Tyranny. Allan Stephens reviews Thoreau and Edward Carpenter, under the title of "The Return to Nature," and F. Rockell has a long paper on "False Modesty and Free Love."

* * *

We much regret to hear that Mrs. Olive Schreiner is in bad health. This has postponed the appearance of her new story, which was to run through a serial, and then to appear in book form. The secret of its intended publication has been well kept until now. The book has long been finished, but Mrs. Schreiner has apparently had misgivings about it.

* * *

Messrs. Longmans and Co. announce a new, and doubtless important, work by Professor W. E. H. Lecky, on *Democracy and Liberty*.

* * *

Mr. Zangwill has a sofa stuffed with Press cuttings. He is thus able, whenever he pleases, to sit on the critics.

* * *

M. Henri de Varigny has been writing on Huxley in the *Revue Scientifique*. He contends that "his general essential conception was, in reality, that of Descartes, 'Not to receive anything as true that I have not proved to be so.' A Cartesian to the marrow, Huxley proclaimed what can never be too often repeated, that Truth alone is beautiful, Truth alone is good. In this faith he lived, in this faith he died. Posterity will not forget him."

* * *

Messrs. D. Nutt & Son issue a neat and compendious *Introduction to Folk-Lore*, by Miss Marian Roalfe Cox, of the Folk-Lore Society.

The Era of Man.

I NOTE that the American Freethought papers adopt the year 1600, the date of the death of Bruno, as the Era of Man. The present year is therefore, with them, 296, a slight alteration from the absurd Christian era, which occasions no confusion. I should like to know if this change has the approval, or otherwise, of English Freethinkers. If approved of, could not the subject be brought before the International Conference to test the views of our continental and colonial *confrères* in the matter?

NOHINI.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, Charles Watts, "A Plea for Unbelief."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "Some More Bible Symbols." Tuesday, at 8.30, social party. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture IV., Aries the Ram."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, H. Snell, "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist and Reformer" (with limelight illustrations). Tuesday, at 8.30, dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Editor of the *Jerusalem Star*, "Shall we Live Again?"

ISLINGTON (Wellington Hall, Almeida-street): Tuesday, at 8.30, H. Snell, "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist and Reformer" (with limelight illustrations).

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 36 Newington Green-road.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "The Roman Catholic Idolatry."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, G. Spiller, "The Poor ye have with you Always."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Evolution of Religion."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, F. J. Gould, "Life of Charles Bradlaugh."

WESTMINSTER BRANCH N.S.S. (42 Vincent-street): 8, members' half-yearly meeting.

WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stewart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 11.30, business meeting; 7.30, social for members and friends.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, E. J. Sale, "Out of Darkness into Light."

BLACKBURN (Venetian Hall, Darwen-street): Thursday and Friday, Jan. 30 and 31, at 7.30, C. Cohen will lecture. Sunday, Feb. 2, business meeting at secretary's house. Wednesday, Feb. 5, G. W. Foote, "The Curse of Creeds."

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, social.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—W. Reid, "Labor's Prayer"; 6.30, J. P. Gilmour, "Socialistic Fallacies."

HECKMONDWIKE (Lumbard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, a meeting.

HULL (Cobden Hall, No. 4 Room, Storey-street): 2.30, Captain Monro, "The Bible God"; 7, H. Percy Ward, "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist."

IPSWICH (Co-operative Hall): Monday, at 8, Charles Watts, "Christianity: its Nature, its Origin, its Influence." Tuesday, at 8, "Secularism and Modern Thought."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, W. Heaford, "God and Morality."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, G. W. Foote, "What has Become of the Devil?" 3, "The Sign of the Cross"; 7, "How and Why was Jesus Born?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, W. Simpson, "The Population Question under Individualism and under Socialism."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, C. Cohen, "French Revolution—The Night"; 3, "Lucretius, the Poet of Atheism"; 7, "Freethought and Morals."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Ernest Evans, "Science in England and Germany"; 7, "Volcanoes and Earthquakes, and the Light they Throw on the Interior of the Earth" (with lantern illustrations); tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting; 7.30, J. Bowie, "Springs." Tuesday, at the Sailors and Firemen's Union Hall, Coronation-street, C. Cohen, "Is Christianity True?"

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, G. Nicholson, "Bees."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—February 2, Newcastle; 5, Chester-le-street; 9, Newcastle; 12, Chester-le-Street; 16, Newcastle; 19, Chester-le-Street; 23, South Shields. March 1, South Shields; 8 and 15, Glasgow.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 1, Balls Pond.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—February 2, Balls Pond.

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The Freethinker

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

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ANOTHER CHRISTIAN THEFT.

A CHRISTIAN may be a very decent fellow as a man, but as a Christian he may be an unmitigated scoundrel. It has been remarked by Lecky that some of the Grand Inquisitors who presided over the torture of heretics were tender-hearted men in the ordinary relationships of life. Victor Hugo has even rehabilitated the character of the great Torquemada himself. To be wicked for the welfare of religion is really righteousness. Lying is not lying when it is done for the glory of God. Fraud and forgery are quite laudable if people can only be induced by them to accept the true faith, for a thousand falsehoods are better than the eternal damnation of a single soul. Torturing a heretic is not cruelty, as it is done for his salvation; and killing him is not murder, as it is done to prevent his dragging others down with him to hell.

Never trust a Christian *as* a Christian. Depend upon it he will sell you if he thinks it to the interest of his religion or of his own immortal soul. In relation to an "infidel" he has usually as much conscience as a shark looking round for a dinner. "Infidels," as such, have in his opinion no rights. It is really a concession to let them live. He will lie to them, and about them, with a perfectly straight face. He will concoct false stories of their conversion, and stick to the same (after exposure) as a religious duty. He will tax them to teach his own children religion, and call himself a friend of religious equality. He will rob them of the commonest rights of citizenship, and call himself a lover of justice. He will smile and smile and be a villain—if it is a heretic who has to suffer by his villainy.

Until the law is altered, and Freethinkers have its protection, they must expect to be treated with injustice. If they were to found an Institution for the promotion of their principles, they would soon find it appropriated by Christians. The thieves, in such cases, being in the majority, keep each other in countenance, and help each other against their victims. Stephen Girard, in America, founded a great college, which he designed to be purely Secular. He expressly provided that no minister of religion was ever to set foot inside the building, on any pretence whatever. Yet the Christians have defeated his intentions. They teach religion and have prayers and hymns in Girard College. And when the Liberals—as they call Freethinkers in America—complain of this infamy, the Christians only smile and say, "Do you think we are going to respect *your* rights, until you can *make* us?"

A somewhat similar perversion of a trust has taken place in Scotland. The late Lord Gifford, an eminent judge, left the bulk of his estate to found Theological Lectureships at the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and St, Andrews. The endowment amounted to £80,000—which. to quote Shylock, was a good round sum, and one that the Christians were not likely to neglect, if they could get hold of it. Lord Gifford's intentions are nothing to them, so long as they can deliver the lectures and finger the cash. His lordship left that £80,000 for lectures on Natural Theology "in the widest sense of that term." He was not himself a Christian, in any proper meaning of the term. Whatever admiration he may have had for the character or teaching of Jesus Christ, he "deliberately rejected miracles," as Professor Max Müller tells us; and therefore he was a disbeliever in revelation. Accordingly he made the following declaration in his will: "I wish the lecturers to treat their subject as a strictly natural science, the greatest of all possible sciences, indeed, in one sense, the only science, that of Infinite Being, without reference to, or reliance upon, any supposed exceptional and so-called miraculous revelation."

This is plain enough, in all conscience; yet Lord Gifford's wishes have been violated in most of the courses of lectures. Sir George Stokes, even, who is a scientist and nothing else, plainly admitted the shortcomings of science as an aid to theology, and sang the praises of revelation as the only source of certainty in matters of religion. Principal Caird's lectures have been delivered as sermons in a religious building, indeed as part of a religious (that is, a Christian) service. Yes, the Christians have got hold of that £80,000, and they will stick to it with the tenacity of a thorough-bred bulldog.

Lord Gifford's will contained another clause, which has likewise been impudently flouted. "The lecturers," he said, "shall be subjected to no test of any kind, and shall not be required to take any oath, or to emit or subscribe any declaration of belief, or to make any promise of any kind; they may be of any denomination whatever, or of no denomination at all (and many earnest and high-minded men prefer to belong to no ecclesiastical denomination); they may be of any religion or way of thinking, or, as is sometimes said, they may be of no religion, or they may be so-called Sceptics or Agnostics or Freethinkers, provided only that the 'patrons' will use diligence to secure that they be able, reverent men, true thinkers, sincere lovers of, and earnest inquirers after, truth."

Lord Gifford did not found lectureships to promote orthodox Christianity. He did not even desire to have his own particular opinions expounded. He wanted the subject of Natural Theology, as distinct from Revelation, to be treated by able men of various views. "The lecturers," he said, "shall be under no restraint whatever in their treatment of their theme." "I am persuaded," he added, "that nothing but good can result from free discussion."

This is excellent. But it is not carried out. Lecturers are permitted to advocate the very Christianity which Lord Gifford excluded. They are selected from the ranks of "safe" men. Professor Max Müller is the worst heretic who has been allowed an innings. Sceptics, Agnostics, and Freethinkers—all of whom are expressly included in Lord Gifford's will—have been studiously ignored. His lordship's £80,000 is being used, and will doubtless continue to be used, in promoting Christianity and swelling the already excessive fees of its advocates. We shall therefore feel justified in stigmatising the execution of the Gifford trust as another Christian theft; and we shall only withdraw the accusation when the lecturers who happen to be Christians are prevented from preaching Christianity, and when a leading "Sceptic, Agnostic, or Freethinker" is called to fill one of the chairs.

G. W. FOOTE.

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SNEEZING SUPERSTITIONS.

"And when Elisha was come into the house, behold the child was dead.....Then he returned and walked in the house to and fro, and went up and stretched himself upon him; and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes."—2 KINGS iv. 32-35.

Two years ago our editor, in a Christmas mood, wrote an article on "Noses," in which he showed that the nose had played an important part in the religious history of the world. I have collected a few more instances of what is really a prominent feature of early religion—the identification of soul and breath, and their consequent connection with sneezing. This belief is so widely extended and so deeply rooted that few superstitions serve so well to illustrate the puerile character of the early faith which lies at the foundations of modern religion.

In an article on "Holy Kissing" (*Freethinker*, Sept. 29) I mentioned the earlier salutation by smelling and touching noses, which was as much a means of communion as kissing. The 91st chapter of the Egyptian Ritual of the Dead is entitled "Of not Allowing a Person's Soul to be Sniffed out of him in the Under World." We are told in Genesis ii. 7 that when God created man he "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." The Hebrew word translated "soul," *Nephesh*, comes from a root signifying "to breathe." So when Jesus gave his disciples the holy spirit he breathed on them (John xx. 22). The first sign of life in the man made by Prometheus was a sneeze.

The involuntary character of sneezing made it considered as of a supernatural character.

Mr. Foote gave from Dr. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* a number of instances from many parts of the world parallelling the English custom of saying "God bless you." Thus, in Vienna gentlemen in a *café* will take off their hats and say, "God be with you." Germans say, "Health," and formerly the expression was "God help." Montaigne refers to the custom, and some French people still say, "*Dieu vous benisse*," when they hear sneezing. In Ireland Paddy will say, "God bless your honor," or "Long life to your honor." Jews say, "Good life"; and Samoans, "Life to you."

The Parsees say a prayer after sneezing. In Bengal they salaam to the person who sneezes; and, should a Hindu chance to sneeze when performing his ablutions in the Ganges, he makes gestures very similar to those of a Catholic when he dips his fingers in holy water. Having touched his forehead, nose, chin, and cheeks with the tip of his finger, he recommences his prayers from the very beginning, and will do so as often as they are interrupted by a sternutation.

St. Augustine, in his work, *On the Doctrine of Christ*, says: "When the ancients were getting up in the morning, if they chanced to sneeze while putting on their shoes, they immediately went back to bed again, in order that they might get up more auspiciously, and to escape the misfortunes which were likely to occur from that cause."

Sometimes a sneeze was deemed favorable. While the Athenian general, Themistocles, was offering sacrifice for the propitiation of the gods, it happened that three beautiful captives were brought him; at the same time the fire on the altar was burning brightly, when a sneeze happened on the right hand. Thereupon Euphrantides, the soothsayer, embraced him and predicted a victory, which he afterwards obtained—that of Salamis.

We also read that at the time Xenophon was addressing his army of ten thousand, and while speaking of that favor from the gods which a righteous cause entitled them to hope for against a perjured enemy, someone sneezed. Immediately the general voice addressed ejaculations to protecting Jupiter, whose omen it was supposed to be. A sacrifice to the gods was proposed, a universal shout declared approbation, and the whole army in one chorus sang the Paean.

The Romans thought even more of this superstition than the Greeks. It was by no means a trivial or meaningless compliment among them to ejaculate, "*Salve!*" when one of the company sneezed. It was a requirement of polite life. Even the stern Emperor Tiberius was punctilious in complying with it, and required those about him to do so likewise.

Catullus, the Roman lyric poet, in *The Nuptials of Peleus and Thetis*, gives the following:—

> The God of Love who stood to hear him,
> The God of Love was always near him,
> Pleased and tickled with the sound,
> Sneezed aloud, and all around
> The Little Loves, that waited by,
> Bowed, and bless'd the augury.

It was commonly believed that Cupid sneezed whenever a beautiful girl was born, and the most acceptable compliment a Roman masher could lisp and drawl to his lady-love was, "Love has sneezed for you!"

Calabar negroes, when a child sneezes, will say, "Far from you," with a gesture as if throwing off some evil. Here the object seems plainly to be to keep foreign or evil spirits from entering. But in other cases it is likely that there was some idea of evil influences being able to operate on the part of the life which had made its exit at the sternutation. In the case of disease the sneeze may be taken as a sign of the departure of the evil spirits, as in the case of the child restored by Elisha. Josephus tells us that he saw a Jew, named Eleazar, curing demoniacs by drawing out the demons through their nostrils with a magic ring.

Connected with sneezing superstitions are a host of others concerning whooping cough, into which I have not space to enter. It should also be remembered that the fact that sneezing does accompany some dangerous disorders, as well as being a frequent attendant of colds and impaired vitality, must have largely contributed to perpetuate the custom. The historian, Sagonius, tells us that in the time of Gregory the Great (A.D. 558) there raged throughout Italy a malignant pestilence, which infected the air to such a degree that they who had the misfortune to gape or sneeze fell dead on the spot. To avert the effects of the tainted atmosphere, it became customary on these occurrences to utter an ejaculatory prayer. Among the Poles, to smell a flower growing in a churchyard is believed to destroy the sense of smell. The idea, of course, is of transference of the qualities of the dead—an idea which has led to many superstitions.

In Theodore Irving's *Conquest of Florida* it is told how Hernando de Soto, the Conquestador, in 1512 was received by the Cacique Guachora, and, on finding that the Floridans had the same custom of salutation on sneezing, remarked: "Do you not see that all the world is one?" Indeed, the general prevalence of this custom alone would go far to show that the human mind, dealing with the same facts, works out similar beliefs according to its state of culture, and irrespective of contact with other peoples.

Mr. Gerald Massey says in his *Natural Genesis* (i. 83): "It is common for people to take a pinch of snuff to cause a sneeze for the expulsion of headache, and in this connection the British custom of placing on the dead a plateful of snuff is most remarkable. If a pinch of snuff were efficacious in expelling the bad spirit, stuffiness or pain, by means of a sneeze, then a plateful of snuff laid on the breathing-place—the bosom of the dead—was typically intended in relation to the breathing of the future life, and wishing well or well-wishing."

In Irish wakes it was a custom to place a dish of snuff on the corpse, each of the wakers partaking of a hearty pinch. After this they would challenge each other to fight, sing, or dance, the idea evidently being that the spirit of the departed had entered into the partakers of the snuff.

Tobacco snuff is, of course, modern in Ireland, but I think it possible some other powder or dust may have been used before, as analogous customs have been found in other parts.* Indeed, it has been conjectured that the use of all condiments may have originally been connected with some such superstitions.

We get an early association with smelling as an indication of desire in the Pacific Islands, where it is the belief that, when a man sneezes, he is thinking of his wife; when a woman sneezes, she is thinking of her husband; therefore, they deem it fitting to say: "*Ofa!*" (Love!). The custom of perforating the cartilege of the nostrils, or, as sailors called it, "sprit-sail-yarding the nose," is allied to this belief.

An early superstition is that preserved by the Xosa

* Mr. Hartland considers "it represents the more archaic consumption of food or drink on the corpse." My idea is that anything causing sternutation might come in vogue as a demonstration of the truth of the notion that the qualities of the departed could be transferred.

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Kaffirs, who, when a man sneezes, hold that his ancestral spirit is trying to speak. Mr. Massey says (*Natural Genesis*, i. 84): "It was a common belief that no idiot could sneeze, and that there was no surety like a sneeze for a new-born child having a soul." British "howdies," or nurses, held the child to be under the fairy spell until it showed signs of spirit by sneezing. "God sain the bairn," said an old nurse when the little one sneezed at last; "it's no a warlock." The ancestral soul had descended. The Maoris of New Zealand had a singular baptismal ceremony called Iriri Rohi. On the eighth day the child was taken to the side of a stream, with the family greenstones hung about it. The list of the child's ancestors was repeated by the priest, and, when the child sneezed, the name then being uttered was the one selected by the child itself, or the ancestral spirit manifesting through it. Then the child was sprinkled or immersed in the river (Thomson's *Story of New Zealand*, i. 119).

We still have some sneezing superstitions, as evidenced in the Lancashire folk-rhyme:—

> Sneeze on a Monday, you sneeze for danger;
> Sneeze on a Tuesday, you kiss a stranger;
> Sneeze on a Wednesday, you sneeze for a letter;
> Sneeze on a Thursday for something better;
> Sneeze on a Friday, you'll sneeze for sorrow;
> Sneeze on a Saturday, you see your sweetheart to-morrow;
> Sneeze on a Sunday, your safety seek,
> The Devil will chase you the rest of the week!

These same rhymes are given in *The Folk-lore of Philadelphia*, by H. Phillips.

J. M. WHEELER.

CAUSE AND EFFECT.

THE terms "cause" and "effect" are employed to indicate natural events, and the relation they bear to each other. Scientific minds not only endeavor to trace the order of nature, but they also seek to ascertain the antecedents of events. Such minds do not, like men in a savage state, attribute the operations of nature to spirits, or to any other alleged supernatural powers. It is not by these crude and superstitious notions that we of the nineteenth century essay to account for certain movements in the world of matter, either in its moral or its intellectual aspects. Primitive man may have been satisfied with the assumption that natural events were caused by spirits or the intervention of gods; modern science, however, has shown the fallacy of such beliefs. True, there are some theologians and metaphysicians who still cling to the erroneous notion that phenomena are governed by what they term supernatural intervention; but, fortunately, such persons are not regarded by the intellects of our day as the true interpreters of the operations of nature. Cause and effect are only relative terms; the one is not a conditioned existence, and the other unconditioned: not that we deny absolute or unconditioned causes, but we simply say that we know nothing of them.

Causes and effects are the names of what we may otherwise denominate a succession of changes, both in time and space. The limitation of causes is no longer possible to minds with even elementary knowledge. The expansive power of heat and the contracting power of cold are but the same phenomenon under different conditions. Causes and effects depend upon, and they vary according to, natural conditions. For instance, clouds are derived from vapor, and they discharge themselves in the form of rain when the condition of the atmosphere changes. The causes of all these varying effects are in nature, and nowhere else. But theologians assert that all effects are caused by some power above, beyond, or outside the universe. They thus introduce, as a cause, a power of which we know nothing, and which we can in no manner connect with effects. This theological practice of placing the control of nature in the hands of one infinite cause induced the men of science to invent another term to stand for all scientific or calculable causes, the term being secondary causes. The reason why this became necessary is obvious: science is concerned only with the known; in fact, the word "science" implies that something is known about whatever it attempts to elucidate.

Perhaps much of the confusion of thought found in pulpit discourses arises from the fact that preachers do not possess a clear conception of the difference scientific men recognise between a science and a theory. An example of this is found in the sense in which the term "evolution" is employed by some theologians. They speak of it as a cause, while really it is a method—that is, it describes the way in which nature works in living forms. "Natural selection" has also been construed to mean that nature makes selections in the same manner as man does, which is a wrong idea of the true meaning of the phrase. While it is quite permissible to use figurative language, there ought to be no difficulty in this case in making the distinctions between the fact that certain forms of life produce other and superior forms, and the supposition that the earlier forms intentionally selected and produced others, upon the same principle that a breeder of pigeons produces a variety of birds. It is the theological mind that so construes the meaning of results that are shown in animated nature. A learned archbishop suggested what he considered to be a valuable truth upon this point. He said that God endowed nature originally so that it might, in the course of ages, produce all the phenomena traced by Darwin and his predecessors, in a succession of superior species, and an infinite variety of new forms. Sir Charles Lyell, in his early days, favored the notion of new creations, and we believe Sir George Stokes now maintains the same opinion. An infinite intelligent will operating in nature is not by any means the same as a human will which acts through the nervous and muscular system; the human will depends upon causes, but is not in itself a first cause, as theologians claim their supernatural will to be. All the mental and physical operations in man are the results of internal and external causes anterior to their production. Man existing by himself—that is, independent of nature external to himself—is inconceivable, and any similar notion applied to any other being is equally so.

Having defined causes and effects as denoting changes in nature, the application of them to something *above* nature, to the exclusion of what we observe *in* nature, would destroy the meaning applied to the term "science." We may assent to the conclusion of the widest induction from the observed facts of existence, whereby is established an invariable order of nature, without being supposed to mean more than that such a condition is found to be the order of nature. As to *why* it is not otherwise we do not know, and neither are we aware of any power that causes any departure from that order, excepting such natural changes in nature's conditions as determined the variations observed. We are on firm ground only so long as we confine ourselves to the limits of our intelligence, and affirm only that which we know. This brings us to the Freethought view of nature and of man. We prefer relying upon what is discovered, and to allow all else to remain to be explained, if it can be, in the future. Events that occur of an unusual or of an alleged miraculous character we do not feel called upon to believe, although we may investigate them as our time and inclination permit.

The advantage that is derivable from the habit of seeking causes and effects in nature, instead of looking for causes outside the objective world, is not only a scientific habit, but it imparts a satisfaction to the human mind which theology can neither give nor take away. When we see the snow melting on the mountain side, or the breaking up of the ice upon the lake, and attribute such operations to an alteration in the temperature, or when the application of a spark to a gunpowder magazine produces an explosion, we are satisfied that the causes of such effects exist in the universe. Comte called special attention to the value of seeking for laws of phenomena in preference to looking for final causes which are beyond human comprehension. Granted that an invariable order of nature is not fully accounted for, neither are external and final causes, to which effects are by some referred. We should suppose that every reflecting person must see the advantage of accepting a natural rather than a supernatural explanation. Surely, to attribute the appearance of the rainbow to the conditions of the atmosphere and the position of the sun is more rational than to suppose that the God of Noah placed it in the skies for the foolish purpose assigned by theology. The idea that the eclipse of the moon is due to planetary motions and the relative positions of moving bodies will commend itself as being more sensible than the Turkish notion that the eclipse is caused through a dragon swallowing "the silvery orb of night."

But above all else there is this one undeniable advantage

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in a rational explanation of natural causes and effects: it accords with the facts of existence as we know them, while what is called a supernatural explanation cannot have any direct known association with natural phenomena. The discovery of the laws of heat, of light, and of electricity enables us to perform what, if put into the language of our ancestors, would appear to be more stupendous miracles than are recorded in the history of any nation of antiquity, either in the wild flights of poetry, or in the amazing power of reputed prophets and saints.

The invention of the telescope and the microscope opened up to man's insight things before hidden in profound darkness, both as regards the infinite great and the infinite small. Since the time of Galileo the study of astronomy and the diffusion of knowledge by the secular press have caused the solar myths to vanish; and now, in the circle of science, cause and effect are recognised as natural agencies pervading all phenomena throughout the universe of worlds.

Thus, as time rolls on and a knowledge of science increases, the pretensions of theology are more and more discredited, and the potency in nature is more and more recognised. The intervention of any God is not required to explain the phenomena of the universe. What can be known is learnt through the indomitable researches of man, and what he fails to discover we see no reason for supposing a God will reveal. CHARLES WATTS.

DEAD NOTIONS.

G. G. GREENWOOD, in the *Westminster Review* for November, has an article on "The Persistence of Dogmatic Theology," in which he refers to the wonderful changes wrought in human thought during the past few generations. Time was and long continued when man considered himself the centre of creation, and everything subservient to his interests. The heavens and earth were created for him; the stars were made in order to light him and guide him; the earth and all its animals and plants were intended for his pleasure and advantage.

All these old notions have been killed by modern science, or driven back and down to linger amongst the ignorant or unconquerably religious. Evolution has knocked the stupid pride out of all who are capable of understanding it; and our own race, instead of beginning at the top and falling to the bottom, is known to have begun at the lowest possible stage of existence, and climbed to its present position; instead of being a decayed family, as theologians said, a broken-down aristocracy, living upon the bounty of "God," science and philosophy show that we are a pioneer family, who began with nothing, and owe all we have, our skill and energy included, to the indomitable perseverance, pluck, enterprise, and invention of the best members of the family.

This is a wonderful revolution, especially when it is remembered that it has all been done within our own day.

We were taught in infancy that the world we live in had been created just 4004 years B.C. This we were taught, not by scientific men or historians, but by the insolent, ignorant clergy, who set up the stupid Bible as the ruling book, and forbad all men to question its statements. Out of those statements they manufactured a chronology for the world, and cut and hacked, shortened or stretched, the chronology of the Gentile nations to make it fit in with that of the Jews!

The same insolent rulers of our thoughts told us of Noah's flood, his band-box of an ark, and the descent of all existing men and animals from the pairs preserved in that craft!

Unfortunately for them, the ignorance of the Creedists has been brought face to face with the facts of archæology and science: at first they were furious, then bewildered; then they cursed facts and prayed for the support and continuance of their error; and, last of all, they are showing signs of dawning reason and common sense, though they are not yet honest enough to drop the Bible that deceived them, and follow the truth whithersoever it may lead.

Of course, it is a bit awkward to learn that King Menes, of Egypt, lived 1,000 or more years before the creation of the world, and that there were before him centuries too many to number during which civilisation was gradually being developed. The millions of ages hinted at in geology are positively overwhelming. And thus archæology renders the Bible almost as ridiculous as astronomy does.

Mr. Greenwood gently ridicules the ancient puzzle called the Trinity in unity, a bugbear which dominated mankind in all branches of life for many generations, a conundrum that it was imprisonment to deny until quite recently, and even now it is not respectable to make too free with it. The Incarnation also is gently touched upon by this writer, and the "wonderful scheme of salvation," of which we used to hear so much; and then he reminds his readers of the conundrums of the Athanasian Creed, which declares all unbelievers shall "perish everlastingly."

The uncompromising stubbornness of the orthodox is referred to, their childish plea that all their dogmas are revealed and therefore true, whose faith can "swallow mountains, if not remove them."

Mr. Greenwood attributes the persistence of orthodox belief to the fact that extremely few people dare to think for themselves; to atavism, or the existence in us of the nature and tendencies of our distant ancestors, who, of course, were as ignorant as they could be, and, therefore, grossly superstitious. We have their nature, and that nature forbids us to think upon religious matters, and bids us follow any religious quack who promises to lead us aright. No doubt this atavism, the influence of our prenatal and our infantile periods, makes it extremely hard for the best of us to break with old-fashioned ideas. Most people are children all their lives, and require nursing as much in their prime as they ever did. Hence the flourishing dry-nursing business conducted by the priests, the wholesale baby-farming on which they flourish so well.

Early education, of course, tells in favor of orthodoxy. This is demonstrated in the patent facts that all but the few remain more or less attached to the religion of their infancy—the Mohammedan to his, the Jew to his, the Christian to his; and in all the sects of Christendom you see the same truth exemplified. Give the priest control of the infant schools, and you enthrone him in perpetuity; keep him and his poison out of the schools, and he will die out in a generation or two. Children are fond of mystery, and are easily impressed with stuff they cannot understand. They are also fully open to the bribes and intimidations the priest knows how to apply. Let a boy or girl go through the hands of a priest, and he or she is morally corrupted and enslaved for life.

All the above influences and many more favor orthodoxy and orthodox sham. I can speak more openly than Mr. Greenwood would be permitted to do, and I say that a large proportion of the orthodoxy of to-day is mere sham, pretence, downright hypocrisy. Most of the intelligent clergy know for a certainty that the Bible is not what orthodoxy represents it to be; that their profession is hollow; that social considerations are all that tie them to it; they have no love or respect for the position they occupy, except in so far as it gives them social status and a living.

Although countless millions of stupid and imbecile people sincerely cling to their early creeds—no matter how absurd—the educated and the thinking part of humanity are not sincere in their orthodoxy, nor is it possible they should be.

Let me ask in closing, Is it not time the lovers of truth everywhere formed combinations among themselves for united action against the priests and their wicked influence? If we were half as earnest to spread the truth as the priests are to disseminate wholesale lying, what a change would soon be wrought in human society! Unfortunately, the thinking part of mankind are not remarkable, as a rule, for courage; often they indulge a contempt for the inferior portions of the community; and they afford no aid or countenance to a man who openly endeavors to enlighten and emancipate the masses.

But here is a truth which all experience proves—namely, that the priest must be discredited, degraded, kicked out, before intelligence, virtue, and manliness can become the characteristics of the people. And who is to do this work? Volunteers are left to starve, and are persecuted just in proportion to their good deserts; while cowards and traitors and hypocrites are most highly honored. How long is this to last? JOS. SYMES.

—*Liberator.*

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FREETHOUGHT IN SCOTLAND.

HOLDING that Scotsmen and Scotswomen, once emancipated from subserviency to churches, creeds, and confessions, prove most thorough Freethinkers, I was much interested in Mr. Gilmour's sketch of the rise and progress of Secularism in Scotland (*Freethinker*, p. 67). That sketch he could doubtless himself elaborate to a much more finished picture. Personally, I should like to learn more of "Antitheos," of the Glasgow Zetetick Society, whom Gillespie acknowledged as the ablest champion of Atheism he had met, and whose examination of Gillespie is a masterly performance. I have been informed that the real name of "Antitheos" was George Simpson, and there are probably those still living in Scotland who could give account of his career. Among my Freethought pamphlets I have one on Prayer, by James Simpson, published at Glasgow in 1837, in which the incompatibility of prayer with the alleged attributes of deity is forcibly put.

Before the time of "Antitheos," Richard Carlile found many supporters, like James Affleck, among Scotsmen, and more than one of Carlile's publications were written north of the Tweed. Frances Wright, one of the first women to appear on a Freethought platform, was a native of Dundee; and a bookseller there of the name of Myles, besides issuing her life and pamphlets, published a version of the famous *Three Impostors*. Robinson and Finlay, of Edinburgh, and Love, of Glasgow—the latter firm, I believe, still flourishing—deserve mention, with brave old Robert Ferguson, as purveyors of Freethought works in the face of the boycott of the bigots. Near the present position of the Glasgow Secular Hall, in the fifties, J. H. McGuire also kept a "Freethought book and tract depôt." Brave Alexander Campbell, too, should be mentioned. He had conducted Abram Combe's social experiment at Ormiston. On June 25, 1834, he was brought before the Court of Exchequer for selling an unstamped paper, the *Tradesman*, under the infamous "gagging Act." An extract from the paper, entitled "The Freethinker," was read to prejudice the jury. He was found guilty, but was recommended to leniency. The prosecuting counsel promised no more would be heard of it; but he was thrown into prison, where he was kept for seven weeks for refusing to pay the fines. I well remember seeing his sturdy figure at the old Eclectic Institute.

Mr. Gilmour makes no mention of the gallant fight for free publication which went on in Edinburgh in 1843. The attack on Owenism by the Bishop of Exeter in the House of Lords in 1839 was followed by a vigorous attempt to suppress Infidelity. Three priests of the *Oracle of Reason*—Southwell, Holyoake, and Paterson—were imprisoned in England, and in Edinburgh Messrs. Robinson and Finlay were arrested for selling works "calculated to bring the Christian religion into contempt." For this "crime" Robinson received twelve months' and Finlay sixty days' imprisonment. The latter made a good defence. While their trials were pending, Paterson, fresh from Tothill prison, opened a blasphemy depôt at 38 West Register-street, and advertised "The Bible and other obscene works *not* sold at this shop." He was arrested, tried, and sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment. Then appeared on the scene brave Matilda Roalfe, who opened a shop at 105 Nicholson-street, and published a circular in which she stated: "I neither hope nor fear anything from authority, and am resolved to supply the public with works of a controversial and philosophical character, whether such works do or do not bring into contempt the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion." She, too, was prosecuted for selling the *Oracle of Reason* and other blasphemous works. She conducted her own defence, and considerably non-plussed the officer who gave evidence against her by asking him if he was less moral in consequence of having read those works. In her defence she told how she had been a Sunday-school teacher, and study of the Bible had made her a Freethinker. She asserted the equal right of Atheists with Christians to publish their opinions, and repeated that she should continue her course when at liberty. The sheriff sentenced her to two months' imprisonment. Upon her release she resumed the same business at her shop, and published an able pamphlet, entitled *Law Breaking Justified*. She was no further molested, and by this persistence the cause of free publication was placed on a firmer basis than ever before.

J. M. W.

PAUSE, PERHAPS; NOT REACTION.

IT is freely alleged in various quarters, occasionally with regret, but more frequently with more or less exultation, that the present is a period of intellectual reaction. Science, it is said by some, has been moving too fast, and has not made good its more advanced positions. It has attacked questions which were beyond its grasp, and has had to retire in discomfiture. It has made promises to mankind which it has not fulfilled, and which evidently it is not going to fulfil. Its watchwords have lost their power—so we are assured—and the comfortable doctrines of the past are in a fair way to recover their former prestige and influence. It is needless to say that we do not accept this view of the situation. In cosmic and in human affairs there is certainly a law of rhythm, as Mr. Spencer has so copiously proved in a celebrated chapter; but rhythm is one thing, and reversal of a main movement is another. There will come times when men will in a measure tire of speculation, and seek rather to rest in a partial conclusion than to pursue further voyages of discovery into the unknown; and such a time may be expected after a period of active and theoretical advance. At such a moment of lull it is not surprising if the Philistines of the intellectual world, who had been more or less in hiding while the forward movement was at its greatest intensity, should venture from their fastnesses and indulge in a few songs of triumph; but this need not disturb the serenity of the army of progress. In due time the order to march will be given; and then the Philistines—will keep out of the way.

Such, we think, is the situation at the present time. The third quarter of the century was a period of almost, if not of quite, unparalleled scientific activity. It gave birth to the most important work of Spencer, Darwin, and the rest of the evolutionist school. It brought important discoveries in chemistry and in biology, and rendered a great deal of so-called orthodox opinion in many departments of knowledge forever obsolete. The impetus of this great movement lasted undiminished for several years longer; and, if it has now slackened in any degree, it is that the specific need of the present day is rather a careful survey and a classification of the results already obtained than a further development of theory. We want to know just where we are before we start again. To say that no opinions which were held with a good deal of confidence ten or twenty years ago have undergone any modification would be foolish. That is not the way in which science advances; but it advances through constant rectification of its observations and adjustments of its points of view. A change of opinion may involve loss, perhaps fatal loss, to a system of thought founded on authority; but it means no loss to science, whose vitality can never be impaired by additional knowledge. As Mr. Spencer has lately found occasion to say, there may be much difference of opinion as to how species originate; but this does not in the least invalidate the great law of evolution, which finds illustrations on every page of the book of nature. The heritage of Darwin may be divided; but, at least, no part of it is in possession of an anti-scientific or an anti-naturalistic school. All who to-day grapple with the question of the origin of species do so on a basis of purely scientific observation and reasoning; and even if the problem had to be given up as too obscure—and it is quite possible that we do not even yet know how obscure it is—it would still remain a problem of science, not a problem of theology or metaphysics.

One most important characteristic of science is, that it can never really be idle. If it is not doing one thing, it is doing another; and its humbler work—or what seems so—may be not less useful, may indeed be more useful, than its more ambitious efforts. There is no department of natural knowledge which is not day by day receiving accretions which all go to better in some way the position of man upon the earth. It will do no harm if, for a time, there is less vague talk in regard to the theoretical conquests of science; but there need be no abatement of the confidence with which we hold that science is the power which transforms impressions of sense into conclusions of reason, which alone throws light on the constitution of the world in which we live, and which confers upon all human effort its highest possible efficiency. Knowing this, we know that the so-called "bankruptcy of science" is a contradiction in terms, the flippant invention of those with whom the wish is father to the thought. In a word, all is well; for whether

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the time be seed time or harvest, whether the field, as we see it, be lying fallow or carrying a bounteous crop, science, the one abiding power and principle of fertility, is present with mankind, and its promise will not fail.

—*Popular Science Monthly.*

GOD IN ARMENIA.

TURKISH atrocities! who is the Turk?
Deity's tool doing Deity's work!
Who is the Deity? All the fools know—
Infinite Wisdom, the "Boss of the show."
Simpletons, hypocrites, rascals, and fools
Counsel their God to get rid of his tools;
Urge him to modify all of his plans—
Strength is Jehovah's, but wisdom is man's.
God, as creator, is smart, they admit;
But, as a ruler, they doubt if he's fit;
Hence, they supply him with notions and views,
Hints and instructions, and items of news;
Statements of fact which they think he should know,
Merely to show him the way he should go.

Why they should fancy that these will avail,
Seeing that vain was the slaughter'd one's wail,
God only knows—if he *does* live, and know
Ev'rything, sideways, above, and below.

God in Armenia is doing God's work;
Foe of the Christian and friend of the Turk;
Always the same, for his present-day crimes
Match with his doings in Biblical times.
Helpless Armenians! what depth of despair!
Victims of Turkey, Jehovah, and pray'r!

Prayer to God who does ev'rything well!
Prayer for what?—will the knowing ones tell?
Something that's not in God's program or plan;
Quite overlooked till suggested by man;
Not kept in stock, but "to order" of those
Willing to wait till they get it—who knows?

"All's for the best"; but they humbly request
Something that's diff'rent from "all for the best."
"All's for the best," say the "*feelings*" on Sunday;
Brains begin work after breakfast on Monday.
"All's for the best" is the doctrine of knaves;
Syrup for fools, and narcotic for slaves.

Simpletons pray, and appear to believe,
Somehow, that God, like themselves, they deceive;
They always deny that their hints and their pray'rs
Are meant to instruct their Creator upstairs;
But still they pray on, with no trace of aphasia:
"O Lord! pay attention to Christians in Asia!
The average *man*, with no claim to perfection,
Would gladly, if able, give help and protection
To suffering creatures; so, surely to goodness!
Requesting as much from a *God* isn't rudeness.
We're not for a moment presuming to teach thee,
But, hang it, Jehovah! jee-up, we beseech thee."

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Holy Kissing.

"Salute the sistren with a holy kiss."—TIMOTHY TITUS.

One custom of the Christian wedding ceremony, which happily is passing away, is that of the clergyman who officiates kissing the bride. In days gone by the man who married a true Christian woman was rather a subordinate factor in the proceeding; for not only had his sweetheart previously pledged herself to be the bride of Christ and of the Church, but hardly were the words which made them man and wife repeated before another man kissed her—doubtless supplying the caress which neither Christ nor the Church would ever be in a position to give in other than a figurative manner. There have been some discussions as to where the custom referred to originated. Some have argued that it is really a relic of a far worse custom, the *jus primæ noctes*. One thing is certain: it originated with the clergy.

ACID DROPS.

PROFESSOR FREEMAN, the historian, now knows whether Christianity is true or false; that is, if he knows *anything*, for he is dead and buried. During his lifetime he professed himself a Christian. "Christianity," he wrote to a correspondent, "went right in the teeth of all that was good and bad in the Roman of the fourth century. Yet it succeeded; and I cannot account for its success by any ordinary cause." Gibbon, however, thought he *could* account for it; and he was a greater historian than Mr. Freeman. The fact is that Christianity triumphed in the fourth century, and not in the first, second, or third, simply because it got hold of the State power in the fourth century, and used it unscrupulously to promote its own interests and crush out all opposition.

Mr. Freeman thought the "preservation of the Jews as a separate people" to be "no small bit of evidence." Well, it *is* a bit of evidence. It proves the malignity of Christianity. Persecution has kept the Jews a separate people. As they are allowed the full rights of free citizenship, they gradually merge into the surrounding populations.

Mrs. Augustus Craven, whose Memoirs have been published by Mrs. Bishop, records her meeting with Mr. Gladstone. "We talked of everything," she says, "and it certainly was most interesting. One thing he said with an energy which added to the feeling he expressed, that the growth of infidelity was the one evil to be resisted before all others, and that whoever served the cause of Faith and Christianity was doing the greatest of all the deeds to be done. In comparison with that, nothing whatever signifies much in this world." Mr. Gladstone is right, from his point of view. Christianity, if true, is the only thing of any real importance; and, if it be false, it is the most noxious thing on this planet. Freethinkers should be encouraged by Mr. Gladstone's dread of "infidelity." It shows that they are on the right track in straightforward opposition to Christianity.

"God himself," says Professor William James, of Harvard University, "*may* draw vital strength and increase of very being from our fidelity." How incorrigible is the vanity of the human species!

Do we need a fresh revelation? asks the *British Weekly*. Of course it thinks not; but it would find it hard to explain why the Jews should have one rather than the English. Revelation, it is said, was given to explain difficulties; but the Bible only raises fresh ones. Surely a new revelation is required even to explain the old. No one will say we have too much light. If more is required, should it not be given?

We referred a few weeks ago to a village in Somerset where the school children are expected to say "Father" to the parson. The parson's lady, like others of her sex, is fond of appearing at school or church dressed smartly, and the other day she donned a brand-new toque, gaily decorated with flowers, etc. When she and the parson put in an appearance at the Sunday-school, one of the boys appeared amazingly well pleased at the lady's gay appearance, and called out: "Oh, father, there's a purty bonnet mother's got on." What followed is not stated.—*Christian Commonwealth.*

At Dorchester a lad named Harold Woolley, son of a clergyman living at Burleston, was brought up in custody, charged with arson. It was alleged that Woolley wilfully set fire to a rick, the property of a farmer named Homer. The prisoner made a statement to the police virtually amounting to an admission of the offence. He was remanded on bail.

Dr. Pullman, a leading sky-pilot at Bridgeport, Connecticut, made from the pulpit some aspersions on Mdlle. Jane May, an actress. This lady decided to prosecute him for libel, and much interest will be exhibited in the suit from the fact that Colonel Ingersoll has undertaken to conduct the lady's case.

The Rev. E. Belanovitch, of the Russian Church, New York, called Mrs. McGahan "a literary prostitute." She is seeing if the law will award damages against the man of God.

It is well to see what others think of us. Here is what the New York *Sun* has to say of the English universities: "Oxford and Cambridge have been endowed with the incongruous privilege of sending representatives to Parliament. This has involved them in party politics, while their close connection with the Established Church has hitherto made them handmaids of Anglican ascendency and battlefields of ecclesiastical strife. American universities happily are free from such influences, and are at liberty to serve the

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Republic impartially at once by prompting a higher treatment of political subjects, and by instilling a regard for principle such as may elevate the tone of public life. This there seems to be little doubt that they are doing."

Dean Hole is a very genial sky-pilot, who has done something to loosen the shackles of Sabbatarianism; but in his *Little Tour in America* he shows that orthodoxy has left its taint, for with amusing severity he remarks that "Harvard has not been faithful to her original dedication, *Christo et Ecclesiæ*. It has, on the contrary, been desecrated by the heresy most repulsive to the Christian faith, by that subtle form of Antichrist, the foe who pretends to be a friend—Unitarianism." Well, Oxford and Cambridge were once dedicated to Christ and the Church, but the old tests have had to be removed.

Here is the refrain of a sweet hymn that is good enough for evangelical street itinerants just now:—

It's a good old thing, religion;
It's good enough for me;
'Twas good enough for Peter
When he walked upon the sea;
'Twas good enough for Daniel
When in the lion's den;
And surely it is good enough
For common working men.

Somebody wrote—

There was an old preacher of Hull,
Who had nothing at all in his skull;
His flock came before him
And said, Cockolorum,
Your sermons are awfully dull.

Well, could there be anything more dull than the average sermon? Was not the pulpit invented, or, rather, taken over by the Christians and baptised, for the express purpose of keeping sleepers asleep, or sending those awake into the land of dreams? And did ever invention half so well succeed as the pulpit in these respects?—*Liberator.*

In Westchester, U.S.A., a Christian parson, the Rev. J. Pearce, conducts, and is superintendent of, a home for destitute children. On the building is inscribed, "Suffer little children," and Mr. Pearce sees to it that the children do suffer. The New York *World* says that Dickens's picture of the treatment of children by Wackford Squeers and Bumble pales before the facts regarding this man of God and his Christian "home." One child was chained, shackled, and beaten, wearing his chains by day and night. He broke the shackle from one leg, and dragged the chain by the other leg for ten miles, and into Connecticut. He, like another runaway girl, begged on his knees not to be sent again to this "home."

Rev. Henry Sandwith, a Yorkshire clergyman, has committed suicide at Upton Grey Lodge, near Basingstoke, where he was staying at the time.

Though Crosby, the Baptist Church Mission pastor of Battersea, and now of Langham, swore in the witness-box that he did not commit adultery with Mrs. Cantello, the jury believed that he did, and the judge pronounced a decree *nisi*, with costs, against the co-respondent Crosby, who had advised the petitioner to marry the lady. All were members of the same church, and the petitioner stated that Crosby called to his God, time after time, denying that there was ever anything improper in his conduct with the respondent. As he had a great respect for his pastor, he believed him. Miss Waller, who gave evidence against the man of God, admitted that she was turned out of the church because she would insist on telling the truth, and because she would not contribute to the Pastor's Sustenance Fund.

"Nemo" writes to the *Glasgow Herald* on the Gifford Lectures, citing the broad basis of Lord Gifford's will, which expressly declares that the lecturers may be of any or "of no religion, or they may be so-called Sceptics, or Agnostics or Freethinkers, provided only that the patrons will use diligence to secure that they be able, reverent men, true thinkers, sincere lovers of, and earnest inquirers after, truth." The lectures only were to deal with Natural Religion, but Dr. Caird has been bringing in the Incarnation. "Nemo" asks: "Can any reasonable man imagine that Lord Gifford ever intended these lectures to be delivered in a sandwiched form as part of a Christian Church service? I think that in this respect also Lord Gifford's wishes have not been sufficiently taken into account."

How they love one another! Here is the way in which the *Catholic News* speaks of Protestant missions: "That most pernicious of all pernicious sects, the Protestant Bible Society, is again at its murderous work. Its false prophets are galvanised into temporary activity, and this time it is the 'benighted' Catholics of Spanish America who are to have the peace of their homes invaded and the sanctity of their religion vilified by psalm-singing twaddlers, gospel tramps, and ignorant hirelings, who are about as competent to explain the word of God as a Hottentot is to lecture on bimetallism."

After some more strong language on "these self-constituted apostles," who live on "addle-pated dupes," the *Catholic News* says: "The priests and people of Spanish America will not remain passive while the slimy serpent of Heresy endeavors to imprint its poisonous fangs in the souls of their little ones. If the Venezuelans are ignorant of anything, it is of the use of tar and feathers, a judicious application of which would be sufficient to keep the brawling ranters of the Bible Society at a safe distance from their shores." Some people fancy that the Christian religion is all treacle. The *Catholic News* gives us a glimpse of its real composition, as seen in history.

The missionary societies and the missionaries are anything but Malthusian in principle. In India, China, and Madagascar the humble pioneers of the blessed Gospel are allowed a house and £300 a year, extra pay for a horse and trap, £14 per year for every child, and £12 per year for its education. The missionaries are notoriously prolific, and their families are no small item in the expense.

The Rev. W. Bayard Hale denounces in the *Forum* modern religious methods of drawing in the cash at church bazaars, fancy fairs, and strawberry sociables. In one case he mentions a female negro minstrel show, the black-faced merry-makers indulging in jokes too profane for the pages of the *Forum*.

Mr. Hale says: "I charge, then, that, besides its hundred other sins, the division of the Church has desecrated holy places and holy days; has assaulted all reverence; has given thousands who might have been won to the higher life an utterly ignoble conception of religion; has reduced Christian congregations to the level of fakirs and poor actors; has turned clergy into scrambling mountebanks; and has dishonored Christian womanhood."

Providence Journal, writing on Mr. Hale's article, says: "If sinners cannot be turned from the error of their ways by the simple preaching of the Gospel, perhaps it is better to leave the responsibility to their Creator than to degrade all religion by using skirt-dances and comic operas as instruments of salvation."

According to the Boston *Transcript*, the commercial enterprise of most of the religious papers is quite remarkable, and the secular appearance of their advertisements is noticeable. But the climax of this sort of thing seems to be capped by a letter seen recently. It was addressed to a business man by the manager of a religious weekly, and it solicited an advertisement on the ground that the paper "not only had a very large circulation, but a very credulous class of readers." We should say our own religious papers could offer the same inducement, and the patent medicine dealers seem to know it.

The other Sunday a lady called at one of the City churches after the afternoon service was over, and asked the officer if he had found an umbrella. The church officer had, and he promptly brought it forth for inspection, and the young lady as promptly claimed it. On the following morning, when the rightful owner put in an appearance, and innocently asked for her umbrella, the beadle naturally received a shock, and tossed some picturesque language around. It now turns out that the enterprising young lady makes a good thing out of this latest religious work.—*Glasgow Herald.*

After reprinting from the *Freethinker* our account of the late Victor Lennstrand, the *Liberator*, of Melbourne, says: "It seems such a pity that useful, heroic men should die in the very prime of life, while so many useless drones, priests, parsons, capitalists, pensioners, and vermin of all sorts, live on to old age. If there were any good and wise God about, things would be managed, I won't say better, but somewhat rationally. If such a God can be found, I for one will vote for him to be ruler of the universe, or as much of it as he can well manage. But the idea of setting up old Jehovah, a mere Jewish tribal God, to rule even this world, not to mention the universe, was the maddest thing this mad world ever did. Of course, they took the old balloon and blew it up with gas and faith; and this promised to succeed for a time. But then the texture wouldn't stand the strain, and it 'bust'; and there was an end of Jah and Co. Ever since the Jews and Christians have had to put up with the ghost or the bare name of their ancient absurdity; and they wonder the said absurdity doesn't rule the world better!"

Hindus and Buddhists are still disputing about the possession of Budh-Gaya in Bengal, the sacred temple erected on the spot where Gautama is said to have attained

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Buddhahood. The disputes there last year led to legal proceedings, which have simply left the matter *in statu quo*. The Buddhists have a moral claim to the place, and the Hindus should be ready to sell whatever legal claims they have to the custody of the shrine.

The Protestants of Australia are in arms because Cardinal Moran was given precedence, at a reception by Viscount Hampden, over the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Dr. Saunarez Smith. The incident shows the pushing character of Catholicism, and that the powers that be do not much care which is to the front.

Christ has had his left leg amputated—at least, Joseph Mayer, the Christ of the Passion Play at Oberammergau, who goes by the name of his impersonation, had his leg crushed while placing a heavy tree-trunk on a waggon. He was, like Jesus, a carpenter.

Ministers of the Gospel are so ready in calling for the law that they evince a lack of faith in the power of their own preaching. Here is the Presbyterian Church of England issuing a Pastoral Letter on "Gambling." Presbyterians are urged to use their influence to have the laws against gambling enforced, to support the movement for prohibiting the use of the post-office, the telegraph, and the press "for spreading the infection." Where does the wonderful influence of religion come in? It does not even prevent raffles at church bazaars.

Gambling, like many other vices, was once under the direct sanction of religion, which taught that everything was in the hand of God, who always favored his own. To this day they raffle for Bibles on the altar at St. Ives. In Bible times they drew lots, even to determine who should be the twelfth apostle. Proverbs xvi. 33 says: "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

The American Sunday Observance League prosecuted Walter Wilmot, and others of the Chicago base-ball team, for breaking the Sabbath by playing on a certain Sunday. The jury returned a verdict declaring that Wilmot did not break the Sabbath. As a consequence, Sunday base-ball will be in force more than ever during the coming season, and the Sunday Observance League may, by paying, look on from the grand stand.

The Rev. T. Wolstencroft, rector of Moston, has a dispute with his parishioners owing to his dismissal of the Sunday-school superintendent and closing the school. Mr. Wolstencroft is eighty-two years of age, and hangs on to his living, but has an afternoon instead of an evening service. As a consequence, his congregation, exclusive of his own family, is said to consist of one person.

The authorities of Milan are wisely desirous of preserving lunatics in asylums from the religious ministration of nuns, whose work is often in a contrary direction to that of the physicians. The Catholic journals regard this as persecution.

In the *Animals' Friend* for February Mr. H. S. Salt, author of *Animals' Rights*, has a slashing reply to the defence of "blood sports" by Bishop Bagshawe, on the ground that "the suffering they inflict resembles the suffering universally inflicted on one another by animals since God caused all creation to 'travail and groan' because of the sin of man." Mr. Salt says: "Consider the sequence of the argument—so fearfully and wonderfully made that the thinking mind stands aghast at it. Man sins. Therefore God causes all creation to 'travail and groan.' Therefore the animals prey on one another. Therefore it is right for man to inflict unnecessary suffering on the animals. That is to say, it is right for man to kill for *sport*, because the animals kill for *sustenance*; and the 'travail of creation,' which was due in the first instance to man's own sin, now justifies this further infliction of pain on the innocent animals! Was there ever such a 'vicious circle' of reasoning as this, in which man is made out to be morally inferior to the animals, and God scarcely better than man; and this by a writer who has just said that, 'as God is loving and merciful to all his creatures, we must be so always, not for their rights, but for the love of their Maker'!"

The Aborigines of North Siberia, according to the *Quarterly Review*, excel Christians in that first element of commerce, common honesty. The merchants of Mobolok, returning from their annual excursion to the North, leave unprotected what remains of their provisions for the following year. Should a Samoyese take a portion for his use, he leaves his I O U, a duplicate stick, to show that he is a debtor, and in the fishing season he comes to his creditor and discharges his obligations. There is thus, when people are all honest, little need for precious metals, and no apprehension of a drain of gold. Eighteen hundred years of Christianity have not improved common truth, because faith has been insisted on, irrespective of works.

Another example of heathenism is given in the Christmas number of the *Auckland Weekly News*, which depicts a real incident of the Maori war, in which one of the New Zealand "savages" brought, at the risk of his own life, water for his enemy, Colonel Booth, of the 43rd regiment, who lay wounded on the field of battle.

Cardinal Vaughan lays down the monstrous assumption that every English parent has a right to have his children taught, at the public expense, the religious faith in which he believes. As for the unbelievers, let them build schools for themselves. Some day this teaching may be retorted on Vaughan's Church.

When it was announced in the London School Board, the other day, that sixty new schools were to be built, Mr. Riley burst out with shrieks of "Shame!" It is all very well to say that Mr. Riley is not intellectually responsible for his acts and words. Do not let us forget what Sydney Smith said about the value of a "foolometer." Mr. Riley blurts out the hatred of education which less candid fanatics keep to themselves.—*Daily News.*

Professor Hall has been reading a paper before the Victoria Institute on the location of Mount Sinai. In opposition to Sayce, he contends that the traditional Jebel Musa is the veritable Sinai. All that is certain is, that Jahveh has long given up that locality.

In the current number of the *Historical Review* is given an account of an Armenian visit to Jerusalem in the seventh century. The Armenian visitor says Bethlehem is 220 parasangs from Jerusalem towards the west. It is now 6 Roman miles nearly due south, and seems to have miraculously changed its site since the seventh century.

The *Presbyterian Review* says there is a gate on the eastern wall of Jerusalem supposed to have been the "Beautiful Gate" of the Temple, and which the Turks are said to have hidden with a wall. If this gate still exists, how about the prediction that "not one stone should be left on another"? What will not people swallow who firmly believe in the Trinity?

During the celebration of Mass in a church near Angers, last Sunday, a portion of the roof fell in. The whole congregation was seized with panic. Not one wanted to be "for ever with the Lord," and in the stampede four were killed and some fifty injured. Religion hardly gives more confidence than common sense.

There is another candidate for heaven. The negro preacher, Jacob S. Johnson, of Somerville, N.J., who murdered Annie Rogers, a mulatto girl of Newark, has been sentenced to be hanged on March 11.

In the State of New York they have fined a blacksmith, named Apfelbaum, five dollars for shoeing a horse on Sunday. The plea of necessity or mercy was of no avail against Sabbatarianism.

The London Unitarians are having a "forward movement" by the simultaneous delivery of a number of lectures on "Protestant Principles." These principles have the defect of looseness—some interpreting them as meaning subordination in all things to the Bible, others as implying the exercise of private judgment on all things. If Unitarians would frankly tell the people to follow their judgment, even though opposed to the Bible, they might have a better chance of a forward movement among the masses.

The Rev. C. H. Wainwright, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, says that he had never yet heard of a single case where a person had been made an infidel through reading the Bible. Mr. Wainwright's experience differs from our own. We have heard of many such cases. Like Mr. Wainwright, we recommend people to read the old collection of books, but we also recommend them to think over the contents for themselves.

The *odium theologicum* has, of course, turned up at the Montrose Burgh election. The Rev. A. Douglas, preaching at the Abbey Church, Arbroath, on Sunday, on "The Folly of Infidelity," said that Mr. Morley was a man whose mission was to transplant, if he could, into this country those principles of French Atheism enunciated by Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau. The doughty Douglas evidently does not know that the first and last named were Theists.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 9, Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street, Glasgow:—11, "The Curse of Creeds"; 2.30, "How and Why was Jesus Born?" 6.30, "What has Become of the Devil?"

Monday, February 10, Dunoon.

Tuesday, February 11, Tannahill Hall, Mars-street, Paisley, at 8, "A Search for the Soul."

Wednesday, February 12, Greenock, at 8, "Why I Reject Christianity."

Thursday, February 13, Lesser Town Hall, Motherwell, at 8, "Can We Follow Jesus?"

Friday, February 14, Kilmarnock.

February 16, Hull; 18, Memorial Hall; 23, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—February 9, Camberwell; 11, Wellington Hall, Islington; 16, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 23, Manchester. March 1, Camberwell; 15, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London.

J. G. Hunt.—Colonel Ingersoll's address is not Washington, but New York. Direct your letter to Colonel R. G. Ingersoll, Fifth Avenue, New York.

E. G. Taylor.—Thanks. But nothing turned upon it in the hearing of the petition.

R. Gibson.—Gainsboro' shall not be forgotten.

H. C. S.—You are wrong as to the date.

Atheist (Glasgow).—Thanks for the *Herald*. You will see that we have written on the Gifford Lectures.

Illiterate.—If you ask our opinion on any particular point, you shall have it; but we do not feel called on to take up any book and mention all its errors. All books dealing with matters of conjecture have some errors.

E. Smedley.—(1) Statistics do not confirm the view that those places are most moral where Sabbatarianism reigns. (2) The Puritans of Massachusetts are shown by Adams, in his History, to have been a most intolerant, bigoted set. (3) There are still in existence laws against Sunday labor and Sunday meetings for discussion, and prosecutions have been carried on by the Lord's Day Observance Society. (4) We have heard of, but do not know, the person named.

J. Hooper.—In our next. Delayed in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence from London.

Many correspondents must wait for answers till the editor returns home.

Papers Received.—Nya Sanningar—Post—Echo—Humanity—Newton Heath Reporter—Chicago Tribune—Animals' Friend—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Glasgow Herald—Truth Seeker—Boston Investigator—Isle of Man Times—Progressive Thinker—East End News—Sun—De Dageraad—New York Public Opinion—Worker's Friend—Blackpool Gazette—Southern Echo.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

How to Help Us.

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

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

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

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote had capital audiences at Liverpool on Sunday. Both the morning and afternoon meetings were exceptionally good, and the hall was crowded in the evening. Special appeals were made on each occasion for new members and increased support to the Branch. Liverpool is a difficult field for Freethought propaganda, and it is to be hoped that all the local Freethinkers will rally round the old standard. There are some very earnest and capable workers on the Branch committee, but they require assistance from the rank and file. Readers of the *Freethinker* in Liverpool are earnestly invited to become members of the Branch, if they are not already enrolled. Those who hesitate to join, for personal reasons, might at least give a little financial aid, and send it promptly to Mr. Roberts, the secretary, 99 Saxony-road.

Mr. Foote delivers three lectures to-day (February 9) for the Glasgow Branch. During the week he will be delivering free lectures in south-west Scotland, at places that are being cultivated through his lecture scheme. On the following Sunday he delivers three lectures at Hull on his way home from Scotland.

Parsons read the "Lesson for the Day" before their sermons, and Mr. Foote has taken to reading a poem before his Sunday evening lecture. At Liverpool he read Tennyson's "Rizpah," which the audience highly appreciated. He will read this poem again before his evening lecture at Glasgow.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner was held at the Holborn Restaurant on Wednesday, January 29, and was a most successful function. A large company—larger, indeed, than was expected—did justice to an excellent repast. Mr. Foote was in the chair, and was supported by Messrs. Watts, Moss, Heaford, and Snell. Mr. Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, who was present, received an enthusiastic greeting when he rose, in response to the chairman's invitation, to say a few words on behalf of the Midlands. Mr. George Anderson, who could not be present in person, was there in spirit; and the chairman conveyed his good wishes to the assembly, with special references to the toast of "The Memory of Charles Bradlaugh," with whom Mr. Anderson was for many years on terms of intimate and steadfast friendship. In addition to the speeches by the gentlemen already mentioned, and a bright one by Miss Vance, there were songs by Miss Williams, Miss Stafford, and Mr. Cheeseman, and a scene from *Lady Windermere's Fan* by Miss Brown and Miss May. The assembly broke up before twelve with "Auld Lang Syne."

Mr. George Anderson, 35a Great George-street, Westminster, S.W., draws our attention to an error in our last week's announcement of the pamphlets he is endeavoring to circulate. This is how the matter really stands. Mr. Anderson will send 10 copies of Winwood Reade's *What Christians Believe* post free for 1s. 8d., and 6 copies of Charles Watts's *Claims of Christianity* post free for 1s. 6d. The former is published at 3d., the latter at 6d. Mr. Forder, on Mr. Anderson's instructions, will supply applicants at the same rate—of course, not for sale, but for distribution.

The Athenæum, in Tottenham-court-road, was successfully opened for Sunday evening lectures last Sunday, by Mr. Charles Watts. There was a capital audience, many strangers being present; and everybody evidently enjoyed the lecture, judging from the repeated applause. Three opponents presented themselves, and an interesting debate took place. We are glad to learn that Mr. Watts was in good form. Mr. Harry Brown presided. As the hall is otherwise engaged for to-day, February 9, our meetings will not be resumed until next Sunday, February 16, when Mr. Watts will again lecture.

Mr. Watts lectures this evening (Sunday, February 9) at the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell, taking for his subject "Theology Tested at the Bar of History." We hope our London friends will muster in good force on this occasion.

The Finsbury Park Branch starts the new year with about £2 in hand, after paying £4 to the Treasurer in settlement of indebtedness to him. This is very satisfactory when it is remembered that Branch lost over £40 in connection with the Rock-street Hall, which had to be closed owing to notice from the District Surveyor that extensive alterations would have to be carried out. Religious meetings had been held in this hall without let or hindrance for some time previous to the Branch tenancy. There is an adjourned meeting next Sunday at the Bradlaugh Club at 4 o'clock, when the officers will be elected, and other important business transacted.

The Annual Ball of the Camberwell Branch takes place at

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the Hall, 61 New Church-road, on Tuesday, February 11, and lasts from 8.30 until 2 a.m., so dancers will have a lengthy period of enjoyment. Though the price is moderate (one shilling), these dances are always very select.

On Sunday night the ordinary half-yearly General Meeting of the Westminster Branch was held. A very satisfactory balance-sheet and report were adopted. Messrs. Tanner, Burrell, Wheeler, and Stace were respectively elected Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and M.C., and most of the other officers were re-elected. At the conclusion of the ordinary business an artistically-designed Memorial Grave Board, in memory of the late greatly-respected member, Sergeant R. Bell, was unveiled. It will be placed over the grave at Brompton Cemetery, and will take the place of the destroyed memorial wreath. The Secretary gave a few reminiscences of the deceased. The execution of the memorial had been carried out by Mr. E. Stace.

The Finsbury Branch of the National Secular Society has for many years carried on open-air work during the summer on Clerkenwell Green, and it will continue to do so, in spite of the opposition of a clique of the old Hall of Science Club malcontents, who never pardoned the N.S.S. Executive for effectively protesting against the Club letting the hall for objectionable "boxing contests." It will be remembered that the Club persisted in this course, in spite of the protests of the Executive and the Board of Directors, and also in spite of warnings from Mr. Foote, who had received a hint as to the real nature of these performances. But the advertisement of the second entertainment was of such a character as to justify Mr. Foote's warnings, and the Club had to shut the doors on the crew who ought never to have been allowed to enter the place. The active spirits in this outrage on decency got into the Finsbury Branch, for other reasons than the welfare of the Branch itself. For some time they played a factious part through their delegate on the Executive, and through ridiculous correspondence; but, finding that they could make no impression in that way, they decided to commit *felo de se*. They determined to work independently of the N.S.S., which is exactly what the N.S.S. wishes them to do. But it is a delusion on their part to suppose that they have broken up the Branch. A Branch of the N.S.S. cannot be wound up against the wish of the Executive. The Finsbury Branch is just as it was, except for the absence of the would-be wreckers, whose absence is far preferable to their company. There are enough loyal members remaining to carry on the work; and these are the old members, the members who used to do the work before the malcontents joined the Branch (as the nearest to the Hall of Science) for the purpose of mischief. The Finsbury Branch will have a lecture-stand on Clerkenwell Green this summer, as usual, from which the N.S.S. lecturers will speak as they have spoken before. Adequate support will be given to the Branch in every way, and the station will be properly maintained. If the factious clique aforesaid like to go on the Green and air their eloquence, of course they are free to do so, as the place is open to all comers. We leave them, having explained them, to the common law of gravitation.

Five new Branches of the N.S.S. have just been formed at Paisley, Heckmondwike, Leeds, Bingley, and Newark. These are the first fruits of Mr. Foote's lecture scheme. Several more Branches will probably be formed before the Conference.

At the last meeting of the National Secular Society's Executive, on Thursday, January 30, it was decided to send out the usual notices with regard to the next Conference, which takes place on Whit-Sunday. As there has been some misunderstanding on previous occasions, it may be well to emphasise the fact that Branches which invite the Conference to assemble in their towns must comply with the conditions, or their invitation will not be placed upon the final voting paper. These conditions are: (1) A suitable hall for the Conference, morning and afternoon; (2) a suitable hall for the public meeting in the evening; (3) reasonable hotel accommodation for delegates and visitors; (4) the local expenses of the Conference hall to be borne by the Branch.

It is ten years since a Conference was held in Scotland, and it has been hinted to us that England ought not to monopolise these gatherings. For our part, we should not be sorry if Scotland were favored this year. Of course the only place for the Conference in Scotland is Glasgow. That is the seat of the strongest Branch, and there is no difficulty (as in Edinburgh) in obtaining suitable halls.

The Freethinkers' Children's Party will take place early in March. All who wish to contribute to the enjoyment of the youngsters should send to Miss Vance as soon as possible. She will be happy to supply friends with collecting cards.

In view of the acknowledged need of reform in our Criminal Law and prison system, the Humanitarian League is starting a special department to deal with that subject. The organising secretary and lecturer is Mrs. C. Mallet, to whom communications should be addressed, at 132 Cromwell-road, London, S.W. Mrs. Mallet is prepared to give a lantern lecture on the prison system before any club or institute that may desire it.

Humanity, the organ of the Humanitarian League, under the heading of "The Shadow of the Sword," gives the notice which appeared in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, and says: "When we published Mr. Foote's pamphlet a few weeks ago, we little foresaw what a new and terrible significance its title would receive from the war-scare which has overclouded Europe and America with the shadow of the darkest calamity that the mind of man can conceive."

Edgar Fawcett, the poet and novelist, in writing about Ingersoll in *The Conservator*, resents the disposition of some persons to emphasise the Colonel's gifts as an orator. He thinks that more attention ought to be paid to the substance of Ingersoll's teaching. Mr. Fawcett finds the "essence of wisdom and mental power" in Ingersoll's matter, and he is delighted and convinced by it.

William Archer has, in the February *Fortnightly Review*, an article on "George Henry Lewes and the Stage," which will interest all admirers of the Freethinking philosopher.

In the *Popular Science Monthly* for January, Professor Angelo Heilprin gives "A Student's Recollections of Huxley," whom he describes as an excellent draughtsman, believing only in drawing from the actual object. Mrs. Thomas Collier, *née* Huxley, ranks high as an artist. Professor Heilprin says, too, that, though an excellent public speaker, Huxley suffered from nervousness whenever he had to speak in public. A good story is told of a bishop who used many magazine pages and many columns of the daily press to decry "the undernurse of Darwinism." Finding Huxley took no notice, he wrote to him, calling his attention to the articles, and asking advice as to how to improve his own scientific studies. Professor Huxley's full and laconic answer was: "Take a cockroach and dissect it." The bishop asked no more.

Huxley, so Professor Heilprin assures us, thought very highly of the German Freethinker, Karl Vogt, whom "he regarded as a tower of strength, and, in a certain sense, a genius." Vogt, even more than Huxley, was fearlessly outspoken in his utterances, living in voluntary exile at Geneva to preserve the integrity of his intellectual conscience.

Mr. J. W. Spencer computes the age of the Niagara Falls at 31,000 years. The river, he holds, is another thousand years older.

An endowment by the Hon. Henry W. Sage established in Cornell University, under Professor A. D. White, a school of philosophy "devoted to the free and unhampered quest and propagation of truth in psychology, ethics, metaphysics, and the history and philosophy of religion." Six scholarships and three fellowships are open to graduates of Cornell and other universities. A psychological laboratory is attached to the institution; a philosophical class has been formed; and a periodical—the *Philosophical Review*—is published under the editorial direction of two of the professors.

The Rev. R. L. Nail, of Hooversville, Pennsylvania, for years a minister in the Campbellite Church, has given up his ministry and religion and become "an infidel." The *Blue Grass Blade*, the editor of which contributed to his conversion, gives prominence to a letter in which Mr. Nail assigns his reasons.

The Paine Exhibition, held at the Bradlaugh Institute, Ball's Pond, was fairly attended on each night. Although the exhibits were not quite as numerous as those at South Place, they were varied and interesting. Among many items which were not at the former exhibition may be mentioned a striking oil painting of Paine by Dalton; a portrait of Carlile lithographed by his son; and the table which Carlile had with him during his imprisonments. This last relic is, we believe, now the property of Mr. George Anderson.

The *Christian Commonwealth* of January 30 reports an interview with Mr. G. J. Holyoake. It begins by saying: "Mr. Holyoake has a distinguished record of public service. As no attempt will here be made to follow his career in detail, it is desired to make this acknowledgment at the outset. He is universally respected; for, happily, it is possible to recognise his zealous labors on behalf of humanity and his high moral principle, without subscribing to his opinions." A brief sketch of Mr. Holyoake's life is given, and the friendly talk seems to have aimed at minimising difference.

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LECTURING NOTES.

ELEVEN lectures in eight days, delivered in seven different towns, is not a bad record. On Saturday, January 18, I left St. Pancras Station for Glasgow, where I lectured three times on the following day. My audiences were large and exceedingly enthusiastic; but, unfortunately, there was no debate at any of the meetings—only a few questions were submitted. It is a significant fact that discussions at my lectures have become the exception, not the rule. The "defenders of the faith" have given up their attempt at "defence" as hopeless, which is not surprising, considering the results that have followed previous controversies. The truth is manifest that the claims of Christianity cannot be successfully maintained in an intellectual combat. During thirty-five years of my public labors I have met all the leading Christian exponents in discussion, and it would be to me a pleasure once more to engage in a set debate with an able opponent upon the relative merits of Christianity and Secularism; but, alas! there is no prospect of finding such an antagonist.

The greater part of my time and work, during my recent tour, was devoted to Scotland, where, it is pleasing to know, Secular principles are rapidly extending. Doubtless this is due, in a large measure, to the efforts of the Glasgow friends, who are persistent in their endeavors to extend Freethought propaganda. Mr. Gilmour is a most able and consistent exponent of Secularism, and his administrative ability is as valuable to the "good old cause" as are his platform efforts. He has the advantage of the co-operation of such staunch toilers as Mr. Forrester, Mr. Black, and a host of brave and earnest young men, who are devoted to the task of fighting the enemy and defending the citadels of Freethought.

On January 20, 23, and 24 I broke new ground in Kilmarnock, Motherwell, and Cambuslang. On the 21st I lectured in Paisley. Mr. Gilmour made all the arrangements for these meetings, and, with other Glasgow friends, accompanied me, every evening, to the different places. These week-night lectures were given under Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme, and the good results cannot be overestimated. Hundreds of people heard of the Gospel of Freethought for the first time, and at all the meetings the greatest attention was manifested, without the slightest interruption from the Christian portions of the audiences. Questions were put, and many inquiries were made to me privately as to the nature of our movement, and how Secular literature could be obtained. This was a gratifying feature of my tour, as was also the presence of so many ladies and young men at most of the meetings. No pains should be spared to enlist into our ranks our wives, sisters, daughters, and sons. They impart an interest and energy to our movement that are absolutely necessary to its success.

The Paisley Branch of the N.S.S., which was formed at my previous visit, has considerably increased its membership. Other Branches are in course of formation at the places where I recently lectured.

On Sunday, January 26, I lectured at Edinburgh, where I found such veterans as Mr. Dewar and Mr. Brown as active as ever. Unfortunately, a gloom prevailed among the members in consequence of the death—which took place on the previous day—of Miss Brown, the daughter of the President of the Society. The deceased lady had been for years a pronounced Secularist, and, through a long and painful illness, she exhibited an amount of patience and fortitude which fidelity to principle alone can command. At her special request, no religious ceremony was observed at her funeral, the Secular Service taking its place. Much sympathy was expressed for Mr. Brown by my audiences on the Sunday. Despite his bereavement, he presided at both lectures.

On Monday, January 27, I lectured at Stockton-on-Tees, under Mr. Foote's scheme, to a crowded audience; and on the following day I returned to London, to be in time to attend the Annual Dinner of the N.S.S. It was a most successful gathering, and everybody was delighted. Joy and happiness illumined the countenances of all present.

CHARLES WATTS.

"An off-tolled tale."—The complaint about the church-bell-ringing nuisance.

THE CHRISTIANS.

AN IMPRESSION.

WHO ransack the whole world for gold—
Their root of evil—uncontrolled?
The Christians!

Who lend their gold to "Heathen" thrones,
Taking great usury for their loans?
The Christians!

Who build great fleets for murderous war,
Making *vae victis* their chief law?
The Christians!

Whose armies increase year by year?
Who bully all they do not fear?
The Christians!

Who lisp of peace, yet live in strife,
Playing the hypocrite all their life?
The Christians!

Who scorn the God they made above,
Giving to Satan their true love?
The Christians!

Who drink, and whore, and go to war,
Add field to field, oppress the poor?
The Christians!

Who burnt each other at the stake,
Except when fear did curb their hate?
The Christians!

Who, when they fear to burn each other,
Rob, cheat, and kill their pagan brother?
The Christians!

Who cant of love, yet live in hate,
Betraying their God's early state?
The Christians!

Who send their priests to tame the savage,
And then his lands and chattels ravage?
The Christians!

Who, in the race for cent. per cent.,
Impoverish each continent?
The Christians!

With rotting slums whose cities reek?
In palaces who pleasures seek?
The Christians!

Who is it hate with hate so fell
That each his brother damns to hell?
The Christians!

Who is it that—so "meek and mild"—
You scratch and find a savage wild?
The Christians!

Who, whilst they of "forgiveness" boast,
Build gallows, jail, and whipping post?
The Christians!

Who for two thousand years have sold
Their fellow men for slaves—for gold?
The Christians!

Whose kings and priests, the "great and good,"
Have drenched the whole wide world with blood?
The Christians!

Who teach that each should love the other,
Yet live by swindling one another?
The Christians!

Whose rich oft die of constipation,
Whose poor of foodless inanition?
The Christians!

Who made their Heaven, and made their Hell,
And then into the latter fell?
The Christians!

Who have the whole black gamut run
Of sin and crime since A.D. ONE?
The Christians!

For wars and murders, lust and hate,
Hypocrisy, and greed its mate;
Theft, lying, and false witness, too,
With modern sins added thereto;
Who a first place do clearly take?
The Christians!

DOGGERELIST.

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BOOK CHAT.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS has written an amusing book, which he has called *A House-Boat on the Styx* (Harper and Bros., New York). The humor of the work lies in the fact that the characters delineated are of every era in history, from Adam and Noah to P. T. Barnum and Artemus Ward. The janitor of the house-boat is Charon, the ferryman of the River Styx. Here is Mr. Bangs' theory of snakes, put in the mouth of Dr. Johnson: "The serpent was the tail. Look at most snakes to-day. What are they but unattached tails?" "They do look it," said Darwin, thoughtfully. "Why, it's clear as day," said Johnson. "As punishment for swinging by their tails in the forbidden tree, Adam and Eve lost their tails, and the tail itself was compelled to work for a living, and to do its own walking." "And the snakes of the present day?" queried Thackeray. "I believe to be the missing tails of men," said Johnson. "Somewhere in the world is a tail for every man and woman and child. Where one's tail is no one can say, but that it exists simultaneously with its owner I believe."

* * *

Mr. Percival Lowell, in his book on *Mars*, published at Boston, does not endorse the opinion of the *Sunday Companion*, which discovers that God has written his old name of Shaddai on the canals. He, however, thinks these lines evidence handicraft, with an intelligent mind behind it. Mr. Lowell says: "To talk of Martian beings is not to mean Martian men. Just as the probabilities point to the one, so do they point away from the other. Even on this earth man is of the nature of an accident. He is the survival of by no means the highest physical organism. He is not even a high form of mammal. Mind has been his making. For aught we can see, some lizard or batrachian might just as well have popped into his place early in the race, and been now the dominant creature of this earth.....Amid the surroundings that exist on Mars, surroundings so different from our own, we may be practically sure other organisms have been evolved of which we have no cognisance. What manner of beings they may be we lack the data even to conceive."

* * *

Collected Papers on Some Controverted Questions in Geology, by Professor Joseph Prestwich, deal with the antiquity of man in Western Europe. The author holds that man probably lived on the Thames and the Somme in pre-glacial times, a period he would put at only from 30,000 to 50,000 years ago. The discussion of the questions involved is able and satisfying.

* * *

A memoir of G. J. Romanes, edited by Mrs. Romanes, is on the point of publication. It is known that marriage made a considerable alteration in the once promising scientist, and perhaps we shall be allowed to see how it came about. It is announced that an important correspondence with Darwin will be included in the volume.

* * *

Anarchy and Moribund Society, a translation of the famous *La Société Mourante et l'Anarchie*, for which Jean Grave was sentenced to two years' imprisonment, is shortly to be published at the office of the *Torch*, 127 Ossulston-street, London, N.W. The price will be 3s., or in twelve parts at 3½d. each, post free.

* * *

The *Christian Commonwealth*, in a belated notice of *Dr. Stark Munro's Letters*, says: "The reader who runs through the fascinating pages of this book feels that the author probably wanted to air his own devout scepticism. If the opinions of 'Stark Munro' are not Dr. Conan Doyle's own, the book gives a vivid impression of the wrong kind. We feel in every chapter that the author is preaching at us very earnestly."

* * *

The *Daily News*, reviewing a new edition of Dr. A. R. Wallace's *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, says: "Of Dr. Wallace's sincerity no one will entertain a doubt; but it is evident that he is far too confiding a man for a deceitful world."

* * *

Russian Politics is the title of a work designed to aid the cause of freedom, by Herbert M. Thompson, M.A., published by T. Fisher Unwin. The prospectus states that the author has been helped by the constant advice of Mr. Felix Volkhovsky, and it appears that a chapter is devoted to a description of the religions and religious prosecutions of Russia.

* * *

Cardinal Vaughan is a fairly wily ecclesiastic, but he shows a puerile tendency to whine over spilt milk. Purcell's *Life of Cardinal Manning* cannot be recalled, and putting it on the *Index* will only increase its circulation. Mr. Purcell, a good Catholic, showed from Manning's own letters the intriguing, ambitious, self-seeking character of the Cardinal. The picture is altogether too truthful for his successor, who lets out that, having previously given Mr. Purcell unconditional access to the Cardinal's papers, his executors tried to prevent the publication of facts thus divulged in their true light. Cardinal Vaughan, finding that the real Manning, by his appointed biographer, demolishes the mythical Manning of the Catholic press writer, cries out that the publication of the book is "almost a crime."

* * *

Iesät Nassar: the Story of the Life of Jesus the Nazarene, by Peter von F. Mamreov, Anna F. Mamreov, and B. A. F. Mamreov (Sunrise Co., New York), is one of those many books which, like *Plutochristus*, *Hafed*, *Ben Hur*, and *The Unknown Life of Christ*, pretend to give a full, true, and particular account of the real life of the Christian idol. *Iesät Nassar* is a book of seven hundred pages, and goes into a lot of legendary detail, of which the following is a sample: "There was a dyer called Kirman who sometimes allowed Jesus Nassar to experiment with small quantities of dyes in his shop. 'Kirman,' said the noble boy one day, 'why don't you make some new colors for the cloth that you dye?' 'I use all the known dyes, and I don't think any other colors could be produced,' replied Kirman. 'Well, Kirman, see here,' said Jesus Nassar, getting out of his pockets where, boylike, he had kept what he intended as a surprise for the dyer. Kirman looked up from his work and was astonished; for Jesus Nassar held in his hands some strips of cloth of beautiful shades and color such as Kirman had never yet seen in any of the bazaars, where there was an almost bewildering variety. When he found that these were the results of the noble boy's own combinations and experiments, Kirman became anxious to learn, and Jesus Nassar quite as eagerly and gladly showed how he had succeeded in making the new dyes. Kirman succeeded so well that in a short time all the other dyers came to learn of him; and when he told them who had been his inspirer and teacher, the guild of dyers prayed permission to name Jesus Nassar their patron. Thus it came about that the Persians honor Jesus Nassar as their patron, and call a dye-house the 'Shop of Christ.'" We should fancy there is a beautiful allegory in this scripture. At any rate, Christ's followers, like the poets, according to Byron—

> are such liars,
> Their hands take all colors like the hands of dyers.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

THE Executive meeting took place on Thursday, January 30, at the Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell-road, E.C.; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. Charles Watts, J. M. Wheeler, W. Heaford, E. Bater, J. Potter, F. Wood, E. W. Quay, H. J. Stace, J. Wood, P. Sabine, A. F. Taylor, T. Gorniot, and E. M. Vance, secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed. Cash statement received. Correspondence from certain members who had seceded from the Finsbury Branch was read, and it was resolved that the meeting pass to the next business.

The President reported that he had addressed a meeting of the loyal members of the Finsbury Branch, when new officers were elected, and arrangements made to carry on the outdoor work on Clerkenwell-green. He had also promised the Branch support from his Lecture Scheme Fund. The Executive adopted the report, and passed a resolution remitting all fees due up to the end of the financial year.

The success of the President's Lecture Scheme in the provinces is self-evident, seeing that the Executive granted permission for the formation of new Branches at Heckmondwike, Bingley, Todmorden, Leeds, and Newark.

No reply having been received from Mr. R. O. Smith, it was formally moved by Mr. Watts that his name be now removed from the Society's books. The President here intervened, and, after some discussion, the following resolution was drawn up and carried unanimously, and ordered to be sent to Mr. Smith: "That Mr. R. O. Smith be informed that his name will not be proposed by the Executive, at the Conference, for re-election as a Vice-President, and that he will not be allowed to renew his membership of the Society after the expiration of his current year's subscription."

A resolution was submitted from the Bolton Branch, asking the Executive to "issue a manifesto calling public attention to the inconsistency of the Nonconformist section in not contending for purely secular education in our Board schools, and thus put an end to the religious squabbling and difference of opinion existing upon the payment out of public funds of any monies to denominational schools," and further requesting that the same be forwarded to all Branches of this Society, and an endeavor made to secure its insertion in local papers. It was resolved to comply with this request.

The President reported a highly successful dinner at the Holborn Restaurant. The Secretary was instructed to send out the invitation circulars for the Conference, and the meeting closed. E. M. VANCE, *Assistant Secretary*.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

EVIDENCE: REAL AND IMAGINARY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I was much interested in Mr. Watts's article on this subject; but, in the cause of truth, I must venture, with your permission, to traverse some of his statements. He says, in regard to ghosts, that unbelievers never see them. Whether the term "unbeliever" applies to those who do not "believe in ghosts," or is used in the sense of disbelief in the doctrines of Christianity, is not clear; but I venture to say that there are on record many instances of persons who at one time would have stoutly denied the existence or power of return of ghosts, who have seen apparitions whom they certainly recognised beyond possibility of doubt. As an instance, I may refer to the account given by Lord Brougham of the appearance to him of the spirit of an old fellow student with whom he had made a promise that whichever passed first from earth should appear to the other to give proof of the continuity of life after the change called death. Many years afterwards, when Brougham had forgotten the solemn promise, and the existence of his friend (who had gone out to India while young) had faded from his memory, while enjoying a bath after an excursion he suddenly saw beside the bath the form of his old friend regarding him steadfastly. So alarmed was Brougham, he fainted; and, some years afterwards, he learnt that his friend had died about the same time he saw the apparition. Lord Brougham was not the kind of man to imagine he saw "spooks," and, as the whole circumstances connected with the compact made with his friend had completely faded from his recollection, "mental suggestion" will not avail as an explanation of the phenomenon.

In the late Robert Dale Owen's *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World* are many authenticated instances of ghosts appearing, and Owen was certainly not a sufferer from religious mania, or by predilection a believer in ghosts.

It is very easy for men to make assertions such as those quoted from Büchner and Burmeister, but the weight of evidence is dead against them, and I would like to ask Mr. Watts what he would think if a person with whom he was perfectly unacquainted were to describe to him forms of persons, friends, or relatives of Mr. Watts, whom the clairvoyant had never seen in earth life; if he were to give such accurate description of little traits or incidents as left no possible doubt of the identity of the forms described, and perhaps were to give a message relating to some matter unknown at the moment both to Mr. Watts and the clairvoyant, but afterwards verified by the former; what would be the opinion of Mr. Watts, then, as to the soul of a deceased individual continuing to exist? Would he agree with Büchner that the soul is dead, never to return?

These circumstances which I have supposed with regard to Mr. Watts have actually happened to myself, and I would like to know whether I should be reasonable in protesting, in the face of such evidence, that there is no continuity of life beyond this earth life? I should be just as blind a bigot as any production of a credulous and cruel Christianity.

Why should there not be a continuance of life under conditions differing from these? What an utter waste of time and effort to the individual who labors assiduously to store his mind—and benefit his fellows—with knowledge, if at the expiration of a few years he—and they—pass away for ever!

Is it not an unjustifiable inference to conclude that that which we don't happen personally to see does not exist? There are many persons color-blind, unable to distinguish musical sounds; may there not be, at the other end of the scale, so to speak, persons with perceptions of sight, hearing, and feeling abnormally developed? and should we be justified in denouncing them as impostors because their powers are greater than ours?

As a Spiritualist subscriber to your paper—which is sometimes somewhat severe upon "mejums"—I venture to ask for space for the insertion of this letter, so as to let the "other" side have a word. A. W. ORR.

[I suggest that Mr. Orr reads once more, very carefully, the last paragraph but one in my article, "Evidence: Real and Imaginary." Therein I state my reasons for doubting the sufficiency of the "evidence" adduced in favor of the belief in ghosts. I applied the term "unbeliever" to those who do not believe in what are termed "apparitions." As to the cases of the alleged appearances of ghosts to which Mr. Orr refers, I give no opinion, as I was not present on those occasions. If our friend has had "evidence," that does not affect my position. For five years I studied what is called Spiritualism, and found no evidence whatever in favor of its pretensions. Of course, I do not dogmatically deny the existence of ghosts, for it would be illogical to deny that of which I have no knowledge. But I cannot believe in their existence, inasmuch as the continuation of life after death is opposed to natural law as known by me. To put it briefly, I regard life as being necessary to consciousness, and material organisation as necessary to life. When that organisation is destroyed, experience teaches me that life ceases, and the conditions requisite for consciousness do not exist.—CHARLES WATTS.]

PROFANE JOKES.

They had just finished singing, "I'm Glad Salvation's Free," when the minister asked: "John, how much did you get on my salary to-day?" John—"$100, sir." M.—"How much for the Elder?" J.—"$30, sir." M.—"How much for foreign missions?" J.—"$50, sir." M.—"And how much on our church debt?" "$500, sir."

Deacon Sassafras (a Hardshell Baptist)—"I have just been reading about a man who was killed by lightning while playing base-ball on Sunday in Kentucky. There's a judgment for you!" Hiram Oatcake—"I don't know about it's bein' a jedgment; a church near by was struck and destroyed at the same time." Deacon Sassafras—"That doesn't cut any figure. It was a Presbyterian church."

A north countryman had been converted from his sins into the Salvation Army. He was known by his comrades as "Bandy Legs," from the fact that his legs were bowed and otherwise of a strange and ugly construction. "Wilt thou have a drink?" asked a companion of his sinful days. "Nay, lad," was the response; "I don't drink any more." "No? how's that?" the other asked. "I've joined the Salvationists." "Thou hast, hast thou?" "Ah, lad, *I've been born again.*" "*What!*" shouted his friend; "*with them legs?*"

A conundrum current in the States is: "Why cannot Bostonians go to heaven?' The answer is: "Because they are so mighty proud of their birthplace that they never think of getting born again."

When Dublin Cathedral was reopened, after restoration at the expense of a Mr. Wise, the archbishop took for his text, "Go thou and do like Wise." Not to be outdone, a clergyman in his diocese, when opening a church built by a brewer, said that his text was to be, "He brews xxx."

Last Moments.

"Shall we send for a priest?" was asked of the dying Duke of Buckingham. "No," he replied; "these fellows eat their God. If you know anyone who eats the Devil, you can send for him."

"I must apologise, gentlemen, for being so unconscionably long in dying," said the urbane though licentious Charles II.

"Come one on each side," said l'Hopital to his priest and confessor. "Now I can die, like Jesus Christ, between two thieves."

"You shall receive a diadem on high," said the minister to J. B. Lear. "I dont want to *die-a-dem* bit," he replied.

Tim Turner, a Lincolnshire yokel, attended in his last moments by the vicar, observed: "Wut wi' feath, grease, an' sanctification, an' wut wi' the neaw machines, the neaw wumun, an' them old Bible yarns, I'm clean muddled, stonied, an' beten." So saying, he turned to the wall and expired.

What a Different Purpose.

On board a steamer a clergyman stepped up to a fellow passenger and began talking to him about the dangers of a sea voyage. "Has it ever occurred to you how near every living person stands to the gates of death?" "I am always thinking about it." "Should not the thought of eternity admonish us ever to keep ourselves in readiness? and ought we not so to live that we may depart hence in peace?" "That is exactly my idea. I am constantly preaching that doctrine, yet the infatuated people will neither hear nor take heed." "What, are you a brother minister? Judging from your dress, I should have thought——" "I am an agent for a life insurance company."

THE INFIDEL LED ALL THE REST.—Of the nineteen millionaires who have contributed $61,000,000 for colleges and universities in the United States, it should always be remembered that Stephen Girard, when dollars were not as plentiful as now, gave $8,000,000. And don't forget that one condition of his gift was that no clergyman shall be permitted to cross the threshold of that great college he founded.—*Progressive Thinker.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, Dr. E. B. Aveling, "Darwin and his Teachings." Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture V., Taurus the Bull."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, special entertainment by the St. Clair Combination Company for the benefit of the Branch.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Theology Tested at the Bar of History." Tuesday, 8.30 till 2, annual ball.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Roman-road): 8, Sunday-school; 7, E. Williams, "Is Socialism a Religion?"

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, C. James, "The Decay of Belief."

ISLINGTON (Wellington Hall, Almeida-street): Tuesday, at 8.30, C. Watts, "The Bible and Civilisation."

LAMBETH BRANCH (Liberal and Radical Club, 108 Westminster Bridge-road): Thursday, at 8, G. S. Combes will lecture.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "The Greek Orthodox Idolatry."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Evolution of Religion."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, business meeting.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, W. Banham, "Can We do Without Government?"

WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stewart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 11, business meeting; 7.30, social for members and friends.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, G. Bayliffe, "Christianity and Socialism."

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, "Gleams from the Devil's Pulpit."

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms, Market-place): 6.45, Mr. Whitney, "Philosophy of Secularism."

DUNOON: Monday, G. W. Foote will lecture.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, G. W. Foote, "The Curse of Creeds"; 2.30, "How and Why was Jesus Born?" 6.30, "What has Become of the Devil?" Musical recital before the evening lecture, and Mr. Foote will read Tennyson's "Rizpah." Tea and light refreshments.

GREENOCK: Wednesday, at 8, G. W. Foote, "Why I Reject Christianity."

HULL (Cobden Hall, No. 4 Room, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Ackroyd, "The New Learning, the New God, the New Conscience."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, musical and literary evening.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Laurence Small, B.Sc., "*Hamlet*." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, H. Simpson, "Cremation" (illustrated by oxy-hydrogen lantern).

MOTHERWELL (Lesser Town Hall): Thursday, at 8, G. W. Foote, "Can We Follow Jesus?"

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, C. Cohen, "The Great French Revolution"; 3, "Voltaire"; 7, "What's Left of Christianity?"

NORTH SHIELDS (Spiritualists' Hall, Camden-street): Monday, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?"

PAISLEY (Tannahill Hall, Mars-street): Tuesday, at 8, G. W. Foote, "A Search for the Soul."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, W. F. Rean, paper on "Socialism."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, a Local Gentleman, "Evolution and Dissolution."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting; 7.30, D. Bow, "Rate v. Tax-paid Salaries."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, G. Yates, recital of *Hamlet*.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—February 16, Newcastle; 19, Chester-le-Street; 23, South Shields. March 1, South Shields; 8 and 15, Glasgow.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 1, Balls Pond.

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The Freethinker

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

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THE NEWER LIGHT.

A NEW heresy hunt is going on in Scotland. The Dunoon Presbytery has solemnly decided that the Rev. Alexander Robinson, parish minister of Kilmun, Argyleshire, teaches what is clean contrary to the Standards of Faith, and is therefore a damnable heretic. Mr. Robinson has written a book; worse still, he has printed it, and published it, yea, and sold it, and thus put it into circulation, to the danger of many immortal souls. His book is entitled *The Savior in the Newer Light*, and professes to be "A Present-Day Study of Jesus Christ." But the Presbyterian Church does not want the newer light, or any light at all, except the old darkness which it lights up with a farthing candle and calls a divine illumination. Mr. Robinson is of opinion that "It cannot be a right state of matters that the clergymen of a national Church, attaining new points of view through instruction and study, should either keep silence about these points of view or else resign their charges." This is not the opinion, however, of his clerical brethren. They act on instinct, which is superior to reason as an agent of self-preservation. Religion is a matter of faith and authority, not of intellect and free judgment. Ministers of a Church must hang together, like Alpine climbers, or they will sink separately in crevasses or fall separately over precipices. All of them going one way, and all saying exactly the same thing, imposes on the average man, who finds himself differing from his neighbors on all sorts of subjects. The unanimity of clerical teaching staggers him. There must be some superhuman influence, he thinks, to keep all these ministers in agreement. But if ministers all think for themselves, they will think differently; there will be a various multitude of opinions, and each will be the notion of an individual, instead of the historic doctrine of a Church. "If that is the Church's teaching (a man says), I accept it; but if that is only Mr. Robinson's opinion, I beg to differ." The Presbyterian Church, therefore, is acting on sound business principles in telling Mr. Robinson that he must join in the chorus; for if each minister is to sing solo as he pleases, there will be no concert, and no gate-money.

Mr. Robinson's "newer light" is too strong for Presbyterian eyesight, but not overpowering to the vision of Freethinkers. Let us glance at his Preface and his Appendix on the Gospels. The body of his work need not engage our attention. It is simply another effort to paint a portrait of Jesus Christ. All the artists who engage in this enterprise follow one and the same method. They take what they please as "historical," and what they please as "characteristic," and in this arbitrary way they produce what (to use the language of Whistler) may be called "Studies in Ideal Features."

Jesus is a man, and not God, to Mr. Robinson, who hesitates, however, to call himself a Unitarian. "Jesus," he says, "is here looked at not as *identical* with the Eternal Divine Soul, but as *revealing* the Eternal Divine Soul." But we dare say that Mr. Robinson would, if pressed, admit that the Eternal Divine Soul had been revealed by others as well as by Jesus Christ.

Mr. Robinson hears "the voice of the True God" in the Bible, but he objects to reading it "slavishly"—which (apparently) means believing what it says. And this applies to both halves of Scripture. "Looked at slavishly," says Mr. Robinson, "the New Testament must, in these days of education, arouse distrust in the mind of the most cursory reader. And are not many of our people, in the face of the glaring incongruities which literal reading of it brings before the intelligence, setting aside both itself and the religion which it represents as wanting in evidence?" The way to avoid this danger is to steer a middle course. Mr. Robinson objects to "the cruel blows dealt by Strauss and others" at historic Christianity; still more to later books "which deny almost all history in the gospels, and would steep the whole origin of our religion in darkness." The gospels have been badly knocked about, in Mr. Robinson's judgment, but not quite annihilated. Let us gather up the fragments that remain, he says, and make unto ourselves a new Jesus Christ. Mr. Robinson's criticism is "reverent and reconstructive." It is reverent, we presume, because he never smiles; and reconstructive because he exclaims, "All is lost but Jesus."

The four Gospels are not treated "slavishly" by Mr. Robinson. Some people would say that he treats them cavalierly. He makes them prove what he likes. He reads out of them, and into them, just what he pleases. Still, he is resolute in disowning their apostolic origin. He thinks the first Gospel written was the "Gospel according to St. Mark," the author being John Mark, a disciple of Paul—although, according to Papias, Mark was a disciple of Peter. This Gospel is "from a mind of the oriental kind which mixes up imagination with fact." Of course it "requires to be read critically."

The "Gospel according to St. Matthew" follows the footsteps of Mark. It originated amongst the Judaising Christians, and "may have had several authors." Probably (O that *probably*) they possessed a record that had come from the apostle Matthew; but they let it perish, and placed their own composition on the literary market instead. They "boldly made up the earlier part of the life of Jesus." But their action "must not be called dishonest." Why, certainly.

Luke, the author of the third Gospel, worked from the other two, and "freely made alterations." Taken all in all, his Gospel is the best; yet he had no "very strict notions of the boundary lines" between history and allegory.

The fourth Gospel is later than the others. It has "been by modern criticism cast down irrevocably from the high pedestal on which piety used to place it." Mr. Robinson endorses the judgment of Keim, that the author of the fourth Gospel is "the most incredible of all the witnesses of Jesus." After a summary of "John's" account of the last visit of Jesus to Jerusalem, and his death and resurrection there, Mr. Robinson adds severely: "Such is the story that has for centuries been accepted by multitudes as historical fact. It is difficult to take up a position of criticism upon it. Its very boldness and detailedness hold us bound in admiration of it. But it is not history. It neither gives the true history of Jesus's life on earth, nor presents the true picture of Jesus's character."

This is what is seen in the "*newer* light." But in the "*newest* light" the synoptical Gospels are no more "true history" than is the fourth Gospel. Mr. Robinson is obliged to reject all the birth-stories of Jesus. The story of the temptation is "an imaginative narrative." All the dead-raising stories are dismissed. They must not be "taken literally." "At the bar of Reason," Mr. Robinson says, "we modern Christians cannot maintain the accounts of such violation of all experience and all scientific ideas on the trifling evidence which we possess. We have, indeed, no evidence that does not crumble away in our own hands.

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The three stories of the kind that the Gospels contain have no organic connection with the rest of the narrative; the other events recorded seem in no way affected by the tremendous circumstances which these stories relate. Their being historical, therefore, is inconceivable." Mr. Robinson points out the absurdity of supposing that Jairus, a ruler, whose son Jesus raised from the dead, would do nothing for him when he was attacked; or that the raising of Lazarus should have been the signal for the execution of Jesus. Of course this has all been urged repeatedly, and in still more decisive language, by professed Freethinkers. There is nothing new in it. The only novelty is its coming at last from the lips of a Christian minister—who, however, will probably soon cease to occupy a pulpit. It is idle to call oneself a Christian after rejecting all the supernaturalism of the Gospels. We do not doubt that Mr. Robinson means well, and there is a certain courage in his challenge to the kirk. What we wish him is more logic. A *little* logic is a dangerous thing. The newer light is, after all, a twilight. We hope Mr. Robinson will yet step into the clear light of day.

G. W. FOOTE.

JEWISH IDEALS.*

It is peculiarly fitting that, when the *Quarterly Review* gives up its pages to a paper on "The Modern Jew," by some Christian writer who sees no proper place in the world for any other faith than that of Christendom, a man of letters of Hebrew birth should let the public know what Jewish ideals are. Mr. Joseph Jacobs shows this not simply by dilating upon the subject—for his lecture upon Jewish ideals, delivered before the Ethical Society, occupies but a small portion of the volume—but by infusing those ideals into his work, which always impresses the reader with the sense of dealing with a scholar and a gentleman.

It is now nearly seventeen years since Mr. Jacobs gave us in the *Nineteenth Century* a most notable contribution to the rational history of Judaism, entitled "The God of Israel: A History." This essay occupies the second place in the volume, to which it alone would suffice to give permanent value. I could well wish that Mr. Jacobs had re-written the essay with the additional light which later studies in Biblical archæology have brought. That so painstaking a writer allows it simply to stand is a proof of how thoroughly he went over the ground at first.

The essay on the Mordecai of George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, which follows, is Mr. Jacobs's earliest magazine work, and bears marks of youthful enthusiasm, easily understood and sympathised with, while not fully shared, by a non-Jewish writer. Then Mr. Jacobs gives us a paper on "Browning's Theology," chiefly considered in relation to Judaism. Another interesting paper is that on "Jehuda Halevi, Poet and Pilgrim," who, as Mr. Jacobs pointed out in his "God of Israel," marks a turning-point in Jewish thought. Great as a poet—"*Das Lied, das der Levit Jehuda gesungen—ist als prachtdiadem um der Gemeinde Haupt geschlungen—als Perlenschnur hält es ihren Hals umrungen*"—he was greater as a man, and one of the most romantic figures of the Middle Ages.

Mr. Jacobs's impartiality is well seen in his treatment of the story of Little St. Hugh, of Lincoln, the boy martyr, said to have been stolen and crucified by Lincoln Jews, in derision of the story of Jesus Christ. Nineteen Jews were executed, and many more imprisoned and plundered, as the result of this story, which is analysed by Mr. Jacobs with all the light which history, archæology, and tradition can cast upon it. He comes to the conclusion that the boy probably fell into a cesspool attached to the house of a Jew. When the body was recovered, instead of announcing the discovery to the proper officials, they attempted to conceal it. Hatred and readiness to plunder did the rest.

With all due respect to Mr. Jacobs, I am not convinced that the blood accusation originated in England, or that "it sprung fully armed from the vile imagination of an apostate Jew of Cambridge, named after his conversion Theobald." J. B. Levinsohn, who, in his *Efés Dammin*, went pretty fully into the matter before Strack, says "the accusation was first raised in Spain and Portugal." Mr. Jacobs says, in the face of Lev. xxvii. 29, 1 Sam. xv. 33, 2 Sam. xxi. 9, 2 Chron. xxviii. 3, xxxiii. 6, Jer. xix. 5, Ezekiel xx. 25, 26, and Micah vi. 6, "human sacrifice has been unknown in Israel since at least the time of the Judges." If this were so, it was at least a matter of common tradition that the sacrifice of a lamb at Passover was substitutionary, as Mr. Jacobs's folk-lore studies must, I think, have convinced him. Nothing is gained by denying that cruelty and credulity were common among all in ancient times.

The extent of Mr. Jacobs's researches as a folk-lorist is seen in his paper on "Jewish Diffusion of Folk Tales," which, as might have been expected, was chiefly through the medium of literature. Equally careful are his determination of the boundaries of "The London Jewry, 1290," his study of "Aaron, Son of the Devil," and his paper on "Jewish History: its Aims and Methods," chiefly directed to the history of the Jews in Spain.

Mr. Jacobs is distinctly right in turning to Jewish history as the key to the Jewish problem; and, though he is urbanely reticent as to the sufferings his race has undergone at the hands of Christians, it is easy to discern the serious undertone which shows that the wrongs of the past, if forgiven, are not forgotten.

It is worse than absurd, it is brutal, for Christians to point to the tribalness, the cunning, or the avarice of Jews. The Jew is what centuries of Christian love have made him.

> By the torture prolonged from age to age,
> By the infamy, Israel's heritage;
> By the Ghetto's plague, by the garb's disgrace,
> By the badge of shame, by the felon's place,
> By the branding tool, the bloody whip,
> And the summons to Christian fellowship.

No chapter in the *Crimes of Christianity* is worse than that which records Christian treatment of the people to whom they owe their God and Savior. Treated worse than dogs, hunted, abused, and driven to despair, the wonder is not so much that Jews sometimes show the vices of the desperate as that, wherever fairly treated, they evince so much kindliness and culture.

A semi-humorous contribution to the *Jewish Chronicle*, entitled "The True, the Only, and the Complete Solution of the Jewish Question," is, to my mind, one of the finest papers in the whole book. It is an old saying that it takes a wise man to be a fool; and in the form of a jest, telling the Jews "make fools of your children," Mr. Jacobs gives his people some of the wisest advice possible. May they read and profit by it. When the Jew cultivates that noble folly or true wisdom which regards welfare as the best wealth; when he is content to say with Mordecai in *Daniel Deronda*, "Let my body dwell in poverty, and my hands be as the hands of the toiler; but let my soul be as a temple of remembrance where the treasures of knowledge enter and the inner sanctuary is hope," the Jewish question is solved, so far as the individual is concerned.

Judaism, as represented by Mr. Jacobs, is distinctly a higher faith than Christianity. It rests not on faith, but on works, seeks no salvation through the blood of the innocent, and has a full eye on the amelioration of man in this world. It is capable of improvement by gradually dropping the untenable and unverifiable, which is of the essence of Christianity. We need not point to Spinoza, Heine, Brandes, Darmesteter, or Lassalle. Mr. Jacobs himself is witness that the Jew, undenying, even glorying in his birth, can be as truly the apostle of culture as of commercialism. The simple fact is that the Jew, for over two thousand years of suffering and struggle, has had to use his brains on everything save religion. That was the bond which held him to his fellows, and it was a social necessity that it should be unquestioned. The Jew can use his brains with effect—which is the secret of much of the hatred he has incurred—and when he uses it on his religion, he will see how much of it was only temporarily serviceable, how much can now be put aside with advantage.

My solution of the racial question would somewhat differ from that of Mr. Jacobs. I believe here, as elsewhere, in freedom and freethought. All lovers of their kind must peremptorily say "Hands off" to those who seek to stir up race and religious prejudices. These repressed, and frank and friendly intercourse being proffered, the Jew will gradually emerge from the voluntary ghetto which long ages of outrage and ostracism have made a second nature to him. Free intercourse slowly but surely removes the prejudices of race and of religion. "Every country," it has been said, "has the Jews it deserves to have." If

* *Jewish Ideals, and Other Essays.* By Joseph Jacobs. (London: D. Nutt, 270, Strand.) 1896.

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the Russian Jew is a bad specimen, it is just because intolerance has made him so. The persecuted Jew is the orthodox, bigotted Jew. The Jew who is treated as a man and a brother is, as may be seen in France, England, and America, on the fair way to become a Freethinker.

This truth will not be relished by the orthodox Jew, and its sequence will be still less palatable. Free intercourse and intercommunion will in the long run lead to intermarriage. Detestable to the traditionalist, this will be satisfactory to the rationalist and humanitarian, for there is no better progeny on this earth than the joint offspring of Freethinking Aryans and Freethinking Semites. Perhaps, after all, the mission of the Jew may be to infuse a strain of antique oriental culture, finely sifted in the mills of affliction, into the coarser fibre of the European races.

J. M. WHEELER.

REASON THE TRUE GUIDE FOR MANKIND.

REASON, when properly cultivated and aided by experience, we consider to be the best guide known for mankind. Of course, it is not perfect, inasmuch as perfection is not an attribute of humanity. That human actions are too seldom controlled by reason is an unfortunate fact; but this is often the result of neglecting mental discipline. A lamp is intended to give light; its illuminating power, however, would speedily cease if the lamp were not trimmed and supplied with oil. So it is with the lamp of human reason, for, in order to secure from it a sufficient light to guide us in our daily actions, it must be supplied with the oil of wisdom, and trimmed by intellectual cultivation.

We define reason as being man's highest intellectual powers—the understanding, the faculty of judgment, the power which discriminates, infers, deduces, and judges, the ability to premise future probabilities from past experience, and to distinguish truth from error. Reason, says Morell, is that which gives unity and solidarity to intellectual processes, "aiding us at once in the pursuit of truth, and in adapting our lives to the state of things in which they exist" (*Mental Philosophy*, p. 232). "It is the guide and director of human activity" (*ibid*, p. 235). Hooker, in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, says reason determines "what is good to be done"; and Chillingworth, the eminent Christian writer, in his *Religion of Protestants*, observes: "Reason gives us knowledge; while faith only gives us belief, which is a part of knowledge, and is, therefore, inferior to it ..... it is by reason alone that we can distinguish truth from falsehood" (quoted by Buckle in his *History of Civilisation*, chapter vii.). Bishop Butler remarks: "Reason is indeed the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself" (*Analogy of Religion*, p. 176). The Rev. Thomas Scott, in his *Christian Life*, refers to reason thus: "He that follows its advice has a mind that is elevated above injury." Thus, it is admitted, even by Christian writers, that reason is our highest guide in all things, not excluding religion itself.

It is true that many professed Christians allege that there are many things above reason, which, it is said, of itself is "a blind guide," and that it requires faith to make it a trustworthy authority. We admit that there is much in nature that is above our comprehension, and that we lack the ability to explain certain phenomena; but that is not what is meant by the above allegation. The orthodox position is not simply the limitation of human capacity; it is that reason is inferior to a faith in supernatural agencies as a monitor in daily life. If there are things *above* reason, we have a right to ask how the knowledge of such things is obtained. When Christians assert that they have a better guide than reason, how do they attempt to prove it? Simply by professing to appeal to reason. They thus resort to our guide to test the value of theirs. Men may draw wrong inferences from facts, or right inferences from wrong conceptions; but it is, in both cases, the work of reason. We do not contend that reason is infallible; it is one thing to allege that reason is the highest faculty that man has to enable him to form conclusions, and quite another to claim that such conclusions are accurate. False reasoning is, perhaps, one of the greatest misfortunes from which the human race suffers. But what is the cause of this evil? Not that reason is necessarily defective, but that its cultivation has not been duly attended to. Doubtless it is as true that reason may lead us astray as it is that it is a guide to truth and virtue. It must be remembered that our reason is largely influenced by our feelings, our habits, and our associates; still, it is the ultimate arbitrator of truth and honesty.

The great contest in all ages has been more or less between Reason and Authority. J. S. Mill says, in his *Utility of Religion*: "It is by authority that the opinions of the bulk of mankind are principally, and not unnaturally, governed.....But to a thinker the argument from other people's opinions has little weight. It is but second-hand evidence, and merely admonishes us to look out for and weigh the reasons on which this conviction of mankind or of wise men was founded" (pp. 155, 156). Some persons arrive at certain conclusions because they suppose them to be based upon revelation; others accept principles because they deem them true from a human standpoint. In either case reason is involved. Any alleged supernatural religion depends for evidence of its truth upon "divine" revelation; but, inasmuch as such revelation is very doubtful in its character, the evidence derived therefrom is certainly not of the highest order. If there be such a thing as religious truth, it must be, like scientific truth, discovered by the senses. Reason seeks the truth; it does not make it. Secularists, Atheists, Agnostics, Deists, and Rationalists can accept only the revelation of human genius; they pay no heed to inferences that do not admit of being tested by reason.

It is urged by some that this process of reasoning may be right when applied to human affairs, but that it is of no avail in reference to "divine" matters. The question here arises, Why not? Take the various conceptions professed of God, and the different views entertained as to the nature and meaning of the Bible; is it not by reason that the correct views are supposed to be discerned? The same method is adopted in judging of the claims of any church or of any authority, let it be human or "divine." If this were not the case, the mind would be passive, and it would accept any dogma without reason, or for the same reason as Paley signed the Thirty-nine Articles—for the sake of peace and quietness. In this age of intellectual discrimination no subject should be deemed too sacred for investigation, and no belief too venerable for honest and fair criticism. If man is not allowed to exercise his "puny reason" upon all matters, even those of the highest and most revered importance, then such things will remain to him an unknown *x*. The critical faculty exists in the human race, and nothing in the nature ascribed to God, or in anything found in his supposed commandments, can arrest reason in its efforts to solve problems, to avert calamities, or to relieve pain. The old orthodox plea that it is presumptuous in man to criticise the alleged mode of God's dealings with the world has no force with persons in whom reason exercises its legitimate sway.

But it may be asked, Why should we rely upon reason? We answer, Because it is the power we possess whereby we are enabled to detect the true from the false. To abandon reason would be to allow ourselves to be overcome by terrors that would fail to alarm any educated child of our Board schools. If reason is not accepted as an authority in matters of opinion and practice, there is no check upon the evils that may overtake us. Any authority that has not reason for its basis furnishes the greatest enemy to truth and rational argument that the world could be cursed with. The Test and Corporation Acts that once existed in England were an example of the pernicious effects of authority without reason. They were the offspring of ignorance and timidity, and they formed a potent agency in obstructing the advancement of society. The repeal of them was one of the greatest triumphs of reason and justice over intolerance and superstition. If reason is ignored or suppressed, the tenets taught as sacred may be but oracles of the nursery, or the traditional legacies of men in whom fanaticism predominated.

If the authority of reason had not proclaimed liberty for speech and pen, it is impossible to estimate the number of errors and abuses that might have been consecrated by time, and held to be the incontestable axioms of human wisdom. There is no device that hypocrisy and tyranny have not employed to thwart the force of reason, and to impose silence upon mankind. And, unfortunately, wherever the would-be destroyers of reason have been successful, ignorance and gloom have filled the minds of men, and choked the seeds of that liberty which gives to life its force and lustre.

CHARLES WATTS.

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THE NEW WOMAN.

In olden times (says the New York *World*) of paganism women enjoyed rights and privileges of value and distinction which, under another *régime*, were taken from them. History declares that the ancient Teutonic tribes treated women with respect—great respect. Women sat in the halls of state, were consulted in affairs of government, and their opinions were sought in matters of war, in settling disputes, and in all important questions relating to the management of human business. These ancient pagans were monogamists, marrying but one wife, and acknowledging the equality of women in religious, political, and secular matters generally.

And so it was in pagan Rome. The women were educated, respected, and honored in the family and in the government.

Hortensia, daughter of Hortensius, was a student of law with her father, and when she was admitted to practice at the bar won many plaudits for her masterly exposition of the Roman laws. So happy were the conditions of the family under pagan rule that a divorce was not known in Rome for five hundred years, and thus the river of life flowed peacefully and happily.

Among other ancient nations women were with the rulers guiding and conducting affairs. They acquired property, and when married kept their own names, their children bearing the same.

The advent of Christianity has been generally supposed to have brought more light into the world, especially to have lifted woman into a wider sphere, to have given her prominence and crowned her with a nobler grace.

The majority of people believe this to-day. Women themselves who have been brought up in the Church do not doubt it. They have not asked, Is it true? but have accepted as fact that which a little examination would have revealed as pure fiction.

The accepted authorities, the makers of Christian theology, brought no message of hope to the women of that other period, or to the women of any period. There was no uplift for woman in anything they had to say—not one word of hope, encouragement, or good cheer; not one.

The book of Genesis portrays how sin got into the world, how misery fastened its fangs upon us. How, then, was it? Does it not tell woman that she did it? that she is responsible for all the distress, sorrow, and agony of life? that she brought sin into a world of happiness and bloom?

It is a dreadful charge, cruel and humiliating beyond expression.

There is the record, the foundation, upon which is built the yoke of inferiority which was fastened upon the neck of woman. Read it, and tell me if there ever was, or could be, anything in the universe more to the hurt and injury of woman, more damning to her progress, more detrimental to her best interests, than the accusation brought against her in the book that is the superstructure of the prevailing fashionable folly of Christian countries to-day.

What is the reason women are not considered the peers politically of their brothers in this free land of ours? Why are they in the same category, politically speaking, with paupers, criminals, idiots, and the insane? Why are they not found in the council chambers framing the laws by which they are governed, and to which they are amenable?

Is it that they are indeed inferior, immature, lacking in good sense, reason, or judgment? Nay, nay, friends, such is not the case. The real reason that woman occupies a position inferior to that of man is due wholly, solely, and altogether to the ban put upon her by the great religious authority, the "Holy Scriptures," on account of the alleged original sin of the alleged original woman. It is that, and that only.

According to the accepted authority in Genesis relative to the advent of woman, she was simply an addendum, an afterthought, a supplement, a spare-rib.

We know, of course, that woman existed on the earth long prior to the last six thousand years; but we will simply trace the account of her miraculous coming according to scripture. Made from a bone cut from the skeleton of a man, and endowed with life, she appears on the scene of action. The first thing she did was to bring knowledge to the surface. Bless her for that.

Knowledge went by the name of sin in that olden day, and there are those living who give it the same name now. Knowledge was below par, and very unfashionable.

Paul said with emphasis that the woman was "first in the transgression"—that is, she had learned something.

The canon law emphasised with almost paralysing force the Biblical statements concerning woman's part and lot as chief actor in the story of the fall of man.

Never were there more scathing words against woman than the sentences uttered and written by Christian saints and rulers, and which have conspired to keep her in the valley of humiliation and despair.

Among the old Latin fathers of the Church was Tertullian, a lawyer, who became a Christian priest in the year 190. He wrote several books, and one telling women how they ought to dress, and that they should hide their features behind a veil whenever they entered the house of God. Let me quote some of his compliments to the sisterhood. "Woman," he says, "thou shouldst ever be clothed in rags, and in mourning, appearing only as a penitent, drowned in tears, expiating thus the sin of having caused the fall of the human race." He goes on to say: "Woman, thou art the gate of the Devil. It is thou who hast corrupted those whom Satan dare not attack face to face."

It was, probably, Tertullian's books and letters that helped Milton when he drew the portrait of a woman, making her a woman to the waist, and the rest of her body a scaly serpent, representing her as the embodiment of sin and doorkeeper of the bottomless pit.

A serpent armed with mortal sting.

Among the many atrocious cruelties perpetrated by the early friends of Christianity is the murder of the beautiful and accomplished Hypatia, in the year 415.

Why, at the great Christian Council, at Maçon, in 581, the good old saints solemnly debated whether woman was a beast or a human being. St. Jerome said she was a wild beast of a dangerous species. The conclusion, however, was that, being the mother of men, she must be human, because men did not like to think themselves the offspring of beasts. They let her take communion, but not in her naked hands; oh, no! She was considered too vile, although her hands had made the bread.

Read Lecky's *History of European Morals*. He says: "She was represented as the mother of all ills. She was taught that she should be ashamed of the very thought that she was born a woman—that she should live in continual penance on account of the curses which she had brought into the world."

The ecclesiastical law-makers seemed to take a fiendish delight in trampling woman in the dust. Augustine declared that a husband had a perfect right to slap his wife in the face. John Wesley did not doubt it. The old English statutes allowed it, but the stick must not be bigger than a man's thumb. What sort of a cudgel it was aforetime no one knows—probably a cordwood stick or a birchen log. Does it seem incredible? Go into the city courts to-morrow morning, and behold the remnant of that same savagery in the bruised and bleeding forms and faces of helpless wives in the hands of brutal lords and masters.

I hate to tell these things, but, in showing the obstinate causes that have obstructed the advancement of women, it is my duty to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

The stigma of original sin was fastened upon woman with the branding-irons of Holy Writ. She inhaled obedience with every breath. She absorbed submission and subjection at every turn—for these confronted her everywhere. The Church had proclaimed her guilt. Could the Church lie? Could it deceive and falsify? Alas and alas, she had no power to learn, for learning was to her a forbidden thing. She was not allowed to read. She could not write. She was told her duty was simply to accept what her master deemed proper. Thus was she relegated to her condition of servitude—a kitchen-maid, a ministering angel in times of need, a ministering servant at any time and all times. The bearer of burdens and the bearer of children, she suffered the martyrdom of motherhood; but she could not, under the law, own her children, unless their father repudiated them. And it was considered that she had failed in her duty as a woman unless she had become the mother of from ten to fifteen children.

Woman in the past lived in the emotions. Man possessed the world and all therein. Woman had—love and religion. Her emotional nature was cultivated to the

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utmost, and to the neglect of her other faculties. Man's love was, indeed, "of his life a thing apart; 'twas woman's whole existence." It made her morbid, often capricious. Man had the schools, colleges, libraries. Woman had the Bible; later she had the old farmer's almanack and the sloshy novel, and she had—the chimney corner. This was the boundary of her kingdom. There she lived, loved, suffered, died, and made no sign.

The New Woman has changed all that. The scales have dropped from her eyes.

The people persecuted Galileo and tried to kill him when he told them that the world moved. They didn't believe it, and many are not aware of the fact even to-day. They fancy the world is standing still. But the New Woman knows that the world moves, and she is moving along with it. The printing press, like sunshine, has beamed upon her, and on her brow sparkle the words—intelligence, intellectual activity.

Colleges and scientific schools have yielded their prejudices, and she has grasped the knowledge so long withheld.

Theology gave to the woman of other days a gown, long, untidy, and draggling around her ankles. It said: "Put that on—'tis a memorial of the Fall." She meekly obeyed, and went around mopping the streets. When she rebelled it said: "'Tisn't modest to wear short dresses; you'll be talked about."

The New Woman looks her contempt, and declares that she is for comfort and convenience. Attired in shorter skirts, in a rational dress, she goes about her business unfettered by garments that signify and keep in mind a foolish and ridiculous old myth.

The old husband told the old wife that she must mind him; that Paul commanded wives to be obedient; that no wife had power over her own self, but the husband owned her absolutely. And the old wife believed it.

The New Woman brings to society a breeze of purity and cleanliness. She looks with scorn upon the worse than barbarous sociology, with its one-sided code of morality—with its one estimate for the morals of man, and another totally different for woman.

The New Woman sees with horror the disgraceful spectacle of women hand in hand with the libertine and betrayer, and shrinking in disgust from his victims.

Yet this practice is but an offshoot of Biblical teaching, which makes woman criminal and dependent, a subordinate, an obedient slave and minister to man's caprice and pleasure.

The world has dealt with results; is still dealing with results. The new order of things will treat causes. The Hercules of education and enlightenment will seek, find, and destroy the sources of crime, cruelty, and injustice. Then, and not until then, may we expect to see a moral uplift of which reformers hitherto have only dreamed.

The last great enemy to be destroyed is theology. The women of old were taught to accept without investigation. The New Woman applies the test of science to all things; to theology the same as anything else. She does not make up her mind without investigation. She works out problems in the crucible of honest reason. She has studied theology as she studies geology and astronomy, with the same freedom and with as little intention of fastening upon her mind anything but truth, and with the resolve to follow truth where'er it leads the way. She has placed theology in the scales along with common sense, and theology has kicked the beam.

In place of the church there will be halls of science, academies, hospitals, homes for the homeless, reading-rooms and libraries, schools, lecture-rooms, open every day, instead of one day in seven, and to which she will be welcome.

The New Woman is the daughter of Freethought. She belongs to Freethought, and nowhere else. Every step out of the poisonous past, every period of her growth, is due to the influence of liberal teaching. For years Freethought has been dealing sledge-hammer blows at the decaying fabric of ancient mythology and religious romance. Under the names "progress," "scientific development," "enlightenment," it has sent javelins of truth through the withered heart of superstition. It has repeatedly called to women to come forth from the caves of ignorance.

The New Woman is sent, not by the Church, but by the nobler civilisation, the angels of love, liberty, and justice, and she is adorned with knowledge, wisdom, and reason, bright and shining as the jewels in the belt of Orion. Her mission is to alleviate, instruct, uplift, and bless.

—*Progressive Thinker.* SUSAN H. WIXON.

THE KING JAMES VERSION.

ALTHOUGH there may be many editions of the Bible and various translations of the so-called Scriptures, as a rule the King James version is referred to when one to-day speaks of the Bible. When a youth, I was led to believe that this James was a saint, and one chosen by the Almighty to give the world a Bible. Too young to read history, I depended for what information I could obtain upon the ministers. So my ignorance ought to surprise no one. When older, I began to look up the record of James, and endeavored to become as well acquainted with him, as it is possible to do with a person who had been dead as long. There had been five James's before this Bible James came on to the stage of action. These men were kings of Scotland, and Bible James was James VI., or James I. of England. He appears to have endeared himself to the Protestants by his persecution of the Catholics. The translators of the Bible (the clergy) were abjectly servile; so characteristically flattering and so really sycophantly sickening in their praise of this hardly ordinary man that, to use a modern phrase, they just covered him with "taffy." The orthodox serpent wished to swallow the crowned rabbit. Before doing this they completely lubricated him with the saliva of hypocrisy. They stated in their dedication that he was "king by the grace of God." They flattered him by calling him the "defender of the faith"—*i.e.*, the defender of their faith. He is spoken of as the "most dread sovereign," which God had placed over the people. In those days God had more to do with the affairs of men than now-a-days. He once took part in wars, but always favored the stronger party. He never appeared upon the weak side. He sent famine until man invented steamboats and railroads, so that food could be brought from remote places; then he retired from the famine business. When men learned the secret of rotation of crops, God stopped the business of making grub worms and dry rot. He used to send small-pox into wicked places and thin out the inhabitants; but after vaccination was discovered he resigned.

The people have advanced since James was king "by the grace of God." Men dare to look up. They are not afraid of the clouds or of the silent stars. They at least understand that the wrath of Jehovah had nothing to do with an eclipse. They have found out that a boy who skates upon thin or rotten ice will break through as quickly Tuesday or Friday as he will Sunday. They have observed that lightning strikes a church spire as often as it does a dancing hall. As the people have grown more intelligent, God has less control of earthly matters. But these ministers crawled in the dust before King James. They flattered him to an extent that would have made an average American President sick to his stomach. Anyone who will take the pains to read his history will not for one moment pretend that he had the ability of James G. Blaine, the solid honesty of Gladstone, or the magnificent liberality of Colonel Ingersoll.

These ministers make no mention of the fact that he drove the Catholics out of the country, and three years afterwards, either from dire necessity or from policy, called them back and restored their castles and estates. They make no mention of the fact that he sacrificed the life of Sir Walter Raleigh. They do not even speak of his sending Buckingham and Charles to Spain to carry out his dirty intrigues, which resulted in a declaration of war with Spain. But these same ministers compare James with the sun. They state that "great and manifold" were the blessings when James took the throne. They declared that he had dispelled the mists, and had given great comfort. Comfort to whom? To the clergy. Why? Because he favored and promulgated the same doctrine which they believed. His "very name is precious among them." "Their eye doth behold you with great comfort." They bless him "as that sanctified person" who, under God, is the author of their true happiness. These ministers called James a "learned and judicious prince," and express the hope that he may be the "wonder of the world." The men who wrote this rot compiled the Bible. If they were not any more honest and more sincere in the translation than in the dedication, did not have any more backbone and honest independence (and how can we suppose that they had), what is the King James Bible worth?

—*Boston Investigator.* A. E. FARNHAM, M.D.

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GOD'S BOOK.

We're told that God Almighty's book
Is absolute perfection;
Inspired or written by his spook,
And needing no correction.

The book correct? "God save the mark!"
Say scholars that are ripest;
A Ghost's no good unless his clerk
Is skilful as a typist.

The book, though bad, is not so bad
For gods unused to writing;
Skylarking was the Spirit's fad,
Jehovah's fad was fighting.

Let God his rambling book revise,
For, goodness knows! it needs it—
The precious work's so full of lies
That none with judgment heeds it.

And let him trust no flighty ghost,
Nor prophet, seer, nor warlock,
But shorthand clerks that work the "Yöst,"
Or "Remington," or "Barlock."

G. L. Mackenzie.

SPIRITUALISM AND FASHION.

Our readers may be interested to learn that the inhabitants of the "spirit world" are beginning to take note of dress and fashion, and are, apparently, willing to act as our "guides, philosophers, and friends" in such matters. Here is a note received by a felt-hat manufacturer last week; but the advice it contains will be equally valuable for other branches of trade: "At the earnest request of my guides, I write to ask you not to make black goods, but those of curative colors, such as blue, violet, red, yellow, and white. Black is the symbol of death and decay. It came into the world through evil agency, and is against God's divine laws. Your guides earnestly pray that you will help us in this important matter.—Yours faithfully, Snowdrop." The grammar of the note is a little "mixed," as is not uncommon, we believe, in communications from the "spirits"; but, perhaps, we may be permitted to make a conjectural emendation, and read "them" for "us," and then the message will be clear. It is not, surely, the intention of our "guides" to confine their attention to colors, and we may reasonably expect ampler communications in a short time. They will doubtless have something to say about the respective merits of "all wool" and linen and cotton underclothing, tight lacing, "murderous millinery," the width and length of skirts, and a host of other matters; and then, if the "spirits" have not yet exhausted their capacity for wonder, they will probably be surprised at being told to mind their own business—which, it will be said, is neither dressmaking and millinery, nor the supervision of fashion generally. Poor human nature! to what depths of folly it does sometimes descend. Is there a lower depth than Spiritualism?

—*Warehouseman and Draper.*

Priestcraft in Thibet.

Buddhism, as practised in Thibet, is (says the *Graphic*) very different from the creed as it is found in other parts of the world. The people of Thibet do not believe in only one Buddha, but they are taught by their lamas, or priests, to worship several lesser Buddhas, the creed having been mixed up with the old Hindu gods. The people are priest-ridden to an extent that is difficult to credit. From the cradle to the grave the Thibetan is never free from the lama. At birth his horoscope is cast by a lama, and at death a lama finds the way for him to that region in which his soul shall be re-born. "Nothing," the Earl of Dunmore tells us in his admirable diary of his travels in Central Asia, "can be done in Thibet without a lama, from the ploughing of a field to the betrothal of a couple; for if the lama, to whom reference must be made, pronounce them unsuited to each other, the marriage cannot take place. Such are the powers of the priesthood. The priests put on hideous masks on certain festivals. They also make use of a prayer wheel. Thousands of prayers are put into cylinders attached to the wheel, which is kept revolving, either by hand or, more frequently, by water power. Innumerable prayers are thus offered up for the souls of the departed, with the least possible trouble to the bereaved relatives."

ACID DROPS.

Boris is baptised. And who the deuce is Boris? A Bulgarian "kid," who doesn't know one religion from another. At first he was baptised in the Greek Church; he is now baptised in the Roman Church; and each proceeding was dictated by political reasons. Could there be a better illustration of the truth that religion is mainly a matter of accident? Reason and evidence have nothing to do with it, in the case of nine hundred and ninety-nine persons out of every thousand. Parents say, "Here's my child. Make him a Catholic, a Protestant, a Jew, a Mohammedan—or whatever it may be." And it is done.

The baptism of baby Boris in the Greek Church has resulted in the separation of the child's mother and father. All this is fulfilment of prophecy. Did not Jesus Christ say he came to set families at variance? The priests take care that the saying is fulfilled.

The editor of a London comic weekly has been asked by a lady to send her a trifle for the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. He replies that he has only just forwarded a subscription to the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Christians.

The terms of the Queen's Speech, or Lord Salisbury's address, in regard to further assistance from public resources for denominational schools, convey really the admission that the supporters of so-called *voluntary* schools do not care enough for religious education to pay for it voluntarily. Their condition, says the speech, is "in many places precarious," which could not be if religionists were prepared to pay for efficiency. Instead of this, they want the general public to pay for their religion.

At the Bolton School Board Mr. Shufflebotham moved an amendment to the payment of £21 per year to Canon Doman as Scripture examiner. Such payments were unnecessary and unjust, as taxing all for the benefit of one sect. Dean O'Brien (Catholic) remarked that, logically, Mr. Shufflebotham was right. The State had no right to teach religion, and the Board, as representing the State, should not make any offerings of money in this direction. Nonetheless, he should vote for the payment, because he was pleased that Protestants were willing to spend money in the teaching of what they believed to be religion. The Rev. T. A. Clarke naïvely expressed regret that such discussions should be raised by Mr. Shufflebotham, "because he knew they were exceedingly unpleasant to Canon Doman." And the rest of the men of God and their followers seemed to take this view of their public duties.

Just as in some parishes attempts are made to collect Church rates by official-looking but illegal notices, so support is acquired for provincial Voluntary schools by voluntary rates, which some people imagine are perfectly legal. It is not only a right, but a duty, to refuse to pay such rates unless the demand comes from a body which the ratepayer has had a voice in appointing, and whose use of the money is under public control.

The Jewish population do not seem to be so much concerned in religious as in secular education. The Religious Education Board sent out an urgent appeal for £1,400 to give children free instruction in religion and Hebrew. In response only £300 was subscribed by the wealthy community, of which sum five individuals contributed £245.

Dr. Edward Berdoe says that he was reclaimed by Robert Browning's poems from Agnosticism to Christianity. Perhaps he was. The point is hardly worth discussing. But the cream of the joke is that Browning himself was *not* a Christian. Mr. Robert Buchanan asserts that Browning plainly told him so, and Mrs. Orr, the poet's biographer, admits that he was not a believer in the supernatural part of Christianity—which is the only part that makes it a religion, or even a system.

"The next day the Jew, tied to the tail of a savage mule loaded with nuts, was broken into as many pieces as there were nuts upon the mule's back." This is the last sentence of the first tale in *The Blue Fairy Book*, translated by Andrew Lang from the French, *Traditions Populaires de l'Asie Mineure*. The Jew, by the way, was not guilty, like pious Jabez Balfour, of ruining widows and orphans; nor did he, like the Rev. Mr. Crosby, commit adultery with another man's wife; but he was—a Jew. Of course, Mr. Lang does not introduce such tales to Christian children to perpetuate the persecution with which throughout the ages Christians have treated the people to whom they owe their God and Savior. His interest is in the folk-lore. And so, in a sense, is ours. What a lurid light such a sentence as this casts on the whole history of the boasted religion of love!

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A more amusing illustration and a fact, not a fairy fiction, is told by the learned Salomon Maimoon. A Christian nobleman entered his church in a state of intoxication, and, on approaching the altar, conducted himself indecently. As a penance, the priest ordered him to supply the church with a large quantity of wax candles to light the church and burn before the violated altar. The nobleman promised to comply, and did. He immediately issued an order that all the Jews on his estates should contribute so many wax candles. This nobleman knew the correct interpretation of the so-called Messianic prophecy: "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

There is no more specious application of prophecy than this of Isaiah liii. to the person of Jesus. Yet a simple reading of the preceding and following chapters suffices to show that this one but personifies "Israel my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen." Moreover, Jesus did not "see his seed," nor prolong his days, as the poem promises the servant of the Lord. Anything does as a prophecy of Jesus, though the Jews, who ought to know their own books best, could never find a single one.

The once famous anti-Semite, Dr. Stöcker, Court Chaplain of Berlin, has been expelled from the Conservative party, and has broken with the Christian Socialists. He can now join Ahlwadt in his anti-Jew crusade in America.

Herr Noske, one of the members of the Austrian Reichsrath, says that the priests from the pulpit excite the people against the Jews. A poor woman, living in the country, had adopted a foundling from Vienna who happened to be a Jew. She informed the parish priest of the circumstance, and was roundly abused by him for bringing a Jew to the locality. The child subsequently died. The priest refused to bury it in the graveyard. It was consequently interred in a field, and only transferred to the graveyard through the intervention of the authorities. Herr Noske asked when some primate of the Church would raise his voice against such practices, and preach that religion which taught men to love their neighbors as themselves. Herr Lüger, in response, declared that not a single bishop would be found to condemn the anti-Semites.

In a lecture on "The Church of To-morrow" the Rev. J. G. Birney, of Gateshead, fairly admitted that the Church had got to secularise and adapt itself to the times. He said: "The question that the modern Church was now called upon to answer was largely that one of method and adaptation of presenting Christianity to the present times. They would have to adapt their preaching to the life and thought of the age, and the Church would not have to be in its teaching like unto Augustine, who thought only for his time, or Luther and Calvin, for theirs, nor even as John Wesley thought out for his, but Christianity would have to be brought in the channels of modern thought—adaptable to modern life and modern progress." Now, has Christianity spontaneously come to this attitude? No; it has been forced to it after eighteen centuries.

Mr. Birney stated that "numerous crimes had been committed by religious persecution and theological controversies in the past," and remarked that, happily, the age of religious terrorism was passing away, and that they were now rejoicing in the light of a better day in regard to human liberty and Christian toleration. Christian toleration was a minus quantity until heretics were strong enough to compel it.

Mr. Birney says the Church will become less theological and creed-bound, and become more and more humanitarian. What is this but admitting that it will have to resign the vain worship of God for the fruitful service of man?

Rev. Edward Everett Hale is of the opinion that "the people of America have learned to suspect the ecclesiasticism of America. They look upon the clergy, by and large, as a lazy set of men, and they believe that what is called religion is a thing manufactured and put up for sale on Sunday mornings in these churches by these lazy ministers." We fear it is only the few who have thus much penetration.

Mr. Funk, of the *Voice*, the leading Christian Prohibition organ of America, made a bouncing offer of $10,000 reward to anyone who could "contrive any way to take the saloon out of politics without taking it out of existence." *Liberty* claimed the cheque, saying: "It has been repeatedly demonstrated that it is possible to take the saloon out of politics without destroying it. That way is—absolute non-interference with the liquor trade. Let anybody who chooses open a saloon and sell liquor at any time he pleases. This will keep all liquor dealers, big and little, out of politics." Funk funked.

Walton Powell sued another infidel-slayer, Harry Long, of Glasgow, for libel, claiming large damages. Harry Long has returned the compliment by suing Walton Powell for £5,000 damages for slander. We look forward to the trial of these actions with the expectation of much amusement.

Lucy Mallory, noticing the *Freethinker's* comments on Father Tyrell's utterance on vivisection, says: "It seems very inconsistent for a priest to claim that animals 'have no rights' because they have 'no radical capacity for pure reason,' for in all times priests have considered it the worst of heresies for anyone to have 'the radical capacity for pure reason'; and they have tortured and killed untold numbers for possessing this capacity. For this they burned Bruno at the stake."

It was hoped that Brunetiere's visit to the Vatican had Christianised him. But not much evidence of this appeared in his speech of welcome to Henry Houssaye at the Academie Française. He is reported as saying: "We professors are accused of having invented antiquity to make of it a livelihood; and the fact is that we make a living of it—a frugal living, it is true, but still a living. Consequently, our good faith is doubted when we say that Europe, if it had not been for the Greeks, would not be Europe; that Europe owes the place which it occupies to the Greeks; that in the immortal days of Salamis and Marathon they saved us, our arts, our sciences, our entire civilisation, from ruin that Oriental barbarism threatened."

The Rev. C. O. Brown, D.D., pastor of the first Congregational Church in San Francisco, California, who recently accused a certain Mrs. Mary A. Davidson of extorting from him the sum of $500, was placed upon the witness stand at the trial on the 4th inst., and, after giving his direct testimony, he was subjected to a rigid cross-examination by the defendant's counsel concerning his relations with a Miss Martha Overman, during which he lost his temper, and attempted to assault the said counsel, but was prevented from doing so by the officers of the court.

The Rev. Joseph Pullman, of Bridgeport, Conn., charged with slandering the actress, Jane May, has been ordered to furnish $7,000 bail to protect a judgment, in addition to the $25,000 already furnished to secure his appearance.

At the Glamorgan Assizes at Cardiff, John Walter Moore, a Nonconformist minister from Rhondda Valley, South Wales, was sentenced to fifteen calendar months' imprisonment for assaulting a little girl named Fanny Ludlow, between Porth and Trealaw.

The *Labor Leader*, of Glasgow, devotes several columns to a scandal in that city concerning the visitors to a Mrs. Pollock, who is described as the cast-off mistress of an Established Church clergyman, and whose more recent patrons are among the *élite* of the pious and respectable.

Horatio Nelson Irving bears a noble name. His wife, however, has got a divorce from him and custody of her children, whom Horatio deserted. When last heard of he was a member of the Bowery Branch of the Christian Association in New York.

Mr. Charles Funk, of Cleveland, Ohio, writes to inquire: "Did R. G. Ingersoll say at the death of his daughter, 'My God'? Please answer." Great Ananias! what next? Ingersoll never lost a daughter by death or otherwise; he has no "god," and is not on speaking terms with anybody else's deity. No; he did not say, "My God."—*Truthseeker.*

As one of the most malignant of pious liars, the Rev. C. O. Brown, formerly of Dubuque, Iowa, will be remembered. In 1888 he made from his pulpit a dastardly assault upon the prominent Freethinkers of the country, including Ingersoll, charging them with leading immoral lives, teaching immoral doctrines, and corrupting the youth of both sexes—all of which he attributed to the influence of unbelief. In view of this, no one will be surprised to learn that the Rev. C. O. Brown, now of San Francisco, has just paid a woman $500 down, and promised her $35 dollars monthly for ten months, in order, as it is alleged, to avoid exposure as a seducer of a female member of his church. The *Star* of that place refers to him as "a self-convicted debauchee and libertine." About every sort of villainy and cowardice may be expected of that brand of pulpit-pounder who expects to win his own case by vilifying opposing counsel.—*Ibid.*

Presbyterian vigor in invective has not degenerated in Scotland. A Glasgow minister, who opposed total abst nence, was described lately in the pulpit as a "white-chokere blasphemer engaged in raising a sign-post to hell."

Father Fitzgerald, a Roman Catholic priest, of Rochester, New York, has been sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for insuring the parish school-house, and then attempting to burn it down to defraud the insurance companies.

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Canon Boulaye, of the Roman Catholic Church at Rochdale, is immaculate as a priest, but contemptible as a man. Mrs. Kenny, one of the attendants at St. John's Roman Catholic Church, died in childbirth with her stillborn child. The father placed the child's body in the cold arms of its mother, and wished them buried together. Canon Boulaye was firm that such a proceeding could not be allowed. The child, he said, not having been baptised, was not a Christian, and could not have Christian burial with its mother. He refused to budge, and the funeral arrangements had to be carried out according to the will of the priest.

Mr. Crosby, the Battersea pastor, who has been found guilty of adultery, had been whitewashed by his "Protestant Church." The members declared that the accusations against their "beloved pastor" were false, and expressed their "deep and heartfelt gratitude to their Heavenly Father" for giving them such a good shepherd. Let us pray!

Is it not monstrous that people may leave any sum of money they like for priests to pray their souls out of purgatory, yet may not bequeath money for the purposes of uprooting protected superstition? Some time ago a lady left £4,000 for masses for the repose of her soul. Her relations contested the will on the ground that this was too large a sum. The Chief Baron of the Exchequer asked the counsel, "How much do you think would bring her out of purgatory?" The counsel suggested ten pounds or so, but the court held that the old lady was the best judge of the extent of her own sins.

There are 135 grog-shops in Jerusalem, all kept by Jews or Christians, and they derive their principal support from European and American Christian pilgrims, who visit the sacred place where they believe the "Son of God died for their transgressions." The local Muslims term these grog-shops, by way of reproach, "the Christian pigsties."—*Crescent.*

The Church has lost one of its graces. The Bishop of Norwich pronounced sentence of deprivation against the Rev. Allen Zachariah Grace, rector of Thwaite, St. John, in consequence of his having been convicted in London of larceny, while he had also been convicted in 1869 of gross intemperance, and was now unable so bring any testimony as to his having reformed his habits.

Tom Campbell, who was formerly secretary to Cardinal Manning's League of the Cross, but has since turned Protestant, made some references in Hyde Park to Mr. Purcell's recent *Life* of that prelate, which were taken in bad part by one John Monaghan, who knocked his hat off. Monaghan has been fined 10s.

Mr. W. T. Stead, or his subliminal consciousness, or his spook Julia, is responsible for the statement that a certain Congregational speaker saw the double of one of his congregation in church, whilè the original lady was lying at home ill in bed. It is lucky full particulars are not given, or the congregation might suspect that the preacher was somewhat too familiar with spirits.

Mr. G. Dolman, who was collector to the Hampstead Provident Dispensary, has sent in his resignation. He states in the local *Express* that the treasurer objected to his being collector on the ground that he is an Atheist. Mr. Dolman reminded the committee that "many of your subscribers are of the same rational school of thought as your collector."

The New Woman who bykes is a portentous phenomenon to the Rev. Dr. Hawthorne, of Atlanta. He says that when a girl returns from a good lively spin on the wheel she finds that "it was not the love of pleasure, but a personal devil, Satan, entered into her that he might degrade and get her picture into the columns of some sensational paper, and make her the subject of obscene comment in every club-house and gathering of filthy sensationalists."

The Rev. John Rusk, of the Church Militant, Chicago, has invited Colonel Ingersoll to occupy his pulpit some Sunday. Should the Colonel accept, there will doubtless be a full house, and a good advertisement for Rusk; and probably we shall hear that the Colonel has joined the Church Militant, whatever that may be.

Tit-Bits for February 1 has the following "Advice to Witnesses":—"It cannot be too widely made known that nobody is bound to 'kiss the Book' at all. Any witness may, if he chooses, elect to be sworn in the Scotch manner, which consists in uplifting the right hand. The extraordinary thing is that so many of the judges and magistrates of the inferior courts do not seem to be aware of this right; but we counsel any witness who desires to assert it to persist in doing so, whatever may be said to the contrary. It is his absolute legal right, and if the magistrate attempts coercion he will fail."

A gas explosion in Doncaster Parish Church has resulted in damage estimated at over two thousand pounds, some fine stained glass windows having been blown to smithereens.

Originality as well as local color seem to characterise the methods of money-raising adopted by exigent Protestant pastors in the United States. If we are to credit the author of a paper in the *Forum*, who does not hesitate to describe them as "ingenious devices for raising money by false pretences," the humdrum bazaar, jumble-sale, or picnic of the old country has been liberally improved upon by our Transatlantic cousins. Thus we have the clam-cake sociable, the strawberry sociable, the pink tea, and the broom drill. The first Baptist Church in New Jersey had a successful "Poverty Sociable," at which, apparently, its members appeared in cast-off rags. We are told, too, that the Baptists of another city had a war concert, the Universalists a lawn *fête*, the Free-will Baptists a chocolate drill, the Congregationalists a Jarley waxwork show, the Swedenborgians a maypole frolic, the Episcopalians a *café chantant*, and the Zion Church a cake-walk.—*Daily Chronicle.*

The Rev. F. G. Widdows, the ex-Franciscan monk, Brother Aloysius, who is reported as saying how much in cash Jesus Christ was worth to him, sends out a circular from the Church of Martin Luther, South Hackney, announcing that "£50 is needed at once."

Rudyard Kipling is in trouble. "The profanity of some of their characters" is such that several of his books are excluded by the Board of Education from the Philadelphia Free Library. This is very sad! Still, it has its compensations. It is an excellent advertisement for Rudyard Kipling.

Du Maurier's *Trilby* is excluded from the Philadelphia Free Library on account of its "immoral teaching." The heroine actually shows her feet. Well, there are people who should be ashamed to show their faces; and some of them are on the Philadelphia Board of Education.

The Rev. Alex. Robinson, of Kilmun, published a very heretical book, entitled *The Savior in the Newer Light*. But the Presbytery of Dunoon means to keep the Savior in the old light—which is better for weak eyesight. Accordingly the Presbytery has decided that Mr. Robinson's book is subversive of all the fundamentals of the Presbyterian faith. That is settled unanimously. It now remains to be seen what will be done with Mr. Robinson himself. His fate is postponed till the first week in March.

The appointment of Miss Munday and Miss Wallis as Government inspectors of schools is a step in the right direction. Paul did not suffer a woman to teach; but we now suffer a woman to inspect the results of teaching.

Mr. John Morley has been well supported in his election campaign by the clergy. The black gentry are reconciled to him now. They see that his mouth is closed on the subject of religion.

The *Tablet* admits the statement of the *Daily Chronicle*, that Cardinal Manning left a document in relation to the Society of Jesus in England, but says "it was intended for the information of his successor, and certainly not for publication." The trouble is that it fell into the hands of Mr. Purcell, Manning's biographer, who is being so badly used by his co-religionists that he may divulge it.

Captain Pfoundes says of the Japanese converts to Christianity: "It is all too true, and more the pity it is that it is so, that the converts (nominal) to Christianity are largely natives whose conduct is such that, by the general opinion of foreign residents, such converts are not the most desirable class to employ. The true Buddhist has ever in mind the fear of punishment hereafter for misdeeds, not to be lightly atoned for. 'The naughty little boy who is always ready to say he "is sorry," if he is assured that he will obtain forgiveness,' has no counterpart in true Buddhism; and the too-easily-purchased pardon of Christian teaching is viewed as a danger, from the ethical standpoint, by the educated and intelligent Asiatic."

The *London Quarterly Review* notices the Rev. Mr. Horton's *rechauffé* of Wendt, under the title of "The New Rationalism." It says the reverent Rationalists profess to honor Christ at the expense of the Bible and the Apostles. "The old names are retained, but the old meanings are gone. We are told to believe that a Christ who is not divine can do for us what only a Divine Christ can do. 'Sin and atonement, forgiveness and faith, mean something different from what they used to do."

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 16, St. George's Hall, Hull:—10.30, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 2.30, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" 7, "Life, Death, and After."

Tuesday, February 18, Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, E.C., at 8 (for the Humanitarian League), "The Rights of Men and of Animals."

February 23, Camberwell.

March 1, New Brompton.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—February 16, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London; 22, Todmorden; 23, Manchester. March 1, Camberwell; 8, Sheffield; 15, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. M. R.—Thanks for cuttings.

R. S. PENGELLY.—Cuttings welcome. We will see about the Manning suggestion.

J. R. WHITELL.—Mr. Foote is lecturing in Hull to-day (Feb. 16). Neither the Protestant nor the Catholic "Lives of Luther" are quite fair. The best plan is to read both, and judge upon the facts.

J. THATCHER.—Mr. Foote will offer Bristol a date immediately on his return to London. We do not know of any book or pamphlet such as you require. To dramatise Secular principles, illustrating them at work in every-day life, would be no easy task. Certainly it has not yet been achieved.

E. S. BASIER.—Rather too slender treatment of such a big subject.

E. S. SMITH.—A pious concoction. Colonel Ingersoll has not become a Christian. He is still lecturing almost every night against Christianity.

A. FLASH.—The story of Thomas Paine's death-bed recantation is an old one. You will be able to read the truth in Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death-Beds*. There is no circumstantial story of Charles Bradlaugh's death-bed recantation, though there are innuendoes. His daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, has the signed testimony of the doctor and nurses to refute his posthumous libellers.

J. PARTRIDGE conveys the best thanks of the Birmingham Branch for the recent lecture delivered by Mr. Watts under Mr. Foote's scheme, and also for the publicity we gave to the Midlands Conference.

W. BOOTH.—We should be glad to see a renewed Freethought propaganda in the Hartlepools, but it is necessary to have local assistance before anything can be done at such a distance from London. The letter of Franklin's seems to refer to the first part of Paine's *Age of Reason*.

G. R. (Liverpool).—Thanks for cutting, which marks the progress of Freethought. Pleased to hear you were "delighted" with Mr. Foote's recent lectures in your city. The perfect health you wish him is not yet realised. It will be necessary for him to obtain rest and change at the seaside on his return home from the north. He has been working against indisposition all the time he has been away.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Daniel Baker, £2; Glasgow Branch, collection at Mr. Foote's lectures, £2 16s. 1½d.

C. LEAICH.—It is very good of you to "expose the Secularism of the N.S.S." on Deptford Broadway; it was still more good of you to invite Mr. Foote to attend your meeting; but, unfortunately, he was engaged at Glasgow, and could not avail himself of this magnificent opportunity, the loss of which will embitter the rest of his days.

J. FAGAN requests secretaries to note that he has removed to 48 Popham-road, New North-road.

S. OAKLEY, 81 Radigunds-road, Dover, wishes to hear from Freethinkers in the town. He will also be glad of tracts or back numbers of the *Freethinker* for distribution.

A. J. H.—Thanks. Mr. Bradlaugh's Bill provided for affirmation, not for swearing in the Scotch fashion.

J. M. R. B.—Cuttings are always welcome.

H. JONES.—There is, we believe, a *Chairman's Guide*. Mr. Holyoake's *Public Speaking and Debate* may be useful.

"VOLTAIRE."—Professor Rhys Davids's manual on Buddhism is published by the S.P.C.K.; his Hibbert Lectures by Williams & Norgate. Lecky's *History of Rationalism* is published by Longmans. Mr. Forder supplies Mr. Bradlaugh's *Humanity's Gain from Unbelief*.

H. B.—Received with thanks.

C. WRIGHT sends us the following version of Diderot up to date: "Wandering by night in a forest with a solitary light, a stranger told me to put it out to find my way more surely. The forest was the world, the light reason, and the stranger Mr. Benjamin Kidd."

J. BURNS.—You will find what you want in *Bible and Beer*.

J. P.—Your book, *God, Christ, and Science Reconciled*, shall receive attention when we have a little leisure.

L. LEVINE (Charleston).—Thanks for papers. Please note "Sugar Plum" on the Paine portrait.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) The division into seven days evidently arose from the phases of the moon. The custom was possibly adopted by the Jews when in Babylon, and legend ascribed it to the Lord's revelation to Moses. (2) Mr. St. Chad Boscawen's book is the latest, but we do not think it throws new light on the Sabbath question.

MANY correspondents must wait for answers till the editor returns home.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Sun—Science Siftings—Reading Observer—Freidenker—Truthseeker—Open Court—Brisbane Courier—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Warrington Examiner—Liberty—Greenock Telegraph—Suffolk Chronicle—Pall Mall Gazette—School Board Chronicle—Torch of Anarchy—Secular Thought—Rochdale Observer—Isle of Man Times—Hampstead and Highgate Express—Twentieth Century—Worker's Friend—Labor Prophet—East End News—New York Public Opinion—Clarion—Le Journal.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE'S lectures in South Lancashire were delivered in spite of indisposition which tempted him to return home. His three lectures at Liverpool were a trial, and he was very far from well on reaching Bolton, where, however, he was fortunate enough to enjoy every home comfort with the hospitable Hampsons. The audience in the Co-operative Hall, for numbers and enthusiasm, excelled everything seen in Bolton for many years. Several persons, more or less orthodox, joined in the discussion. At Blackburn, on the following evening, there was a similar experience. The hall was crowded with the largest audience that has been seen there for a considerable time. Many ladies were present, and friends had come in from Preston, Nelson, Lytham, and other places. Seated near the front was the veteran J. M. Umpleby, whose face was a picture as he followed all the points of the lecture. As for the audience in general, it was as enthusiastic as could well be imagined, and the discussion was continued till ten o'clock.

The Blackburn and Bolton friends are loud in praise of Mr. Foote's lecture scheme. They say it has put new life and activity into the movement. Audiences grow larger, and new members are being enrolled.

Glasgow gave Mr. Foote capital meetings on Sunday. The Brunswick-street hall was fairly filled in the morning, well filled in the afternoon, and inconveniently crowded at night. All three lectures seemed to be highly appreciated, the evening audience being particularly enthusiastic. Mr. Black and Mr. Gilmour officiated during the day as chairman. They strongly invited discussion, but did not elicit any. A collection in aid of Mr. Foote's lecture scheme realised £2 16s. 1½d. Glasgow has done extremely well in this respect. The Branch fully realises the value and importance of the lecture scheme, and is thankful to the President for its inauguration.

During the week following his Glasgow meetings, Mr. Foote has been lecturing every night in south-west Scotland. An account of his tour will appear in our next issue. To-day (February 16) Mr. Foote delivers three lectures in Hull, on his way back to London.

Mr. Foote delivers an address for the Humanitarian League next Tuesday (Feb. 18) in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street, E.C.—near Ludgate-circus. The chair will be taken at eight o'clock, and the admission is free, though in case of need preference will be given to the holders of tickets, which can be obtained gratis at 28 Stonecutter-street. Mr. Foote's subject is "The Rights of Men and the Rights of Animals." The address is one of a course organised by the Humanitarian League, in which Mr. Josiah

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Oldfield, Mr. J. C. Kenworthy, the Rev. A. L. Lilley, and Mr. Frederic Harrison have already taken part. Such an opportunity should be seized by Freethinkers to induce their Christian friends to hear the President of the National Secular Society.

Mr. Daniel Baker, the Birmingham veteran, promises a subscription of £12 during 1896 towards Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, and sends a cheque on account. Another veteran, Mr. J. M. Umpleby, of Blackburn, offers to give £100 if ten others will do the same, or £50 if twenty others will subscribe the same amount. We hardly dare to hope that ten or twenty Freethinkers will volunteer to keep Mr. Umpleby company, but they may rely upon it that he means business, as he has already subscribed £20 to this fund. Certainly a thousand pounds would enable us to double the strength of the Freethought party in a year or two.

Mr. Charles Watts had two very successful meetings at Ipswich on Monday and Tuesday, February 3 and 4. He reports that the local Branch of the N.S.S. is doing practical work. Referring to Mr. Watts's lectures, the *Anglian Daily Times* says: "The able manner in which he dealt with his subjects was appreciated by the audience." A good report also appears in the *Suffolk Chronicle*.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Watts had a capital audience at Camberwell, when he lectured upon "Theology Tested at the Bar of History." The applause was frequent and most enthusiastic, and at the conclusion Mr. Watts received quite an ovation. Mr. Hartmann made an excellent chairman. We are pleased to hear that many strangers were present, including a large sprinkling of ladies.

This evening, Sunday, February 16, Mr. Watts lectures in the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject "Woman: Past, Present, and Future." This should draw a large audience at the present time, when so much is being said about "Woman's Rights" and the "New Woman." We hear that an interesting debate may be expected after the lecture.

The debate held at Derby between Mr. Foote and Mr. W. T. Lee is in the press, and will be published in a week or two in a handsome form at one shilling. It is probable that another debate between Mr. Foote and Mr. Lee will soon take place in London.

The Blackburn Society has taken a larger room at 18 St. Peter-street, where fortnightly meetings will be held. The recent social party, and the visits of Mr. Cohen and Mr. Foote, have all been successful, and new members have been added to the roll.

Mr. Forder lectures at Leicester on Sunday (Feb. 16), and as it is some years since he was there he will be glad to see many of his old friends. His subject is, "The Bible and Ancient Monuments."

At the adjourned general meeting of the Finsbury Park Branch, Mr. G. J. Ward was re-elected treasurer for the Branch, and Mr. H. R. Clifton as secretary, for the ensuing twelve months. The secretary was elected to represent the Branch on the N.S.S. Council. There will be a Branch meeting on the first Sunday in each month at the Bradlaugh Club, at 9 p.m.

The *Outlook*, an American religious magazine, in its number for January 25, gives an account, by Myrtis Willmot Barton, of Miss Clara Barton, of the Red Cross Society, who has gone out to Armenia to nurse the victims. She says: "Questions are frequently asked concerning Miss Barton's religious belief; on that score I can say that she comes of a family of most liberal-minded people, and this, combined with her life, has led her to adopt the true Red Cross spirit, making no distinction in race, nationality, nor creed—the word 'humanity' embracing everything—so that it may well be said of her, as Thomas Paine said of himself: 'The world is my country, to do good is my religion.'"

Mrs. Tyndall is making good headway, the *Athenæum* says, with the biography of her husband, the late Professor Tyndall. She has had to sift an enormous correspondence, some of which will doubtless be very interesting.

The Liverpool *Daily Post* publishes further correspondence on Religious Doubt. Some of the letters are refreshingly outspoken.

Mr. Joseph Collinson, of the Humanitarian League, sends us the following statement: "Much confusion having been caused by the similarity of names, attention is again called to the fact that the Humanitarian League is not in any way connected with the later-established magazine, the *Humanitarian*, and is not responsible for any of the opinions expressed in that paper. It is the more necessary that we should repeat this notice, and that our members should give all possible publicity to it, because it is apparent from some editorial notes in the January number that the so-called *Humanitarian* is committed to a vivisectionist policy."

After a labor convention recently held in Cincinnati, the question of taxing Church property was discussed at length. The only Jew delegate in the convention said he was perfectly willing that the Jewish temple be taxed as well as the church. A resolution in favor of Church taxation was carried.

In an article on "The American College as a Moral Force," written by Professor W. T. Sedgwick, in the *Technology Quarterly*, he says: "In two important respects most scientific and technical colleges depart very widely from the old-fashioned American college of fifty years ago—namely, in neither requiring nor offering religious exercises, and in refusing altogether to stand *in loco parentis*." Mr. Sedgwick holds that these secular tendencies rather increase than diminish moral force. The present ideal is truth and love of accurateness.

The Paine exhibitions have excited new speculations as to what has become of the Romney portrait of Paine, valuable as a masterpiece of the artist as well as from its subject. It was painted for Thomas Cooper; not the Chartist, but the Freethinker, and author of *The Right of Free Discussion*. Cooper was one of the English Jacobins, and was deputed with James Watt, the inventor, by the Constitutional clubs, to congratulate the Democrats of France in April, 1792. The Romney portrait was painted in June of that year. Cooper afterwards went to America, where he became a judge, and president of South Carolina College. He died at Columbia in 1840, and it is likely that the Romney portrait is still in that district, though it is possible that it passes under some other name than that of the once obnoxious Thomas Paine.

BIBLE "IFS."

If God made Eve from Adam's rib
While he was hypnotised,
Breathed in her lungs the breath of life
And stood her up full-sized
Before him, then aroused her lord,
Why can't that God again
Create a man and woman so,
And save the bearing pain?
Is man, the earthly king, so weak
No anguish he can bare
Without an anæsthetic, while his mate
Must grin and bear her share?
If God made every living thing—
Made man of common mud,
And called the job a splendid one,
Then why that awful flood?
If good it was at first, why drown
And start it all anew?
A good mechanic plans his work,
And works his plannings too.
If God, at first, discerned the end,
Why did he not then know
Enough to make the whole thing right,
And let it stand just so?

—*Dr. T. Wilkins.*

Revised Texts.

Pray not at all.
Love without ceasing.
Let women not keep silence in the churches, or in any other places that need reformation.
And if they want to know anything, let them *not* ask their husbands, for they may not find out much if they do.
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of folly.
Blood is of no use for washing out sin.
Give not to everyone that asketh, but find out the deserving.
Resist all evil.
Take much thought for the morrow.
Put not thy trust in preachers.
Be yourself instead of trying to imitate an impossible God

BABBALANJA.

"Please take us out somewhere, but not to a music-hall, for I have a clergyman's daughter stopping with me, and—she might meet her father."

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THE REAL FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH.

MATTHEW ARNOLD used to call the Church of England an association for the promotion of national goodness. This was not sarcasm, but his idea as to what the Church should be; and he tried his best, with small success, to make it so tend. As a matter of fact, the Church never has been this, and the only goodness it has ever promoted has been identified with submissiveness and obedience to "our spiritual pastors and masters" and the powers that be. Historically, the Church is an association for the promotion of subordination among the masses. Its political and economic purpose is to make the poor contented with their lot by assuring them that theirs is the kingdom of heaven, that resignation under suffering here is the necessary prelude to happiness hereafter.

The Church has always been the buttress of privilege; the buffer between the classes and the masses. Hume saw this pretty clearly, and Macaulay had a good inkling of the situation. The latter historian shows that in England in the seventeenth century the parson was a mere appanage of the squire. He says that, for one who made the figure of a gentleman, ten were mere menial servants. The coarse and ignorant squire could hire a young Levite for his board, a small garret, and ten pounds a year. This clergyman might not only be the most patient of butts and of listeners, might not only be always ready in fine weather for bowls and in rainy weather for shovel board, but might also save the expense of a gardener or of a groom. Sometimes the reverend man nailed up the apricots, and sometimes he curried the coach horses. He cast up the farrier's bills. He walked ten miles with a message or a parcel. He was permitted to dine with the family, but he was expected to content himself with the plainest fare. He might fill himself with the corned beef and the carrots; but, as soon as the tarts and cheesecakes made their appearance, he quitted his seat and stood aloof till he was summoned to return thanks for the repast, from a great part of which he had been excluded (*History of England from the Accession of James the Second*, chap. iii.).

Lecky remarks that the domestic chaplains "often closed their career by purchasing some small living at the expense of a marriage with the cast-off mistress of their patron." Dean Swift says that in a great household the chaplain was the resource of a lady's maid whose character had been blown upon, and who was therefore forced to give up hopes of catching the steward. All this shows the parson was a mere retainer—retained, of course, for his utility. As the squire got superseded by the commercialist, the parson attained a better position as a protector of the haves against the havenots. The increase of wealth gave an increase of position to the clergy, as a sort of superior auxiliary to the police. But with the establishment of a regular police force, and the utilisation of the press as a protector of property, the economical function of the clergy is rapidly passing from their hands.

In Mr. Brooks Adams's *Law of Civilisation and Decay*, a work of original thought and research, the true function of the clergy is clearly displayed. In Catholic times the Church was a power between the crown and the nobles, often able to usurp authority over both. It was the growth of the free towns and of trade which diminished the power of the clergy. To the Church, the rise of the mercantile class was pure loss, not only because it prompted their vassals to seek better protection than ecclesiastics could give, but because the propagation of the secular spirit of trade bred heresy. Minds brought into contact with actual facts were apt to doubt the utility of prayers and masses. Accordingly, all commercial communities have rebelled against paying for miracles, and in the thirteenth century scepticism was already widely spread among the manufacturing towns. The clergy retaliated with frightful ferocity. As heresy followed in the wake of trade, the Inquisition followed in the wake of heresy; and the beginning of the century just named witnessed simultaneously the prosperity of the mercantile class and the organisation of the Holy Office.

The Reformation indicated the triumph of the commercial, landed, and monied classes. As the well-to-do and aristocratic ceased to be military, they needed all the more the services of the clergy to "haud the wretch in order." The endowment of the Church was a saving of blood and treasure to the army. It was the distinction of Henry VIII.—not that he changed religion, for he had no intention of doing this, but that he fully carried out the policy of all strong English kings—to make the Church wholly subordinate to the State. He ended, as far as England is concerned, a prolonged conflict. Hence the hatred of sacerdotalists for what they call the Deformation.

What an unwarlike oligarchy requires is a moral instrument of repression, which will assure safety to their property and privileges. Mr. Brooks Adams says plainly that the Tudor rulers treated their religion as a financial investment. The Church of England, in Tudor times, vibrated between the orthodoxy of the "Six Articles" and the Calvinism of the "Lambeth Articles," according to the exigencies of real estate. Within a single generation the relation Christ's flesh and blood bore to the bread and wine was changed five times by royal proclamation or Act of Parliament. In all the changes of faith under Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, the clergy were always with the powers that be. If creeds were alike to the aristocracy, it well understood the value of the pulpit as a branch of the police of the kingdom, and from the outset it used the clergy as part of the secular administration. On this point Cranmer was explicit. Elizabeth represented the landed gentry more perfectly than any previous sovereign, and she told her bishops plainly that she cared little for doctrines, but wanted clerks to keep order. Elizabeth led her clergy with a rod of iron. No priest was allowed to marry without the approbation of two justices of the peace. When the Dean of St. Paul's offended the Queen in a sermon, she told him "to retire from that ungodly digression and return to his text"; and Archbishop Grindall was suspended for disobedience to her orders. The correspondence of the Elizabethan bishops is filled with accounts of their thraldom.

The Church of England has been, since its constitution, the first order of defence to property and privilege. Hence the amount of old sermons on the divine right of kings, followed by those on the divine right of primogeniture. When the land was poor and the people ignorant, the only learned class could pretend that kings themselves acquired their supernatural qualities from sacerdotal consecration. As wealth and knowledge increased, the process became reversed; and priests drew their title to speak in the name of God from bishops appointed by the Crown. Politically speaking, this was the whole substance of the Reformation, which intellectually, by opening the flood-gates of "private judgment," began a process by no means yet completed. Archbishop Cranmer taught that God committed to Christian princes "the whole cure of their subjects as well concerning the administration of God's word as of things political." Bishops, parsons, and vicars were ministers of the temporal ruler, to whom he confided the ecclesiastical office precisely as he confided the enforcement of order to a chief of police. As a part, indeed, of the secular administration, the main function of the Anglican priesthood, under the Tudors and the Stuarts, was to preach obedience to their patrons. In no other department of public affairs did the landed gentry show particular energy or ability. Their army was ineffective, their finances indifferently handled; yet, down to the time of their overthrow in 1688, they were eminently successful in ecclesiastical organisation. Every intelligent person, who might otherwise prove troublesome, was found a benefice, while Dissenters were kept down by Test and Conventicle Acts.

While the man of God was almost the only educated person in the town or village, and certainly the only one who week by week could impress his ideas on the people, he was a political power, and was utilised as such. Yet, as Herbert Spencer points out, Nonconformity has developed with the spread of industrialism. Every extension of the power of the people has been resisted by the parsons, for every such extension has restricted their own sphere of influence. Above all, they have stood, and still stand, as far as possible, in the way of education; for, as their influence over adult minds diminishes, they can retain their hold only by securing the plastic minds of infants. The fight for the control of education is a fight for life and death, and they will do anything to secure the victory. Bitterly opposing science and democracy as long as they dared, they are now in the towns seeking to accommodate religion to science, and authority to democracy. They are unsaying the old lies about man and his destiny. They are throwing over the Devil and eternal torments. Juggling with words is their trade. They seek to hold with the hare, and run

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with the hounds. The poorly-paid curates in towns are allowed to flirt with Christian Socialism, while the whole real weight and influence of the Church throughout the country is placed in the scales of reactionary Conservativism. Whether this identification of the Church with Conservativism, which has come conspicuously to the front of late, will be to the permanent interest of either remains to be seen. Freethinkers bide their time, and rely on more powerful and palpable agencies than prayer.

The clergy are, as Carlyle called them, solemnly-constituted impostors. Pretending to despise the things of this world, they have always been scheming for power and preferment, and greedy of the crumbs which fall from rich men's tables. They vow they are called by the Holy Ghost to their office, and are always ready for a better living. They preach principles flagrantly opposed to their own practice. They say, "Woe to the rich," and "Regard not the things of this world," yet keep a good eye on the fat livings. High, Low, and Broad Church, Attitudinarians, Platitudinarians, and Latitudinarians, are one on the fundamental question of cash. Those who fail to see that the whole thing is a blind will, in my judgment, never penetrate the real inwardness of our holy religion.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

MISSIONARIES AND THE SLAVE TRADE.

SOMETHING about Christian missions in Africa is learned from the report of Professor O. F. Cook, who was sent to Liberia to make an investigation for the New York State Colonisation Society. The *World* publishes a summary of a chapter in the report devoted to a description of the slave trade.

Professor Cook alleges that many enterprising missionaries, too impatient to convert natives by the slow process of moral suasion, buy them as slaves at so much per head, and thrust Christianity upon them. These missionaries, he says, are largely responsible for the demand which makes traffic in human bodies profitable. "There is every probability," says the report, "that if only the good work goes on far enough we shall have regulation slave raids, towns burned, the people slaughtered, and the children carried away to satisfy the demand. Buying children is a part of the system. The missionary soon finds that he could work to better advantage by having children who can be expected to stay continuously, and thus have the opportunity of prolonged training. Children are cheap—he will redeem them from barbarism, train them for usefulness among their own people, etc. In the interior of Liberia boys twelve and fourteen years old were offered me for goods of cash value of about three dollars. Girls come at about twice the price. But what becomes of these children after they are bought? They are, as a rule, at the mercy of the vicissitudes and temper of the missionary, and not in the charge of some permanent and well-organised institution. Beyond the missionary who bought them, no one feels any special responsibility. The missionary may die or return home within a very few years or months; indeed, one of these alternatives is, in this climate, an early probability, and the child, now unused and ill adapted to returning to native life, but without hold on the civilised, is in a truly pitiable state."

The writer says that slavery is still an African institution. "Willingness to attack and carry off the inhabitants of the next village is well-nigh universal in Africa. There needs only to be a sufficient demand for the captives. It makes not the slightest difference in the world whether the goods are to be exported to America or carried across the Soudan to Egypt, or 'educated' in mission schools in Africa or elsewhere; the pillage and cruelty which will be invoked to supply the demand are exactly the same."

Professor Cook has only added new testimony to the mischievousness of missionary work everywhere among subsidiary races of people. In China we have massacres and consequent international complications; in Turkey, the Armenian atrocities; in South America, the extinction of the natives; in Hawaii, disease and depopulation; in Africa, a stimulation of the slave trade and rapine. All this to inculcate a religion that makes the heathen no better off here or hereafter. It is time that the criminal folly should cease, and the "millions for missions" be retained in the pockets of the dupes from whom it is extorted under false pretences.—*New York "Truthseeker."*

Good Minister—"Yes, children, we all have besetting sins. So have I, like the rest. Now, what do you suppose is my besetting sin?" Bright Boy—"Talking."

TO A CHRISTIAN.

WHY couple the ungodly one
With sinners? Tell me, pray!
Know ye not, then, that sin is done
Alone when man his way has won
O'er crushed humanity?

The God to whom ye bow the knee
In homage, year by year,
Came, a phantasmal mystery,
From men of low mentality,
Beneath the stress of fear.

The lightning, as it rent the sky
With swift electric flash,
Did then unto each startled eye
An angry God personify,
His voice the thunder-crash.

And so, where'er in cosmic plan
They could perceive no cause,
The early men a greater man
Conceived, with power to bless or ban
Apart from Nature's laws.

Yet you know those events that they
Observed with wonderment
Are all accounted for to-day,
Because the lamp of Reason's ray
A swift solution sent.

Then cast ye off the childish lore
Found in the mythic page;
Think not as thought the men of yore,
But knowledge seek for evermore
To grace the coming age.

To Truth and Right erect your shrine,
And intellect and worth;
Let no one 'neath injustice pine:
So shall you find a very mine
Of happiness on earth.

F. W. THORRINGTON.

IMPRESSMENT OF SINGERS.

IT is common enough to *press* people to sing, but in former times this practice was carried to a more tyrannical extent than we have now any example of. In the time of Henry VIII., when music was more cultivated in England than it had ever been before, a power was given to the deans of cathedrals and collegiate churches for supplying their several choirs with children possessed of good voices by *impressment*. John Tusser, the unfortunate author of a poem on *Husbandry*, tells us that he was *impressed* from Wallingford College, in Berkshire, into the King's Chapel.

Queen Elizabeth, who relinquished no prerogative which had been exercised by her ancestors, kept in full force, during her whole reign, that of issuing placards or writs for impressing singing boys for her Chapel, as well in the capital as at Windsor. The original of one of these, signed by herself, is preserved in the British Museum. It authorises Thomas Gyles, Master of the Children of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, and his deputy or deputies, and every of them, to take up in any cathedral or collegiate churches, and in every other place or places of this our realm of England and Wales, such child or children as he or they, or any of them, shall find and like of, and the same child and children, by virtue hereof, for the use and service aforesaid, with them or any of them, to bring away without any let, contradictions, stay, or interruptions to the contrary.

Under some such acts as these archbishops still pretend to confer musical degrees. But this treatment was not nearly so bad as that in Catholic countries, where, for ages, boys with good voices have been castrated for the service of the Church, women's impure voices not being permitted in the sacred buildings!

The odd result of the misplacement of stops must be familiar to most readers, but it is not often that they are so serious as in the following instance:—William Sharp, the celebrated line engraver, believed the divine mission of the madman Richard Brothers, and engraved a portrait of that worthy with the following inscription beneath it: "Fully believing this to be the man appointed by God, I engrave his likeness.—W. SHARP." The writing engraver by mistake put the comma after the word "appointed," and omitted it at the latter part of the sentence, thus giving a ludicrous effect to the whole inscription. Many impressions were struck off before the mistake was discovered and rectified.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

SPOOKS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You will perhaps kindly grant me a small space in your next issue for the purpose of passing a few remarks on Mr. Orr's *critique* on Mr. Watts's admirable article on "Evidence: Real and Imaginary."

I have been a decided unbeliever in both *holy and unholy ghost stories and miracles* for the last sixty-three years; as such, I herewith humbly beg to endorse every word in Mr. Watts's article.

I have spent many years in Pembrokeshire, where there are scores of *old women* who do not condescend to witness single ghosts, but go in for them in the wholesale line, such as crowded funerals, etc. When a farmer, or any member of his family—or, indeed, any other country person—dies, it is quite a common occurrence for one or more of these *old women* to say: "Ah, I knew that somebody would soon die in that house, for I saw a funeral coming out one night about a week since." It is quite amusing to the respectable people in the neighborhood, as not one of the old women was ever known to mention a word about the imaginary funerals until there was the necessity for a real one.

I may say that it is also quite a common occurrence for Christians, on the death of a relative or friend, to say: "Ah, their dear spirit is gone to the Lord who gave it."

It may be that Lord Brougham's friend, when death was approaching, thought that one Lord was as good as another; so, quite naturally, he sent his spirit to his old friend, Lord Brougham.

T. DUNBAR HARRIS.

THE DEVIL STILL ALIVE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—One of the audience at Mr. Foote's lecture in Bolton on Tuesday week, who listened to "What Has Become of the Devil?" carried the lecturer's verdict to the mill where he works, the following morning. "Bill," he said to his mate, "dost know as a yeerd last neet hast devil's deud?" "It's a damn lie," said Bill; "devils noan deud. Thers one ut hawer heawse, a gradley sneezer, who crakt my on t' yed wit poker obeawt a fortnit sin, an' that's why aw stopt off my wark. Neawe," said Bill again, "devil's noan deud."

J. F. H.

NO MATTER WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM.

IT has often been said that the orthodox Church never refused to accept money, no matter by whom given or how the donor acquired it. The following anecdote is illustrative of the effect of the example set for the more ignorant class of white people and negroes:—

In one of the Southern towns there was a colored "revival" meeting in progress, and as nearly everyone was more or less filled with "de sperit," and would be inclined to be liberal in their donations, the pastor, an aged negro, took advantage of this fact, and urged the congregation to remember that the church was sadly in need of money for various purposes.

Just about this time a gambler from Ohio and several friends came in out of curiosity. The pastor then asked one of the deacons to pass the collection box. The first to contribute was Brother Wilson, who dropped in ten cents.

"Ten cents frum Brudder Wilson," announced the deacon.

"May de Lawd bless Brudder Wilson!" answered the pastor.

"Twen'y-fi' cents frum Brudder White!" again announced the deacon.

"May de good Lawd bless Brudder White!" responded the pastor.

The deacon continued to announce the names of those who contributed and the amounts, and finally reached the gambler, who was feeling pretty joyful, as he had won quite a large sum the previous night, and he took a twenty-dollar bill from a large roll and dropped it in the box.

"What's de name, sah?" asked the deacon, his eyes popping with excitement.

"Oh, never mind the name. I am a gambler from Ohio."

"Twen'y dollahs frum a gamblah frum Ohiah!" the deacon shouted.

"May de good Lawd bless an' prospah de noble gamblah frum Ohiah!" fervently exclaimed the pastor.

It has yet to be understood that a man may be a religious doubter, a pious sceptic, and an earnest infidel; for surely it is religious to doubt as long as a thing seems doubtful, and pious to refuse to give assent to that which appears to the soul a lie.—*George Dawson.*

BOOK CHAT.

WE are pleased to notice that Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman has included in his *Victorian Anthology* the noble sonnet, by Eugene Lee Hamilton, entitled "A Flight from Heaven":—

Once, from the parapet of gems and glow,
An Angel said: "O God! the heart grows cold
On these eternal battlements of gold,
Where all is pure, but cold as virgin snow.

"Here sobs are never heard; no salt tears flow;
Here there are none to help, nor sick nor old;
No wrong to fight, no justice to uphold:
Grant me thy leave to live man's life below."

"And then annihilation?" God replied.
"Yes," said the Angel, "even that dread price;
For earthly tears are worth eternal night."
"Then go," said God. The Angel opened wide
His dazzling wings, gazed back on Heaven thrice,
And plunged forever from the walls of Light.

This fine sonnet, the imaginative daring of which is equalled by its artistic beauty, was copied into the *Freethinker* on its first appearance in the *Academy* some years ago; but no lover of poetry will regret our repeating it, as it now appears in *Sonnets of the Wingless Hours.*

* * *

The *Academy* (Feb. 8), reviewing Mr. D'Arcy's *Short Study of Ethics*, says: "To appeal to God when thought is helpless, and then make the Divine Being the principle of thought's explanation, is, in the last resort, only to expound *ignotum per ignotius.*" The same number of the *Academy* contains a review of Mr. J. M. Robertson's work on *Buckle and His Critics.*

* * *

A series of "Famous Scots," to be issued by Messrs. Oliphant, is inaugurated this week by one on Thomas Carlyle, by Hector C. Macpherson.

* * *

Dr. A. Specht's Freethought work on *Theology and Science* has been translated into Dutch, and is published in six parts, at forty centimes per part, by Wilms & Co., of Amsterdam.

* * *

Hiram M. Stanley, the author of *Studies in the Evolutionary Psychology of Feeling*, holds that feeling is the primitive mental state. Fear is regarded as the primitive emotion which arises with knowledge of objects and power of representation, and superstition follows fear. The evolution of mind is regarded as dependent on the stimulating influence of pain on volition.

PROFANE JOKES.

Child—"Does the Lord take the papers?" Mother—"No, my child. Why do you ask?' Child—"Oh! I thought he didn't; it takes our minister so long to tell him about things."

Bobby—"I don't think Dod was very polite, mamma." Mamma—"Why, Bobby, what makes you think that?" Bobby—"You always told me 'at ladies should be 'tended to first, and Dod 'tended to Adam 'fore he 'tended to Eve."

"Who was Peter?" asked a Sunday-school teacher. "Peter was a brick." "Why, Johnny, I am surprised at you." "It says so in the Bible, anyhow. I read it the other day. It says: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this brick I'll build my church.'" "Rock, Johnny, rock; not brick." "Well, I knew it was some kind of a building material."

It was in a Caribou church, only the other Sunday, that the choir did not put in an appearance at the opening hour. The pastor arose, glanced at the empty choir seats, and said: "I see the singers are absent this morning. Let all arise and sing, 'Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow.'"

"Dickson resents your pitching into the Devil, bishop." "On what ground?" "Says it doesn't do to antagonise people we may have to ask favors of in the future."

This reminds us of a good old Freethinker who told his parson he had better die in the middle of the week. "Why so?" said the man of God. "Because no rich man can enter the kingdom of God. You will have to go to old Nick, whom you are always preaching against, and if you are fresh from a Sunday sermon won't he pile on the fire and brimstone?"

"Do you want to come in?" asked St. Peter, kindly, as a forlorn-looking soul rode up on a second-hand cloud. "I dunno," was the dubious response. "Ain' the poor pew kinder drafty?" "No, no; we have no poor pew here!" Taking hold of his arm—"Come right in." "No, ye don't! I know what religion is, an' I know what heaven is. No poor pew, no religion; no religion, no heaven. So long!"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, Charles Watts, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, Conrad Goodrich (late of the Lyceum Theatre), "Some Comedians of the Early English Church." Tuesday, at 8.30, social party. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac"—Lecture V. continued.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Thomas Paine."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. Rowney, "Paul and his Teaching."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (78 Libra-road, Roman-road): 8, Sunday-school; 7.30, Miss Hope Rea, an address.

LAMBETH BRANCH (Liberal and Radical Club, 108 Westminster Bridge-road): Thursday, at 8, F. A. Davies, "The Value of Christianity."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "The German Lutheran Idolatry."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, T. Gautry, M.L.S.B., opens discussion on "Should Voluntary Schools be Subsidised by the State?"

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Mrs. Gilliland-Husband, "Philosophic Faith."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, W. Heaford, "The Dream of Immortality."

WOOD GREEN (Club and Institute, 4 Lawn-villas, Stewart-crescent, opposite Wood Green Church): 6, club committee; 7.30, T. F. Blanchard, "The Principle of Population in Relation to Socialism"; 9, social for members and friends.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 8.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, H. Snell, "What are Sacred Books?" 7, "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist and Reformer" (with limelight illustrations).

BLACKBURN (Venetian Hall, Darwen-street): Thursday, Feb. 18, J. Titherington, "Inconsistencies of Christianity." Sunday, at 3, members meet at 18 St. Peter-street.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Leon Dorné, A.K.C., "Christian Gratitude."

HECKMONDWIKE (Lumbard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, a meeting.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Kinniburg, "Some Eccentricities of our Written Language"; 6.30, J. Cassels, "Over-population and Poverty."

HULL (St. George's Hall): 10.30, G. W. Foote, "How the Bible Stands Now"; 2.30, "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" 7, "Life, Death, and After."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, R. Forder, "The Bible and Ancient Monuments."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anno-street): 7, J. Read, "The Ethics of Suicide."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, a lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 11, C. Cohen, "The Great French Revolution—Daybreak"; 3, "Spinoza"; 7, "Atheism: its Meaning, Morality, and Justification."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, F. H. Hart, "Respectable Heresy."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting; 7.30, entertainment.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, W. M. Scott, "Vaccination."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—February 16, Newcastle; 19, Chester-le-Street; 23, South Shields. March 1, South Shields; 8 and 15, Glasgow.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 1, Balls Pond.

HUMANITARIAN LEAGUE LECTURE.—The fifth of a series of addresses on THE RIGHTS OF MEN AND THE RIGHTS OF ANIMALS will be given in the MEMORIAL HALL, Farringdon-street, E.C., on TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, at 8 p.m., by G. W. FOOTE. The chair will be taken by ERNEST BELL. Subject, "THE SECULARIST VIEW." The Lecture will be followed by a Discussion. Admission Free.

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The Freethinker

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

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FREETHOUGHT MISSIONS.

IT is perfectly obvious that the old methods of Secular advocacy are now inadequate. Twenty years ago there were only three possibilities in an English town on a Sunday; you might go to church, or to the public-house, or attend a Secular lecture, if there happened to be one in the place. Until the Sunday League was formed there was absolutely no competition to be faced by Charles Bradlaugh when he lectured at the Hall of Science. Unless you went to the dram-shop or the gospel-shop, it was "Bradlaugh or nothing" on a Sunday evening. But what a different state of things exists to-day! The Sunday League has concerts going on in all parts of London, which are attended by thousands of persons. Ethical Societies invite the public to their meeting places. Socialists have dozens of lecturers going on Sunday. Even the churches and chapels are going in for "pleasant Sunday afternoons." There is rivalry on all sides in the metropolis, and on a lesser scale it obtains in all the large centres of population. Even if Charles Bradlaugh were living now, and in the plenitude of his powers, it is very questionable whether he would draw "paying" audiences as he once did. Hundreds might go to hear him with a charge at the door—but would thousands? I doubt it, and I believe he felt the change for some time before his death.

Another fact has also to be taken into consideration. Twenty years ago the Churches were very sleepy. They thought themselves secure, and did not foresee the great interest that was to be excited in social questions. But they are asleep no longer. They are courting "the people," the new voters, the democracy, with great ardor and perseverance. The activity of the Church of England is astonishing to those who remember its old supineness. Nor are the Dissenting bodies lagging behind. Thousands a year are spent by Wesleyan Methodists on their West London Mission. The public are invited to St. James's Hall, instead of a church; and the raucous voice of Mr. Price Hughes is supplemented by a choir and band.

For my part, I have long seen that Secularism must be more modern in its methods of propaganda. Some years ago I induced the National Secular Society's Annual Conference to pass a resolution for the reform of our lecture system. Nothing was done, however; and at length I resolved to strike out myself. If I could not move the party by mere persuasion, I might do so by convincing action. Accordingly, I formulated my Lecture Scheme, which I determined to nurse myself, at least until its value was fully recognised, and the labor of operating it could be entrusted to the ordinary party machinery.

My scheme has been in operation only for a few months, but I am already and entirely satisfied that it moves along the line of least resistance. Mr. Watts and Mr. Cohen have delivered dozens of lectures under it, which would not have been delivered otherwise. The meetings addressed under my scheme are thrown open to the public. There is no charge at the door. Secular salvation is offered to Christians without money and without price. The collection taken up goes towards defraying the local expenses, the expenses of the lecturer being guaranteed by myself.

Readers of the *Freethinker* have already seen accounts of the success of my lecture scheme from the pens of Mr. Watts, Mr. Cohen, and Mr. Gilmour. It may not be amiss, however, if I supplement what they have written.

Having to visit Glasgow, I decided to deliver some lectures in the district, following for the most part the track of my friend and colleague, Mr. Charles Watts, who had recently given south-west Scotland a taste of his vigorous eloquence. My lectures at Glasgow were attended by the largest audiences the Branch has seen for a considerable time, the hall being quite unpleasantly crowded in the evening. These meetings were not free. There was the usual charge at the door. The free meetings began on Monday, when I visited Dunoon and broke fresh ground. A handful of Secular "saints" had taken a large room in the Town Hall premises, and advertised the lecture extensively. The result was a crowded meeting. Most of the people present must have been Christians, at least by profession, but they showed an unexpected sympathy with my treatment of the Bible. Several questions were asked, and a local doctor made some rather feeble observations. The local clergy were all absent. They did not care to oppose the "infidel." One of them, the Rev. Mr. Johnson, preferred to rate a member of his flock, Mr. Robertson, the Convener of the Halls Committee, for letting the room to the Secularists; and I hear that Mr. Robertson has since resigned his eldership in Mr. Johnson's church. I also hear that Dunoon has been "shaken" by this lecture, and that it is still the talk of the town. Anyhow, the local organisers of the meeting are simply delighted. The success of the experiment exceeded their most sanguine expectations.

On Tuesday I lectured at Paisley. There was another large meeting and plenty of discussion. On Wednesday I lectured at Greenock. A Freethought lecture was once delivered in this town by Robert Owen, another was delivered by George Jacob Holyoake, and a third by Charles Bradlaugh. But that was long ago, and I was virtually breaking fresh ground again. Mr. Kennedy had worked hard, and the handsome hall was crowded; and here again there was plenty of discussion. On Thursday I addressed another large meeting at Motherwell, the hall being quite filled with a most appreciative audience. On Friday I lectured at Cambuslang, where I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Keir Hardie's father, sister, and two brothers, who are all Secularists. This meeting was not as large as the others, but it was much larger than Mr. Watts's some weeks previous. Of course his meeting helped mine, as mine will help its successors. We shall get a good hearing amongst the miners of Cambuslang if we only "keep pegging away."

Mr. Gilmour presided at every one of these meetings, and a better chairman would have to be specially manufactured. Mr. Black sold the *Freethinker*, and made himself generally useful. He is what the boys call "a brick." Several other friends kept us company. We returned to Glasgow every evening except Monday, and the pleasant companionship was quite medicinal to me, struggling as I was against indisposition. The Glasgow friends are "gone" on my lecture scheme, and don't mind working and subscribing now that a feasible plan is devised for reaching the "heathen" in their part of Scotland.

On Saturday I travelled up to Hull—a nine hours' journey. Some of my readers will remember the battle I had there once with the Chief Constable. He said I should not charge for admission on Sunday, and I said I would. I engaged a hall for a week, and kept a man in possession;

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lectured every week-night free, and charged on Sunday; and defied the Chief Constable to begin his threatened prosecution. His threats, however, terrified the lessees of halls, and I have not visited Hull since. But rather than neglect it altogether I resolved to deliver three lectures with free admission. Captain Monro and other friends worked very hard, and we had splendid meetings on Sunday. The hall was crowded at night. There must have been eight hundred persons present. The collections were excellent, and the hundred copies of the *Freethinker* were sold out early in the day. If the Hull Branch perseveres, it will soon be in a strong position.

Let me conclude by stating that on Tuesday evening I delivered an address for the Humanitarian League on "The Rights of Men and Animals," giving "The Secularist View." We had by far the largest meeting of the whole course. I am told that hundreds of people could not gain admittance. Friends of my own could not get near the door. Despite the newspaper boycott, the public does get to know that a Secularist is speaking, and takes an interest in his message. G. W. FOOTE.

IT IS NOT TRUE.

"We have no right to believe a thing true because everybody says so, unless there are good grounds for believing that some one person, at least, has the means of knowing what is true, and is speaking the truth so far as he knows it. However many nations and generations of men are brought into the witness-box, they cannot testify to anything which they do not know. Every man who has accepted the statement from somebody else, without himself testing and verifying it, is out of court; his word is worth nothing at all. And when we get back at last to the true birth and beginning of the statement, two serious questions must be disposed of in regard to him who first made it: was he mistaken in thinking that he *knew* about this matter, or was he lying?"—WILLIAM KINGDON CLIFFORD.

"What is incredible to thee, thou shalt not at thy soul's peril attempt to believe."—THOMAS CARLYLE.

"GEORGE ELIOT" once remarked that she had but one objection to Christianity. "And what is that?" was asked. "*It is not true.*" The answer was complete. "George Eliot" had looked into the matter for herself. She had studied science, and discovered that the Christian doctrine of the origin of this world and of man was at variance with fact. She had looked into the historic evidences of Christianity, and found that anything like adequate evidence of the supernatural narratives of the Christian books was altogether wanting. Much might be said of the great part which Christianity has played in the world, but nothing that could be said is to the purpose compared with the fact that it is not true. The Christian account of creation is fabulous, the story of the Fall is a fiction, and the theory of redemption founded upon it is a figment.

It is not true that Eve was in transgression, or that all women have to be kept in subordination on that account. It is not true that for Adam's sin all are born in sin and shapen in iniquity. It is not true that a serpent talked, or that death entered into the world in the time of Adam.

It is not true that the Jews, two thousand years ago, were better conversant with the laws of nature than we are to-day. The testimony to miracles of ignorant and superstitious fisher-folk of Galilee, even if we had it at first-hand, would be received by moderns with doubt and suspicion.

It is not true that the Bible is without error. That book says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." This command has been the occasion of the putting to death of myriads of helpless women. The delusion has been fostered and perpetuated by the Gospel stories of diabolical possession. The New Testament throughout speaks of the speedy approach of the end of the world. The early Christians lived in daily expectation of that great event. If mistaken on this point, is it not probable that they were mistaken on others?

It is not true that God ever made this world in six days, or proposed to drown it with forty days' rain. It is not true that he stayed the sun and moon to enable a tribe of Israelites to slaughter a band of Amorites; or that he sent his own Son to be slaughtered for the sins of other people. It is not true that God or the Holy Ghost visited a young Jewess, or that her boy was born without a father, or that she remained a virgin after producing a large family. It is not true that Jesus turned water into wine, devils into pigs, or walked on water, or ascended through the clouds into heaven.

It is not true that his followers can take up serpents or drink deadly things with impunity, as they were promised. It is not true that prayers are potent to change the course of nature. The fervent prayers of the righteous are not effectual. The Armenians vainly cry to God for help. Kings, who are the most prayed-for people, are among the shortest lived. It is not true that faith the size of a mountain will suffice to move a single grain of mustard-seed.

It is not true that any of the Apostles had anything to do with drawing up the Apostles' Creed. It is not true that the compilers of the Athanasian Creed had any more information on the subject of the Trinity than Voltaire. It is not true, as affirmed in the Church Articles, that works done before grace have the nature of sin, nor is it true that one man's sin can be washed out by the blood of another. It is not true that faith suffices to turn a bad man into a good one, or that he who is deficient in faith is therefore without any virtue. It is not true that Christianity ensures morality. Hindus, Buddhists, and Moslems have less crime among them than the Christian nations. Christianity has brought, not universal peace, but dissension in its train. It is not true that some persons are fit for eternal happiness, while others deserve eternal misery. You cannot divide men sharply into sheep and goats. Hair and wool are mixed. As Shelley says in *Peter Bell the Third*:—

> 'Tis a lie to say "God damns";
> Where was Heaven's Attorney-General
> When they first gave out such flams?
> Let there be an end of shams;
> They are mines of poisonous mineral.

It is the verdict of human experience that falsity in the long run carries disaster in its train. Hear the ringing voice of Carlyle, the prophet of this century: "Speedy end to superstition—a gentle one if you can contrive it, but an end. What can it profit any mortal to adopt locutions and imaginations which do *not* correspond to fact; which no sane mortal can adopt in his soul as true; which the most orthodox of mortals can only, and this after infinite essentially *impious* effort to put out the eyes of his mind, persuade himself to believe that he believes?" A system which has at its back a mighty past, which is supported by immense wealth and protected by power, is sure to find much, very much, that can be said on its behalf. But, to the Freethinker, nothing that can be said is of significance compared with the fact that it is not true.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE NEW DEFENCE OF THE BIBLE.

No book has had so many varying and conflicting estimates formed as to its nature and value as the Bible. For centuries it was regarded by the orthodox Church as the "very word of the very God"; the cry was "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." As education, however, illuminated the human mind and liberated human thought, it was found that such a claim and demand could not reasonably be maintained, hence even Christian scholars began to entertain very modified views in reference to the character of the Bible; the belief in "verbal inspiration" gave way to reliance upon "essential inspiration," and the book was no longer considered as containing only the Word of God. The Secular method of eclecticism was adopted by some of the foremost men within the Church. These eclectic Christians felt impelled to submit the Bible to the test of their own reason and conscience, which had been educated and purified, not by the book itself, nor by any supernatural grace, but by the results of a long and gradual progress in Secular enlightenment, which progress had been at nearly every step opposed on the authority of the book, and in the name of the religion founded on it. Doctrines that now revolt the common conscience did not in former centuries revolt the consciences of men who were taught by the book and purified by the Holy Spirit. It is not by special grace, nor by revelation of the Holy Scriptures, but by critical scholarship, that men have come now to decide as to the genuineness and authenticity, the date and authority, of the various portions of the book. Until free learning was revived at the classical Renaissance, the

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Holy Spirit was content to leave all the most pious Biblical students in very deep darkness as to nearly all the points on which our eclectic Christians are now so clearly enlightened.

While, of course, it is gratifying to us to note this rational progress, the question may be fairly asked: From a theological standpoint, what can be the use or authority of a moral and doctrinal code from which each man is free to pick and choose just what commends itself to his own taste and judgment? Selection having once begun, who can say where it is to end? What will ultimately be left in common to all who, with this elastic theory, call themselves Christians? We believe it would not be difficult to gather from various eminent men—learned, subtle, and devout, and all alike claiming to be orthodox—denial and refutation of every doctrine usually and vaguely considered essential to the creed. To assert that the Bible contains the Word of God, but that the whole of it is not so, is to leave to the individual mind the decision as to what is and what is not "God's Word." The alleged divine is thus made subordinate to the human. The damaging result to theology of adopting such a course is seen in the many contradictory notions that are entertained by professed Christians as to what the Bible really teaches. As the different existing sects which constitute the Christian fold hold so many varying and opposite ideas as to what the Scriptures mean, it is an irrefutable proof that the supposed truths of the Bible are not self-evident; each person is left to attach to them what veracity he or she thinks they deserve. The logical sequence of all these changes in the views entertained of the Bible is that it cannot be looked upon as aught else than a human production; the old pretensions put forth by the Church upon its behalf are given up, and now the book is allowed to be judged by its merits or its demerits. This is a striking evidence of the progress of Freethought.

An illustration of the new mode of defending the Bible was given only the other Sunday at the Union Chapel at Islington, when the Rev. Hardy Harwood preached a sermon from the text, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The sermon was reported in the London *Daily Chronicle* of February 3. Mr. Harwood is considered one of the leading Nonconformists of London. He is the successor to the late Dr. Allon, and his chapel is termed the "Nonconformist Cathedral of North London." His sermon was a desperate effort to reconcile the theory that the Bible is "God's Word" with the modern views held in reference to it. It is strange, if the book is such a "lamp" and "light" as the text states, that so few persons accept its illuminating power to guide them in the "path" of their lives. We know of no one who regulates his conduct by, nor of any progressive institutions that are based upon, teachings which are peculiar to the Bible. True, it contains some practical injunctions, but these are to be found in other books that have no relation to either the Old or the New Testament, and therefore they are not distinctive Bible teachings. Besides, the "light" obtained from the Bible "lamp" is clouded by so much mist from the same source that, without other light, it would be extremely difficult to see our way through the path of life.

The rev. gentleman frankly admitted that the Bible was not "the perfect revelation of God to man, or designed to impart to men the secrets of natural science, or facts about history." To a rational mind, undisturbed by theological considerations, it seems remarkable that a revelation from God should be imperfect, and that a knowledge of science as the greatest benefactor to man should not be imparted. If the Bible were silent upon history and science, it would be bad enough in a book that is said to be "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"; but when it teaches as history and science what is known to be false we fail to see the good of the light from the Bible lamp. Take its history as to the origin of man; the description of the river out of Eden that parted into four heads; the Biblical chronology, making our race about 6,000 years old, which is not only contradicted by science, but by clear historical memorials. The pyramids, temples, and tombs of Egypt, dating back more than 5,000 years, with their inscriptions, their dynastic records, their pictures, and other works of art, prove that that country must have been populous, maturely organised, and skilled in many arts and handicrafts, at a period when, according to the book of Genesis, the human kind consisted of but a few families. Again, as to the New Testament history, the story of the life and death of the founder of Christianity, there is an external test, which to a thoughtful and candid mind is none the less effectual because it is negative—namely, the silence of contemporary writers of the first century. Had Jesus been crucified as alleged; had Pilate himself written the title to be put on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews"; had there on this occasion been a mid-day darkness over all the earth for three hours, the sun eclipsed, an earthquake, the rocks rent, the veil of the temple torn in twain, graves opened, buried saints arising and going into the holy city, and appearing unto many;—had all these signs and wonders appeared, is it possible to conceive that no other record of them should remain?

It appears to us that for Christians to assert that the Bible ignores natural science is to attribute to their God an utter neglect of that which provides for their principal requirements. But the fact is, the Bible does refer to scientific subjects, and deals quite largely with matters that fall within the region in which science reigns supreme. Kalisch says: "The Bible is not silent upon the creation; it attempts, indeed, to furnish its history; but in this account it expresses as facts that which the researches of science cannot sanction." But the subject of creation is not the only topic upon which the book states the very opposite to what is correct. Surely, how man was made, the phenomena of the solar system, and the mode by which disease and death entered the world, are scientific questions. These, with other similar subjects, are dwelt upon in the Bible, and a reference to its statements thereon will show that science and the Bible are not on the most friendly terms. Indeed, there have been but few discoveries of any magnitude in science that have not exhibited in some way the fallacy of portions of the Bible. That which in the days of Moses might have been considered right, and in accordance with the laws of nature, science has since proved to be incorrect; and what Christ taught concerning the possession of devils by the human body is now regarded as an exploded superstition. The Bible alleges that mankind has degenerated from a state of perfection; science, on the contrary, indicates that the career of man has been progressive, and that each age, profiting by experience, has been superior to its predecessor. The Bible affirms that at a certain command the sun and moon stood still; science rejects such a statement. The Bible asserts that all the kingdoms of the world were exhibited from a certain high mountain; geography teaches that there are many parts of the world totally invisible from any one elevation. In almost every field the "sacred writings" appear to be the very antithesis of the teachings of science. Where does the "light" of "God's word" come in here?

The rev. gentleman's new defence of the Bible is that its record is "honest, sincere, and reverent." But surely this does not make the Bible superior to other books; neither is it any guarantee that its statements are true. These virtues may be allied with the greatest errors and the direst superstitions that ever darkened the human mind. They have also been the characteristics of men who have written against the orthodox claims of the Bible. Take, for instance, Thomas Paine, who, in his *Age of Reason*, displays the utmost honesty, sincerity, and reverence for truth. Will the Rev. Hardy Harwood admit that on that account Paine's unanswerable book is true? If not, why not? If the Bible is to be accepted because its writers were honest, etc., then upon the same principle the writings of some of our noblest heretics should not be rejected.

Honesty, sincerity, and reverence for the true and useful are always commendable; but something more is expected in a book that is supposed to be our guide through life. We need accurate statements, practical teachings, and ethical consistency; and it is in these necessary requirements that the Bible is deplorably deficient.

CHARLES WATTS.

Who can compute what the world loses in the multitude of promising intellects combined with timid characters, who dare not follow out any bold, vigorous, independent train of thought lest it should land them in something which would admit of being considered irreligious or immoral? . . . No one can be a great thinker who does not recognise that, as a thinker, it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusions it may lead.—*J. S. Mill*, "*On Liberty*."

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BYRON'S RELIGION.

LORD BYRON was undoubtedly a Freethinker, though he does not, as a Freethinker, stand on the exalted eminence of his friend Shelley, who, eclipsed in his lifetime by the popularity of the noble poet, is now seen to have been greater as a poet and greater as a man. Both may be called poets of the Revolution, yet Byron only embraced it on its negative side, while the imagination of Shelley looked forward to the time when the enthusiasm of humanity should recreate society. Self-love, too predominant in Byron, was in Shelley lost in an ocean of love for his fellows.

Most competent judges would assign the first place among Byron's works to *Don Juan*, whom Leigh Hunt said he designed at last to turn into a Methodist. Certainly the work could have been written by no Christian. Byron's views were fluid and fluctuating, yet he doubtless uttered a predominant mood when he wrote :—

> Some kinder casuists are pleased to say,
> In nameless prints, that I have no devotion ;
> But set those persons down with me to pray,
> And you shall see who has the properest notion
> Of getting into heaven the shortest way.
> My altars are the mountains and the ocean,
> Earth, sea, stars—all that springs from the great whole,
> Who hath produced, and will receive, my soul.

In *Childe Harold*, his noblest, if not his ablest, utterance, we have yet more clearly this pantheistic worship of nature :—

> Are not the mountains, waves, and skies a part
> Of me and of my soul, as I of them ?
> Is not the love of these deep in my heart ?

In this light the petty religions of man all dwindle :—

> Even gods must yield ; religions take their turn :
> 'Twas Jove's, 'tis Mahomet's ; and other creeds
> Will rise with other years, till man shall learn
> Vainly his incense soars, his victim bleeds—
> Poor child of doubt and death, whose hope is built on reeds.

He had a strong sense that all forms of faith were of equal inutility :—

> Foul superstition ! howsoe'er disguised—
> Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,
> For whatsoever symbol thou art prized—
> Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss,
> Who from true worship's gold can separate thy dross ?

Contempt for death, which Byron exhibited in death's face at Missolonghi, is seen almost obtruded in some of his most characteristic utterances :—

> And, strange to say, the sons of pleasure—
> They who have revelled beyond measure
> In beauty, wassail, wine, and treasure—
> Die calm, or calmer, oft than he
> Whose heritage was misery.

He may at times have hoped for immortality. He certainly did not believe in it. How finely he apostrophises this longing in *Childe Harold !*

> Bound to the earth, he lifts his eyes to heaven ;
> Is't not enough, unhappy thing ! to know
> Thou art ? Is this a boon so kindly given
> That, being, thou would'st be again, and go
> Thou know'st not, reck'st not, to what region, so
> On earth no more, but mingled with the skies ?
> Still wilt thou dream on future joy and woe ?
> Regard and weigh yon dust before it flies,
> That little word saith more than thousand homilies.

How nobly Cain, in the very spirit of the vegetarian, Shelley, pours his scorn on the God who takes "his high pleasure in the fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood"; and, even when making offerings of fruit to him, says :—

> If a shrine without victim
> And altar without gore may win thy favor,
> Look on it ! and for him who dresseth it,
> He is—such as thou madst him ; and seeks nothing
> Which must be won by kneeling.

Indeed, the whole drama is a protest against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

The "Vision of Judgment," in which the poet's genius for satire has full force, is no less daring in its "blasphemy." From its opening, with the angels all singing out of tune, to its close, with George III. practising the hundredth Psalm, it is full of contempt for all the hallowed paraphernalia of revealed religion.

Leigh Hunt, in his account of *Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries*, says :—

> "The world have been much puzzled by Lord Byron's declaring himself a Christian every now and then, in some part of his writings or conversations, and giving them to understand in a hundred others that he was none. The truth is, he did not know what he was ; and this is the case with hundreds of the people who wonder at him. I have touched this matter before, but will add a word or two. He was a Christian by education ; he was an infidel by reading. He was a Christian by habit ; he was no Christian upon reflection. I use the word here in its ordinary acceptation, and not in its really Christian and philosophical sense, as a believer in the endeavor and universality which are the consummation of Christianity. His faith was certainly not swallowed up in charity ; but his charity, after all, was too much for it. In short, he was not a Christian, in the sense understood by that word ; otherwise he would have had no doubts about the matter ; nor (as I have before noticed) would he have spoken so irreverently upon matters in which no Christian of this sort indulges licence of speech. Bigoted Christians of all sects take liberties, God knows. They are much profaner than any devout Deist ever thinks of being ; but still their profanities are not of a certain kind. They would not talk like Voltaire, or say, with Lord Byron, that, upon Mr. Wordsworth's showing, 'Carnage must be Christ's sister.'"

Byron himself, in his *Letters* to his friend, John Cam Hobhouse, is fairly explicit. In his letters to the Rev. Francis Hodgson, in 1811, he says in so many words : "I do not believe in any revealed religion.....I will have nothing to do with your immortality ; we are miserable enough in this life, without the absurdity of speculating upon another.....The basis of your religion is injustice ; the Son of God, the pure, the immaculate, the innocent, is sacrificed for the guilty." Moore, poetaster, flunkey, and philistine, admits "Lord Byron was, to the last, a sceptic."

YOOMY.

BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

REVIEWING Sir Monier Williams's contrast of Christianity and Buddhism, in the pages of the *Open Court*, its editor remarks :—

If the essence of Christianity consists in the hope of an entire washing away of every guilty stain and getting rid of the consequences of our evil deeds, we can only hope that the civilised nations of mankind will abandon Christianity. Buddha's doctrine is certainly grander, and, what is more, truer, than this hollow doctrine of a salvation of the guilty by the death of the innocent. Buddha, when speaking of sacrifices, rejected the idea that blood can wash away sins, and when he regarded himself as the savior of man he meant that he was their teacher. He claimed to have pointed out the way of salvation, and to have removed the cataract from the eyes of the blind ; but he expects every one of his followers to exert himself when walking on the path.

A man converted from sin is saved in the sense that henceforth he will walk in the right direction ; his character is changed ; he turns over a new leaf, but he cannot annihilate the past and the consequences of his former karma.

The dogma of the vicarious atonement through Christ's death is a survival of the age of barbarism, for it is based upon the savage's idea of religion which represents God as an Apaché chieftain, who, when offended, thirsts for the death of somebody, and must be pacified with blood.

In a summary of his comparison of Christianity with Buddhism, Professor Williams remarks :—

> "Buddhism, I repeat, says : Act righteously through your own efforts, and for the final getting rid of all suffering, of all individuality, of all life in yourselves. Christianity says : Be righteous through a power implanted in you from above, through the power of a life-giving principle, freely given to you, and always abiding in you. The Buddha said to his followers : 'Take nothing from me, trust to yourselves alone.' Christ said : 'Take all from Me ; trust not to yourselves. I give unto you eternal life, I give unto you the bread of heaven, I give unto you living water.' Not that these priceless gifts involve any passive condition of inaction. On the contrary, they stir the soul of the recipient with a living energy. They stimulate him to noble deeds and

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self-sacrificing efforts. They compel him to act as the worthy, grateful, and appreciative possessor of so inestimable a treasure.

"Still, I seem to hear some one say: We acknowledge this; we admit the truth of what you have stated; nevertheless, for all that, you must allow that Buddhism conferred a great benefit on India by encouraging freedom of thought, and by setting at liberty its teeming population, before entangled in the meshes of ceremonial observances and Brahmanical priestcraft.

"Yes, I grant this; nay, I grant even more than this. I admit that Buddhism conferred many other benefits on the millions inhabiting the most populous part of Asia. It introduced education and culture; it encouraged literature and art; it promoted physical, moral, and intellectual progress up to a certain point; it proclaimed peace, goodwill, and brotherhood among men; it deprecated war between nation and nation; it avowed sympathy with social liberty and freedom; it gave back much independence to women; it preached purity in thought, word, and deed (though only for the accumulation of merit); it taught self-denial without self-torture; it inculcated generosity, charity, tolerance, love, self-sacrifice, and benevolence, even towards the inferior animals; it advocated respect for life and compassion towards all creatures; it forbade avarice and the hoarding of money; and from its declaration, that a man's future depended on his present acts and condition, it did good service for a time in preventing stagnation, stimulating exertion, promoting good works of all kinds, and elevating the character of humanity."

If Professor Williams's conception of Christianity must be accepted as true Christianity, Christianity will pass away to make room for Buddhism. Happily, Christianity is a living religion, that, having passed through the stage of metaphysical dogmatism, is still possessed of the power of regeneration, so as to approach more and more—though progress is sometimes slow—the ideal of a genuine catholicity. Those features which Professor Williams regards as the essential grandeur of Christianity are a most serious defect; and their absence in Buddhism indicates that it is the more advanced religion. That religion only which has overcome the pagan notions of a special revelation, of atonement through blood, of wiping out the past, of the miraculous power of prayer, of the ego-consciousness as a kind of thing-in-itself, and of a creation out of nothing by a God-magician, can eventually become the religion of mankind.

FETISHISM.

It is profoundly curious that in a city like Paris, which inherits the civilisation of Greece and of Rome, and after the progress of science accomplished during the last four centuries, there are still minds so belated or rudimentary as to represent the world as the work of a supreme being, who is a kind of almighty machine constructor, like Edison or Eiffel.

This fetishism, this African theology, this Papuan philosophy, belongs not only to the different Churches—Jewish, Christian, or Moslem, fossil *débris* of early ages of thought vainly trying to comprehend the world. Even present-day teachers seem as little emancipated in this particular as the magistrates, the politicians, and the common run of writers. The words, "God," "Providence," "soul," "immortality," are retained as much in the academies and the chairs of education as in synagogues, mosques, or churches. Since all infirmities are worthy of compassion, perhaps this is a sore which respect for humanity might interdict exposing to daylight: even the animals lick their ulcers. How long will this immense flock of deicoles make us assist at the spectacle of their superstition? There seems to be no remedy—at least, for all those who have neither the leisure to learn nor the power to reflect. We must take account of them. It has ever been thus, and perhaps will be always so. Democritus and Protagoras hardly found themselves in any better company.

I say this spectacle is profoundly curious. I say no more. To be astonished is simple; to be angry extremely bad taste. The naturalist who studies the social life of hymenoptera soon ceases either to admire or be indignant at the doings or antics of bees, wasps, and ants. When young, we dreamt of reforming the world; later, we held that all is probably for the best, or for the least evil in the human ant-hill.

Besides, to one who follows and observes, even from afar, the transformations of the public mind, it becomes evident that the leaders of opinion, who are always in reality serfs, do little beyond transposing the political institutions or the religious and metaphysical beliefs of a nation. These great players on the lyre sing and play in one key that which has been noted in another. That is all. But fetishism looses nothing by all this. The Mexicans have placed at the feet of the Pope a crown of gold and precious stones destined for some statue of the Virgin. Leo XIII. blesses the crown at audiences accorded to the academicians. The French raise statues to their heroes, and, above all, to their heroine. The worship of Joan of Arc succeeds to that of the Madonna, as this last succeeded the worship of Isis. Yet these are men of the nineteenth century, doubtless in possession of "integral instruction," and not poor, ignorant monks. Well, in my opinion, this fetishism is well worth that of the Eternal Father.

I say that the most striking result of the knowledge of the world and of life, accumulated during two thousand years in human brains, is not that there is no God, Providence, immortal soul, etc., but that it is useless to discuss, save as an historian of language and ideas, conceptions which have been as necessary, but are as childish, as those of the devil, of ghosts, or of phlogisticon. No instructed person, capable of reflection, provided sincere and not under the weight of inherited physiological fatalities, admits that the causes of things are to be sought for outside the universe itself—that is to say, in nothingness; for what can there be outside all? The sane and penetrating reason of the old Greek philosophers long since posited the problem in the same terms as Laplace and Darwin.

I know well, and profess, that we have not, and cannot have, any other knowledge of ourselves and of the universe than one which is subjective and ideal, and that the reality of things is only a postulate. Such is the result of an analysis of the human understanding. But if the last word of science should be a supreme avowal of ignorance, assuredly it will not be an act of faith. Is it not enough to be ignorant that one must also be dupe? Nothing, absolutely nothing, as far as we can penetrate into infinity, leads us to think that that which now exists has not ever existed, under some form and in some condition. Nothing suggests the idea that the universe does not suffice for itself, its own cause, or, as says St. Beuve, all can be deduced from the eternity of matter.

That this matter is neither brute nor inert, in the sense of antique atomism, may be seen by the physico-chemical sciences. But if for life and the elementary properties of life the same eternity may be argued as for force and matter, it does not follow, in my opinion, that we must place consciousness among these, or any consciousness whatever among those primordial properties which are common to inorganic and organic existences. Nothing reveals the existence of consciousness, however elementary, neither in the sidereal universe, nor in the life of plants, nor in that of animals, until physiological division of labor has determined the appearance of nervous structure.

Jules Soury.

—*Almanach de la Question Sociale.*

"And a Good Judge, too!"

Talking of the Bench, there is a good story told of an American judge who occasionally relieved the monotony of his court with a quiet though telling observation. "And, gentlemen of the jury," said a certain flowery advocate pleading before his honor, "as I stand at this bar to-day in behalf of the prisoner, whose health is such that he may at any moment be called before a greater Judge than the judge of this court, I—" His honor rapped sharply on his desk. Counsel stopped suddenly, and looked up with an interrogation in his protesting face. "The advocate," said the Court, with great dignity, "will please confine himself to the case before the jury, and not permit himself to make invidious comparisons."

Two little girls were quarrelling the other day over the possession of a doll. Their struggle in time waxed fierce, and their mother attempted to interpose in a gentle, motherly way. "There, there, little girls, you mustn't quarrel like that; what do you read in your Bible?' "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," was the unexpected response of one of the little belligerents. And the struggle went on.

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ACID DROPS.

The Duke and Duchess of York's second baby has been christened. The ceremony was an elaborate and costly affair. A special gold font was let into the ordinary one, and filled with Jordan water, which the officiating sky-pilot splashed on the royal infant. The *Daily Telegraph* reporter thinks it necessary to say that York's baby cried at this salutation. While the sky-pilot was invoking "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" the royal infant protested in the only way open to him against the whole performance. He was handed back to his nurse still snivelling. When he grows up he will *not* protest against religious rites. He will understand their efficacy in bamboozling the people.

Jordan water has long been used for royal christenings. It is now being patronised by a wider public. It is sent to England and other countries in tin bottles, and sprinkled over babies who cannot tell how it differs from water which comes from the domestic tap or the back-yard rain-barrel.

Alfred Austin, the new Tory-Christian Poet Laureate, has written another poem entitled "Who Would Not Die for England?" We could name one who wouldn't—at least one who won't. He would rather write for England, though some of us would sooner die than read his loyal effusions.

Hugh Kenny, a Rochdale operative, lost his young wife, who died in giving birth to her first (still-born) child. He naturally wished to bury them together, but Canon Boulaye, the Catholic priest to whom he applied, told him that it was impossible, as the child, not having been baptised, was not a Christian like its mother. The dead baby had to be taken out of the dead mother's arms, and buried in another part of the cemetery. Such are the consolations of religion!

The *Parish Councillor* (Feb. 14) copies a slashing exposure of the *Christian World* from *Plain Talk*. The writer points out that, while in its editorial columns it deprecates usury, the advertising columns insert the notices of the worst kind of money-lenders. The Rev. A. C. Perian says of the proprietor: "Members of his staff may denounce wrong-doers, but for himself he consents to receive a portion of their ill-gotten gains, and goes on publishing their pestilent puffery." In a recent issue of the *Parish Councillor* Mr. Farrow asks his readers to note "The proprietor of the *Christian World* is still inserting the advertisement of Townend's 'Pall Mall Bank'; he persists in this course in the face of my having proved in my pamphlet that Townend is an unscrupulous usurer, and that his advertisement is grossly misleading. I wonder whether the leaders of the Churches, the eminent Christian men who contribute signed articles to the *Christian World*, commending social righteousness and brotherhood, ever think about this matter—whether it ever occurs to them that the parallel column with the tout of the 60 per cent. usurer is just a little incongruous."

Miss Editha Lolita Montez Dis Debar, an American mejum who is well known to the police, now announces herself in the New York *Sunday World* as a re-incarnation of Madame Blavatsky. Theosophists doubt this, having H. P. B.'s word for it that in her next incarnation she would be a male. Those who know both ladies, however, allege that they are remarkably alike. Claude Falls Wright, secretary of the Theosophical Society, says: "Personally, I have met no less than five women who asserted that they were incarnations of the ego behind Madame Blavatsky. Dis Debar makes the sixth. She has nothing to do with the Society, has never done any work entitling her to recognition, and no member of the Society would, for an instant, accept her as a Theosophist."

Who says there are no miracles now-a-days? On the heels of the Rontgen photographs we read that the Jews of Glasgow have decided to excommunicate a person who has been charging extortionate rates of interest from certain Gentiles in Scotland.

A certain Miss Jackson, as we see from the *Madras Times* of January 30, has written a fifth gospel, being a resetting of the old four for children. This is how she tells the story of the Annunciation: "There was a kind look on the angel's face, and he spoke to her in such a gentle manner that her fear left her, and a quiet gladness came into her heart; for Gabriel told Mary that God was with her, and that he was about to send her a baby." Our Indian contemporary hopes that St. Jackson's Gospel will be excluded even from the apocrypha, at any and every œcumenical council of the future.

Church attendance is sadly decreasing at Birmingham. According to the *Daily Post*, the morning and evening attendance at five large central churches is quite shocking. These churches offer the attraction of surpliced choirs and free seats, yet the worshippers, counted on a recent Sunday, were wretchedly few. The five gospel-shops contain seats for 8,850 people; in the afternoon the worshippers in all five numbered only 840, and in the evening 1,340. Oh, what a fall was there!

The *Dublin Journal* proposes to set up a "clerical will pillory." It mentions the case of Father Flood, who was executor and director of a will whereunder, out of five or six thousand, only £250 was to go to the children, and the great bulk to chapels and charities. The will was put aside, but, as the *Journal* remarks, "for one case that comes into court there are at least twenty cases where the victims are afraid, or have not the means, of seeking legal redress." The Church enriches itself by death-bed terrors, while any endowment of Freethought is illegal. Such is Christian justice.

Norman Kerr, the well-known teetotal doctor, writes to the *Church Times* that from an examination of communion port he holds it would be necessary, in administering the Sacred Eucharist, to put fourteen tablespoonfuls of water to one of wine in order that the communion may have no bad effect on reformed drunkards. Clerical writers in the *C. T.*, however, hold that to dilute the wine at all is probably to render the sacrament invalid.

It may be doubted if the advocacy of prohibition is as efficacious in the cause of temperance as the older method of persuasion. At any rate, with the increase of prosperity there is a marked advance in the drink bill of Great Britain, which, from £138,737,828 in 1894, rose to £142,414,812 in 1895. It is largely from the drink revenue that the Church hopes for support to its schools.

According to the New York *Journal* (Feb. 2), thousands of negroes throughout the South are settling up their worldly affairs preparatory to leaving the earth on March 5 next. On that day they firmly believe the world is to end. Gabriel is to blow his trumpet at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Jerusalem time. The signal, therefore, will be received in Georgia about sunrise.

When the blast echoes throughout the land, all good negroes, so they are told, will rise into the air, and by some celestial force be carried over land and sea to Jerusalem, where there is to be a grand "round up" of the faithful ere the journey to the skies is resumed. So thoroughly have these ideas taken possession of many of the negroes that they have already disposed of their worldly belongings. They have thrown up their jobs, and are simply waiting for the trumpet blast. Circulars, headed "Jesus is Coming," are scattered all over Georgia.

The chief propagator of this mania was Dr. J. S. Willetts, a faith-cure prophet, who was killed by the White Caps. But a worthy successor to his mantle was found in Dr. Anderson Rogers, who has also taken a leaf out of the book of Prophet Baxter. The motto of the believers is the saying of Jesus: "If a man shall keep my saying, he shall not see death."

March 5 is fixed as the time of the second coming of Christ by counting 1896 as 1900, the new creed holding that an error of more than four years was made when the system of reckoning as now used was introduced. They say the command in Mark xvi. 15, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," will have been carried out by March 5.

The Willettsites are not spending money for robes as did the Millerites, who expected the judgment day several years ago. The latter congregated on a large hill and awaited in vain for the coming of the Lord. The followers of the new creed will remain right in their homes until the summons they expect arrives. Mrs. Willetts says that she recently had a message from her departed husband in which he announced he was making arrangements for the reception of the faithful, and that he would be on hand early on the morning of March 5 to greet the saved. If Jesus Christ is aware of the folly his utterances have given rise to, he should surely be sorry he spoke.

Says the *Twentieth Century*: "The American missionaries have acquired a considerable portion of the Hawaiian Islands; English missionaries own large blocks of land in New Zealand, and we are informed that the father of Cecil Rhodes did some mission work in South Africa. He converted the Kaffirs just as his distinguished son is doing to-day—that is, he is converting Kaffir stock into money in the London market."

The same paper observes: "The Japanese are civilised.

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They are keen observers. They do not like to hurt the missionaries, but they consider them a nuisance. A Shintoo priest said recently to an American missionary: 'You are helping to destroy the belief of our people in the spiritual. But you are not converting them. They are simply becoming Atheists. Our educated classes now read French and English, and they learn from French theological works that Protestants are heretics, who will go to a warm place when they die, and from the English and American works that Roman Catholics are idolaters, who worship sticks and stones. And, again, have you not in your native land poor people deserving of your attention?"

The *Methodist Times* is wild with Dr. Rigg, the official head of the Methodist Education Department, because Mr. Purcell's *Life of Cardinal Manning* proved that Rigg was in correspondence with Manning, and distributing his tracts on the education question. Moreover, Dr. Rigg wrote to Manning about "our Methodist firebrand, Hugh Price Hughes." This is blasphemy to the readers of the *Methodist Times*.

Chambers's Encyclopædia is grossly unfair to men and women of sceptical opinions. The latest edition quotes a diatribe against Paine from Leslie Stephen, which the writer has apologised for; but there is no mention of *this* fact. Ingersoll is said to attract more attention than he deserves, and readers are referred for information about Bradlaugh to the libellous "Life," by Mackay (and a clique of other rascals)—a work which Bradlaugh proceeded against and had destroyed. "Ouida" is accused of "muscular heathenry" and "encyclopædic ignorance." There seems to be a good deal of "encyclopædic ignorance," or worse, about *Chambers's Encyclopædia*.

We don't often look at the *Literary World*. It is a sort of offshoot from the *Christian World*, and it views literature through a religious medium. Nevertheless, it is not exactly a fatuous paper, and we do glance at it occasionally. Last week's issue contained a brief notice of *The Crucifixion Mystery*, by John Vickers. The notice is obviously meant to be smart, but it is really impertinent. We are told that the book "exhibits to perfection the credulity of scepticism," and there are several similar sneers at the author, but not a word is said about the drift of his argument All the reader can learn—if he is ready to learn it—is that Mr. Vickers is a silly sceptic. And this is called criticism! We shall have to read *The Crucifixion Mystery*. It must have some merit to be treated in this fashion.

The *Literary World* has also some observations on Thomas Paine. It sees that the old abuse of this great Freethinker is played out, at least in decently well-informed circles; so it praises him considerably, but takes care to counteract the praise as far as possible by reservations, qualifications, and back-handed compliments. Paine is admitted to have been "a bold and inventive schemer" in politics and engineering, but then he had not "the steadiness and the penetration of a solidly able man." In other words, Paine was a man of ideas and convictions; he was not a Philistine of ability, who made the most of his powers in promoting his personal interest; he was troubled with principles, which are always apt to be burdensome; and so, instead of making a fortune, and leading an impeccably "respectable" life, he made acquaintance with hardship and imprisonment, and died amidst the curses of "decent" society. That he was an "able" man cannot be denied; it is only urged that he was not "solidly" able; that is, his ability was far more useful to the world than it was to himself; and men of that sort are ridiculously frivolous. The "solid" man puts on a big "corporation," and Paine went down thin to his grave.

It is hinted that Paine drew an ideal commonwealth. Nothing could be more absurd. His mind was eminently practical. Utopia did not fascinate him, and certainly it did not mislead him. The principles of *The Rights of Man* have largely been woven into the texture of the English constitution. Paine was not a social romancer. He was a pioneer of popular self-government.

The most famous sermon of Principal Caird was one which he preached before the Queen many years ago on "Religion in Common Things." He took for his text, "Not slothful in business" (Romans xii. 11). Caird did not choose to consult the Greek, or he would have known there was nothing about business in it. So that there was really no connection between the subject of this popular sermon and the true interpretation of the text on which it was ostensibly based.

In a similar way, what a number of sermons have been preached upon 1 John v. 7, disregarding the fact that that verse, like some others, is an arrant forgery. We have heard of one divine who used this verse in a friendly controversy on the Trinity. "Why," said his opponent, "you do not mean to say you are not aware that that verse is spurious?" "Oh, yes," replied the man of God; "I know all about it; but I was not aware that you did."

One of the most amusing things in life is the fact that so many people consider themselves Christians, and are ready to do almost anything for their religion; and yet at every step they put their foot upon some command of Christ! They swear, though he forbade all swearing; they do not turn the other cheek, or lend the "cloak also"; they do not follow the example of the birds and lilies, and are just as anxious about to-morrow and this world's goods, pleasures, and affairs as Infidels and Atheists could be. Indeed, you can only learn that they are Christians from their tongues, which give the lie to their general conduct. The day when Christians went about in sheep skins and goat skins, or naked, destitute, and afflicted, is past, never to return. The followers of the lamb have learnt the art of reconciling Mammon and Jesus, although the two hate each other like mad.—*Liberator*.

The Rev. W. J. Jenkins, rector of Fillingham, but resident at Muswell Hill, is always in squabbles with somebody. He has been threatening to put the Home Secretary and the Lord Chancellor in motion against the magistrates at Highgate for ordering his removal from court. We should advise the reverend gentleman to restrain his Christian infirmity of temper, and keep out of police-courts, if possible, for an entire year.

Some funny matters cropped up in the action brought by the Rev. E. B. Ward against the Rev. E. B. Green, of St. Simon Zelotes, Bethnal Green, for the sum of a guinea for preaching a sermon. The Rev. Mr. Ward, it appeared, expected the curacy, but Mrs. Green said his housekeeper was too young. He had been dismissed, or rather asked to resign his position of chaplain at the Northern Hospital for alleged immorality: but, nonetheless, he held the bishop's licence to preach. The plaintiff said: "I did not think the morality of Bethnal Green was so high as to object to my young housekeeper; but I would agree to separate bedrooms." The Judge: "But the remedy you suggest, that of separate rooms, suggests and implies that some other system existed before you undertook, if appointed, to have a separate bedroom." After this admission the plaintiff lost his case. The defendant said: "If every blackleg were to charge for services rendered in view of a curacy, they would not need to trouble about getting one. They could get a living without." He evidently thinks there are many in the Church of no better character than the Rev. Mr. Ward.

An American minister is said to have announced at a meeting of his brethren that a worker in the Smithsonian Institution had discovered the color of sin. Some of the other ministers remarked that we were already informed by Scripture that the color of sin is scarlet, so there was no need for any research in that direction. It appeared, however, that experiments had shown that it is not of quite so deep a hue, but is merely "pinkish." This is found by submitting to a certain test the perspiration of persons when under the influence of some sinful passion. Persons of blue blood may be expected to perspire purple.

A former undergraduate of Cambridge, named Green, brought an action against the Master and Fellows of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, for breach of contract. Mr. Green gave up attending the college chapel on religious grounds, and claimed exemption under the Universities Test Acts; but this was refused, and eventually his name was erased from the college list. His plea to be re-instated, and enabled to take his degrees, was disallowed by the judges.

M. Emile Vandervelde gives, in the *Almanach de la Question Sociale*, statistics showing that in Belgium the departments which show a majority of Catholics also show the greatest criminality, while the liberal and freethinking portions show a minimum of crime.

At Courtrai, in Belgium, they are getting up a grand procession for Whitsuntide in honor of the Holy Hair of Jesus Christ, which Courtrai claims to have possessed since 1279, when it was brought there by Count Philippe d'Alsace, who was given the auburn locks of his Savior in return for his bravery in the Holy Land. The priests at Courtrai, having seen what money was brought to Tréves by exhibiting the Holy Coat, have decided to exhibit the Holy Hair, and to institute a procession which shall outrival the famous procession of the Holy Blood at Bruges. There is money in it.

Speaking of the number of churches he has known to have been injured by lightning, earthquake, etc., and of the number of sudden deaths of preachers, the *Blue Grass Blade* editor says: "If the lightning, or paralysis, or a cyclone, or an earthquake, or some other of the sportive dispensations of providence, were to knock out old Bob Ingersoll and two or three of us Infidel editors, in pretty rapid succession, the

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whole Christian world would see 'the hand of God' in it, and would start a boom in religion that would make forty million people join the Church."

The Rev. F. Passmore (of Denver) says, in the *Coming Nation*: "One of the heart-bleeding, sad, and humiliating scenes of this age is that of the bishops and great preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church prostituting the power and influence of the Church of God at the feet of the millionaires, the corrupt Republican party, and saloon power of this nation. There can be no liberty while this remains. What a sight to see—our bishops, millionaires, corrupt Republican politicians, and saloon men living in fine mansions, clothed in the splendors of the earth, and living on the fat of the land, while millions are deprived of justice, and consequently are hungry, workless, and homeless."

The editor of the *Christian Soldier* has been put in a pious rage by receiving a copy of the *Crescent*, and finding that the editor thinks there are worse atrocities than those in Armenia. It says: "A fearful and eternal fate awaits both the lawyer-editor and his bloodthirsty royal client. It is a fearful thing to tempt the living God. Unless he repents and comes to the arms of Jesus Christ, whom he is daily re-crucifying by his vile apostasy, the name of Quilliam, the English Turk, will be branded in history with those of Tom Paine, Voltaire, Bradlaugh, and other infidels, who, by this time, have learned by bitter experience the folly of rejecting salvation through Jesus Christ." There is no accounting for tastes. Some people would rather go to hell with the company named than inhabit heaven along with the editor of the *Christian Soldier*.

Mr. Morley's Montrose candidature has called attention to the fact that by an Act for securing the Protestant religion and Presbyterian Church Government, passed separately by the Estates of Scotland and the Parliament of England, and afterwards embodied in the Acts of Union, 1707, the established Presbyterian Kirk cannot be touched by the British Parliament. The only way apparently to deal constitutionally with the question would be to give the Scotch Home Rule, and let them decide for themselves. Parliament, however, is not likely to allow its own jurisdiction to be overruled by any old Acts, and probably some lawyer will discover a way to drive a coach and six even over the Acts of Union.

We are informed that a somewhat similar betrayal of trust to that instanced in the administration of Lord Gifford's will has taken place with regard to the college left for the higher education of women by Thomas Holloway. We hope the matter will be looked into.

The *British Weekly* says that the Bishop of Manchester was asked not long ago what was the first book that had influenced him in his early years. His lordship replied that his first ideas of another world were derived from reading *Jack and the Beanstalk*. He believed that to many little children this well-known tale brought a first suggestion of something above and beyond this world. We should fancy the story to the full as instructive and credible as those of Balaam and of Jonah.

Mr. J. O'Neill, the author of *The Night of the Gods*, looked on *Jack and the Beanstalk* as representing a real feature of ancient religion, when it was actually considered easy to climb up to the sky. Certainly the old myths give many stories of such ascents and descents, all true as gospel.

In Cincinatti the Roman Catholic Church owns a million dollars worth of property, other than that used as churches. Catholics in office having refused to put it on the list for taxation, a suit has been filed for a *mandamus*, requiring it to be set down for taxation. The suit will be an important one.

The Chicago Board of Education have published a revised Bible, in which they have considerably improved the handiwork of the Holy Ghost. They have cut out the Song of Solomon *in toto*, also the stories of Abraham and Sarah, and the imprecatory Psalms. The story of Joseph is told omitting the episode of Mrs. Potiphar. The whole volume consists only of two hundred pages of large print.

Peter Lombard says in the *Church Times* that there is at Varese a statue of the Virgin with the inscription in Latin, "Come unto me all ye that labor, and I will give you rest." P. L. thinks this an awfully blasphemous misapplication of scripture. It would be hard, however, to say why it is not just as appropriate to a woman as to a man.

Miss Mary Clarke recently wrote to the *Echo* suggesting that, "as Mr. Wilson Barrett's play of *The Sign of the Cross* seems a great financial success, perhaps the persecutions and tortures inflicted by Christians on those who differed from them might prove equally remunerative. Someone might write a moving drama on the persecutions of the Waldensians, or on harrowing torture scenes in the chambers of the inquisition."

"Hudor Genone" writes in the *Metaphysical Magazine* on "The Holy Trinity of Science." According to Mr. Roe, Relation (that which is), Action (that which does), and Volition (that which desires) is the triune God, without body, parts, or passions, in which we live, move, and have our being.

Dr. Joseph Parker is renowned for his modesty. Everybody in England knows how he excels in that characteristic. Imagine our surprise, then, on reading that a Swiss pastor, who recently visited England, speaks of Dr. Parker in this fashion. "Never in all my life," he says, "have I heard a man so frankly boast of himself, nor could I believe it possible."

Dr. Pierson did not get the pulpit of the late Mr. Spurgeon. However, he is not going to forsake us. He has undertaken a mission through England, Scotland, and Ireland. Possibly by way of pre-advertisement, he states that he had a fresh spiritual experience on August 15, which he regards as a precious anointing for his new labors. Dr. Pierson adds, rather maliciously, that he regrets he did not have this experience while he was preaching (*pro tem.*) at the Tabernacle.

A Palermo church has a miracle-working Madonna, who was reputed to be the wealthiest in all Italy. But, alas! her splendor is departed. She was unable to work a miracle on certain thieves who broke into the church, and divested her of twenty pairs of diamond ear-rings, dozens of valuable bracelets, and other precious finery. Unless the police are sharper than the Madonna, those thieves will quietly enjoy the proceeds of their robbery.

Four hundred Hindoo gods were recently sold in London for £71. This is about three-and-sixpence apiece. Will the Trinity fetch as much at the end of the twentieth century?

In the current number of Dr. Bernhard Slade's *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* Dr. Cheyne has an article, in English, on "The Date and Origin of the Ritual of the Scapegoat." Dr. Cheyne allows that "the post-exilic Jews had the custom of propitiation of dangerous goblins called serim by sacrifices (2 Kings iii. 8; 2 Chronicles xi. 15; Leviticus xvii. 7), and also that the goat which was allotted to Azazel must originally have been a sacrifice to some superhuman being. Doughty found that the Arabs of the desert still sacrifice goats to jinn, but Dr. Cheyne argues that the object of the ritual was to provide the ignorant people with a visible sign of the removal of the sins of the year, and to do away with the cultus of goats." He dates the ritual about the fourth century B.C.

"I am innocent, your honor. Heaven is my witness." "I am sorry," said the sympathetic justice. "Your witness is beyond the jurisdiction of the court. Five years."

There are many more vital points of contact between the New Testament and the Talmud than divines seem yet fully to realise; for such terms as Redemption, Baptism, Grace, Faith, Salvation, Regeneration, Son of Man, Son of God, and Kingdom of Heaven were not, as we are apt to think, invented by Christianity, but were household words of Talmudic Judaism.....The fundamental mysteries of the new faith are matters totally apart, but the ethics in both are in their broad outlines identical. The grand dictum, "Do unto others as thou wouldst be done by," is quoted by Hillel, the president, *at whose death Jesus was ten years of age*, not as anything new, but as an old and well-known dictum "that compriseth the whole law."—*Em. Deutsch, "Quarterly Review," October, 1876.*

How to Help Us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 23, North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road, Camberwell, at 7.30.

March 1, New Brompton.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—February 23, Manchester. March 1, Camberwell; 8, Sheffield; 15, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

F. LANSDELLS.—Pleased, though not at all surprised, that Mr. Watts gave such high satisfaction at Ipswich.

JOSEPH SEDDON.—(1) Mr. Foote was in the doctor's hands, and is not even yet restored to his usual good health. He had to send a substitute to Camberwell and Islington as well as to Edmonton. You will be able to understand now the full depth of that evangelist's egotism who asserts that Mr. Foote did not lecture at Edmonton through fear of *him*. The last time Mr. Foote saw that evangelist was in the Court of Queen's Bench, where his printer and publisher, whom he had indemnified, were condemned to pay damages and costs for a filthy libel on the Hall of Science. (2) Your lecture notice, not being marked as such on the envelope, was forwarded to the editor in Scotland. Paragraph is inserted this week.

TRUTHSEEKER (Kettering).—Many of Calvin's writings are translated into English, including his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. We do not know of any journal devoted to the advocacy of his views. Of course the Scottish Presbyterians are all Calvinists, though they do not wear that label.

VIGILANT.—(1) Not at all annoyed. The lady's letter is amusing. She thinks Mr. Foote must be prejudiced if he does not share her opinion of Mr. Barrett's play. She does not appreciate his criticism of the play, because people go to a theatre to be amused rather than instructed. But this is to lose sight of the fact that Mr. Barrett claims more than entertainment for his production. And what is there *amusing* in torture and massacre? Mr. Foote's criticism of *The Sign of the Cross* will be published, and you will be able to judge of it for yourself. (2) The Glasgow Freethinkers have no power to prevent the abuse of the Gifford Trust. It is no use to blame *them*.

S. HOLMES (Southport), in sending a cheque for Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, writes: "I think your scheme is admirable. Bolton was the first evidence I had of it, and I must certainly say that I now think it the best thing ever attempted for bringing Secularism more into contact with the people." Mr. Holmes hopes we shall succeed in exciting the enthusiasm of certain Freethinkers who, being saved themselves, have done little for the salvation of others. We hope so too.

R. W. TRENAMAN.—Many thanks for paper and cuttings.

F. TODD, secretary of the West London Branch, has removed; his new address being 21 Abdale-road, Shepherds Bush. Lecturers and others please note.

J. POTTER.—Prophet Baxter's book, and his subsequent fresh prophecies, have been dealt with more than once in our columns. Baxter is no fool, but there are plenty of other fools to keep him going.

MARY HUMPHREYS.—Shall appear.

P. H. SMITH.—We cannot insert advertisements in this column. Mr. Forder may be able to find you a purchaser. Apply to him direct, at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Mr. Thompson (Hull), 10s. 6d.; Thomas Johnson, 5s.

JOHN SANDERSON.—Your second letter to hand. It is all right now, and acknowledged. Mr. Foote is rather better, but needs a holiday for complete restoration to health.

SECULARIST.—Sorry we cannot make use of your copy.

S. J. B.—Shall appear.

H. O. SCHOFIELD.—It was an oversight. The Newark Branch, just formed, was not started through Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, but independently. Much pleased to hear that six new members have joined this Branch since your previous communication.

PETE KAVANAGH.—A good idea if newsagents would use the name of this journal on billheads. But they won't. Bigotry is too rampant yet. Thanks, all the same.

C. E. SMITH.—Thanks for the packet of cuttings, etc. The reference to Mr. Foote in the *Free Review* hardly calls for a special reply.

CASTOR.—We are obliged for the extract.

G. E. C. NAEWIGER.—Pleased to hear that the Hull audience, among whom you sat, were so delighted with Mr. Foote's lectures. Shall be glad to receive any local paper containing a notice of the meetings. You need not have refrained from speaking to Mr. Foote personally.

W. SIMONS.—Thanks. See paragraph.

J. P. GILMOUR.—Much obliged for the cuttings.

G. HILL.—The extract will be useful. Glad to hear that you circulate *The Age of Reason*, *The Bible Handbook*, and other of our publications, amongst your friends and acquaintances.

K. W. B.—Jokes are welcome. Thanks for your interesting letter. We have often recommended leaving a copy of the *Freethinker* in the train or tramcar. Pleased to know that you endeavor to promote our circulation in this way.

E. S. H.—(1) The passage seems plain enough. It means that the Christian apologists have to explain the connection they allege between the Christian Sabbath, which was observed in the second century, and the "event that was said to have occurred nearly seventy years before that century commenced"—namely, the Resurrection. It seems pretty evident that the Christians just adopted the Pagan Sunday (Sun's-Day). (2) What is the use of asking us questions about "a certain Atheist"? *What* Atheist? (3) Read Darwin and Huxley for yourself.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Homœopathic Review—Parish Councillor—Sun—Workers' Friend—Western Figaro—Two Worlds—New York Public Opinion—Freidenker—Dunoon Observer—Secular Thought—Der Arme Teufel—Labor Leader—Dublin Journal—Irish Life—New York Sun—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Torch of Anarchy—Freethought Ideal—Twentieth Century—Open Court—Liberator—La Justice—Reading Observer—Leeds Mercury—Crescent—New York Journal—Progressive Thinker—Natal Witness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures this evening (Feb. 23) at Camberwell. We are unable to announce the subject, as the secretary has not forwarded the weekly notice. Possibly it will be "The Sign of the Cross," which was the first subject on the list that Mr. Foote sent to Camberwell for selection.

The *Dunoon Observer* gives nearly a two-column report of Mr. Foote's lecture on "Who Wrote the Bible?" Amongst the local "Echoes" appears the following: "Foote put his foot into the Bible question on Monday night." Omit the word "question," and the statement is correct.

A briefer report appeared in the *Dunoon Herald*, which mentions that there was "a crowded audience."

Mr. Foote's lecture at Greenock was reported in the local *Telegraph*, which noticed "the hall being crowded." An editorial note on the subject, appearing in another column, was as follows: "Great interest was taken in Wednesday night's Secularist lecture, and Mr. Foote did not get it all his own way either. He might, however, have been opposed to better advantage. If a discussion was to take place at all, the exponents of Christianity should have been represented by 'heavier metal,' for it is hardly possible to effectively reply to a carefully-prepared lecture with a few cursory remarks of an impromptu character."

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured in the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, upon "Woman: Past, Present, and Future," to a capital audience, the hall being filled in every part. The lecture was enthusiastically received. There was no discussion, although Mr. Watts made a severe attack upon the Church for its treatment of woman. A Christian gentleman asked a few questions. Miss Vance presided, and made a brief but appropriate and facetious speech, which was warmly received.

To-day, Sunday, February 23, Mr. Watts lectures three times in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. Of course, our Lancashire friends will, as usual, muster in full force. Mr. Watts's lecture at Todmorden is postponed, as no hall can be obtained for the date announced.

The West London Branch has arranged for a course of lectures to be given on Sunday evenings, during the month of March, in the Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Shepherds Bush. Mr. Robert Forder will open the course, his subject

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being "The Bible and Ancient Monuments." Freethinkers in the West of London should do their best to make these lectures a success. The admission is free, but reserved seats can be obtained, price 3d. and 6d.

Mr. S. P. Putnam, President of the American Secular Union, sends a strong official invitation to Messrs. Foote and Watts to visit America this year and attend the Secular Union's Annual Congress in October. Mr. Putnam's letter will be printed in our next issue.

One of the most curious facts in the world's religious movements of to-day is the introduction of Buddhism into the British colonies of South Africa. It has been introduced from Ceylon by Buddhist monks, who hope that their religion will humanise the African black. The Sikhs, and other warlike races of British India, have been brought over to South Africa for service in the police, and it is said that they are uniting with the Buddhist missionaries in the effort to convert the Nyassa-land regions to Orientalism. Buddhism, unlike Hinduism, is a missionary creed, and seeks to convert the world to its belief.

Mr. Harry Simpson, secretary of the Manchester Cremation Society, lectured for the Manchester Branch on Sunday evening, February 9. The lecture—which was a most interesting one—was illustrated by means of an oxy-hydrogen lantern, which the Branch has recently purchased. There was a large attendance, and the lecture was much appreciated. Mr. Simpson is a thorough Freethinker, and one who is not afraid of expressing his views.

The President of the Folk Lore Society, Mr. E. Clodd, in his address to the Society, "went for" baptismal regeneration and a whole host of Christian superstitions. There was a nice row in consequence, some pious members threatening resignation if the address were printed, as it was an attack upon their religion, etc. The council had a meeting on the subject. Good sense prevailed, and the address will, as usual, be printed in *Folk Lore*. If the narrow-minded secede and are replaced by more liberal members, the Society will be all the stronger.

The members and friends of the East London Branch hold a tea and concert at the Aldgate Pump Hotel, 26 Aldgate, on Sunday, March 1. Tickets can be obtained from Mr. Warren, 20 Rhodeswell-road, E.

Monsieur Jules Soury, from whom we translate an article entitled "Fetishism," is one of the most pronounced and learned of French Freethinkers, and has occupied since 1865 an important position in the Bibliotheque Nationale. Among his Freethought works may be mentioned *The Religion of Israel* and *Jesus and the Gospel*, the former of which shows the savagery which underlay Judaism, and the latter maintains that Jesus suffered from cerebral affection. Both these are translated into English. M. Soury has also published works on *The Bible and Archæology*, *A Breviary of the History of Materialism*, *Studies of Psychology*, and *Contemporary Psychological Doctrine*.

Renan on his Sister Henriette.

To tell the truth, she never thought of reward. That interested view, which often spoils the sacrifices inspired by positive religions, leading us to think that virtue is practised only for the usury to be derived from it, never entered into her great soul. When she lost her religious faith, her faith in duty was not lessened, because that faith was the echo of her inner nobility. Virtue with her was not the fruit of a theory, but the result of an absolute disposition of nature. She did good for its own sake, and not for her own salvation. She loved the beautiful and the true, without any of that calculation which seems to say to God: "Were it not for Thy hell or Thy paradise, I should not love Thee."

Her religion had attained to the last degree of purification. She absolutely rejected the supernatural.....About a month before her death we had a religious conversation with good Dr. Gaillardot on the terrace before our house at Ghazir. She held me back from the abyss of formulas in regard to an unconscious deity and a purely ideal immortality, into which I allowed myself to be drawn. Without being a Deist in the vulgar sense, she did not wish religion to be reduced to a pure abstraction. In practice, at least, everything was clear to her. "Yes," she said to us, "at my last hour I shall have the comfort of thinking that I have done as much good as possible; if there be anything which is not vanity, it is that."—*Selected by L. Levine.*

"Mamma, didn't the vicar say that the natives of Gongalooloo wore no clothes?" "Yes, darling." "Then why did papa put a button in the box?"

INSTINCT AND INNATE IDEAS.

The term "instinct" is very vague and ill-defined. It is commonly employed to denote any action, or even any feeling, which is not dictated by conscious reasoning, whether it is or is not the result of previous experience. It is "instinct" which leads a chicken just hatched to pick up a grain of corn; parental love is said to be "instinctive"; the drowning man who clutches at a straw does it "instinctively"; and the hand that accidentally touches something hot is drawn back by "instinct." Thus "instinct" is made to cover everything, from a simple reflex movement, in which the organ of consciousness need not be at all implicated, up to a complex combination of acts directed towards a definite end, and accompanied by intense consciousness.

But this loose employment of the term "instinct" really accords with the nature of the thing; for it is wholly impossible to draw any line of demarcation between reflex actions and instincts. If a frog, on the flank of which a little drop of acid has been placed, rubs it off with the foot of the same side, and, if that foot be held, performs the same operation, at the cost of much effort, with the other foot, it certainly displays a curious instinct; but it is no less true that the whole operation is a reflex action of the spinal cord, which can be performed quite as well when the brain is destroyed, and between which and simpler reflex actions there is a complete series of gradations. In like manner, when an infant takes the breast, it is impossible to say whether the action should be termed instinctive or reflex.

What are usually called the instincts of animals are, however, acts of such a nature that, if they were performed by men, they would involve the generation of a series of ideas, and of inferences from them; and it is a curious, and apparently an insoluble, problem whether they are, or are not, accompanied by cerebral changes of the same nature as those which give rise to ideas and inferences in ourselves. When a chicken picks up a grain for example, are there, firstly, certain sensations, accompanied by the feeling of relation between the grain and its own body; secondly, a desire for the grain; thirdly, a volition to seize it? Or, are only the sensational terms of the series actually represented in consciousness?

The latter seems the more probable opinion, though it must be admitted that the other alternative is possible; but in this case the series of mental states which occurs is such as would be represented in language by a series of propositions, and would afford proof positive of the existence of innate ideas, in the Cartesian sense. Indeed, a metaphysical fowl, brooding over the mental operations of his fully-fledged consciousness, might appeal to this fact as proof that, in the very first action of his life, he assumed the existence of the Ego and the non-Ego, and of a relation between the two.

In all seriousness, if the existence of instincts be granted, the possibility of the existence of innate ideas, in the most extended sense ever imagined by Descartes, must also be admitted. In fact, Descartes illustrates what he means by an innate idea, by the analogy of hereditary diseases or hereditary mental peculiarities, such as generosity. On the other hand, hereditary mental tendencies may justly be termed instincts; and still more appropriately might those special proclivities which constitute what we call genius come into the same category.

The child who is impelled to draw as soon as it can hold a pencil; the Mozart who breaks out into music as early; the boy Pascal, who evolved Euclid out of his own consciousness: all these may be said to have been impelled by instinct as much as are the beaver and the bee.—*T. H. Huxley*, "*Life of Hume.*"

From the first council of Nice to the last council of the Evangelical Alliance, the history of the Galilean Church has been the history of an unremitting war against nature; and the propaganda of her dogmas could prosper only at the expense of our earthly happiness. The direct results of that warfare would be amply sufficient to account for the fact that the Age of Faith, the era when the rule of the cross maintained its supremacy, was the dreariest period in the history of the human race; but, unhappily, those results were not confined to the suppression of harmless amusements and scientific investigations. It is easier to pervert than to suppress a natural instinct. Wherever pessimism crushed the flowers of this earth, the soil began to teem with poisonous weeds. The suppression of healthful pastimes begat a passion for vicious pastimes, and made the fancied identity of sin and pleasure a sad reality.—*Felix L. Oswald.*

Mrs. G.—"Mr. Henpeck seems to be going to the bad since his wife died." Mr. G.—"Yes; her last words were that she'd meet him in heaven. So he's taking measures to prevent it."

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THE MERCIES OF PROVIDENCE.

ANOTHER calamity has transpired which may be ascribed to the merciful dispensations of Providence. The unprecedented floods which have been desolating the Osage Valley in Missouri are quite as rare as unacceptable in the winter season.

The Lisbon earthquake made an infidel of Goethe, and it would be a matter of no great surprise if there were some few of those unhappy sufferers in Missouri whose homes were devastated, whose babes were drowned, and whose hearths are desolate by reason of the dreadful visitation Christmas Eve—I say it would be no surprise to me if some of those miserable beings should in future fail to celebrate the birthday of Christ with the customary religious fervor, and perhaps sing the song of his mercies in a somewhat weaker strain.

But, of course, we cannot penetrate the inscrutable mysteries of a merciful Divinity, and perhaps it would be best to say no more of this. Yet the heart goes out in sympathy to the occupants of those stricken homes who have no shelter from the howling blasts that sweep down from the north. The inscrutable mysteries of a merciful Divinity! One must confess that there is something inexplicable and mysterious pervading the attribute of mercy when applied to the aforesaid Divinity.

The losses in that river valley will aggregate millions of dollars. Where once were fertile fields, where crops were grown and cattle grazed, and where the flowers grew, now nothing may be seen but the bleak surface of sand-bar upturned to the winter's storm.

In the face of such vivid facts, is it not mockery to talk of "mercy," when none has been displayed? The singular individual who "plants his footsteps on the sea and rides upon the storm" is either highly blameable for the misfortunes which befall mankind, or else they are entirely beyond his control. If the latter is true, he is too impotent to maintain his sovereignty; but if the former is a fact, he is a barbarous and cruel despot, who deserves not the obedience of his subjects.

It is not a little remarkable that men will adhere to the standard of one who demonstrates his affection for his friends by administering to them a severe castigation as the first mark of his favor; for it is said, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."

And it is passing strange that recruits can be obtained under a banner within whose folds lurks the greater portion of life's ills and sorrows, in whose shadows is pestilence, and whose protection is desolation and woe. And, too, what good can be expected of a master who promises a crown, and bestows no earnest of his good intentions but the badge of servitude? Very odd, indeed! Yet it is answered, "God's ways are not our ways." Fortunately for us, they are not. If a man should dispense to his fellows the same treatment accorded them by the deity, he would soon find himself in the penitentiary. I allude to the practice of laying waste whole farms, and the committing various other pernicious depredations not at all consistent with the well-being of society, and altogether incompatible with the spirit of universal love. This may be an evidence of friendship, but fellow-feeling is not usually indicated by cuffs and blows. A parent may chastise his child moderately without incurring the indignation of the community; but if he beat it to death he can scarcely be presumed to have committed the deed through motives of kindness.

Men may have much to be thankful for, but none but the most ignoble slaves can bless the hand that wields the scourge. And yet this passive submission is called Christian fortitude! It is Christian imbecility. It is well that man should maintain that magnanimity of spirit, that greatness of mind, which enables him to breast the storm and move serenely through the most trying difficulties; this is true greatness, and is a distinctive peculiarity of the grandest human characters. But to feel a sense of gratitude towards some imaginary being who is deemed the author of all the mischief is the height of folly, and can only be denominated a most egregious absurdity.

Common sense amounts to something. The "firm and unalterable experience" which Hume extols is entitled to rather more credit than the roving creations of Hebrew fancy, and the burden of proof ought certainly to be on those who assert the improbable. They talk of faith, but I apprehend a reasonable man will have little faith in the goodness of one so little distinguished for complaisance and civility. The so-called dealings of God with man evidence a unique idea of justice; they bear the stamp of a barbarous age.

It is not desired to deaden the human heart to the emotions of gratitude; I hate an ingrate. But it does seem that gratitude should be yielded to whom it is due, and naught but the blind and imperturbable credulity of misguided zealots could ever bestow it elsewhere.

—*Independent Pulpit.* SPEED MOSBY.

THE FATE OF PIOUS DAN.

"RUN down and get the doctor, quick!"
Cried Jack Bean with a whoop:
"Run, Dan; for mercy's sake be quick—
Our baby's got the croup!"
But Daniel shook his solemn head,
His sanctimonious brow,
And said: "I cannot go, for I
Must read my Bible now;
For I have regular hours to read
The Scripture for my spirit's need."

Said Silas Gove to Pious Dan:
"Our neighbor, 'Rastus Wright,
Is very sick. Will you come down
And watch with him to-night?"
"He has my sympathy," says Dan,
"And I would sure be there
Did I not feel an inward call
To spend the night in prayer.
Some other man with Wright must stay;
Excuse me, while I go and pray."

"Old Briggs has fallen in the pond!"
Cried little Bijah Brown;
"Run! pious Dan, and help him out,
Or else he sure will drown!"
"I trust he'll swim ashore," said Dan,
"But now my soul is awed,
And I must meditate upon
The goodness of the Lord;
And nothing merely temporal ought
To interrupt my holy thought."

So Daniel lived a pious life,
As Daniel understood;
But all his neighbors thought he was
Too pious to be good.
And Daniel died, and then his soul,
On wings of hope elate,
In glad expectancy flew up
To Peter's golden gate.
"Now let your gate wide open fly;
Come, hasten, Peter. Here am I."

"I'm sorry, Pious Dan," said he,
"That time will not allow,
But you must wait a space, for I
Must read my Bible now."
So Daniel waited long and long,
And Peter read all day.
"Now, Peter, let me in," he cried.
Said Peter: "I must pray;
And no mean temporal affairs
Must ever interrupt my prayers."

Then Satan, who was passing by,
Saw Dan's poor, shivering form,
And said: "My man, it's cold out here;
Come down where it is warm."
The angel baby of Jack Bean,
The angel, 'Rastus Wright,
And old Briggs, a white angel, too,
All chuckled with delight:
And Satan said: "Come, Pious Dan,
For you are just my style of man."

—*New York Sun.* SAM WALTER FOSS.

A tedious, monotonous sky-pilot who had exhausted the patience of his hearers by an elaborate dissertation on the four greater prophets, to their sad disgust passed on to the minor ones, and asked: "And now, my brethren, where shall we place Hosea?" A man rose from the congregation and made answer: "You can place him here, sir; I'm off."

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ADAPTATION, NOT DESIGN.

To my mind, there is no evidence of forethought or of intention in Nature. She is eyeless, earless, voiceless, and reasonless. Hence, she has no purpose. She simply moves, having no power to rest. Her phenomena are the products of matter, whose predominant characteristic is never-ending activity.

If this activity has produced phenomena which seem to correspond to other phenomena, it is not proof of foresight and of design, but simply of adaptation, which is effected by the more pliant organisms fitting themselves to those more nearly fixed and unyielding. Useful structures have been improved, while very faulty ones—those so poor as to lose their utility—have fallen into disuse, become rudimentary, and in many cases no doubt have been entirely obliterated.

In the case of animals, plants, and many geological formations, it is evident that structures have been modified by the circumstances with which they came in contact. Why is not the same true of the various organs of man's body, and even of his mental and moral characteristics?

I have been asked by advocates of the "design theory" if "the wonderful adaptation of the eye to light did not prove that it was designed to meet such requirements." I answer, "No." The adaptation, such as it is, proves that the eye, in its efforts to inform the brain of external circumstances, has developed itself into a very useful organ of surprisingly ingenious mechanism.

If we should admit an evidence of design in the above case, we would be forced by the imperfections of the eye to admit that it was designed by a very limited power.

Structures, faculties, and propensities have improved and strengthened themselves in accordance with the degree of usefulness of their activity. I find it easy to account for the evil in man by the fact that these propensities have, at some time, been beneficial to the individual or to the race.

In the realm of life, only active structures thrive. When they cease to be active, they degenerate and die, and their component parts are, by degrees, taken up by other organisms. They are active only as they are useful. When their utility ceases, their activity ceases also, and decline and death ensue.

Thus we have a complete solution of the apparent "marks of design"; and it will be fortunate, indeed, when all terms which can be construed to mean design or intention shall be dropped from Liberal and scientific literature. They have properly no place in dealing with any theory of the universe, save that of creative intelligence. Only intelligence can form or execute a plan; but in the operations of nature, where a blind yet incessant force is ever at work, things arrange themselves with a degree of order, just as pebbles in a basket, by being continuously shaken, will arrange themselves with a degree of regularity according to their sizes.

—*Boston Investigator.* LOU LAWRENCE.

Colonel Ingersoll on Vivisection.

The initial number of an excellent quarterly paper, published by the New England Anti-Vivisection Society, has been received. Its chief contents are "The Personal Experiences of Two American Anti-Vivisectionists in Various Countries," and an appendix by Robert G. Ingersoll. The "experiences" comprise several interesting accounts of the journeyings of Philip G. Peabody and Dr. George Baudry among European laboratories. The following remarks are an extract from the appendix contributed by Colonel Ingersoll: "Vivisection is the disgrace and shame of some of the sciences. A good man would no more think of flaying a living animal than of murdering his mother. It is wonderful that it ever occurred to any human being to dissect any living animal; to so fasten a horse or dog that he could not resist, and then proceed to cut him to pieces for the purpose of ascertaining certain facts that, by no possibility, can be of real use to any human being. It is still more wonderful that anybody ever did this. The man who cuts a hoof from a living horse is capable of committing any crime that does not require courage. Such an experiment can be of no use. Millions of living animals have been cut to pieces. Millions of experiments have been tried; all the nerves have been touched. Every possible agony has been inflicted. People can read these reports. There is no need of repeating such savage experiments. I believe that it is the duty of every civilised man to do what he can to prevent the infamous practice of vivisection."

The Infidels have been the brave and thoughtful men; the flower of the world; the pioneers and heralds of the blessed day of liberty and love; the generous spirits of the unworthy past; the seers and prophets of our race; the great chivalric souls, proud victors on the battlefields of thought, the creditors of all the years to be.—*Ingersoll.*

A MODEL MISSIONARY.

If Mr. William Day, of Canbury Park-road, Kingston, who carries on the business of missionary, finds himself as destitute of faith and good works at the end of his terrestrial journey as he was of a genuine railway ticket at Maldon Station of the South-Western Railway, it is to be feared that the celestial janitors will treat him even more severely than mundane magistrates, "and cast him into oblivion." This gentleman is in the habit of impressing his deep piety on the public by carrying about with him a black bag on which are painted, in large letters, the words: "After Death is Judgment." He would have done better to use the money he spent on the artist in purchasing a railway ticket, like ordinary Christians, who do not require to carry a sign-board with them. When his fraud was discovered by the ticket-collector he attempted a game of bluff, showed him the text on his bag, and indignantly demanded, "Do you think a man in my position would defraud the company?" Afterwards he saw that such a course would have no effect; then, like Uriah Heep, he became "werry 'umble," and wrote to the South-Western authorities a letter, in which he referred them to the 1st Corinthians, chap. vi., verse 7, where they would find written the consoling words, "Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" Was it not far better to follow the advice of St. Paul than adopt the un-Christian attitude of persecution, and thus bring a reproach on the religion they all cherished? When smitten on the one cheek, were they not told to turn the other? Apparently the missionary labored under the impression that, because he had defrauded the company of one journey, they ought to give him another for nothing. Obviously, it is impossible for railway directors to do justice to their shareholders on such terms, so the gentleman, with his text-covered black bag, was duly forced to appear before the Kingston Bench of magistrates, to whom he practically offered no defence for his breach of the Ten Commandments, as well as of the South-Western's bye-laws, but called a witness who certified that Mr. Day was a "consistent Christian." The Bench repudiated the description, saw hypocrisy in the case, and ordered the missionary to pay a fine of £2, with 12s. 6d. costs. The one bright feature in the course of the proceedings was the admission by the defendant that he was "deeply ashamed and humiliated," and that the conviction would be a "severe lesson" to him. There is always joy over a repentant sinner, and if the man will in future leave his black bag at home and buy his railway tickets like a real Christian, he may yet issue forth into the full light of a perfect Day.—*Daily Telegraph.*

THE PRODIGAL SON UP TO DATE.

THERE lived a wealthy Christian in a place remote from town;
His name—but tell it not in Gath—was Jeremiah Brown.
He dwelt in a secluded spot, shut out from worldly strife,
And, like his God, ne'er did a stroke of labor all his life.

Now, Jeremiah Brown Esquire possessed an only son,
Who was a great deal more than seven, for he was twenty-one.
A dismal life this young man led; for Brown the live-long day
Did nothing else but read the "Word of God" to him, and pray!

This pious life at length upon Brown Junior did pall;
It seemed as if it didn't suit the young man's health at all.
"Perhaps," thought Brown, "he wants a change—he is so pale and thin";
So up to town he sent him, with a month's supply of tin.

Now, with religion, by his dad, he had been dosed so long,
As you'd expect, when "on his own," he came it rather strong;
He visited a skating rink, a playhouse, and a ball,
And, sad to say, was even seen inside a music hall!

He led so gay a life, 'tis sad, but I the truth must speak,
His money lasted not a month, but only just a week.
And when he found, save railway fare, a penny he did lack,
He took the next train out of town, and to his dad went back.

MORAL.

Now, all you wicked infidels, this moral I would teach:
"The pious seldom practise what in pulpits parsons preach."
On seeing his son return "stone broke," Brown's face grew dark and grim;
He didn't kill the fatted calf, but nearly murdered *him!*

ESS JAY BEE.

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BOOK CHAT.

Almanach de la Question Sociale Illustre pour 1896, Sous la direction de P. Argyriades (Paris, 5 Boulevard Saint Michel), is a volume of 256 pages, containing contributions from the leading continental Socialists, such as A. Bebel, Clovis Hugues, Marya Chéliga, Paule Mink, Octave Mirbeau, Maurice Barrès, Jules Guesde, Amilcare Cipriani, Louise Michel, etc. The famous scientist and Freethinker, Charles Letourneau, writes against the presumed necessity of war. Guilliaune de Greef has an article on "Positive Sociology." Prudent Dervilliers writes in favor of suppressing the embassy to the Pope, and René Ghil on "The Poetry of Science." Extracts are also given from Machiavelli, Lassalle, Zola, Coppée, L. Ackermann, Jean Richepin, H. Denis, etc. The longest piece is a four-act play, *Monseigneur*, by Charles Raymond, which exposes how the Church lives on its dupes. Another paper on "Fetishism," by Jules Soury, we translate for the benefit of our readers. We notice a misprint in the calendar; 1891, instead of 1890, being given as the date of the death of Dr. Cesar de Paepe.

* * *

Among the forthcoming publications of the Humanitarian League will be a pamphlet on the subject of vaccination by Mr. Joseph Collinson, which will form No. 21 of the League's well-known series. The pamphlet announced will deal with the humanitarian view of vaccination, and not only the abolition of the laws, but the entire prohibition of the practice, will be advocated.

* * * *

A Radical Secularist's Candid Examination and Criticism of Mr. John M. Robertson's "Future of Liberalism," by Thomas James Thurlow, is a penny pamphlet published by the Truth Seeker Company, 36 Villiers-street, Bradford. It warmly attacks the Socialistic proposals of Mr. Robertson, presenting the other side in a very direct fashion.

* * *

Père Ragey has published a volume on *La Crisè Religieuse en Angleterre.* The worthy Marist priest has worked himself to the belief that there is a religious crisis in England which will lead to its reconversion to Rome. This will only be the sequence of a former miracle, the establishment of a Catholic hierarchy in England. If the reverend father considers the establishment of a paper hierarchy a miracle, he is easily satisfied of the supernatural.

* * *

Cardinal Vaughan, not relishing the exposure of Cardinal Manning's worldly intrigues by his own chosen biographer, Mr. Purcell, has caused a new biography to be rapidly prepared by the Oblates of St. Charles. The full rotundity of the Cardinal's life will doubtless be considerably oblated by the process.

* * *

The Catholic *Month*, of course, follows the lead of Cardinal Vaughan's *Tablet* in denouncing Mr. Purcell for his life of Cardinal Manning. This is altogether overdone. If there is any blame, it is not Mr. Purcell who is at fault in using the materials entrusted to him, but the executors of the Cardinal for handing over to him materials the Church would desire concealed. But the truth is, the Catholics are wild because, instead of getting an idealised biography, they found the duplicity and worldly ambition of the late Cardinal exposed by his own letters. Hence these whines.

* * *

Ruskin's *Letters to the Clergy on the Lord's Prayer and the Church*, which has been out of print for nearly fifteen years, appears in a new edition, edited by the Rev. S. A. Malleson, and published by Mr. George Allen.

* * *

A German with the singularly appropriate name of Bormann has taken up the cracked-brained theory of Delia Bacon and Ignatius Donnelly, and elaborates it with the usual fearful ponderosity of a German. A bad joke elaborated into a volume, which it would take a week to read, is one of those things of which only a Teuton is capable.

* * *

Colonel Meadows Taylor, the author of *Confessions of a Thug*, in his interesting *Story of My Life*, gives the following incident of his early days, which illustrates a phase of religion seen early in the century at Liverpool. He says: "One incident I have never forgotten. I was returning to the office late one evening when, passing by the door of a chapel, and hearing groans and cries, I looked in. A person stationed at the door invited me to enter and 'save my soul.' The place, a large one, was in profound darkness; a candle here and there only made the gloom more impenetrable. People of both sexes were sitting in the pews, and shrill piercing cries arose of 'Save me!' 'I'm going to hell!' 'I'm damned!' 'The Devil has me!' 'I'm burning, burning!' 'Go away, Satan!' 'Jesus has got me!' and the like, with prayers so profane and shocking that I dare not write them down. Sometimes one got up, man or woman, and gave his or her experience of sins and crimes, horrible to hear, but which, nevertheless, fascinated me. I know not how long I stayed, but a girl sat down by me at last and whispered, 'Come and kiss me, you beautiful boy—come away.' I gained the door, and fled rapidly in the darkness up the street." One other reminiscence in Taylor's Life is amusing. He threw a shilling to an old Irishwoman, who fell upon her knees and cried: "Ah then, that yer honor might be in heaven this night, sitting wid the blessed Virgin Mary upon a binch!"

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. WATTS AT IPSWICH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I wish to record my appreciation of Mr. Charles Watts's efforts to atone for the disappointment the Ipswich Branch suffered in November last, when Mr. Watts was unable, through illness, to fulfil his engagement here. His proverbial fairness was forcibly shown on Monday and Tuesday (February 3 and 4), when he delivered two excellent lectures here in the Co-operative Hall, giving his services free. Everybody connected with the Branch worked hard to obtain large audiences, but the attendance was much below expectations. Ipswich is described in the guide-books as an ancient borough with narrow, winding streets. I think it should have been creeds. Mr. Watts's gentlemanly behavior and jolly appearance so *non-plussed* the Christian friends, who were diligently taking notes at the lectures, that when the time came for questions and opposition, only one could be found who had as much pluck as Balaam's ass.

F. LANSDELL.

PROFANE JOKES.

Sunday-school Teacher (trying to enforce the necessity of faith)—"And what was the one thing Jonah needed to make him safe?" Bright Scholar—"The earth."

"Our mother Church," said a preacher, "is like a giant, with one foot firmly planted on the earth, the other pointing to heaven."

Evangelist—"Do you ever have any revivals in your town?" Mr. Bute—"Nope; they mostly dies once they gits plugged."

"Jabber's son, they say, could talk when only two weeks old." "That's nothing. The Bible says Job cursed the day he was born."

The Rev. Mr. Saintly—"I hope you go to Sunday-school, Bobbie." Bobbie—"Yes, sir. And that's how I get ahead of father and mother." The Rev. Mr. Saintly—"How so?" Bobbie—"They have to go to church."

"The need of the age," said the Rev. Mr. Wilgus, as he leaned back in his chair and placed the tips of his fingers together, "is a more practical Christianity." "Which reminds me," said the captious man, "that your church hasn't cleaned the snow off its sidewalk yet."

"I see," said Mrs. Hashcroft, "that they have passed an ordinance imposing a fine on any one who yells 'fire' in a church." "Oh, well," said the cheerful man, "that sort of preaching has pretty much gone out of date, anyway."

Militia Captain (to new recruit)—"What religion are you?" New Recruit—"I be a shepherd." Militia Captain—"No; but what church do you go to?" New Recruit—"Does the band go to church?" Militia Captain—"Yes." New Recruit—"Then I go to church."

"Young man," said a minister to a youth of his congregation, "do you know what relations you sustain in the world?" "Yes, sir; two cousins and a grandmother, but I do not intend to sustain them much longer.'

Three very young children who were supposed to be in bed attracted the attention of their mamma by the noise they were making. Upon inquiring into the cause of the disturbance, she was greatly amazed to find the little ones parading around the nursery with large straw hats on their heads, and otherwise entirely devoid of clothing. "What are you doing?" she exclaimed in consternation. "We's playin' Darden of Edin," said one. "Yes, and I'm Adam," said the oldest boy. "And I'se Eve," chimed in the little girl. And then, in a most important tone, the third little voice chirped up, "And I am the Lord Dod, walkin' in the tool of the day."

An old woman who sold ale, being at church, fell asleep during the sermon, and unluckily let her old-fashioned clasped Bible fall, which making a great noise, she exclaimed, half awake, "So, you jade! there's another jug broke!"

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, R. Forder, "A Night with the Devil." Tuesday, at 8.30, social party. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture VI., Gemini."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, entertainment.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. W. Foote will lecture.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (74 Libra-road, Roman-road): 8, Sunday-school; 7.30, M. Adams, "The New Morality."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "The English Church Idolatry."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Evolution of Religion."

WESTMINSTER BRANCH N.S.S. (42 Vincent-street): 8, members' meeting.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, A Member, "Secularism: Past, Present, and Future."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30—lectures, weather permitting.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, S. Armfield, "The Mythical Temptation of Jesus." (Collection for N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.)

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, J. Watts Treasure, "Bible Morals and Society."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Gilbert, "Anarchism and Communism: A Comparison"; 6.30, soirée.

HULL (Cobden Hall, No. 4 Room, Storey-street): 7, Messrs. Smith and Trumpet, debate on *Merrie England*.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Genius and Sanity."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Wollet, "Marcus Aurelius."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, Charles Watts, "The Science of Life from a Secular Standpoint"; 3, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future"; 6.30, "The Religious Man."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street, near Grey's monument): 3, urgent business; 7, a lecture.

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, business meeting; 8, music.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Stanley Jones, "Creation and the Deluge"; 7, "Christianity and Civilisation." Tea at 5. Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Charles Darwin and Christianity"; 7, "Atheism: its Meaning, Morality, and Justification."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.

SUNDERLAND UNITARIAN DEBATING SOCIETY: 8, R. Weightman, "Jesus and Labor Problems."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—February 23, South Shields. March 1, South Shields; 8 and 15, Glasgow.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 1, Balls Pond.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—March 1, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road; 8, Balls Pond; 15, Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road; 22, Athenæum, Shepherds Bush. April 12, Balls Pond; 26, Glasgow.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Co-operative Hall, Green-street.—Lectures by Mr. MALCOLM QUIN every Sunday afternoon (till March 8 inclusive) at 3.15. Conversational meetings, open to all, at Mr. Coates's, 13 Derby-street, every Sunday, at 7.

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The Freethinker

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

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THE COMING STORM.

THERE are many indications that priestcraft is gathering its forces for a great struggle. We do not mean that we are approaching the Armageddon of Reason and Faith, which Charles Bradlaugh referred to when he declared that the final fight, even in England, would be between Freethought and the Roman Catholic Church. What we mean is, that priestcraft, feeling itself threatened, has its instinct of self-preservation thoroughly aroused, and will not only defend itself, but probably make aggressions upon its enemy. And in this struggle the priests of all denominations—for they are all priests, whatever they call themselves—will hang together. Let us hope that the friends of freedom, on their side, will be equally energetic and united.

The principal storm signal is the demand which is being made by the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church for additional grants in aid of what is facetiously called their "voluntary" schools. These establishments very obviously exist for one object—the instilling of religion into the minds of children. It is not the merely secular education of boys and girls in which the men of God have any interest. That might be left to profane School Boards, or any other body of persons who would take charge of it. Reading, writing, arithmetic, geometry, geography, and so forth—these are not the subjects about which priests have the slightest anxiety. All such subjects can be taught without them, without their supervision, and without their interference. They are only solicitous about religion. Every other motive they allege is a brazen pretence. They see multitudes of children brought together by the Education Act, who cannot be compelled to go to Sunday-school; and this compulsion is the priest's opportunity. "These children *must* go *somewhere*," he reasons, "and if we get the faithful to build schools for their accommodation, and then get the State to give us financial support on account of the *secular* education we impart to them, we shall have establishments open every day, filled with children whom we could never approach otherwise, and at very little or no cost to ourselves we shall be able to stuff them to the throat with our religious doctrines, and thus secure them, or at least the major part of them, as worshippers in our churches when they grow up to be men and women." Having reasoned in this way, the priest goes to work and erects "voluntary" schools, in which he teaches his sectarian theology at the cost of the taxpayers. Not satisfied even with this, he affects a miraculous interest in the education of children in the non-voluntary schools. He puts himself forward as a candidate at School Board elections, and, having succeeded in cheating a sufficient number of voters, he proceeds to bring the religious education in Board schools as near as possible to that which he deals out in his own places of juvenile perversion.

The priest and his nominees are already pretty strong on the School Boards of this country. In most districts they carry matters very much in their own way. The Bible is introduced as a good beginning; the use of it, in some way or other, being the maximum of Christian agreement. In some places it is supplemented by that document whose very name is a lie—the Apostles' Creed. But there is always a certain dread of public opinion on School Boards. To get on them you have to appeal to the ratepayers, and truth is apt to leak out in contested elections. There is no such danger, however, in regard to the "voluntary" schools. They are the priest's happy hunting-ground. Still, they have to be paid for. Aye, there's the rub! Slowly, but surely, the "voluntary" subscriptions have fallen off. The bulk of the cost is borne by the State, and the priest now demands that the State shall also bear the "voluntary" balance. And the worst of it is that the Tory Government, which owes so much to the priests, can hardly resist this impudent demand. Lord Salisbury gives the bishops a plain hint that the Church Temperance Bill is all rot; but when it comes to Church schools he bids them hope for the best.

Nonconformist opposition to this demand of priestcraft will be of little avail. It is half-hearted, and is based upon no principle. Besides, it has leaders, like Mr. Price Hughes, who declare that *anything* is preferable to secular education.

There are but two possible methods of education—secular and sectarian. And as religion is the natural support of sectarian education, so is Freethought the natural support of secular education. The only way to promote secular education is to make Secularists. And this is the one great immediate task to which the Secular party must address itself. Our supreme duty at present is propaganda. It is idle, one might say ridiculous, for a handful of Secularists to get together in a big town, and fancy that a semi-family party is enough for the situation. Twenty or thirty Secularists in a town of a hundred thousand inhabitants have just one duty to perform—to convert the population to Freethought. Anything else that they can do by themselves will never disturb the great stream of public affairs.

Unless we make more Secularists by an active propaganda, the victorious priests will do their best (or worst) to deprive us of the few rights we already enjoy. Those who know history will be perfectly sure of this. Aggression is, therefore, our best method of self-defence. We must win over recruits from the army of faith, so as to strengthen our own side before the struggle begins. *How* it will begin, who can say exactly? But begin it will when priestcraft sees its opportunity—for Freethought only exists on sufferance. Those who *tolerate* us, *put up with* us; and they will not put up with us any longer than they can help.

Ours has always been a fighting party. It is so still, and will remain so longer than any of us will see daylight. Those who carry on the fight will obtain the support. Those who merely stand aloof and criticise—or offer that cheapest of all presents, irresponsible advice—will soon be disregarded, and eventually forgotten. The main army always travels one way, and sweeps on to one end; and the doom of stragglers is desertion or annihilation.

G. W. FOOTE.

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ANOTHER CONVERSION?

Joyful News is a Christian evangelical and temperance organ, "edited by Thomas and Eliza Mary Champness," and published by the well-known firm of S. W. Partridge, Paternoster-row. In its last number, dated February 20, it contains a narrative signed "J. T. S.," and headed "Conversion of an Infidel." The story is throughout so typical of its class that I shall give its essentials in the very words of "J. T. S.," interspersing a few remarks naturally suggested by some familiarity with "infidels," and with stories of their conversion.

It begins "Mr. X."—and, before allowing "J. T. S." to proceed, I must interject that the heroes of these stories are usually nameless, or denominated only by some letter of the alphabet. "X." is distinctly appropriate, as it always stands for an unknown quantity. It says, then: "'Mr. X.' was a pronounced infidel. His presence threw a coldness of heart and misery over others in his home, business, and company." That the very presence of pronounced infidels suffices to throw coldness of heart and misery over others is a fact of Christian psychology which has not come under my observation. It deserves noting and possible inquiry. "Having," it goes on to say, "much acquaintance with the Bible"—here is an "infidel" characteristic I can endorse—"especially those parts suitable for his wicked designs." What's this! Parts of God's Holy Word suitable for wicked designs! Well, this looks like a true touch, and reminds me that I, who, in my *Footsteps of the Past*, have publicly stated that I consider the Bible, viewed from the standpoint of the anthropologist, throws much light on the past, have been asked why I do not write on the beauties of the Bible, which I both acknowledge and appreciate. My answer is that thirty thousand ministers are paid to do this weekly; so while the whole book is regarded as a fetish I am more likely to select those parts suitable for my "wicked designs."

But to get to "Mr. X.": "he was constantly thrusting infidelity before the notice of others, and delighted to meet an opponent not versed in the Scriptures, or ignorant of their meaning. When possible, he spoke standing near Glasgow Cross." This is the only indication of locality in the story; and, although I lived for some years in Glasgow, it indicates nothing to me save that "Mr. X." must have selected some time for speaking when the police were not about; for public speaking—let alone the preaching of infidelity—would no more be permitted at Glasgow Cross than at Charing Cross, London.

"Should an opponent put 'Mr. X.' into difficulties, he became passionate, using most brutal language; even cursing God and his book. Christians of ability would not speak in opposition to him, owing to his disgusting language, lack of courtesy, control, and modesty." These are the unfailing characteristics of infidel advocates—in Christian fiction. Lack of culture, experience, or sensitiveness must have stood in the way of my ever noticing them in fact.

Now a new character is introduced on the scene by "J. T. S.," who, perhaps, hardly cares to take the responsibility himself. He says: "My friend, a Christian cobbler, remembers 'Mr. X.' calling, with vehement language and hands uplifted, for God to 'Paralyse my hands if he exists.'" Who, pray, is this Christian cobbler, and where does he cobble? Is he any relative of the Atheist shoemaker of Mr. Hugh Price Hughes? If his address can be communicated to me, I will undertake to inquire further into his story. I have heard of many Atheists thus offering a test, and recollect that Mr. Bradlaugh made some good Christian subscribe pretty heavily to the Masonic Orphanage for having said that he challenged God to strike him dead. God does not seem to have exactly taken "Mr. X." at his word; but, nevertheless, He was kind enough to make the Atheist a notable warning, for the story continues: "Years passed, and the ungodly man continued crying against his Maker; but his hands had gone, cut off accidentally by machinery! This did not cripple his efforts to injure Christians." This should be a means of identification. Having in view a History of Freethought, I have ever been a sedulous inquirer as to infidel advocates; but I never heard of such a mutilated person. I wrote to Mr. J. P. Gilmour, vice-president of the N.S.S., a gentleman whose accuracy and information can be relied on. He answers me as under:—

> "(1) 'X.' is an utterly 'unknown quantity' to me and to all the Glasgow Secularists to whom I have recited the *Joyful News* fable. (2) I never heard of any Glasgow 'Infidel' mutilated as 'X.' is said to have been. Some years ago we had a one-legged member, but, as he died unrepentant, he can hardly be worked in anyhow. (3) No outdoor meetings of any kind are permitted at Glasgow Cross. Evangelistic street-meetings are held in some of the thoroughfares leading from it; but even they are on sufferance. No political or anti-theological harangue would be permitted. (4) To the best of my belief and knowledge, there is no foundation whatever for the *Joyful News* story."

From something else Mr. Gilmour tells me, I think he is on the track of discovering who "J. T. S." is.

The story continues: "Mr. X. became seriously sick. Every evening his followers gathered around their chief's bed to watch and encourage. Hideous oaths and curses resounded in the room. Although it became a struggle to breathe, yet with nearly every breath came a curse." This is the regulation pattern of the proceedings when an infidel chief is sick—in Christian fiction. "My friend called at the house, and went into the bedroom, after being strictly cautioned not to cause agitation by referring to Christ." The room resounds with hideous oaths and curses, yet the friends—or is it fiends?—are anxious not to cause agitation. This seems a dim reflection from the story told of Voltaire that he said, "Do not mention to me the name of that man." But back to our friend. "He stood still, and, with Bible clasped under his arm, watched and waited. Mr. X. was propped up with pillows; his eyes, like projecting glassy balls of fire, rolled feverishly in their sockets." Yes, dear reader, I have been at the death-bed of infidels before, and I have noticed how their eye-balls roll in their sockets. This may not have received the attention it deserves in treatises on pathology; but it is to be found—where I have found it—in Christian fiction. "Gasping for breath, he cried out, 'Burn that cursed Book! burn that Book!'" The infidel (of fiction) always has his heart set on one thing. He wants, above all else, to burn the Bible. I must have read of dozens of them who looked on this as a consummation devoutly to be wished, and yet, though the performance would be so easy, I never came across the man or woman who did. The only authentic case of Bible-burning in modern times of which I know was when a Roman Catholic priest burnt a Protestant Bible in Mayo. "J. T. S." proceeds: "It was a hideous picture of abject misery and remorse." Up till now the remorse has not been apparent. However, it is coming. "With all possible vehemence he hissed out fiery curses, again crying, 'Burn that Book.'" The friend evidently could not stand "fiery curses," and went home to pray.

> "At midnight a knock was heard at the door. 'Can you come immediately? Mr. X. wants you.'
>
> "Quickly dressing, he took his Bible and went.
>
> "'Will you forgive me?" asked Mr. X.'
>
> "'Yes, but you need God's forgiveness.'
>
> "'Will you ask Him?'
>
> "'You had better ask yourself, and He will forgive when you confess faithfully.'
>
> "The infidel prayed with agonising plea; then my friend prayed.
>
> "'Will you read fourteenth of John?' asked Mr. X.
>
> "My friend read it. He had hoped to read that very chapter, and his hope was realised. 'Yes, many mansions for those who believe,' added the Christian. Again they prayed, and pardon was given.
>
> "Next evening Mr. X. informed his old comrades of his decision. 'I have led you wrongly. All was dark and miserably dreary; now all is light and happiness!'
>
> "God spared his life for sixteen weeks. Full of intense pain and agony of body, yet he murmured not, and passed away trusting in Christ.
>
> "His conversion caused considerable commotion, and many called to hear his wonderfully clear testimony, mingled with a desire to undo what wrong he had committed—a noble desire never fulfilled.
>
> "Others of Mr. X.'s followers became Christians after seeing the change and hearing his testimony."

Very pretty, Mr. "J. T. S."; but, having looked into a few similar cases, you must excuse my asking, Is it true? In order that "J. T. S." may have an opportunity of substantiating his statement, I give it this extra publicity, and shall see that a copy of this number is sent to the editors of *Joyful News*. J. M. WHEELER.

There is one road to peace, and that is truth.—*Shelley.*

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SECULARISM A REAL EDUCATIONAL FORCE.

We regard Secularism as being one of the greatest educational forces of the present century. Secular philosophy recognises that the ignorance and the many evils by which we are surrounded are the natural outcome of imperfect conditions; and, instead of looking for a remedy to what is termed the supernatural, Secularists endeavor, not only to remove these drawbacks by human means, but to ascertain their causes. With this knowledge we are the better enabled to avoid a repetition of the evils we deplore. So long as we are subjected to a defective environment, so long must we suffer from its necessary consequences. Instead, therefore, of depending upon so-called divine agencies for deliverance from the many "ills that flesh is heir to," we rely upon secular effort to regenerate man, and to improve the conditions by which he is surrounded.

Orthodox believers frequently urge that Secular principles are derived from Christianity, and they further assert that, without such theological inspiration, our teachings would lack a regenerating force. If such a supposition were true, Christians, to be consistent, should accept our views as being the true gospel for man. When, however, we remind professed Christians that their allegations are wrong, and that Secular principles are concerned only with the affairs of mundane existence, we are told that such a belief is destitute of hope, and that it is without any objective stimulus for effecting any beneficial change in the condition of the human family. St. Paul appears to have entertained a very low estimate of any system of thought that had for its basis, aim, and end, only the requirements of this life and the adequate means to provide for them. Hence he exclaims: "What advantageth it me if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." A more selfish and grovelling view of the duties of existence it is hardly possible to conceive. In such teaching no consideration for posterity is manifested, and the world of itself is deemed as being of no practical account. In the face of such notions, what becomes of the Christian boast that New Testament teachings are adequate for secular education? Were such injunctions acted upon, we should indeed be strangers to the highest happiness, and to those enjoyments that are possible to be derived from a well-spent life. In the early centuries of the Christian era the one thing which appears to have been thought needful was, to prepare for another state of existence. There was but little opportunity for, and no encouragement given to, educational enterprise. The all-absorbing consideration was, how to prepare to die. The principal object of Secularism is to instruct people how to live, for death will follow as the natural result of life.

The question we desire here to emphasise is: Can it reasonably be shown that Secularism is superior to Christianity as an educational force in all matters of importance to the human race? We think that it can, inasmuch as the primary object of Secularism is to develop the intellect and to enlighten the mind of man, so that he may be led into the path of truth, honor, and justice. It has been said that there is nothing great in nature but man, and that in man there is nothing great but mind. Hence we regard it to be of the highest importance that we should cultivate those faculties in man that enable him to distinguish the true from the false, and the right from the wrong. Experience proves that it is only by intellectual culture that man can reach the highest possible condition of his nature. There are two requisites for human guidance which the intellect *can alone* discover, and these are to know what is true *and to learn* what is useful. The main difference between a wise man and a fool is, that the former applies the true and useful to lessening the evils of life, while the latter increases them by fostering sentiments of superstition. Surely the depth of folly was never so nearly sounded as it was by those who devoted themselves to the unprofitable task of trying to persuade men to despise "the world and the things of the world." This fatal and delusive doctrine of the Church kept the people in mental darkness for ages, and prevented them from realising some of the noblest objects of existence. To isolate oneself from the rest of the human family is conducive neither to personal happiness nor general improvement. Monks and nuns have not been the great educators of the world; they have too often sacrificed the noblest passions of their natures, and deprived themselves of the greatest charms of life.

Secularism maintains, what the foremost intellects of the day are constrained to accept as being the dictates of reason and common sense, that it is the moral duty of all to strive to become useful citizens in this world, and to evince a generous feeling of sympathy for the welfare of mankind in general. This can only be properly effected by our coming in contact with men and women on admitted terms of equality—that is, that each person should have an equal right to share in all that is conducive to the establishment of thoughtful and self-dependent members of the commonwealth. We are aware that the art of navigation can be taught where neither seas roll nor winds blow; but the proof of the value of such instruction must be found in facing the storms and tempests of the ocean. In like manner, the principles that are to guide man through his journey of life may be planned amidst the timidity of some, the pride of others, and the ignorance and superstition of many; but the soundness of the proposed plan of procedure must be proved on the tempestuous ocean of life, where we have to encounter too frequently the waves of custom, passion, and prejudice. A mind educated by Secular philosophy will be better enabled to withstand these disturbing elements than one imbued with the notions of a crude theology. This fact is being more and more perceived in this sceptical age of ours. A knowledge of things and an exposition of the useful are being appreciated in proportion as they are seen to promote the progress of the world. Secular education aims to furnish motives for action superior to those supplied by the Church; and, as the result of this educational process, we hope to inspire new efforts in the direction of the mundane improvement of mankind. Contributions to the common harvest will, we believe, flow in more than ever when it is made clear that all will fairly participate in the distribution of whatever tends to human advancement. When men understand that their own tranquility depends largely upon the education of those around them, they will seek to elevate their neighbors to the same moral and intellectual level that they have reached themselves. It is to the accomplishment of this task, so far as it is possible, that the educational force of Secularism is directed.

The education of the masses we know is slow, but no intelligent mind can doubt the marked strides that have been made in this direction during the past few decades. The increased facilities for the instruction of the young; the extension of the circulation of literature; the diffusion of general knowledge; the scientific explanation of natural phenomena; the granting to woman of rights which for centuries had been denied her; and the higher estimation that has been formed of the duties and responsibilities of human life, are among the results that have followed the partial decline of theological instruction and the establishment of a rapidly-approaching secular system of education. Let our readers reflect what will be the result of this improving process if it continues for, say, a century. What a contrast our ideal of what society will be a hundred years hence presents with the actual survey of the condition of the people when they were under the unrestricted influence of Christian rulers. This contrast of the actual past with the justifiably imagined future shows the possibility of important changes which can be wrought by true educational force. Those who think that the world will be for ever governed by fear, moved by fanaticism, and controlled by priestcraft must be oblivious of the law of mental progress. The influence of the darkest past has been too great to be denied or ignored; but that it is being superseded by the growth of the human intellect, and the spread of a knowledge of rational principles, is a fact that gladdens the hearts of all lovers of truth and of an enlightened humanity.

Secularism aims at the multiplication of those forces that contribute to the fostering of intelligence, the consolidation of freedom, and the inculcation of those virtues that adorn the nature of man. To achieve this is the object of Secular philosophy; and, judging from the lessons of the past, we have good grounds for believing that our object will be attained. We have said that the work of true education is slow, and this is not to be wondered at, considering the amount of false instruction that for ages has been imposed upon the people. The errors of the past have to be eradicated from the human mind before it can fully receive the truths of the present. Happily, the work of mental purification is steadily going on, and the mists of ignorance are fast clearing away, opening

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to our view a regenerated society, where devotion to truth and justice shall be the passports to recognition and distinction in a world that has been educated by the force of Secular principles. CHARLES WATTS.

THE GOSPEL OF LOVE AND CREMATION.

An address delivered before the Manchester Branch of the National Secular Society on Sunday evening, February 9, 1896, by J. Harvey Simpson, Secretary of the Manchester Crematorium.

As Secretary of the Manchester Crematorium, and as one greatly sympathising with your Society, I have pleasure in again addressing you on the subject of Cremation.

This evening, however, I purpose asking you to look upon the subject of cremation from a somewhat different aspect than heretofore, naming my address "The Gospel of Love and Cremation." At first sight it may popularly be imagined that there is little connection between the two; but, before the evening is over, I hope to prove to you that such is not the fact, and that, on the contrary, the Gospel of Love may go hand in hand with the practice of cremation, and be near akin to it.

I will first of all explain what I mean by the Gospel of Love.

You put at the heading of your official note paper the words, "We seek after truth." I also, for the last ten years, have devoted a large portion of my time seeking after truth—that truth which you and I feel that we are unable to find within the tenets of the Christian faith, as taught and practised at the present day.

There is no doubt that it is with no light heart that one separates oneself from the thoughts and religious feelings which have actuated one from one's earliest youth; but, for my part, having once emancipated myself from the thraldom of ecclesiastical superstition, I threw myself with ardor into the task of finding, if possible, some system of ethics, some system of conduct, which would guide me rightly through the troubled seas of this mortal life of ours.

The philosophers of all ages have devoted a superabundance of their energies in the attempt to comprehend the attributes and personality of God; and it is with shame that one has to confess that in this so-called enlightened and highly-civilised latter-end of the nineteenth century the predominant religion of the world attributes to its God thoughts, feelings, and actions which are so awful, so disgusting, and so repulsive that the earnest Freethinker feels that they can have originated only through the ideas and working of man in his most malignant and devilish aspect.

We are called upon to worship a God who is unable to produce a being in any degree perfect or under self-control; a God who permits his creation to become vile through the agency of a devil, presumably also of his own creation; a God who, to stem the tide of wickedness, has no other idea than to drown almost the whole of his creation; a God who again permits wickedness to become rampant upon the earth, and whose second idea is to sacrifice his only son, and (after allowing ages to elapse in which the dwellers upon earth, having no knowledge of this God, are presumed to be now undergoing the terrors of hell for an ignorance from which they were never enlightened) this God sacrifices his son in an out-of-the-way country, and permits his new gospel to filter through various obscure channels, so that at the present time there are three principal Churches of that gospel, each excommunicating the rest and consigning one another to the undying flames of hell. And in this present year of grace this gospel permits us to witness the fact of the central portion of Christendom being merely an armed camp, and Bible-loving England at one time lately almost within twenty-four hours of war with Protestant Germany, and little less with Puritan America; while the sons of our aristocracy are filibustering on the plains of Southern Africa. Now, the God whom I have so far been able to discern is a God of a very different character. I am unable to describe him so minutely as the Christian God is described and analysed in the Athanasian Creed, nor do I think it necessary so to do; but, at the same time, I do not consign non-believers to eternal perdition. The God in whom I believe has one name and one message only. His name is "Love," and his message is "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you"—a message found in books far more ancient than the Christian New Testament. The message is simple, can be grasped and realised by the most ignorant and lowly of mankind, and is not obscured by the theological dogmas which have made Christianity so repulsive and so terrible.

It is because I believe in the Gospel of Love, and in our duty of doing unto others as we would they should do unto us, that I am so enthusiastic in the cause of cremation. The Gospel of Love would banish disease, pain, and misery. But by the present method of interment we are placing in the earth annually four million stones of putrefying flesh and bone, which flesh is for years rotting, decomposing, and evolving gases, fluids, and other poisonous organisms which must have their outlets from the graveyards, which sometimes (perhaps in mockery) have been fondly called breathing places. The danger from such a method of interment is perhaps small in sparsely-populated countries, but here in England we have now to deal with over-populated towns and crowded cities.

Is evidence necessary to prove the danger? Let me give you some.

A committee of physicians appointed in the United States some years ago reported that "the horrid practice of earth burial does more to propagate the germs of disease and death, and to spread desolation and pestilence over the human race, than do all man's ingenuity and ignorance in every other custom of habit. The fatal illusion that the earth renders harmless and innocuous the corpse must be dispelled."

Dr. Cameron has said: "I might multiply examples *ad nauseum* to prove the danger of contamination to our water supply which many of our burial grounds present."

The Right Hon. Sir Lyon Playfair says: "In most of our churchyards the dead are harming the living by destroying the soil, fouling the air, contaminating water springs, and spreading the seeds of disease. I have officially inspected many churchyards, and made reports on their state, which, even to read, make me shudder. By the act of ordinary interment we literally sow broadcast through the land innumerable seeds of pestilence, germs which long retain their vitality, many destined at some future time to fructify in premature death or ruined health for thousands."

Is it necessary to quote any more statements proving the danger of our present method of interment—a danger, as I before said, infinitely greater now that our town population has so largely increased?

Referring for a moment to the love which we should bear to those now around us, when they die ought we not to decently dispose of their bodies and vigilantly secure their remains from violation? How many people have tried to realise the process which the body undergoes under the present system of earth burial? The dreadful change in some bodies within a few hours after death indicates in some slight manner the much greater and more detestable and horrible change in the body shortly after interment. As a matter of fact, we perversely shut our eyes to the facts, and imagine some change chaste and beautiful, so that we may with kindly and reverent feeling visit the grave of him or her whom we have lost, and whose loss we so much deplore. Your motto is "We seek for truth," and yet in one of the most sacred phases of our existence you wilfully evade the truth and seek refuge in a fanciful idea, which is an absolute lie. You permit your lost friend to become vile, offensive, and dangerous, when you have it in your hands to avoid it by annihilating those elements of physical evil by the purifying action of fire.

Is it "reverential" care for our dead to leave them to rot in the ground, spreading abomination and disease, and becoming the prey of creeping insects and virulent germs?

Another aspect of cremation in regard to our care for our descendants is the economic. Acre after acre are we adding yearly to the making of municipal cemeteries and other graveyards for the reception of our dead; land not on far distant hill country, but right on the outskirts of our overcrowded population; land which is certain to be wanted within a few years, and yet for ever unusable. Is not this of itself the acme of selfishness, the desire to please ourselves without thought of others? Perhaps we are a cynic, and say: "What have my descendants done for me?"

People fondly imagine that by interring their dead they have provided them with a permanent resting place. Vain

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illusion! how often dispelled, when we hear in so many districts of old burial places disturbed, and the remains rudely removed.

An argument in favor of cremation particularly appealing to oneself is the prevalence of premature burial, and on that point Dr. Alexander Wilder, of New York, has lately been giving some highly-interesting and instructive lectures, pointing out its frequency. On interment life may exist several minutes after regaining consciousness, whereas with cremation the body enters a temperature of 2,000° F., and the action of the heart absolutely ceases at once and life is extinct, some minutes of direful agony thus perhaps being obviated. And now let me describe to you the process of cremation as carried out at the Manchester Crematorium, and attempt to prove to you that by cremation the body is disposed of in a manner much more reverential, much purer, more beautifully and more really sentimental, than by the present method of earth burial.

To commence with, the applicant for cremation must sign a Request for Cremation, stating (*inter alia*) that the deceased expressed no objection (orally or in writing) to be cremated after death. There is no craving for compulsion among the adherents to cremation, except in those cases where the deceased died from some zymotic disease, when we think the Government should step in and compel cremation.

In the next place, we require, beyond the ordinary Registrar's order for burial, two medical certificates of the cause of death—the first being exhaustive, and signed by the medical attendant of the deceased: and the second signed by an independent medical practitioner, who shall certify that there exists no reason why the body should not be cremated. These certificates are necessary for two purposes: (1) To prevent premature burial; (2) as a precaution against poisoning or other crime.

If it were not a fact, proved by the report of the Registrar-General, it would hardly be believed that of 562,248 deaths in 1890 in England and Wales no fewer than 15,947 bodies were buried without any certificate at all, and 25,683 bodies were buried with a certificate wholly inadequate.

A select committee of the House of Commons have been lately sitting on "The Disposal of the Dead," and the evidence there adduced is highly instructive, and should be read by all persons who imagine that a facility for crime arises solely from cremation.

The advocates of cremation demand that in every district there should be appointed a medical officer, to whom every death should at once be notified, and whose duty would be to visit and inspect the corpse; and without his authority nobody should be allowed either to be cremated or buried.

We argue that prevention is better than cure, and that all necessary precautions should be taken before burial, and not required afterwards. It is pointed out that by cremation the power of exhumation is gone. But what is this power, and how has it been exercised? We find that for the last twenty years the annual average of bodies exhumed has been five, and of these the proportion is less than one annually of those who have met their death criminally. And we know that only metallic and mineral poisons are capable of detection for any length of time in the human body after burial, the vegetable poisons being rapidly decomposed.

The committee of the House of Commons say they "are of opinion that, with the precautions adopted in connection with cremation as carried out by the cremation society, there is little probability that cases of crime would escape detection."

And then as regards the cost. The coffin itself must be of the plainest possible character, with no ornaments whatever; and when cremation becomes more popular the cost of the actual cremation will be very small, the present cost being from two to five guineas; and afterwards no expensive plot of ground and monument in a cemetery, but simply a plain, unpretending niche with a marble tablet, and inscribed thereon the name of the deceased, costing about £3.

Arriving at the crematorium, we find that the service, of whatever character it may be, is conducted in the interior of the building, thereby avoiding that profuse source of mischief to the living—namely, the attendance at the graveside with uncovered head and damp feet, often in pitiless weather. On arrival, the coffin containing the body is placed on the table, or catafalque, in front of the aperture leading to the furnace, and at a given signal passes, by invisible mechanical means, through the small door of the draped ante-chamber to another chamber, and thence to the furnace.

The furnace mainly consists of a gas generator and a cremating chamber, the actual fire from the coal and coke being fifteen feet away from the cremating chamber. By mechanical means an intense heat, reaching up to 2,000° F., is eventually produced, at which point the cremating chamber is ready for the reception of the coffin. The coffin itself is disposed of within a few minutes, leaving no trace behind, and the body is left almost a shapeless mass, the gaseous portions finding their way as elementary gases, pure, and without any unpleasant odor, up the chimney, and the bones remaining in the chamber.

After the space of about one and a quarter hours the process is over, and the remains are carefully gathered and placed in the urn provided for that purpose. The ashes are absolutely inert, absolutely innocuous.

And thus the body is disposed of in a quick and, as I contend, beautiful way, without harm to anyone, and a pure white ash is the result, which can be placed in a niche where the friends may visit and renew and soothe their grief; or, if preferred, the ashes can actually be buried (much less space being required), where the relatives may, as under ordinary interment, have their quiet grave, their green turf, and their surrounding shrubs and flowers, but without the revolting details of the process of decomposition which belongs to the present custom.

It may even be legitimately imagined that, their friend having gone up in flames to heaven, the very atmosphere around the crematorium is thereby sanctified by the admixture, in some way, of the friend who has departed, and whose loss is so much deplored. His remains have mixed again with the elements from which they and all things terrestrial sprang, quickly and purely, and not, as in interment, slowly and horribly.

The memory of the departed becomes more precious, more pure, more holy.

GOD'S ADVISERS.

THE Lord's most vain and stupid friends go out
To teach his pagan children how to pray;
The god-helped pagans kill God's friends, and flout
The God whose schemes they aid, whilst thus they slay;
And all's for best, God's friends agree.

God's creatures kill God's creatures, and obey
His grinding law of change: Life, Strife, and Death;
They work and love; they preach, and hate, and pray,
And think, poor fools! that God cares aught for breath
Of infant, tiger, priest, or flea.

Does Nature's hideous strife our Reason fill
With hope that Hatred's fell Designer feels
For those whose slaughter prompts the song-bird's trill,
Or those whom tyrants crush beneath their heels?
To sharks, go bend in pray'r your knee!

A pray'r to Him that doeth all things well,
That numbers hairs, and makes the sparrows fall,
Must shake the universe, from heav'n to hell,
With mirthful shrieks of demons, great and small—
If God, heav'n, hell, and ghosts there be.

The priests and parsons—God Almighty's staff
Of cosmical, consulting engineers—
Advising God, are fit to force a laugh
From Christ himself, the man of threats and tears,
Whose frenzied frown could blast a tree.

The foolish folk that pray—if God there be—
Were made to pray, and we were made to think
That pray'r's absurd, and yet that they and we,
Their faith and our contempt, with all things link,
Perforce, to make what is to be.

If aught we know, we know that naught is known
Of heav'nly aid—man saves himself, or dies.
Let, therefore, work, true seed of hope, be sown
On earth alone, nor waste on silent skies
The time so short for you and me.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

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AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF THOMAS PAINE.

MONCURE D. CONWAY publishes in the New York *Nation* of February 6 a letter of Thomas Paine, purchased many years ago at an auction sale by Mr. Joseph Cowen, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, to whom it now belongs. Though there is no indication in the letter of the person to whom it was written, Mr. Conway feels certain that it was to Colonel John Fellows, the New York bookseller, who had then copyrighted Part I. of *The Age of Reason*.

The letter is dated from Paris, when Paine was about to be imprisoned, and it was doubtless entrusted to Joel Barlow, the ex-parson, with the MS., which was forwarded to Barlow's own publisher in New York.

The letter refers to Dr. Franklin, "my intimate friend of thirty years past"; and for this reason Paine thinks it natural the connection with Colonel Fellows, Franklin's grandson, should be continued. He refers also to the fact that "the printer (an Englishman) whom I employed to print the second part of *The Age of Reason* made a copy of the work while he was printing it, which he sent to London and sold. It was by this means that an edition of it came out in London."

Mr. Monroe, the author of the now famous doctrine, is stated to have been "in good credit" with the French while American Minister at Paris. Paine speaks bluntly of the "Father of his country," saying that "it is time that Mr. Washington retire, for he has played off so much prudent hypocrisy between France and England that neither Government believes anything he says." This estimate of the character of the great first President hardly harmonises with the popular idea of the hero of Sunday-school story-books, who could cut down a pear-tree, but "could not tell a lie." According to Paine, he must have got over his boyish scruples, thereby disproving the dictum of Wordsworth, that "The child is the father of the man."

Mr. Conway, in some comments, gives a short outline of the "strange outcome of Paine's purpose of publishing all his works." On his return to America, in 1822, Paine was made the scapegoat of the Federalists furious at the election of Jefferson, and of the parsons furious over *The Age of Reason*. This tornardo of fanaticism prevented him from publishing his old works, and still less the two he had in manuscript. These were Part III. of *The Age of Reason* and *An Answer to the Bishop of Llandaff*. These he bequeathed to Madame Bonneville, "who, in Paris with her husband, had nursed him in illness, and shared with him their home for nearly eight years." This lady was an ardent disciple of Paine and his ideas, but "no sooner was Paine dead than she began to revert to her original type—Catholicism." This was, indeed, as Mr. Conway well observes, a strange irony of fate. The reconstructed devotee at once began to make up for her years of backsliding by "mutilating and erasing Paine's ideas, so that the two important volumes were well nigh ruined." Madame's poverty luckily checked her destructiveness, and "it is due to the means and enterprise of John Fellows .....that a number of important fragments were rescued; and in a good many cases he was able to recover striking passages, despite the erasures of the zealous French woman."

Had this strange combination of circumstances led to the preservation of some ancient Hebrew myth about supperless Jehovah, ladder-climbing angels, and fiery-charioteering prophets, it would have been quoted far and wide as a miraculous intervention of Providence, and a convincing proof of the truth of the legends saved from destruction; but that the masterpiece of the most famous infidel of the century should have been rescued—well, this is quite another thing, and would doubtless be explained by pious zealots on the theory that "the Devil looks after his own."

It is well known, however, that Paine's entire career abounded in striking instances of "providential intervention" in his favor. The merest accident saved him from the guillotine, and in many other ways the shafts of destruction were turned aside or intercepted by an unseen hand. His life, like those of Shelley, Byron, Heine, Lassalle, Bradlaugh, and other of the world's great iconoclasts, was a stormy one, and when his soul, like that of Lucretius, shot down the fiery sides of the universe and sank with hissing thunder into the ocean of eternity, the world stood amazed that the event should have been so long and incomprehensibly delayed. B.

ACID DROPS.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH was expelled from the House of Commons on February 22, 1882. Mr. Horace Marshall has noted this event in his "Calendar of Scripture Quotations." Against the date he says: "Bradlaugh expelled from the House of Commons as an Atheist." Then comes a quotation from 2 John 10: "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." A very appropriate text. But of course you can always quote bigotry from the Bible.

The Lord's Day Rest Association sends out a circular inviting to united prayer "on behalf of God's Holy Day"—not Saturday, but the day substituted by Christians for God's Holy Day. The united prayer is to take place from April 12 (it should have been April 1) to April 19, and will include special prayer "for all Lord's Day committees and writers in newspapers and periodicals."

Special prayer should be offered against the Bill backed by Mr. H. M. Stanley, General Laurie, Colonel Mellor, and Sir B. Simeon, to legalise in the United Kingdom colonial marriages with a deceased wife's sister. The preamble sets forth that, such marriages being lawful in certain of the British colonies, and the laws relating thereto having been duly sanctioned by the Imperial Parliament, it is expedient that the status, legitimacy, and rights of inheritance and succession within the United Kingdom of the issue of such marriages should be distinctly affirmed and declared. This Bill has already passed the Commo[illegible] more than once, but has been thrown out of the House of L[illegible]s by the efforts of the bishops.

The United States offers to the world the sublime spectacle of a land of liberty. We read in a New York paper that on Sunday, February 2, "a family taking dinner in a respectable restaurant were pounced upon by one of the police spies and marched off to prison because they were caught drinking wine with their dinner." No such liberty as this prevails in effete old Europe. It would hardly be tolerated in Russia.

America is the happy hunting-ground of r[illegible]gious cranks. It seems to be fifty per cent. worse tha[illegible] England. Dr. Lyman Abbott is our authority for stating that America boasts six kinds of Adventists, twelve kinds of Mennonites, twelve kinds of Presbyterians (Ugh!), thirteen kinds of Baptists, sixteen kinds of Lutherans, and seventeen kinds of Methodists, besides a variety of Episcopalians and Congregationalists. Outside all these there are 153 independent congregations who own no fellowship with anybody. What a happy family it is, to be sure!

In New York City not one-half of the churches exist to-day, in proportion to population, that existed fifty years ago. The annual gain in membership is but a little over one per cent., and of this not one quarter are males.

The Pope's order of condemnation of the secret societies of Knights of Pythias, Sons of Temperance, and Oddfellows is absolute. The three orders have a Roman Catholic membership of nearly 100,000. An appeal from a representative committee to Cardinal Satolli to set a day for hearing the case brought forth a reply from the Delegate Apostolic to the effect that the matter was not open for discussion.

Talmage took the three fires at Brooklyn Tabernacle as a hint that the dear Lord wished him to change the scene of his labors. He went to Washington, but has been in hot water with his colleagues and assistants ever since.

Talmage has gained his point in his contest to oust his associate pastor in the First Presbyterian Church of Washington, D.C., and hereafter he will appear twice every Sunday, and will have the benefit of all collections.

A Catholic priest at Rochester, New York, named Fitzgerald, has been sentenced to ten years in the penitentiary for setting fire to a parochial school in the village of Charlotte. His hired man and "housekeeper" are in jail awaiting sentence for the same crime of which the priest was instigator.

Jesus Christ has turned up in Cincinnati, Ohio. At any rate, there is someone there remarkably like the pictures of J. C., and who calls himself by that name. He went to hear a lecture by Miss May Collins, the nineteen-year-old infidel advocate, at the Ohio Liberal Club, on February 2, and said: "I go everywhere, and these people are nearer right than the Christians." It is to be hoped J. C. will not get run into a lunatic asylum, as he seems to be acquiring a little sense at last.

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Christ Schlatter, according to the New York *Journal*, the pioneer one-cent paper of the States, has got run in. He has been arrested for vagrancy at San Bernardino, California, and set to work to break stones in company with manacled tramps. When brought before the justice and asked his name, he answered, "Call me Elijah"; and since that reply was given he answers all questions as to his identity with a sorrowful glance, and will not speak of himself.

Christopher Cusuck, of Dublin, left legacies to the value of £350 for masses and cleaning church. The Attorney-General asked that the priest to whom the money was left should pay legacy duty, but the Exchequer Court held that the bequests were for charitable purposes, and as such not chargeable with duty. So that legacies, by which the Church benefits, go even without duty, while bequests for Freethought purposes are altogether illegal.

Rev. Charles F. Aked, of Liverpool, puffs a certain book by a brother man-of-God, which is clearly the most wonderful book in the world. Mr. Aked says "*it is all point*"—and the italics are his own. *All* point! Prodigious! Fancy a face all nose?

The Lord sendeth his fires, like his rain, upon the just and the unjust. The recent "million-dollar fire" in Philadelphia destroyed property to the value of 700,000 dollars belonging to the American Baptist Society. We dare say, however, that this Society did not put all its trust in Providence, but did a little judicious hedging in the way of insurance.

D. L. Moody, the American evangelist, has had a religious training. He tells how, when he was a young man, if either he or his brother got into bed without first saying his prayers, the other one would kick him out and swear at him.

There are hosts of unemployed preachers in the United States. According to a correspondent of the *Christian World*, the scramble for pulpits is very exciting, and "the old notion of a divinely-directed call seems to be wearing thin."

"A Sceptic Convinced." This heading attracted our attention in a religious newspaper. The matter below it was an advertisement of colored pills for white people. "Conviction" is played low down in some Christian journals.

"Never Heard of a God" is the dreadful heading of a paragraph which is going the round of the Church papers. It refers to a boy of ten who was called as a witness at a coroner's inquest at Southampton. The coroner asked him, "Have you been told there is a God?" and the boy answered, "No." "Can you say the Lord's Prayer?" was the next question, and again the answer was "No." Whereupon the coroner turned to the jury, exclaiming, "This is what you are paying for in the rates. It will be a serious thing for England if her children are brought up as heathens." It does not appear, however, that this godless boy was less able or willing to tell the truth than the coroner or the jury; and as all the court wants from a witness is his evidence, it is really a waste of time for the presiding officer to deliver theological discourses. If he wishes to preach, he should hire a chapel, and hold forth in his private capacity.

The Rev. J. Twamley was reported as saying that brickmakers were a low class of men, whereupon one signing himself "Hazel Grove" writes to the *British Claymaker* saying that the brickmakers are, as a class, far superior to any parson, inasmuch as they work for an honest living. "Can any parson conscientiously say as much?"

The Church magistrates have been investigating a case of indecent assault by a Wesleyan school-teacher, at Clayton-le-Moor, upon two girls aged nine and ten.

The Rev. G. W. H. Hanford, vicar of St. Andrew's, Cardiff, has obtained a decree nisi for a divorce against his wife on the ground of her adultery with the Rev. T. Lewis Harris Jenkyn, one of the curates of his church.

The Dean of Ely is one of those who are very busy in putting a new complexion on Christianity. Preaching at Westminster, he sought to show that the "cursing" words in the Commination service are not words of imprecation. Dealing with Lenten observances generally, he contended that the season, instead of being regarded as sad and gloomy, should be pleasant and comfortable. Fasting might, as a temporary expedient, be necessary for most of us; and if, he said with marked emphasis, "fasting helps you, use it and make no fuss; while, if feasting helps you, use that and thank God." This new coat of paint, under which one would hardly recognise the old features of the faith, is put on to hide the putrid carcase beneath.

The *Liverpool Post* (Feb. 24) has a long article on Thomas Paine, and finds that his theological opinions were rather more orthodox than those of Broad Church clergymen today. If this be so, it does not say much for the honesty of the Broad Church clergymen.

The *Glasgow Herald* has a leaderette on a young man named Joseph Carson, who has been convicted of stealing books from the Mitchell Library. It is so good that we venture to reproduce it *in extenso*: "It is a generally-received opinion that meditation on a future state produces good moral results. The rule, however, is not invariable, and has just received a striking contradiction in our own city in the case of the young man who was convicted yesterday of stealing books from the Mitchell Library. *Salvator Mundi*, *The Doctrine of Annihilation in Light of the Doctrine of Love*, and *Plymouth Brethrenism*—these are edifying titles, and of the person who pores over the books that bear them one is tempted to say, What a very good young man that good young man must be. But human nature, alas, is strongly perverse, and, as the poet has it, things are not what they seem. When Mr. Joseph Carson turned up the library catalogue at the heading 'Future State' he was filled with dark and evil purpose; he asked for the tomes of Dr. Samuel Cox and the Rev. James Baldwin Brown as though he had been one of the elect and regenerate, yet 'the same with intent to deceive.' Verily, the ways of the book-thief are past finding out. One can understand how felonious leanings may co-exist with a desire for first editions and rare copies, as they did in the heart of that priest who amassed a library by murdering rival collectors, and felt remorse only when his booty turned out not to be unique. But it is more difficult to realise how a taste for speculative theology and a disposition towards petty larceny can go together. It must be a very severe antinomian that can enjoy religious studies in a stolen book, and a very morbid curiosity about a future state that insists on being gratified even at such risks as beset the breach of the Eighth Commandment."

Mr. John Morley was heartily supported in the Montrose Burghs by several ministers of religion, but he was thoroughly well denounced by the Rev. Andrew Douglas, parish minister of Arbroath. This man of God deplored Mr. Morley's "pronounced hostility to the supernatural and essential element of the Christian faith." He described Mr. Morley as more than a sceptic, as an avowed enemy of Christianity, and declared that if he were elected "it would be the darkest day that Scottish Christianity had ever seen since the Revolution settlement." Well, the darkest day has arrived. Mr. Morley has been returned by an increased and overwhelming majority.

The Rev. Andrew Douglas says that no man who "dispenses with the presence of God," like Mr. Morley, is "fit to make the laws of a Christian nation." Perhaps not. It is enough that he is fit to make laws for honest and sensible people. The time has gone by for filling Parliament with nominees of the pulpit. Let the men of God save souls—if they can, and leave practical matters to better qualified practitioners.

The New Orleans *Picayune* says: "The burning to death of a defenceless woman, who was about to become a mother, by an armed mob of fifty men, near Lebanon, Ky., was one of the most brutal and cowardly crimes that ever blackened the fair fame of a civilised community. The woman's sin was unfaithfulness to her husband. If a mob of women should go about the country burning all the men who are unfaithful to their wives, what an illumination there would be! The very heavens would be lighted up." This in Kentucky, so piously Christian a State that Editor Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, was obliged to cross over to Cincinnati, O., to carry on his heathen paper.

An old superstition says that one born with a caul can never be drowned. James Parks, who has spent eighteen years of his life as fireman on board different steamships, doesn't believe this. On the contrary, he thinks a caul is a "hoodoo." He was born with a caul, and had been wrecked three times, when finally he shipped on board the *St. Paul*, when the latter was first launched. Every disaster which has befallen that vessel he lays to the evil influence of the caul, which he has made over to a friend.

James McAvois, a groceryman, of Carthage, Ill., has gone crazy over religion. A protracted meeting had been in progress, and McAvois was baptised in a creek through the ice. The excitement maddened him. While being taken to the asylum he continued to shriek, "Help! Help! The crucifixion!" He claims to witness the divine tragedy. Is that religion heaven-inspired which produces insanity? Will worse than howling dervishes be always permitted to work upon the fears of the people, and meet with no restraint? Do systems of religion other than Christianity steal away men's brains?

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A missionary to the Chippeway Indians in Northern Wisconsin told them that if they planted corn on Sunday it would not yield a harvest; and they perversely proceeded to test his wisdom. They planted an acre on Sunday, hoed it on Sunday, worked on it on no day except Sunday; and in August it was the best acre of corn on the reservation. The missionary resigned.

Rev. Julius Feick, of Hoboken, N.J., is ready and willing to earn an honest living; and he doesn't care whether he does it by preaching sermons or by selling whiskey. Just now he is in the saloon business; but he says: "I am prepared to take up the ministry again, if I can find a chance which will give me a salary large enough to enable me to support my family; but you can't pay rent and educate five children on $700 a year." Possibly, if the Rev. Fieck should run his gospel-shop on Sundays and his rum-shop on week days, he might manage to do quite a respectable business—that is, if his leading topers did not object to the combination.

A correspondent of the Boston *Congregationalist* in India says: "There is little doubt that in most places in India the educated native mind is not as favorably disposed towards Christianity as it was some time ago. Some speak of it as a reaction against Christianity; others denominate it a season of religious apathy; while others still describe it as a revival of philosophic Hinduism. Perhaps all these combined give us the present situation."

It seems that in the United States hairdressers advertise "convent hair" as specially attractive. The poor nuns are encouraged—nay, exhorted—to sacrifice their locks for the good of the convent. A list of hair dealers is kept by the sisters, who, whenever there is a new lot, hasten to the dealer they have reason to think will treat them most generously. If the price he offers is not considered sufficient, they send for another agent, whose stock is perhaps not so full, and who, in order quickly to accumulate a large amount, is willing to pay a somewhat higher price. Paul said a woman's glory was her hair, but Christ's brides have to surrender their locks to the dealers.

According to a recent despatch from Xenia, Ohio, an applicant at that place for enlistment in the regular army was found by the examining surgeon to have his heart upon his right ride, instead of upon the left. The surgeon was in doubt as to the advisability of passing him; but the applicant referred him to Ecclesiastes x. 2, where was found the following remarkable assertion: "A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left." Upon the strength of this authority the surgeon recommended that the man be passed. A wonderful production is that collection of documents known as the Holy Bible.

Our paltry Church House at Westminster is to be outdone at Chautauqua, where Bishop Vincent proposes to raise, with the cash of the faithful, a "Hall of Christ." The hall is to contain a hall where the life of Christ can be studied, with seats for five hundred—which seems rather a small allowance for the thousands who go to Chautauqua; a library containing nothing but lives of Christ, and a gallery for paintings and engravings of scenes in the life of Christ. There are Protestants who regard the images and pictures in Roman Catholic churches as objects of idolatry, who will think this project of Bishop Vincent for a $50,000 shrine very fine.

Prince Robert, Duke of Orleans, the legitimate pretender to the throne of France, who is twenty-eight years of age and gradually seeing his hopes of a crown fizzle out, is going to set up an establishment in London, where he may receive the court of those modern English Jacobins who believe that Mary of Bavaria is the rightful occupant of the English throne. Prince Victor Napoleon, who has as much ambition and bravery as his father "Plon-plon," stays waiting events at Brussels. The Pope's acknowledgment of the Republic disappointed both these young pretenders, who fancy that Republican disregard for the Church will aid their designs.

John Davison Rockefeller, the oil monopolist millionaire, is a good type of the philanthropist who robs Peter to pay Paul. His contributions to the Baptist Church and Chicago University have been well advertised. A benefactress of the latter institution, Helen Culver, has just donated a million dollars to be devoted "to the increase and spread of knowledge within the field of biological science," one purpose being "to make public the advances of science in sanitation and hygiene." Miss Culver, in setting aside this fund to be used in perpetuity for the benefit of humanity, desires it to be associated, not with her own name, but with that of Charles C. Hall, who suggested this endowment.

The *Catholic Watchman*, of Madras, writes in its leading article: "The falling standards of the Salvation Army need propping up, and the 'General' has come out once more to do it. Everyone that runs must see that the results of the Army operations are not what the noise of the drum and tamborine would lead us to imagine; and, if we are to judge by numbers, the efforts of the Army, as far as this Presidency is concerned, point to nothing but failure all along the line." According to the last census, there are 101 members of this curious and fantastic sect in the Madras Presidency, and that after years of labor.

The rows between Protestants and Catholics in Hyde Park, anent Cardinal Manning, led to a number of questions in the House of Commons, and last Sunday the Protestant lecturer was protected by a large bodyguard of police. They do love one another!

Sunday is the usual day of rest in Japan. Its selection is not due to law nor to religious scruples, but to public convenience, and, perhaps, out of respect to foreign nations. When what is known as the six-day law was passed the Government set the example by closing its offices on Sunday, and all other institutions followed suit. That law was originally suggested for sanitary reasons.

Something like a serious mutiny threatens the American section of the Salvation Army in connection with the removal by "General" Booth of his son, Ballington Booth, appointing in his place, as commander, his son-in-law, Mr. Booth Tucker.

"Colonel" Eadie is said to have been at the bottom of the disturbance. When he went to the States he found the army officers were buying houses on instalment methods through savings from their salaries. "Colonel" Eadie ordered them to stop this and to give up their homes, because Salvationists were to take no thought for the morrow, but to trust to Providence. He ordered one officer who had a private income to stop keeping a horse and carriage, saying that it was preposterous for a Salvationist to ride about on his duties. He also forbade the use of bicycles as unheard of and unseemly. He and Herbert Booth are believed to be at the bottom of the recall of Ballington Booth.

A very bad impression has been made by "Colonel" Nicol in a statement which he sends to the Press, in which he flatly accuses Mr. Booth and his wife of repeated falsehood and fabrication in their announcement of their reasons for withdrawing.

A military spirit seems engendered by the "blood-and-fire" methods of the Army. A despatch from Memel, in East Prussia, says that the local police, having dissolved a meeting of the Salvation Army, were vigorously attacked by the members of this body and their friends. The civil authorities, finding themselves unable to suppress the disturbance, called in the aid of the regular troops, who speedily drove off the rioters. Many arrests were made.

It is quite a treat to hear once more the sweet strains of the good old Christian doctrine of hell. They are so refreshing that we copy from the North Staffordshire *Herald* (Feb. 22) a specimen from its report of a sermon by the Rev. C. Coupe, S.J.: "Upon those who served not God the terrible doom has gone forth, 'Depart, ye cursed, into fire everlasting.' Now in their ears the thunders of God's anger are resounding, and the arrows of God's vengeance are piercing their souls. They are dwelling amid the devouring flames of a fire that shall not be quenched, amid cries of grief and woe, amid shrieks of desolation and despair, amid weepings and gnashings of teeth, and thus for ever—ever to suffer, never to be redeemed, for all eternity, unchanging, unending. For, realise it, the eternity of hell is unchanging, at least in all its essential features. It is ever-green, never-fading. The sun will rise and set its billions of ages, it may be; the tides will ebb and flow; the seasons will come and go; generations of men will be born, will live, and will die. At last the universe will collapse and crumble into ruin. But there will be no change in hell, no mitigation, no alleviation of the suffering, no diminution of the anger of God."

The press boycott of Mr. Foote is very amusing in some respects, although, of course, there is a serious side to the matter. Take the case of *The Shadow of the Sword*, for instance. Mr. Foote has presented this pamphlet to the Humanitarian League, and carefully revised it for this new edition. The League sends out press copies in the usual way, but the pamphlet is only noticed by a few Radical papers like *Reynolds* and the *Weekly Times*. Other journals, that usually notice the League's publications, will not even mention a pamphlet by "that Mr. Foote." The *Echo* is as obstinately silent as the rest of the boycotters, although Mr. Passmore Edwards is a "great humanitarian" and a patron of the League. Of course the press boycott extended to Mr. Foote's lecture at the Memorial Hall. But somehow or other the public came to hear "that Mr. Foote." The hall had not been crowded at any other lecture of the course, but on this occasion the hall was far too small, and hundreds of people were turned away from the door.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, March 1, Secular Hall, New Brompton, Kent, at 7, "How the Bible Stands Now."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—March 1, Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell; 8, Sheffield; 15, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby; 19 and 20, Nottingham; 22, Hull.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

D. BAKER.—We do not know Mr. Snell's address either. You omit the name of the paper from which you made the cutting.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Monthly and quarterly lists are worse than useless. If we set from them, we simply mislead people in many cases. Secretaries should send Branch lecture announcements weekly. It is not a heavy task, as there is only one Freethought paper which inserts them.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—George Anderson, £10.

J. LEIPPER.—Thanks for cuttings.

G. W. B.—Pleased to hear it, but we always like to *see* such things before commenting.

J. A. STABBINS.—The far East End is not forgotten. Mr. Foote has been negotiating for good halls there, in which to deliver special courses of lectures during the spring. Announcement will be made shortly.

D. D. (Brisbane).—Thanks. Papers are always welcome.

L. LEVINE (Charleston).—Received with thanks.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Liverpool Branch, £2 1s.; Birmingham Branch, £1 5s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Brisbane Observer—Secular Thought—Two Worlds—Birmingham Weekly Mercury—New York World—New York Journal—Sun—Dunoon Observer—Isle of Man Times—Brisbane Courier—Southend Standard—Progressive Thinker—Liverpool Post—Freethought Magazine—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Lucifer—Der Arme Teufel—Daily Chronicle—Freidenker—Blackpool Gazette.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

SPECIAL.

IN pursuance of my plans for organising our Freethought propaganda, with a view to establishing it on a satisfactory and permanent basis, I have arranged to keep Mr. C. Cohen in London from May to September. He will deliver open-air lectures on Sunday, and occasionally on week-nights. I guarantee him a fair living-wage, and the collection taken at his lectures must be sent in to me (through Miss Vance) to assist in defraying the expenses. Branches that require his services must please apply to Miss Vance, who will make up his list of engagements. This does not imply that Mr. Cohen has no freedom in the matter. He is at liberty, of course, to make engagements, under this plan, wherever and whenever he specially wishes; only we must keep in view our main object, which is to utilise his services all over the metropolis, and particularly where they are most urgently required in the interest of the movement.

Should this experiment prove successful, it is my intention to attempt the organisation of the whole of our outdoor propaganda next year.

Mr. Cohen has delivered twenty lectures, under my Lecture Scheme, in the provinces during the past six weeks. Mr. Watts has also been fairly busy, and I have done some of the work myself. Mr. Parris, Mr. Moss, and Mr. Heaford have taken part in the free courses of lectures in London, which have generally been very well attended.

These efforts involve a great deal of expense, but I hope we shall be able to continue them. To do so we shall require *the means*.

Six months ago I invited the readers of the *Freethinker* to subscribe to my Lecture Scheme. I now invite them to subscribe again, so that the work may be carried on without flagging. March will be another "Shilling Month." Every reader who is interested in Freethought propaganda outside the old restricted limits of unassisted Branch activity, and who is also able to render some assistance, should send me one or more (preferably *more*) shillings during this month. Every shilling I receive will be duly acknowledged, as usual; and I will make a general statement, financial and otherwise, at the Annual Conference.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

DESPITE the sudden cold weather, which always tends to keep elderly and delicate people indoors, Mr. Foote had a capital audience on Sunday evening, when he lectured at Camberwell on "The Sign of the Cross." We are glad to hear that the Camberwell Branch has been doing "better business" altogether lately, and we hope the improvement will continue.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening (March 1) in the Secular Hall, New Brompton, on "How the Bible Stands Now." This is the first time that Mr. Foote has lectured there on a Sunday.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts had three capital audiences in Manchester. The gathering in the morning was good, in the afternoon more than double the number attended, and in the evening the hall was full. Each lecture was received with great enthusiasm, and several of the audience expressed a wish for Mr. Watts to again visit Manchester at an early date. Friends were present from Rochdale, Failsworth, Oldham, and Hyde.

This evening, Sunday, March 1, Mr. Watts lectures in the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell, taking for his subject the different types of religious men.

Mr. C. Cohen writes that he has delivered twenty lectures under Mr. Foote's scheme since he left London on January 18. An account of this tour will appear in the *Freethinker*. Mr. Cohen has arranged to give two lectures at Willington Quay on February 28 and March 3. Local Freethinkers will please note.

The ferment created by Mr. Foote's visit to the West of Scotland has by no means subsided. The *Dunoon Observer* has a large number of letters on the subject, the Freethought side being fairly represented. One, signing himself "Churchman," complains that the *Observer* gave a full report of Mr. Foote's lecture, but was told by the editor: "Our correspondent is just rather presuming and intolerant, and forgets what are the proper functions of the press. In reporting Mr. Foote's lecture we only discharged a public duty."

Mr. Gilmour informs us that at Dunoon a special meeting of the Commissioners was called to settle the question of letting the Burgh Hall for Freethought meetings, and it was *unanimously* decided that, if respectable ratepayers wanted the hall for any lawful purpose, they should get it. The Dunoon friends have taken the large hall, seating 500, for Mr. Cohen's meeting on March 9.

The *Greenock Telegraph*, too, which had been having a controversy on "The Religion of Burns," inserts letters from both sides on "Mr. Foote and Secularism." A little mishap, it appears, occurred here. On one of our active friends returning to the Hall from the station, he found that about two dozen persons had come into the side-room to see about forming a Branch, but as no one was there to confer with them they went away. It is to be hoped that Mr. Cohen will visit Greenock and bring the lost two dozen and more into the fold.

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Mr. Foote has taken the Athenæum, in Tottenham Court-road, for two more Sunday evening lectures, this time by Mr. Touzeau Parris. The first of these will be delivered this evening (March 1) at 7.30. Admission to the front seats is by tickets, purchasable at 28 Stonecutter-street, or near the hall before the meeting. The back seats are free. We hope there will be a good gathering on both occasions.

Mr. Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, sends us a cutting from the local paper, but without the name, containing a descriptive article, entitled "Among the Agnostics." It describes a visit to the Alexandra Hall, and gives a fair account of Mr. Snell's lecture on "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist and Reformer." The writer pays Mr. Snell the compliment of saying that his lecture was good, clever, and not without a certain eloquence. "The audience," it is said, "were attentive and appreciative, and in the matters of external respectability and decorum altogether unexceptionable. Several ladies of superior type were present, and a number of well-dressed children."

Secularists in the western suburbs are reminded that the West London Branch has engaged the Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Goldhawk-road, Shepherds Bush, for a series of Freethought lectures on Sunday evenings during March. Mr. Robert Forder will deliver the opening lecture to-night (Sunday) at 7.30, his subject being "The Bible and Ancient Monuments." The hall is easy of access by rail to Shepherds Bush Station, and by trams from Richmond, Kew, and Chiswick, which pass the doors.

The Bradlaugh Club are making arrangements for courses of free lectures in North London. The first series will be on four successive Mondays at Edmonton. Mr. Forder opens the course on Monday, March 9, on "The Devil."

Mr. John Morley is returned to Parliament for the Montrose Burghs by a lumping majority. We hope Mr. Morley will remember that there are other people who want justice besides Irishmen. Freethinkers, for instance, are denied some of the commonest rights of citizenship, and Mr. Morley might really give them a little assistance in obtaining those rights, especially as he is a Freethinker himself, unless he has recently recanted.

The following extract from a leading article in the *Christian World* shows how Freethought (under another name) is spreading in certain religious circles: "For one thing, it may be said that, so far as choice is concerned in the matter of his religious beginnings, Prince Boris fares no worse than the rest of us. Our personal liberty in these matters of highest moment is, after all, a very limited one. Whether we should be born in the fifth or nineteenth century, whether our parents should be Mohammedans, or Agnostics, or Salvationists, whether we should be male or female, of this mental and moral capacity or that, would seem to be considerations of the utmost importance to our spiritual prospects. Yet on no one of these questions were we consulted. Prince or peasant, Eastern or Western, our ecclesiastical standing has been three parts made for us before we come into the business at all. The theory that the eternal bliss or woe of any mortal depends on his acceptance, in this life, of some one of the creeds or systems into which he may or may not have been born becomes, from the moment that this view of the matter has been fairly grasped, manifestly impossible."

Another article in the *Christian World*, over the well-known signature of "J. B.," speaks of the "ferocity of the theology" of Calvin and Knox. This is nearly as strong, though not so pointed, as Colonel Ingersoll's saying, that Calvin and Knox fitted each other like the upper and lower jaws of a wild beast.

J. Allanson Picton, writing in the *Christian World* on "Honesty in Teaching," says: "I am afraid there is another cause for the continued repetition of 'antique ideas.' People who know better are afraid to say so."

New England used to be the home of American Sabbatarianism. Now, says the report of the New England Sabbath Protective League, from 50 to 90 per cent. of the population of New England are non-churchgoers, and many of these open Sabbath desecrators and scoffers. Over one thousand churches have been closed on the Lord's Day in New England, and some six hundred Sunday trains run regularly in and out of Boston.

Munsey's Magazine for February gives a good portrait and sketch of Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Cremation is growing in favor in Philadelphia. A cremation society was organised in 1888, and the number of bodies cremated each year since then has increased steadily. In 1889 there were twenty-eight cremations, and, so far, this year there have been eighty-six. The society has started recently a scheme to "popularise the movement," by issuing bonds, which net the purchaser three per cent. interest per annum, and entitle the holder of each bond to one incineration, with a receptacle and space for the storage of the ashes. The society now has two hundred and sixty members and three hundred stockholders.

A very bold letter on "The Bible and the Bible God," signed "Varon," finds place in the *Blackpool Gazette and News*. It puts the matter so straightly that the editor quite needlessly disclaims agreement with "Varon."

The *Literary Guide* (March 1) contains, among other interesting matter, a notice of Gerald Massey's *My Lyrical Life*, and of Mr. Holyoake's *Public Speaking and Debate*. Professor Edwin Johnson tells of his literary relations with Professor Froude, who did not accept his theory. "F. J. G." continues his "Literary Chats," this number's being with Mr. J. M. Wheeler.

The following subscriptions were received for the National Secular Society at the Annual Dinner, held at the Holborn Restaurant on January 29. The delay in acknowledgment has arisen through Mr. Foote's illness and absence from London:—Mr. and Mrs. Miller, 5s.; A. Hartman, £1; T. L. Harris, 2s.; A. Sumner, 10s.; E. Winning, 5s.; Mrs. Penny, 2s.; Friend, £1; H. S., 5s.; S. M. Willen, 2s.; E. C. Ramsey, 5s.; G. Bedborough, 5s.; E. Wilson, 5s.; F. Cottrell, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Henderson, 2s.; F. J. W., 5s.

AN INVITATION FROM AMERICA.

Washington, February 4, 1896.

George W. Foote, President of National Secular Society, Great Britain.

My Dear Comrade,—In accordance with the resolution passed by the Congress of American Freethinkers, held last October at New York, I cordially invite yourself and Mr. Watts to visit our shores during the coming year. Our people will gladly welcome you both. Your own fame is already known to thousands of my countrymen. They remember your valiant defence of freedom in England, and they desire to extend to you the hand of fellowship, and look upon your face. The battle you fought is the battle for all mankind, and we reap the benefit with our friends in England. Mr. Watts has already been with us, and his value of his work is appreciated. We desire to receive you both as the representatives of the Freethought of Great Britain. My own visit to your land, the generous reception accorded me, and the acquaintance with many friends have increased and broadened the comradeship of American Freethinkers. It has given a nobler outlook to our future work; it has helped us on both continents to see the world-wide significance of our common cause. Your visit to our land will be equally productive of practical results. It will kindle our thought, enlarge our horizon, and add to our forces; it will help to make Freethought more widely known among millions of our people. I voice, therefore, the unanimous sentiment of the membership of our national organisation in asking you to come to our Congress of 1896, and to mingle with our people. I desire you to know the greatness of our own country, and to see the progress of truth and liberty in a New World, while you can give to us the intellectual wealth of the Old World, which we need for our highest civilisation. Freethought comradeship must be cosmopolitan. We must work on no narrow lines. Like Thomas Paine, we labor for the glory and freedom of two continents. To myself it will be the greatest pleasure to stand with you and friend Watts upon the same platform in this American Republic to do our best for man, for liberty, and for progress. Don't fail to come. In behalf of the Freethinkers of America, I am, yours always,

Samuel P. Putnam,
President of American Secular Union and Freethought Federation.

How to Help Us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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HUMBOLDT AS A FREETHINKER.

THOUGH living in the pre-evolution era, the mind of Humboldt was as truly of a scientific cast as that of Darwin or of Huxley. He imbibed from the French Atheists, Lalande and Delambre, love for fact and dislike for "a system of chemistry in which one did not get one's hands wet." He saw many lands and many people, yet, in the days when Hegelianism was in vogue, remained a frank naturalist. An unwearied student of science, he paid no attention to religion, frankly disliked pietists and theologians, and even opposed his brother Karl Wilhelm's essay on *The Province of the Historian*, because it seemed to acknowledge a divine government of the world, which to him was as much a delusion as the hypothesis of a principle of life. In his *Kosmos*, and his other works and letters, he never tired of teaching the Gospel of Humanity. Nothing was more odious to him than that pietistic hypocrisy which domineered in State and society during the reign of Frederick William IV. The noted General v. Gerlach, of the *Kreutz-Zeitung*, ironically asked Humboldt: "Your Excellency now often attends church, I suppose?" to which he as sarcastically replied: "The NOW is very kind of you; evidently you intend to show me whereby I could enter upon a career." Thereafter the pietistic wit no more tried his smart sayings on Humboldt. The clergy of all denominations hated him with that fervor of which the *Church militant* alone is capable. Had he not been chamberlain, it would have fared ill with him. Varnhagen relates, in his *Memoirs* (Dec. 26, 1845), that Humboldt himself spoke of his probable expulsion from Berlin, were it not for his position at the court; and he also spoke of the almost incredible endeavors made by the ultra-pietists to prejudice the Government against him. Nor would other Germanic countries have tolerated him had he not been protected by his high position. The great author of the *Kosmos* was distinguished, in the Jesuitic press, by such epithets as "soul-poisoner" and "assassin."

Humboldt resolutely opposed the persecution of the Jews in the name of religion, writing a strong letter to Count Stolberg, which concluded with the following remarks: "It is a dangerous presumption on the part of men to expound the old laws of God. The history of dark ages teaches of the missteps to which such interpretations have led. Let no fear of any harm it may do me keep you from making use of these lines. First of all we must have the courage of expressing our opinion." Among his favorites in latter days were two cultured Freethinking Jews—Heinrich Heine, the poet, and Ferdinand Lassalle, the Socialist, whom he called "das Wunderkind." About the time when Bruno Bauer was turned out of his chair at Bonn for having published his *Review of the Gospel History*, Humboldt wrote to his friend, Varnhagen von Ense, under date December 3, 1841: "Bruno has found me preadamitically converted. When I was young, the Court clergy held opinions much the same. [Humboldt was seventeen years of age when Frederick the Great died.] The one who confirmed me said that the Evangelists had made a variety of notes, from which in later times biographies had been romanced. Many years ago I wrote: '*Toutes les réligions positives offrent trois parties distincte; un traité de mœurs partout le même et très pur, un rêve géologique, et un mythe ou petit roman historique, le dernier élément obtient le plus d'importance*'"—(All positive religions offer three distinct elements—a code of morals everywhere the same and very pure, a geological dream, and a myth, or little historical romance; this last element obtains the greatest importance). Later on he says to his friend that Strauss disposes of "the whole historical romance of the apostolic myth collectors"; and Varnhagen notes, in his Diary, how he made merry with Bunsen's sanctimonious little tract on *Passion Week*. So also he speaks of being "much amused with the Straussian Savior," and with the tactics of the black army, "who, in order to impose fresh fetters upon mankind, even put on the armor of their former enemies." How admirably does this describe the tactics of the men of God in our own day. Of Strauss's *Leben Jesu* he says in a letter dated April 6, 1842: "The method of its logical arrangement is excellent; besides which, it imparts to us the whole history of the religious beliefs current in our time, especially the priestly craft, with which people, Schleiermacher-like, profess all forms of the Christian myths, accommodate themselves to dissentients, and, the 'chalice being drained,' will have themselves put under the sod with a *cortège* of royal carriages;* while for each of these myths a so-called philosophical explanation has been substituted." Such expressions, and many more that could be culled from his works, could come only from one who utterly rejected "the Christian myths."

J. M. W.

MITCHELL LIBRARY THEFTS.

EXTRAORDINARY CASE—LOCAL CLERGYMAN CENSURED.

JOSEPH CARSON, a respectably dressed young man, who is employed in a locomotive work in Springburn, and resides at 22 Avenue-road, was charged at the Central Police-court, to-day, with having, since May last, stolen from the Mitchell Library "Plymouth Heresies," "Salvator Mundi," "The Doctrine of Annihilation in the Light of the Doctrine of Love," and "Plymouth Brethrenism."

It seems that Carson, who frequently visited the library, took out a number of books, and gave in most cases a false name and address. Several of the books having gone amissing, an official of the library went to one of the addresses the man named in the slip, and satisfied himself that he was not the person who got the books. He stated, however, that one Carson, who also worked in Springburn, had an ill-feeling against him, and had possibly assumed his name to get him into trouble. A further clue was got from a letter, extending to a column and a-half, which appeared in the *Springburn Express*, advocating views similar to those set forth in the missing books. The library officials hit upon an ingenious method of procuring a specimen of Carson's handwriting. A letter, to which a fictitious name was attached, was sent to Carson, complimenting him upon the knowledge which was displayed in his communication to the *Express*, and asking what books should be read by the writer, who desired to learn something more on the subject. The ruse succeeded. Ignorant of the consequence, Carson replied to the letter, and not only gave a list of books, including the ones missing from the library, but informed his correspondent that they could be seen at the Mitchell Library. Having compared the handwriting with the writing on the slips, Mr. Barrett put the case into the hands of the police, and Detectives Dempster and Campbell arrested Carson.

Four of the books were found in his house, but the library stamps had been torn out. To-day Carson pleaded guilty to taking all the books with the exception of "The Doctrine of Annihilation," which he said he purchased.

Police-Judge Brechin said he had received a letter from a local clergyman giving Carson a good character. Such a thing was most injudicious, and he hoped that no such attempt would again be made to influence a magistrate's decision.

The accused stated that he intended returning the books.

Mr. Brechin said he had the utmost difficulty in refraining from sending the accused to prison for a considerable period. It was a very bad feature of the case that he tried to throw a slur on an innocent person. He would impose a fine of three guineas, with the option of 21 days' imprisonment.

—*Glasgow Evening Citizen, February 19, 1896.*

OUR CHILDREN'S PARTY.

FOR several years past the National Secular Society has given a children's party. It is intended to do the same this year. Miss Vance and a special committee, appointed to make the necessary arrangements, are busy with the preparations for the happy gathering. The date on which it is to take place will shortly be announced. In the meantime, friends who desire to contribute to the evening's amusement of the young ones are earnestly requested to send subscriptions *at once* to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. It is intended to provide refreshments and a variety of entertainments for between one and two hundred children; and, as this will cost about £20, it is hoped that those who can afford to render pecuniary assistance will do so. Nothing should afford adults greater pleasure than to see the children of our party indulging in innocent sports and pastimes. Let us all do our best to make them happy on the occasion of their annual festival. Mr. Foote and myself will be present to share in witnessing the jollity of the little ones. The committee have not yet decided where the merry meeting will be held, but it is expected that it will be in the large hall of the Club Union, Clerkenwell-road, E.C.

CHARLES WATTS.

* Alluding to Schleiermacher's profession of the orthodox faith on his death-bed; whereupon King Freidrich Wilhelm III., hearing of it, ordered the court carriages to follow his funeral.

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BELLS.

Bells come from the East, and have been associated with Buddhist worship from the earliest times. There is little doubt that Buddhist monks introduced them both to China and to Europe, where they got incorporated with Christianity, "the Buddhism of the West." In China and in Russia they have received their largest development, there being in Pekin, Nankin, and Moscow bells so enormous that they cannot be sounded. The Czar Kolokol at Moscow, reputed to be the largest in the world, having a diameter of 22 feet and weighing 198 tons, is said to have cost £350,000. That in St. Ivan's Church, though weighing but 57 tons, is a monster compared to any known in England. Our largest are Great Peter at York, Great Tom at Oxford, and Great Paul in London.

The use of bells doubtless arose from the striking of sticks, shells, and gongs to drive away evil spirits. The fool, known by his cap and bells, is only a remnant of the earlier medicine-man or sorcerer, or devil expeller, the prototype of the modern priest and devil-dodger. Durandus, the old writer on Christian ritual, says: "The church, when a tempest is seen to arise, rings the bells that the fiends, hearing the trumpets of the eternal king, may flee away, and cease from raising the storm." Among old inscriptions on bells we find such as these: "I drive away pestilence," "I am called Mary: I disperse the storms, scatter enemies, and drive away demons."

This was one of the "fooleries" against which Latimer, the Reformer, declaimed. "Ye know," he said, "when there was a storm or fearful weather, then we rung the holy bells; they were they that must make all things well; they must drive away the Devil! But I tell you, if the holy bells would serve against the Devil, or that he might be put away through their sound, no doubt we would soon banish him out of all England; for I think, if all the bells in England should be rung together at a certain hour, there would be almost no place but some bells might be heard there, and so the Devil should have no abiding place in England." No disease of the body is more hereditary and inveterate than these disorders of the mind. The Bishop of Chalons christened a peal not many years since, and in a sermon which he pronounced on the occasion enforced the "fooleries" which Latimer had laughed away. "The bells," said he, "placed like sentinels on the towers, watch over us, and turn away from us the temptations of the enemy of our salvation, as well as storms and tempests. They speak and pray for us in our troubles; they inform heaven of the necessity of earth." If this be true, there is more virtue in the clapper of a bell than in the tongue of a prelate. So late as 1852 the Bishop of Malta ordered all the church bells to be rung for an hour to allay a gale. Under the auspices of a hierarchy so enlightened the custom continues to flourish to this day in many parts of the Continent, and may not impossibly endure while a tower, a bell, and a Roman Catholic priesthood can be found collected on the same spot.

So far from bells being a protection in storms, it is likely they increase the danger. At any rate, the ringers, when aloft, are in an exposed position. A German *savant* calculated in 1783 that in the space of thirty-three years 386 towers had been damaged and 121 ringers killed.

The "passing bell," as it was called, was tolled at the time that some person was dying, in order to drive away demons who might be waiting to seize hold of the passing spirit; and this reason lies at the root of the tolling of bells at funerals. The bell, when rung, as of yore, before the death, must often have dismayed the dying, and by putting them in mind of evil spirits and other supposititious terrors of death may have hastened their ends. It doubtless was an instrument in the hand of priestcraft in making dying sinners hand over some of their goods to the Church. Nelson, in his *Fasts and Festivals* (1732), says of the good Christian: "Should his senses hold out so long, he can hear even his passing bell without disturbance."

Bells are still an occasion of dread and discomfort to the sick and dying. In country places, where houses are scattered, and many parishioners remote from the church, they serve some purpose of utility, and even may have, when heard at a distance, some delectable influence upon the feelings, as with

> The bells of Shandon
> That sound so grand on
> The pleasant waters of the river Lee.

But in crowded cities church bells are neither more nor less than a tintinnabulating nuisance.

Uncle Benjamin Bimbom.

He who opposes his own judgment against the consent of the times ought to be backed with unanswerable truths; he that has truth on his side is a fool, as well as a coward, if he is afraid to own it because of the currency or multitude of other men's opinions.—*De Foe.*

EACH ALIKE GUILTY.

A clergyman writes that, in his opinion, we err in holding Protestants and Christianity generally responsible for the wrongs and violence of Catholics. He says: "The excesses of which you justly complain were all committed before the Protestants were in being."

The objector cannot be ignorant of the fact that Christianity was fashioned and moulded into form by Catholics. Every rite and ceremonial and belief was shaped by the Mother Church. Not a dogma prevails among Protestant Churches which does not owe its paternity to Catholicism. These were forced on the world by persecution and slaughter. Every sacred day and every holiday observed by Protestants was inherited from their vile ancestors. Every saint in the Church calendar is of papal origin. Her historians were Catholics. Her sacred books were first found in the hands of the fathers of the Roman Church, and in all probability were forged by them. The first commentaries on the "Holy Scriptures" were written by Catholic priests, in whose lead Protestants have slavishly followed. Knowing the wickedness of the parent Church, no trust can be put in anything coming through her corrupt hands.

The thief in possession of stolen goods, with guilty knowledge of the original larceny, who labors to conceal his own connection with the crime, is, in law and in fact, held to be as guilty as the original thief.

Violence was the instrumentality employed to make Christians, without which the Church would be a feeble force in the world at this time. It was advancing civilisation that arrested the Church in its crimes, of which Protestants for several centuries were as culpable as Catholics.—*Progressive Thinker.*

Secularists on Animals' Rights.

The fifth of the Humanitarian League's series of addresses on "The Rights of Men and the Rights of Animals" was given at the Memorial Hall last night by Mr. G. W. Foote, the President of the National Secular Society, the subject being "The Secularist View." There was a crowded attendance, a large number of persons being unable to gain admission. Speaking as an evolutionist, and basing his argument on utilitarian grounds, Mr. Foote made a strong appeal for the recognition and humane treatment of animals as the relatives and fellow-workers of mankind, and quoted the authority of great Freethinkers, such as Voltaire, Schopenhauer, Bentham, and Ingersoll, the last-named of whom has denounced vivisection as the "disgrace and shame of some of the sciences." The position of the Secular Society on the subject is summed up in its demand for an extension of moral law to animals so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.—*Westminster Gazette (February 20).*

Parnell's Hatred of the Priests.

And then he hated the priests. He knew—none so well—that they were the real conservative force in Ireland. "The priests would all be against us. The young men would possibly help us in passive resistance; but for aught else they would be against us." That was his view. "I wish we could be rid of the black dragoons," he muttered on one occasion; "here comes another of them." We were engaged in earnest consultation. The approaching priest was a conceited coxcomb of a curate. Parnell stepped forward, and in his best style, a bland smile and a polite grasp of the hand, excused himself to the priest, and returned with a muttered malediction against priests in general, and this one in particular.—*New Age.*

Obituary.

A leading French Freethinker and scientist has departed in the person of M. Abel Hovelacque, anthropologist and orientalist. Born at Paris November 14, 1843, he studied law, and under the Second Empire made part of the group of *La Pensée Nouvelle*, with Asseline, Letourneau, Lefevre, etc. He studied anthropology under Broca, and founded, with Letourneau and others, the "Bibliothèque des Sciences Contemporains," publishing therein *La Linguistique*. For the "Bibliothèque Materialiste" he wrote a work on *Primitive Man*. He also published choice extracts from *Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau*. In 1878 he was made a member of the Municipal Council of Paris, and from 1881 to 1894 sat as deputy to the French Chamber.

Every day yields illustrations of the way in which men think only of the proximate and ignore the remote.—*Herbert Spencer.*

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BOOK CHAT.

ALEXANDER DELMAR, who is a foremost authority on the subject of money, in his *History of Monetary Systems* brings out the fact that the right to coin has always been a mark of sovereignty. In the empires of antiquity the minting of money was a sacerdotal function, and as such it was exercised as to gold and controlled as to silver by the sovereign-pontiffs of Rome and Sassanian Persia, when Mahomet and his undaunted followers issued from Arabia to overthrow these great powers.

* * *

Here is Le Gallienne's latest on books :—

What are my books?—My friends, my loves,
My church, my tavern, and my only wealth;
My garden: yea, my flowers, my bees, my doves;
My only doctors—and my only health.

* * *

Fun of the Footlights, by G. V. K. (7 Whimple-street, Plymouth), is a penny contribution to the gaiety of the Three Towns, that can be safely recommended to anyone in preference to pills or pious literature.

* * *

The most popular book in America just now is another of the many bogus lives of Christ. It is called *Titus: A Comrade of the Cross*, and is said to have been circulated to the extent of three millions of copies. Titus is the repentant thief of Luke xxiii. (According to Matthew xxvii., both thieves reviled him.) Titus is represented as a son of Caiaphas, the high priest, who has been stolen in infancy, and whose identity is discovered only when he hangs on the Cross. This sort of thing suits the American religious public, and is considered an excellent kind of book for Sunday scholars. After all, the incidents are not more fanciful or false than those of the well-known story on which *Titus* is founded.

* * *

Here is a very old book advertisement, one of the earliest which appeared in the English newspaper press, and which should be of interest to Freethinking book-lovers. It appeared in the *Mercurius Politicus* for September, 1659 :—

CONSIDERATIONS touching the likeliest means to remove Hirelings out of the Church; wherein is also discours'd of Tithes, Church Fees, Church Revenues, and whether any maintenance of Ministers can be settled by Law. The author, J. M. Sold by *Livewel Chapman*, at the Crown in Pope's Head Alley.

The author, J. M., we need scarcely say, was John Milton.

* * *

Another advertisement connected with one of the greatest names in our literature, Dean Swift, appeared in the *Tatler*, August 24, 1710. It reads :—

WHEREAS an ignorant Upstart in Astrology has publicly endeavoured to persuade the world that he is the late John Partridge, who died the 28 of March, 1718, these are to certify all whom it may concern that the true John Partridge was not only dead at that time, but continues so to the present day. Beware of counterfeits, for such are abroad.

This was one of Swift's many jokes on poor Partridge, the astrologer, whose assertions that he was living were not allowed to stand against the prophecy that he should die.

* * *

Writing of prophetic advertisements reminds us of the crank who always advertises in the *Standard* at Easter time about the "coming great war"—or is this one of Prophet Baxter's dodges? At any rate, it is not a new one, and in the *Times* of fifty years ago we read :—

THE MIGHTY ANGEL'S MIDNIGHT ROAR. "Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." This awful cry, as is demonstrated, will very shortly be heard, viz., at the commencement of "the great day (or year) of God's wrath," or the last of the 2,300 days (or years) in Daniel's prophecy. By the authors of "Proofs of the Second Coming of Messiah at the Passover in 1848." Price 6d. Fourth Edition.

* * *

Camille Flammarion, the astronomer-novelist, is writing another story based on scientific and astronomical facts. Flammarion was educated for the priesthood; but, being unable to reconcile his own views with those of the Church, he resigned his post and took up the study of the stars. His early training and imaginative powers are seen in his Spiritism and his theory that the parallel lines in Mars are the work of human agency.

* * *

Mr. Hardy's *Jude* no longer remains *the Obscure*. The voice of Mrs. Grundy has shouted so loudly against the work both here and in America that it is lifted into a first place among books of the day by the advertisements of its detractors. Mrs. G. always was a foolish female.

* * *

Dozens of stories are told concerning the kind heart and generous nature of the younger Dumas. Upon one occasion he wrote a play which he sent to a publisher anonymously. Several months later he published the fact, stating that he had heard nothing of the play, and presumed it was lying in the manager's lumber-room with hundreds of others, all unopened. He neglected to say whose lumber-room he meant. A play by Dumas was something of an event in Paris, and every manager set about a careful overhauling and reading of manuscripts that had accumulated. This was exactly what Dumas wanted. Of course there was no doubt concerning his play when it was discovered; but incidentally many a young author received the hearing he had long sought in vain.

* * *

Money: Its Mysteries and Mistakes, and their Bearing on Commerce, Industry, and Poverty, by E. S. Cooper (Reeves, 185 Fleet-street, E.C.), is a twopenny pamphlet which argues in favor of individualism and a ready-money system; recovery for debt, which the author says is the parent of bankruptcy, imprisonment, over-reaching, and extortion, to be abolished.

* * *

No. 5 of the Bijou Library (Reeves, 185 Fleet-street) is *Patriotism and Christianity*, by Count Leo Tolstoi. Written shortly after the Franco-Russian festivities at Toulon and Paris, October, 1894, Tolstoi boldly compares this outgush of patriotism to an epidemic in Russia, one feature of which was that the peasants gave up work under the conviction that the end of the world was at hand. Tolstoi sees in such proceedings, not a confirmation of peace, but an incitement to war, which, in his view, though not in that of Christian nations, is incompatible with Christianity. Like all Tolstoi's works, the *brochure* is vivid and attractive.

* * *

In a long and pungent criticism of Mr. J. M. Robertson's book on *Buckle and His Critics*, the *Athenæum* (Feb. 23) admits that "Buckle's book is one of the few attempts at constructive synthetic work in the domain of history which have a permanent value, and in so far as Mr. Robertson has sought to vindicate a great work from petty and ignorant misrepresentations, we are devoutly at one with him."

* * *

A bulky, complete set of the Buddhist sacred books, in four hundred volumes, was sent by Buddhists in Japan to Dr. Barrows, in token of his services in organising the Parliament of Religions. He has handed them over to the University of Chicago, where they should be utilised in the study of comparative religion.

* * *

Sir Henry Spelman's *History and Fate of Sacrilege* is a work making out that all who have taken part in despoiling the Church of England have come to bad ends. It is, of course, popular with clergymen, and has gone through four editions in our own generation. Spelman's facts are by no means unquestionable, and neither he nor any of his editors has ever investigated the proportion of prosperous and unfortunate families, so that his argument is in the air.

PROFANE JOKES.

A very diminutive clergyman, whose head would barely reach the top of a pulpit, went one Sunday to preach at a country church. Of course a stool had to be provided for him to stand upon, but he had no sooner taken his text from the words, "A little while and ye shall not see me," than the stool collapsed, rendering him invisible.

A young theologian, fresh from college, once went to preach at a remote village church; and, wishing to display his learning, quoted largely from the commentators. Some commentators, he said, translate the passage thus; other commentators put on a different construction. At length he was interrupted by an ancient rustic, who exclaimed: "Don't talk to us any more about common taters; me and my old gal allus eats the best kidneys."

A country vicar, on going his round one Monday morning, called at the house of a venerable old dame, who had seen some seventy odd summers. "Well," said he, "and how did you like my sermon yesterday?" "Oh sir," she replied, "it was delightful; especially your description of that place where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth; and, considering I have had no teeth to gnash for the last twenty years, there will be no chance of you meeting me there."

If men were to abdicate their reason in the simplest transactions of life in the way they are taught and expected to do in matters of religion, they would be laughed to scorn.—*Theodore Mayne.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "Certainties of Religion Worthless."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, A. B. Moss, "The Conversion of the Devil." Tuesday, complimentary dance to members of the N.S.S. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture VII., The Twins" (continued).

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, a lecture. Friday, February 28, at 8, urgent meeting of members and friends.

EAST LONDON BRANCH: 6, tea and concert at the Aldgate Pump Hotel, 26 Aldgate.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (73 Libra-road, Roman-road): 8, Sunday-school; 7.30, Mr. Johnson, "War."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 36 Newington Green-road.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Scotch Presbyterianism."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Prophets."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Shepherds Bush): 7.30, R. Forder, "The Bible and Ancient Monuments."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, J. Rowney, "Paul and his Teaching."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, members' social meeting.

BLACKBURN: 8, business meeting at 18 St. Peter-street.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, social.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, G. W. Foote, "How the Bible Stands Now."

FELLING AND EAST GATESHEAD BRANCH (Mechanics' Institute Hall, Felling): Wednesday, C. Cohen, "Is Christianity True?" Friday, C. Cohen, "The Teachings of Jesus Inadequate and Anti-Social."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—impromptu speeches and business meeting; 6.30, Zosimus, "Campaigning Notes; or, the Humors and Lessons of Peripatetic Propagandism."

HECKMONDWIKE (Lumbard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, a meeting.

IPSWICH (G.E.R., Commercial-road): 7, members' meeting.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Captain Monro, "Repairing the Idols" (Ingersoll).

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Anniversary Sunday.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Ernest Newman, "Oscar Wilde." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "Plants and their Adaptability to their Surroundings" (illustrated by oxy-hydrogen lantern).

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, musical and other recitals.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "State Interference v. Individual Liberty"; 7, "What has Become of Christianity?"

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (Literary and Philosophical Room of the Exchange Hall): Thursday, at 7.45, C. Cohen, "Atheism: its Meaning, Morality, and Justification." Friday, at 7.45, in the Workmen's Institute, Milbank-street, South Bank, "Is Christianity True?"

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—March 1, South Shields; 2, Felling; 8, Wellington Quay; 4, Felling; 5 and 6, Stockton-on-Tees; 8, Glasgow; 11, Paisley; 18, Motherwell; 15, Glasgow; 22, Edinburgh; 29, Leeds. April 5, Balls Pond; 12, 19, and 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—March 1, Balls Pond.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—March 1, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road; 8, Balls Pond; 15, Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road; 22, Athenæum, Shepherds Bush. April 12, Balls Pond; 26, Glasgow.

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The Freethinker

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THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

INTRODUCTION.

MR. WILSON BARRETT'S new play has been a striking success from the popular and managerial point of view. "Put money in thy purse," says Iago to Roderigo, and Mr. Barrett has adopted the advice. By appealing to the sentimental and religious public, instead of to the more limited public with some dramatic taste and experience, he has drawn crowds to hear his fine, if somewhat monotonous, voice, and to witness his statuesque posings in the scanty costume of ancient Rome. When I saw the performance at the Lyric Theatre I was struck with the novel character of the audience, which might almost be called a congregation. It seemed to be the emptyings of the churches and chapels of London. Most of the people appeared to be unused to such surroundings. They walked as though they were advancing to pews, and took their seats with an air of reverential expectation. Clericals were present in remarkable abundance. Parsons to right of me, parsons to left of me, parsons in front of me—though I cannot add that they volleyed and thundered. Everybody wore his best Sunday face, and when the lights were turned low, and pious opinions were ejaculated on the stage, it was remarkably like a religious exercise. "Ahs" and "hear hears" arose from the auditorium, and I fancied—but it must have been a mistake—that I occasionally caught an "Amen" or a "Hallelujah."

THE PLAY.

The Sign of the Cross is a Salvation Army tragedy. Setting aside pecuniary motives, it is designed in the interest of that species of Christianity which is generally styled "primitive," and the play is as primitive as the religion it advocates. It is melodrama from beginning to end. There is plenty of incident, but no real plot; much movement, but no real progress. Men and women are brought on the stage and taken off; they talk and act, and talk and act again; but as they are at the rise of the curtain they remain at its fall; there is absolutely no development of character, which is the one thing that gives a serious interest to dramatic composition.

Mr. Barrett informs the world, in a letter to the Newcastle *Chronicle*, that he has "sought" in this play to "make vice hideous." It is really very good of him to be so solicitous about her appearance, but his anxiety is somewhat unnecessary. Was it not Pope who said that vice to be hated needs but to be seen? Mr. Barrett tickets her carefully, and paints her like a scarecrow; in doing which he overreaches himself, for it is not brazen, riotous vice that is seductive. Temptation comes to average human nature in a more plausible fashion. It may be good preaching to "make vice hideous," but it is bad drama. The business of the playwright, as the great Master taught, is to "hold the mirror up to nature." Do that, if you can; give us a faithful image of good and evil; and you need not fear as to which will be loved or hated. But if you cannot do that, it is idle to plead your excellent intentions.

Far more pertinent is Mr. Barrett's statement, in the same letter, that "it was necessary to introduce the darker side of the life of the time, in order to show the value of Christianity." This he has done with a vengeance. His playbill gives two lists of characters, "Pagans" and "Christians." All the Pagans are wicked people—tyrants, sycophants, intriguers, assassins, drunkards, thieves, and prostitutes. All the Christians are good people—pure, benevolent, and merciful. Look on this picture and on that! Oh yes, but both are painted by a partisan. We all know that the lion was nowhere in the picture of his fight with the man, but a lion who saw it remarked that it might have been different if lions could paint.

Mr. Barrett's method is contemptibly silly. It is the sheep and the goats nonsense over again—as though the world, in its religious, political, or social disputations, was ever sharply divided into two categories of absolute virtue and absolute wickedness. Not thus are the elements of human nature mixed and distributed; not thus ever were they, not thus will they ever be.

Mr. Barrett has simply availed himself of the ancient trick of the Christian apologist. He does not merely introduce the "darker side of the life of the time," he excludes all its brighter side. It is nothing to him that Seneca, the philosopher, was sent to death by the same Nero who is said to have murdered Christians. That may be history, but it is not partisanship. Mr. Barrett makes the life of Paganism as black as midnight, and the life of the little handful of Christians the one gleam of light piercing the darkness. What childish simplicity! And only to think that this should be accepted as fair and accurate by thousands of apparently rational people a hundred years after the death of the great author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire!*

"Religions," says Schopenhauer, "are like glow-worms; they require darkness to shine in." Mr. Barrett may not have read this epigram, but he felt its truth instinctively; so he painted a black sky, and called it "Paganism," and then he painted in one star, which could not help being brilliant, and called it "Christianity."

WHAT IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

Had the author of *The Sign of the Cross* been a real dramatist, instead of a melodramatist, he would have taken the same human nature on both sides, neither miraculous in its heroism nor subterhuman in its weakness; he would have taken men and women of this composition, exhibited them as husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, lovers, friends, and citizens; and then have shown how these universal and eternal relationships were affected by a difference of religious conviction. Mr. Barrett has not done this; he has not even attempted it. No doubt he felt it beyond the scope of his powers. He might at least have displayed conviction on both sides, and he has not even done that. But without conviction, while there may be comedy, there cannot be tragedy; and thus Mr. Barrett's play is on the one side farce, and on the other side melodrama.

REAL MELODRAMA.

I confess that I like my melodrama—when I do take it, which is very seldom—to be the real unadulterated article. Let me explain what I mean, and I can do this best by an illustration.

Many years ago, in the early seventies, I visited an East-end theatre famous for its melodrama. The audience took the play as sterling tragedy. They cheered the hero and howled at the villain. For my part, however, I cried with laughter, and shed more tears than I ever dropped at a serious performance. The villain of the piece had as many lives as a cat, or *would* have had as many had there been time for nine acts. At the end of

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one act he fell down a precipice several hundred feet deep; but he turned up again smiling, and bent on further mischief. At the end of another act he sat all alone on a block of ice in a northern sea; the ice sank, and he went down with it; but he turned up again as though nothing had happened. At the end of another act he was shot by a platoon of soldiers. That *should* have settled him, but he turned up again. Finally, in the last act, he was accurately hung, as Carlyle would say. As the life was squeezed out of him, a breathless messenger rushed in with a reprieve. This was the hero's last great opportunity. Standing in the centre of the stage, with his right hand uplifted to heaven, he exclaimed, "Too late! too late! the ends of justice can no longer be defeated!"

That is how I like my melodrama, and if Mr. Wilson Barrett played in such a piece, I would go to see him with pleasure.

CLAUDIAN.

Mr. Barrett's melodramas are not as good as the one I saw at the "Brit." Take *Claudian*, for instance. That was considered a highly moral play. It is even alleged that it won words of praise from Mr. Ruskin. But it was a melodrama, and only a Christian could discover its morality. Claudian was a gentleman who could not die, being under a curse of longevity, which could only be broken by a pure and disinterested love. He lived for centuries, and was constantly standing amidst the wreckage of mankind. He survived earthquakes that ruined whole cities. He stood alone on tumbling masonry that would not kill him. And all this slaughter was apparently designed to complete his spiritual development. Surely a monstrous ethic! contemptible to all minds undebauched by the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice. G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

THE FISH SYMBOL.

It has often been jocularly remarked that the injunction to take no meat but fish in Lent is a proof that Christianity came from fishermen. And, in truth, it will be found on examination that there is something very fishy about the origin of our national religion. Antiquaries make the fish a symbol of Jesus Christ. Christianity seems to have spread at first largely among the fishing population of the Mediterranean. A fish is sculptured on a number of early Christian monuments. It was as much a symbol of the baptised as the square and compasses are of Freemasons. St. Clement of Alexandria says: "Let the dove and the fish remain as signs unto you." Tertullian adds: "We are like fishes in Christ, our great fish; for we are born in water, and can only be saved by continuing therein." About the middle of the fourth century Optatus, Bishop of Milesia, in Africa, declared that "the single name of fish, according to the Greek denomination, contained in the letters composing it a host of sacred names; ΙΧΘΥΣ gives in the Latin, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior." In fact, by taking each letter of ΙΧΘΥΣ for the initial of a Greek word, we make "Ιησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υιος Σωτηρ."

But, as remarked in *Footsteps of the Past* (p. 163), the fish symbol was an ancient pre-Christian one, which came into special signification about 263 B.C., when the sun entered Pisces. *Ichthus* was a title not only of Jesus, but of Bacchus and Horus. The Sibylline oracles, which existed long before the Christian era, contained an acrostic on the word *Ichthus*. Justin Martyr, the earliest Christian writer of undisputed authenticity, in the middle of the second century, appeals to the Sibyl as predicting, "in a clear and patent manner, the advent of our Savior Jesus Christ"; and Celsus soon after nicknamed the Christians "Sibyllists." Possibly what the Sibylline books predicted was simply that the equinox would pass from Aries into Pisces—from the Lamb of God into the Divine Fishes. Gerald Massey (*Natural Genesis*, i. 454) says: "When the equinox passed into the sign of Pisces, the fish became the figure of the Christ on the cross. Hence the fish on the pre-Christian cross which is found in Scotland and Ireland, and the fish type which was continued whenever the reckonings were kept." He further tells us that "Horus in Egypt had been a fish from time immemorial; and when the equinox entered the sign of Pisces, Horus, who was continued by the Gnostics, is portrayed as *Ichthus* with the fish sign over his head." Jesus said his only sign is that of Jonas, who was swallowed by a fish, or, as Kenneth Mackenzie says, "absorbed into the *Vesica Pisces*." This writer, in his *Royal Masonic Cyclopædia*, cites Dr. Crucifix, who says: "In former days the Grand Master of our Order used to wear a silver fish on his person." Dr. Kenealy, in the curious anonymous hodge-podge he called *The Book of God*, said (p. 240): "The *fishes* mystically signify the Initiated into the Eleusinia." It was the symbol of the perfected, the elect.

Baptismal fonts are particularly ornamented with fish. Thus at Gemona in Frioul, and Pirano in Istria, are two large baptismal urns, bearing fish. In a village church near Beigetad, in Denmark, around a baptistery, are three fishes, intertwined in the form of a triangle. France contains many similar examples. The fish is distinctly depicted on the baptismal font at Boulogne-sur-Mer; and so, likewise, on that of St. Jacques at Compiégne. In Saint Germain-des-Près, at the entrance where the baptismal font is placed, a male and female siren are seen, with fishes in their arms; while other fish play beneath the waters which undulate around those fantastic personages. Fishes are likewise seen in other parts of French churches besides the baptisteries. In the nave of St. Caprais-d'Agen three fishes are represented. A fish is also sculptured on a statue in the cemetery of St. Jean, department of la Nièvre.

Jesus is said in the Gospels to have declared he would make Peter and Andrew "fishers of men." His representative on earth, the Pope, is par-excellence the Fisherman of Rome, and signs with the fisherman's ring. Jesus himself was called "fisher of men." St. Gregory Nazianzen says that Jesus, the fisher of men, descended into the troubled sea of this world in order to draw men from it like fishes, and carry them up into heaven. M. Robert informs us that on one of the sarcophagi in the Vatican, described by Bottari, Jesus is represented standing on the shore, a line in his hand, and a crowd of little aquatic beings nibbling at the bait. An engraving taken from a cornelian, and published by the Abbè Vallarsi, at Verona, represents a young fisherman, holding a little fish on his hook; against the fish is the word ΙΧΘΥΣ. But the most complete existing monument of this description is furnished by a miniature in the manuscript of Herrade. God the Father is there represented holding in his hand a line, which he casts into the abyss of ocean. The line itself is formed of the busts of patriarchs, prophets, and kings, enchained the one with the other, from Adam, who is nearest God, down to David, who is next to the hook; the bait, in fact, is no other than Jesus the Savior, attached to the Cross.*

Beyond the astronomical explanation of the fish as a religious emblem is the fact that much of the food of the ancient world was drawn from the sea, and fish, from being extraordinarily prolific, became signs of abundance and increase. Major-General Forlong (*Rivers of Life*, i. 246) says: "The fish is universally worshipped in all lands as the most fecundative of all creatures; and, where most valued, the superstitious have offered it in sacrifice to their gods, refusing to eat or injure it." While some abstained from fish, others partook of it as the sacred food, taken as a preparation for a following feast. Thus the fasting, or fish diet, of Lent is a preliminary to the celebration of the spring resurrection. J. M. WHEELER.

Infallible Records.

The attempt to find infallible records in canonical books, and permanent standards of truth in ecclesiastical votes, has so hopelessly failed that honest persistence in it has become impossible to instructed persons; and therefore, in all competent guides and teachers of men, a continued sanction and profession of it is not simply an intellectual error, but a breach of veracity. And this tampering with sincerity on the part of instructors, who know better than they choose to say, not only arrests the advance to higher truth, but eats, like a canker, into the morals of our time. The sophistries of unfaithful minds are as strange as they are deplorable. Who ever smothers an "honest doubt" creates the sin, while missing the preluding good of unbelief. And the conventional outcry against "destructive criticism" intercepts the reconstructive thought and faith which can alone endure.—*Dr. Martineau.*

* *Université Catholique*, vol. vi.

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BELIEF IN GOD AN EMOTIONAL FIGMENT.

It is curious to note the various phases the belief in God assumes at the present day. The old orthodox notion of a deity, based upon the delineations of the Bible, is now given up by the intelligent portion of believers in a supernatural being. The Christian God is preached about from the pulpit, but his character is seldom, if ever, dwelt upon. Ministers of the Gospel rely upon their own imaginations in describing a Supreme Being in whom they profess to believe. Hence the descriptions rendered of God are as varied as they are contradictory and purely visionary. The orthodox idea differs widely from that of the "advanced Theist," as does also the notion entertained by the Calvinist from that of the Unitarian. To us it appears that the belief in all those gods which credulity has ever pictured has been simply an emotional figment.

It must be remembered, however, that an emotional figment is but a mental phenomenon caused by imaginary agencies, or by the exercise of the inventive faculty. In either case it is not the result of observation, or the product of the understanding. It is reported that a Frenchman once remarked that, if a God did not exist, we would have to invent one, forgetting apparently that the God of every nation is a theological invention. Emerson says: "Men bear beliefs as trees bear apples"; and he further adds: "The God of the cannibals will be a cannibal, of the crusaders a crusader, and of the merchants a merchant. . . . . The interior tribes of our Indians, and some of the Pacific Islanders, flog their gods when things take an unfavorable turn." This shows that some identity is supposed to exist between men and their gods. That is, man thinks himself related to his God, whom he has created in his own imagination. It is said that the religions that once comforted people, and even made nations famous, are gone; but is it not a fact that to-day we see in Christianity a revival or survival of what orthodox folk contemptuously denominate heathenism? It is a matter of history that those nations who lacked genius aped their ancestors in religion, as, indeed, they did in most affairs of every-day life. The very essentials of orthodox Christianity are but reproductions of ancient myths. Moreover, the institutions of to-day are the characterisation of the people who either establish or adopt them. What men imagine to exist outside their experience frequently becomes a belief which appears to them as conclusive as though it were demonstrated geometrically. Hence, persons imbibe certain notions in the morning of their lives without thoroughly reasoning out why they do so, and as they grow in years such notions become imperceptibly, as it were, to them a part of their mental reality. This may explain why some gods are represented as being partial, cruel, and unjust, while others are depicted as being possessed of qualities the very reverse. The fact is, all the gods who were ever thought to exist are but the reflex of the mental characteristics of their worshippers.

It is somewhat singular that we should find in the old Roman world, amid its great courage and its vigorous intellect, indications of an emotional belief as to the basis on which the government of the world depends. Yet we read that Marcus Antoninus said: "It is pleasant to die if there be gods, and sad to live if there be none." This means that our fates are ruled by the gods, whose existence was thought necessary to the lives and happiness of the human race. This is a delusion born of uncontrolled emotion. The paradoxical character of such a view of existence is seen when we compare the different objects the god-believers have in their minds when they act upon the emotional belief. One starts out upon a mission of peace, inspired by "a God of love"; while another shoulders his rifle and marches to war, calling upon "the God of battles" to lead him to victory. It would be puerile to seek for the source of this actuating power outside the individuals who are concerned in the actions. Our ancestors bravely faced the Roman legions, but when an eclipse came on they dispersed and fled. The cause of the flight was in them, not in the celestial phenomenon. Conduct, like belief, based upon the purely emotional is seldom of long duration. The one changes its nature, and the other its form, with the acquirement of new impulses. Herein lies the difference between the method of conversion of the Secularist and the Christian. They both appeal to the emotions, but in a very different manner. The Secularist seeks to reach the heart through the head, while the Christian aims to touch the head through the heart. In other words, the one appeals first to reason, and the other devotes his primary attention to fear.

In evoking the aid of what is termed God, the orthodox believers seek only that which they deem conducive to the realisation of their desires. In such instances the emotions frequently become uncontrollable, and the supplicants are worked up to a state of ecstasy, which appears to practical, sober-minded persons as bordering on madness. Many instances may be given to justify this allegation; such, for example, as St. Paul and his visions; Swedenborg and his "spiritual communications"; the Methodists with their "experiences," and the Salvationists with their wild flights of fanaticism. Of course the religious enthusiasts will urge that these "manifestations" and 'outpourings" are but the frenzy of their immortal souls. Our lunatic asylums, however, show that persons have been so emotional that they have gone beyond mere frenzy, declaring themselves to be personages of the highest rank; some have even thought themselves to be Jesus Christ. From the condition of St. Paul to that of the lunatic patients it is only a question of degree in madness. With all of them, reason had become dethroned and judgment impaired. To this unfortunate mental disease the cause may be traced of those malignant wars and abominable atrocities which have disgraced the history of the Christian faith. As Earl Russell, in speaking of the condition of society under Christian rule, writes in his *History of the Christian Religion*: "The spirit of persecution unfortunately arose, and the majority endeavored, by fire and sword, to make the minority embrace what was considered the orthodox creed.....Hence the bloody wars between the Athanasians and the Arians, which did not cease till the Arians were utterly subdued in the field of battle. Hence the persecutions of the Albigenses, and the cruel watchword when a town was taken by assault by an orthodox army, 'Slay all—God will know his own.' Hence the massacres and executions which marked with blood the various countries of Europe, and led to the establishment of the Spanish Inquisition" (pp. 279, 280). To the emotional believers, intellect is a hobgoblin, and genius a mocking fiend. With them reason is a snare, doubt a curse, and unbelief a crime.

The true explanation of the professed conceptions of all the gods will be found to be based upon what is termed the subjective—that is, they are mere fancied ideas of a person who is supposed to be similar in many respects to a human being. Such conceptions have no objective reality; they are not the subject of the understanding, of induction, or of science. Many Christians affect to believe that this is so in reference to devils, which they regard as figments of a disordered imagination. Why should not the existence of a god be as visionary as that of a devil? They are both the outcome of an intellect disturbed by theological figments. The fact is, man animates what he sees, and his preferences are determined by his antecedents, his occupation, or his natural gifts. Thus we find that the primary belief of a philosopher is philosophy, of a bishop theology, and of a poet poesy. Their natures predispose them to go in different directions, according to their education and tastes. Laplace, having no belief in gods, did not put even their names in his astronomical system. He said God had nothing to do with it.

Fortunately, belief in the intervention of a god, based as it is upon an emotional figment, will disappear as the knowledge that the world is governed by natural laws advances. Gods are only as intelligent and good as are their believers; the one is the measure of the other. Men but magnify their own virtues or vices in the mental conceptions they form of their gods. An ignorant and evilly-disposed man will ascribe to his God conduct far from being noble and ennobling, while an intelligent, kind, and benevolent god-believer will readily endorse the teaching of Euripides:—

> Goodness and being in the gods are one;
> He who imputes ill to them makes them none.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

Nurse—"Willie, in your prayers you forgot to pray for grandmother's safety." Willie—"Has she got a bicycle, too?"

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A BOUT WITH A BIGOT.

THE village of Garelochhead, which, as its name denotes, is situated at the upper end of the Gareloch, the first of those picturesque inlets of the sea that form so striking a feature of the scenery on the Firth of Clyde, has at least one claim to distinction. Some years ago, when a Sunday steamer from Glasgow was sighted coming up the loch, the Sabbatarian zealots of the place rushed down to the pier and forcibly prevented the mooring of the vessel. Since then the Lord of the Sabbath has signally prospered the place; for has he not caused sundry of his stewards, who lend him a little at a hundred per cent. and invest the remainder at a beggarly five, to construct the West Highland Railway which passes through Garelochhead, but often drops a fat tourist or corpulent visitor, to the great gain of the Lord's servants who own "houses and lands," etc.? But the Lord's goodness has gone further; for lately—in order, perhaps, to try the faith of his chosen people—he has permitted some naughty "infidels" to invade this secluded corner of his vineyard. And they have been sowing the seeds of that lusty plant—the tree of Liberty—so diligently that the Lord's gardeners have been filled with anger and dismay. Garelochhead, among other modern innovations, boasts of a "Mutual Improvement Society," and, even from the little I saw and heard of some of its members, I should say that there will be no need for the Society to change its title for a generation at least. One of the luminaries in this corner of space is a certain Mr. Hart, who, whether of his own motion in view of the spread of heresy in the district, or at the instigation of someone in authority who had not the manliness to come out into the open and vindicate the faith, was entered on the syllabus to read a paper on "Infidelity" on December 6, 1895. As, with a few exceptions formed by the villa residents, whose defection or recurrency the local clergy resent, but cannot punish, most of the Garelochhead Freethinkers are either inexperienced in public discussion, or in a position of economic dependence upon church-going employers and neighbors, I was invited down to hold the brief for "Infidelity."

There is no neutral meeting-place in Garelochhead, an anomaly which is about to be removed, as the community lately received a gift of money for the erection of a public hall; and the symposiums of the "Mutual Improvement Society" are held in the hall of the Established Church, with the parish minister in the chair, and the Free Church minister and the schoolmaster at hand to act as wet nurses for Christianity, and as wet blankets on the rash ardor of the spirit of Free Inquiry. I was told that, as a rule, the average attendance at the Society's meetings was about twenty; but evidently the prospect of gloating over the discomfiture of the "infidel," who had been vexing the soul of the righteous, had for once overcome the apathy of the villagers for "mutual" or any other species of improvement, for the audience on December 6 reached about a hundred. I slipped in quietly, and took a seat behind a young man who was planted between two good-looking and sprightly young ladies. The young man beamed graciously upon me, and inquired insinuatingly if I intended to take part in the discussion. I said deprecatingly that, as it was my first appearance there, I felt some diffidence even in thinking of such a contingency, but that I would see later on. The young man, with an effusion of urbanity and persuasiveness, continued that "really, as the subject was a most important one," I should say something. After I had said something, the young man looked neither friendly nor happy. I learned subsequently that he is a son of the deceased parish minister, and, if his eye should alight on this profane page, will he accept the assurance of a Pagan that my speech was not the result of his unwary solicitation, but solely of my own impious premeditation? This avowal may ease his conscience. It was amusing, and a little grievous also, to observe the contrast in the bearing of the meeting towards me before and after it was known that I was an "infidel." Before the direful disclosure of that damning fact, I was passed over as an inconspicuous and inoffensive fellow-Christian, and I don't suppose that the most misanthropic person in the room detected anything "swinister" in my appearance, or any mark of the beast on my spacious brow; but the moment it was discovered that I was a heretic everyone, who was not a heretic himself, eyed me askance. The old ladies drew up their skirts, and seemed to be sniffing for brimstone; some of the old men positively glared. The young ladies seemed to be divided between a vague disquietude and curiosity, and the boys, who stared most persistently, no doubt regarded me as a degree worse than a raw-head-and-bloody-bones pirate, since my villainy was not even romantic. Seriously, however, I make no complaint of the way in which the meeting treated me. I spoke strongly, but received a courteous hearing, and both the chairman, the Rev. Mr. Calderwood, and the Rev. Mr. Ireland, the Free Church minister, were evidently most anxious that I should get not only fair play, but even indulgence.

It would be a waste of space to give even an outline of Mr. Hart's essay. It had all the defects, without any of the occasional merits, of the painfully familiar Debating Society dissertation. As a dreadful example of what an essay should not be, it might have served a useful purpose. It was a farrago of turgid declamation, cant, and claptrap, a compound of "flapdoodle"—the stuff they feed foals on, garnished with flagrant misstatements of fact, wild travesties of history, and recurring crises of acute imagination and fanatical virulence. It finally reached the *denouement* for which I had all along been waiting—an ascription of the excesses of the First French Revolution to the malign ascendency of "infidelity" during the Reign of Terror. Mr. Hart gave no historical references of any kind; and it was not until I had repeated a demand for them that he admitted having derived his data from a book, the title of which *he did not just remember at the moment;* but, if I gave him my address, he would notify me of it by post. Upon receipt of the advice some weeks later, the delay being due to a misunderstanding on my part, I addressed the following letter to Mr. Hart:—

"……You can hardly complain if I have taken some time to collate my authorities for the systematic refutation of averments borrowed by you, without acknowledgment, from Dr. Dick's *Improvement of Society by the Diffusion of Knowledge*. By the way, you would have heightened my sense of indebtedness had you furnished me with the full title, instead of the sub-title, of that work, and given detailed references; but I suppose one must be thankful for small mercies.

"The edition of *The Improvement of Society* that lies before me is undated; but, as on the book-plate of the public library to which it belongs it is entered as having been received in 1851, it was probably issued about that time, by its publishers, William Collins & Co., Glasgow. Your copy must be a reprint, or a different edition. However, there is not likely to be any essential variation in the text between the two.

"I am entirely at one with Dr. Dick in the belief that the improvement of society has only come through the diffusion of knowledge; but I have yet to learn that the sole, saving, or socialising knowledge is the Christian form of it. According to my view, there can be no monopoly of Truth. Truth is neither better nor worse because it is held or proclaimed by Christian, 'black Gentoo, or pagan Turk'—it is always the same Truth, and has the same value. Dr. Dick argues that knowledge is only fruitful when allied with *his* special brand of Christianity, and that, divorced from this, it becomes sterile or pernicious. Puerility of this sort stultifies itself. Dr. Dick seems to have been a diligent, if not very accurate, compiler; but his logic is a minus quantity.

"As a specimen of his looseness of statement take the following: 'Paine, one of the most virulent adversaries of Christianity, had the effrontery to affirm that when he wrote the first part of *The Age of Reason* he was without a Bible,' and proceeds to animadvert upon the folly and impudence of the man who dared to attack a book of the contents of which he kept himself wilfully ignorant. I don't ask you to take my word for it that Dr. Dick has suppressed every material fact in the real explanation of the case. Here are Paine's own words: 'Under these disadvantages [the approach of the Reign of Terror, and in the prospect of his own imprisonment and probable death] I began the former part of *The Age of Reason*. I had, besides, neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, though I was writing against both; *nor could I procure any.* Notwithstanding which, I have produced a work that no Bible believer, though writing at his ease, and with a library of Church books about him, can refute.'* Paine could not defer the writing of *The Age of Reason*, because, having conceived the belief that Christianity, as embodied in the Churches, was 'no other than a human invention set

* Preface to *Age of Reason*, part ii., Truelove's edition, p. 36.

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up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolise power and profit,"* and being apprehensive of the nearness of death, he desired, as a friend of humanity, to give it the benefit of his discovery. Is there not something admirable in the enthusiasm for what he esteemed to be truth, and the fortitude of this 'infidel' who, face to face with death, yet gave all his thought for mankind, and had so little for himself? I am rather surprised that Dr. Dick does not claim him as a Christian; but perhaps that familiar body-snatching device of the shifty pietism of our day was still a formless embryo in the womb of time when that enterprising and ingenious apologist flourished.

"'The way for such a revelation was prepared by the writings of Voltaire, etc.....they endeavored to disseminate principles subversive both of natural and revealed religion.....the deity was banished from the universe, and an imaginary phantom, under the name of the Goddess of Reason, substituted in his place.'† It is not denied that the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, etc., operated powerfully in precipitating the Revolution; but what gave point and pith to their appeals and arguments? Read Buckle's account of the proximate causes of the Revolution.‡ Read Arthur Young's description of the pitiable state of France in 1787-1789 (*Arthur Young's Travels in France*, edited by Miss Betham Edwards, pp. 198–322). Read the recently-published *Memoirs* of the Prince de Talleyrand, and note the admission—significant in spite of its splenetic qualifications—of this 'silk stocking filled with filth,' as Napoleon called him. 'It (the Revolution) had no authors, leaders, or guides. It was sown by the writers, who, in an enlightened and venturesome age, wishing to attack prejudices, subverted the religious and social principles [the principles expressed in the prescription, 'Fear God and honor the King,' even if the latter be a Louis XV. or Bomba—J. P. G.], and by unskilful ministers who increased the *deficit of the treasury and the discontent of the people.*'§ Read even so melodramatic and rhapsodical a work as Carlyle's *French Revolution* or M. Taine's monograph, which, reactionary as it is, still belies Dick's ridiculous miscalculation of the causes of that tremendous upheaval. Listen to the language of Young, the typical, constitutionalist Englishman. 'It is impossible to justify the excesses of the people on their taking up arms. They were certainly guilty of cruelties. It is idle to deny the facts, for they have been proved too clearly to admit of a doubt. But is it really the people to whom we are to impute the whole blame, or to their oppressors, who had kept them so long in a state of bondage? He who chooses to be saved by slaves, and by ill-treated slaves, must know that he holds both his property and his life by a tenure far different from those who prefer the service of well-treated freemen. And he who dines to the music of groaning sufferers must not, in the moment of insurrection, complain that his daughters are ravished and then destroyed, and that his sons' throats are cut.'¶ It is simply not true that all, or even a majority, of the French *philosophes* of the eighteenth century 'endeavored to disseminate principles subversive both of natural and revealed religion.' Voltaire and Rousseau, the most illustrious and influential of them, were Deists, who insisted on the necessity of some form of 'political religion,' so that Atheists would have been banished from their model state. (See Rousseau's *Social Contract* and Morley's *Voltaire*.) It is also false that God was banished from the universe by order of the leaders of the Revolution, and a Goddess of Reason installed in his place. There is something ludicrous in the idea of expelling an omnipresent deity by Act of Parliament or plebiscitum; but we will let the anomaly pass, and come to the facts. There is no evidence to show that at any juncture of its stormy career the National Convention had any official proposal of so ridiculous a kind before it. Throughout the whole duration of the Revolution the constitutional clergy were in receipt of their emoluments, or the credit of the State was pledged for them, and, according to M. Taine, 'the Parisian populace were deeply devout all through.'‖ The 'Goddess of Reason' *episode*—there was no institution of a ritualistic worship of Reason, as Dick implies—of which so much has been made, was one of those spectacular freaks to which the volatile Parisian temperament is so partial. It was the outcome of an 'idea put practically by the President of the Convention, who had said, "These sacerdotal toys insulted the Supreme Being; *he desires no other worship than that of Reason.*"* That will henceforth be the national religion.' The pageant so exasperated the *Deist* Robespierre that he resolved forthwith to extirpate the Hébertiste faction, which, in the person of Chaumette, was principally responsible for the affair.†

J. P. GILMOUR.

(To be continued.)

* *Ibid*, p. 3.

† "Causes of the First French Revolution," *Improvement of Society*, p. 314.

‡ *History of Civilisation in England*, vol. ii, pp. 323-424.

§ *Memoirs of the Prince de Talleyrand*, edited by the Duc de Broglie, p. 163.

¶ *Young's Travels*, p. 332.

‖ *The Revolution*, by H. Taine, English translation, vol. ii., p. 291.

A CLERICAL ADMISSION.

THE oldest manuscript of the Gospels which we possess dates from the fourth century after Christ. The first question, therefore, is whether we have these Gospels in the same shape in which they were originally written. We cannot say when they came into their present shape, but the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, as Gospel writers, are mentioned only at the end of the second century, though probably older versions of the Gospels existed before that date.

The transcripts of the Gospels which we possess are not accurate copies of the originals, for the different Greek manuscripts of the Gospels which are in existence contain thousands of various readings. There are differences in words and phrases not only, but also whole paragraphs; sometimes half a chapter or very large portions are different. The differences are to be attributed not only to mistakes and carelessness of transcribers, but also to dogmatic prejudices, the copyist changing words or phrases to suit his own views, and thus committing intentional fraud. We have the high authority of one of the Church fathers of the period for this. The New Testament books were, of course, not regarded as sacred writings immediately after their appearance, and it was therefore at that time not regarded as sacrilege to add to them or to change them. Their writers were then familiarly known, and age had not yet added any peculiar sanctity to them. But, whatever they thought of the books of the New Testament, the whole Christian Church of that day was agreed on the divine origin of the Old Testament, and they regarded the books of the Old Testament with superstitious reverence. That was their scripture before the New Testament became scripture. Yet Origen, one of the oldest of the Church fathers, states that in the heated and angry controversies of that period they did not scruple to change even the text of the Old Testament for their own purposes. Concerning the Septuagint he says: "There are evidently great discrepancies in the copies of the Septuagint, whether attributable to the carelessness of scribes or to the rash and pernicious alteration of the text by some, and the unauthorised interpolations and omissions of others." Origen, therefore, here declares that the early Christians dared treat even the Old Testament scriptures in this manner, so it is easy to imagine with what freedom they would have handled the less sacred and younger books which afterwards constituted the New Testament. It is beyond question that great changes were made. In those days, when the most bitter controversies were carried on, the one party hurled Bible texts at the heads of the other as vigorously as we have known them to do twenty-five years ago. And if we consider that in those days there were only manuscripts, no printing press, and, therefore, no standard editions, it was easy for a man to change his own copy, and then to claim that his was the original text. His opponent, whose copy contained different words, would claim that his was the original, and, as in our time, the loudest claimant carried the day.

We know also that in those days there were more than four Gospels; how is it, then, that we have only four?

Luke himself assures us in the first verse of his gospel that "forasmuch as many have taken in hand" to write

* Lamartine's *History of the Girondins*, vol. iii., p. 301.

† *Life of Robespierre*, by G. H. Lewes, page 316. *Revolution Française*, par Mignet, p. 33, quoted in *French Revolution* by A. Besant.

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gospels. . . . "it seemed good" to him also to write one for the benefit of Theophilus. From other sources also we learn that there were a great many gospels in circulation in the early Church. The apocryphal books of the New Testament form a volume as thick as the New Testament itself. Among these now-called apocryphal books there are gospels, visions, allegories, which were afterwards declared unworthy of a place in the New Testament. We still possess a gospel of Mary, a Protevangelion, the gospel of the infancy of Jesus, the gospel of Nicodemus. Besides these there were several others which have disappeared. Even some of Paul's own epistles are lost. He himself refers to an epistle to the Laodiceans, and to others of which we know nothing, and which are lost to us. The great dispute between Paul, who favored the admission of Gentiles into the Church, and Peter, James, and John, who would admit no Gentiles unless they became Jews first—this dispute caused many gospels to be written, the one set being known as Petrine gospels, and the other set as Pauline gospels. In these the original gospels were changed, and colored to suit the views of the one or other of these factions.

By collating and combining the quotations made in the controversial writings of those days, we can reconstruct these lost gospels, and can ascertain with sufficient accuracy what these writers related about Jesus. Take, for instance, the gospel of Marcion, one of the leading heretics of the time. He claimed that his gospel was older than any of those still existing, and in it Jesus was represented as a man. Marcion, being such a prominent heretic, was quoted by all the writers of that time, and they did this so extensively that we can piece together these many quotations, and so almost reconstruct Marcion's gospel. What the value of the authority of the highly-revered Church fathers on such critical and historical questions is appears from a statement made by Irenæus. He writes to explain how it is that there are four authentic gospels, and no more and no less. And the reason he gives for this is a most astonishing one. He does not say that there were four gospels because there were only four writers who told the truth about Jesus, or because there were only four who were inspired by God to write these books. But, according to Irenæus, a very different reason exists for this. He assures us that it is impossible that there should be more or less than four gospels, for there are four zones in the world which we inhabit, and four principal winds, and therefore the Church should have four pillars, and these pillars are the four gospels! REV. D. P. FAURE.

—*Truth About the Bible.*

THE GODS ARE DEAD.

THE gods are dead, and only shrines remain;
The gods are dead, but still the Christs are slain;
The gods are dead, but priests yet work their will;
The gods are dead, but men must worship still.

The gods are dead, but mystery is yet,
And fears and tears, and drops of bitter sweat,
And these begot and these have slain the gods,
And these upheld and these shall break the rods.

The gods we made to help us in our need,
And gave them crowns, and in their lips a creed;
But pain crushed on, and they helped not at all,
And so we turned and smiled to see them fall.

We, in our minds, make all things that we know
Of gods above or god-like powers below;
Kings, tyrants, lawyers, warrior, or priest,
The millions serving and the few at feast.

Withhold our faith, and all these things shall fall,
Like as the gods to whom our faith was all;
Make change within, and outward there shall be
Fair field, free growth, and life in all things free.

—*Commonwealth.* J. WILLIAM LLOYD.

Tommy (whose father is a clothier)—"Mamma, did God make the world?" "Yes, dear." "And everything there is in it?" "Yes, darling." "And did he make me?" "Yes, Tommy; but do stop asking so many questions. Why do you do it?" "Oh, nothing. I was only just wondering whether I was ready-made or made to order"

ACID DROPS.

How the clericals lay hold of any bone that has meat on it! Here they are blarneying away at a new Anglo-American Arbitration Committee, and posing as though they had saved England and the United States from a bloody fratricidal war. A lot of them have wasted money on a telegram to their "American kinsmen," and among the signatories to this bit of cheap advertisement are the Bishop of Durham, Dean Farrar, Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, Rev. Dr. Parker, and Rev. Dr. Clifford. The document is also signed by Mr. W. R. Cremer—and thereby hangs a tale.

Years ago, when Mr. Gladstone's Government took to killing people in Egypt, while sanctimoniously pretending that there was really no such thing as war going on, Charles Bradlaugh called a demonstration in Hyde Park in favor of peace and justice. No ministers of religion stood at his side. He went to Hyde Park without them, and nearly lost his life at the hands of "loyal" ruffians. Some time afterwards Bradlaugh held a big meeting in St. James's Hall, and one of the speakers was Mr. W. R. Cremer. We remember hearing this gentleman say that his Society had sent out circulars to all the ministers of religion in London, with a view to convening a Peace meeting, and that only *three* had taken the trouble to reply. That is how Peace and Arbitration stood then. Now the cause is growing popular; so the men of God patronise it, and even talk as though they had invented it.

We don't observe the clericals howling much over our "war" with Ashanti. It doesn't matter when the game is all profit. The clericals wake up when there is likely to be a loss.

Ashanti "trophies" are being exhibited at Dover. They include two umbrellas, three chairs, a bed, and some stools. Fancy sending out an expedition to capture these articles!

Rev. W. Crosby, the Battersea pastor, lately found guilty of adultery in the Cantello divorce case, is declared by his congregation to be "absolutely innocent," and requested to "continue his God-honored ministry." It would be a pity to spoil this sweet flower of Christian charity with the breath of criticism. Let it stand in all its beautiful simplicity.

"By God's help you will prosper and be happy." Thus wrote William Fairway to his wife. He himself found so much of God's help that he committed suicide. A Putney jury decided that he was of "unsound mind." Exactly so His letter proves it.

Thomas Meredith Sheridan, abortionist, who was executed at Darlinghurst Gaol recently for the murder of a young woman named Jessie Nicholls, was a Roman Catholic of a distinctly religious type. During the whole of the time of his incarceration he was attended by the Rev. Father Carey and several nuns. On the morning of his execution he wore around his chest a band, upon which were embroidered the letters I.H.S. He also displayed an assorted collection of *Agnus Deis*, scapulars, and crucifixes. Father Carey, when interviewed by a *Star* reporter after the execution, said that "If ever a man went straight to heaven, it was Sheridan." Of such is the kingdom of heaven.

The Rev. Josiah H. Gunning, formerly pastor of the Harvard-street Baptist Church, Boston, but now the pastor of the Bedford-avenue Baptist Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., has been sued by his wife, Mary E. Gunning, for divorce, on the ground of extreme cruelty, he having on one occasion, as she alleges, blackened her eye with his fist, and at other times has maltreated her in many other ways.

A Burlington (N.J.) man recently "got religion," and, finding that his wife attended a skating-rink instead of the church, he beat her and put her out of the house.

The Rev. Jacob S. Johnson, a negro clergyman of Somerville (N.J.), has been sentenced to be hanged on Wednesday, March 11, for the murder of Annie Rogers, a mulatto girl who resided in the city of Newark in the same State.

The trustees of the First Congregational Church of San Francisco (Cal.) have decided to hold an investigation in order to ascertain the truth or the falsity of the charge of criminal intimacy between the pastor, Rev. C. O. Brown, D.D., and Miss Martha Overman, who has served as his stenographer. Later accounts say the reverend gentleman has failed to prove his innocence of this base accusation, and public opinion throughout the State is decidedly against him.

The *Humanitarian* for the current month contains an article on "The Multiplication of the Unfit," by Arnold

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White. Incidentally, he ridicules the proposal made by "S." in last month's issue of "A Lethal Chamber for the Unfit." He suggests that if this proposal is to come into force "it might be well to establish a lethal chamber in each bishopric for diocesan use"; for "unhealthy and penniless curates" do much towards multiplying the unfit.

The wretches in Melbourne who run the missionary show are sending out two poor girls to China, to take the place of those murdered there last year. This conduct is not only immoral, but cowardly and detestable. There is in Melbourne alone room enough for all the humanitarians to work in, and plenty of sin and sorrow to be cleared away. Honest people would see to their own countrymen before going to the "Heathen." Besides, the real promoters of the missions to foreign lands know well that the stuff they send to the "Heathens" consists of a mixture of transparent lies and fables, and has totally failed to convert or improve a single village or town in Christendom during all the centuries in which it has been tried. Christianity has been tried for 1700 or 1800 years; and to this day it has never purified one city, one town, one village, one hamlet. In the nature of the case, it never can, for the superstition itself is impure in its very fountain—the Bible. The records of the Christian Church are simply frightful in their revelations. And the wretches who run the mission-sham know this. We suppose they are deliberately bent upon corrupting China, and other lands, down to the level of the morals of Christendom.—*Liberator.*

The Archdeacon of London wants the expedition to Ashanti to be followed up by Christian missions. Guns and Gospel follow naturally in the great work of Christian civilisation.

According to the New York *Independent*, the Catholic Church leads the denominations in the United States by a long neck. The communicants in 1895 numbered 7,742,774, or about one-seventh of the population. Next after the Papists come the Methodists, with 5,438,969, the Baptists with 3,928,106, the Presbyterians with 1,458,999, and the Lutherans with 1,390,775. The Unitarians are put down at 68,500, Universalists at 47,986, and the Spiritualists at 45,030.

The *Christian Cynosure*, which is cited in the *Catholic Review* as not a Catholic journal, says: "Freemasonry is the superlative of immodest ignorance, the essence of superstition, and the infamy of savagery." This is an exhibition of Christian brotherly love which is relished by the Catholic journals.

The *Athenæum* (February 29), in reviewing D. G. Hogarth's *Wandering Scholar in the Levant*, quotes his favorable description of the Turkish peasantry, and adds: "There is no one who has travelled in the East who will not subscribe to this judgment, nor is it at all certain that the introduction of Christianity would secure to these people a higher moral life. Wherever Greek Christianity is brought into contact with Islam, it is but the plain truth to say that, as a moral force, the latter is far superior."

Mr. F. P. Badham, writing in the *Academy* of February 29, gives evidence that the Gospel of Peter was used by the early Christian father, Arnobius, as well as by his pupil Lactantius, and in the *Acta Pilati*. One point noted is that Lactantius mixed the feeding of the 5,000 with the feeding of the 4,000, and the storm-stilling of Matthew vii. 23–27, Mark iv. 35, with the storm-stilling of Matthew xiv 32–33, Mark vi. 51–52. These doublets show separate documents were combined in our canonical Gospels, while the fact that pseudo-Peter identifies them indicates, perhaps, his having had access to the documents behind.

The claim of the Hope Trustees to the sum of £85,000 under the will of the late Mr. John Hope, of Edinburgh, for the purpose of carrying on a systematic "total abstinence and anti-Popery crusade," has just been declared valid by the Scottish Courts. It is by such endowments that many movements, religious and other, obtain their working strength.

Sir William Mackinnon, it appears from another case which we see in the same paper, had left £35,000 to the Free Church of Scotland, which has to lament the loss of that good round sum because, just before his death, Sir William feared, from the prevalence of heresy, that his money might not be used in the interest of "true orthodox and disruption principles." He, therefore, revoked his bequest by a codicil.

Professor Paul Haupt, writing in the *Hebrew Standard*, says: "There are more than eighty different theories extant regarding the site of Paradise: The North Pole, Polynesian Isles, Canaries, Cashmere, Delta of the Indus, Arabia, Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Armenia, Scandinavia, Eastern Prussia, foot of St. Gothard in Switzerland, etc." Professor Paul Haupt contends that the Jews adopted the idea from the Babylonians, changing the mouths of four rivers into the heads of those rivers, in accordance with their idea that God dwelt in the north (see Ezekiel i. and Isaiah xiv.). These changes, of course, entailed geographical confusion, since, while the four rivers empty into the Persian Gulf, they do not, of course, spring from the same source.

An announcement, in the *Hull Daily News*, of the Waltham-street Wesleyan Adult Bible Class gives among its items: "Christ receiveth sinful men, with band accompaniment." We suppose this is in accordance with the consoling declaration of Scripture, that there is more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

The Aldershot School Board, after an animated and heated discussion, extending over more than two hours, decided, by seven votes to three, to rescind the resolution passed by the former Board including the Apostles' Creed in the syllabus of religious instruction. The former Board was composed of a majority of Churchmen. On the new Board only two Churchmen were elected, and the Nonconformists, though in favor of religious instruction, have taken an early opportunity of removing what is looked upon by them as denominational teaching.

We are glad to see that Mr. Justice Hawkins is against vivisection. We should be still better pleased to see English judges less brutal to criminals upon whom they pass sentence. There seems an inconsistency in denouncing cruelty to dogs, and then ordering a man's back to be lashed into disfigurement by the cat.

Ballington Booth seems to be entirely in the wrong in his dispute with the Salvation Army headquarters. According to the first reports, he was the victim of a sinister conspiracy; but later information shows that he has no real grievance. His removal from the American command is but a part of the general policy of the Army. All other "commanders" are shifted about in the same fashion, and Ballington Booth is simply making a "bally" row because he is not treated exceptionally.

Ballington appears to be wet-nursed by Yankee millionaires, who naturally look upon the Salvation Army with friendly eyes, because the plastering over of social ulcers diverts attention from the bad condition of the social blood. One of Ballington's warmest friends is Mr. Chaucey Depew, who has been interviewed on the threatened split. "Americans," he said, "want to get their salvation *vid*. Bunker Hill and Lexington, not *vid* London. If they can't get it that way, they'll take their chances about heaven." This flippancy is not a sign of belief. People who believed in heaven, and wanted to get there, wouldn't mind which way they travelled as long as it took them to the right place. Mr. Chaucey Depew simply wants to play off religion upon the American working men, and thinks it will be more acceptable with a spice of Spread-Eagle-ism.

Holman Hunt, the great painter, goes in for Judæa for the Jews. The children of Israel know their book better than this. They know there is not enough milk and honey to go round. If a gold mine were discovered at Jericho, they might then flock to the land of promise; but at present the prospect is unpromising.

Baron Hirsch, the wealthy Jew, founded a colony of Jews in the North-Western Territory of Canada a little time ago. This settlement has now completely collapsed. Of the original 800 who were placed on the land, only a few dozen now remain. This fact does not augur well for the colonisation of the Holy Land by Hebrew agriculturalists.

Sir Samuel Montagu thinks it quite feasible to buy out the rights of the Sultan in Palestine, but whether the Jews would settle there is another question. We have heard of a wealthy Jew who remarked that, when the Jews were again a nation in Palestine, he should ask to be appointed Ambassador to Paris.

Dr. Rigg denounces "the calumnies of the *Methodist Times*," and declines to withdraw the word "firebrand" applied to Mr. Price Hughes in the letter to Cardinal Manning. "It is a true word," says Dr. Rigg, "and passing years have only established its truth." Dr. Rigg winds up with a reference to the "atrocity" of the attack made upon him by Mr. Hughes. It is a pretty quarrel.

The *Sunday Companion*, of February 29, outdoes "Another Infidel Conversion" of *Joyful News*. It tells, on the authority of the well-known American evangelist, the Rev. B. Fay Mills, that "in a certain town"—nameless, and not even the country or continent mentioned—"a club of infidel

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young men, numbering altogether about forty-five," were all converted by a pastor, also without a name or place of residence. The president of the club "afterwards gathered his young men into the Sunday-school, and became the teacher of a large Bible class." If any curious person wants to know when and where these things occurred, he may be told on p. 107 of the *Sunday Companion* for February 29, 1896. Surely that is enough.

The pastor of a peculiar sect, established by a woman some years since in a Western State of America, had recently the idea of demanding that every one of his adult parishioners, two hundred in number, should fill in the replies to a set of printed questions as to their exact age and the number of times they have been married. This was about three months ago, and all but twenty of his flock have meekly obeyed their spiritual guide and filled in answers. Those who refused to do so were forbidden to enter the church. One of the recalcitrants, a lady, on attempting to go into the building, was dealt a violent blow on the nose by the pastor's wife—a sort of argument not unknown in the annals of religion.—*Daily News* (*Feb. 25*).

The *Sunday School Times*, answering a question about evil spirits from the Lord (1 Samuel xvi. 14; xviii. 18, etc.), says: "Our modern matter-of-fact theologians would say that God 'ordains' the good, and 'permits' the evil. But the Bible writers did not have the advantage of a modern theological training, and this must be borne in mind in judging their expressions."

The New York *Christian Advocate* says: "Sunday shows of all kinds are increasing. A joint debate was advertised for Sunday last in the Academy of Music, this city, between Rev. Anna Shaw and Rev. Thomas Dixon, on 'The New Woman'; seats twenty-five cents, and reserved seats fifty cents."

A debate between two Christians, one of the Christadelphian and the other of the Christian Evidence variety, has been sent to us. Logomachy, word-chopping, and disputes about texts prevail. Part of the debate is Socratic, and treats us to such choice questions and answers as these: Q.—"How long has God been the Father?" A.—"Why, ever since He had a Son, and was the Father." Q.—"Was God the Father prior to the time spoken of by the angel to Mary?" A.—"Yes, God has always been Father." After a dose of this, we felt that we must defer the task of review until after the judgment day. We do not mind taking an emetic in the straight course of duty, but we cannot see our way to sicken our readers also.

The following is from the *Atlanta Constitution:* "Raleigh, N.C., February 4.—The Rev. D. S. Hobson, a negro preacher, was brought here to-day and jailed for stealing a cow and a mule. He sold the cow and bought a frock coat and Bible, and then began active ministerial work."

Boston, the hub of the universe, is eminently Christian, and, after the way had been shown by Garrison and the "infidels," shone as a centre of abolitionism. Yet even now, thirty-three years after slavery has been abolished, Bishop Arnett, a leader of the negro race in the States, has been excluded from a Boston hotel on account of his color.

In the loftiest altitudes of American society there is much distress. Mr. John Alexander van Rensselaer, son of Mrs. John van Rensselaer, the leader of the Colonial Dames, who objected to the admission to the society of a descendant of Benjamin Franklin, on the ground that he was a vulgarian, has just run away with and married a pretty Brooklyn girl "of no family or position."

Dr. Krauskopff, a Jewish rabbi of Philadelphia, proposes a union of Jews and Christians on the basis of a national American religion, with July 4 as a chief festival. This Jew hardly shows the usual astuteness of his race. When the Christian lion and the Jewish lamb lie down together the lamb will be inside.

The well-known Baptist clergyman, Rev. Dr. George Lorimer, says of the Higher Criticism: "Higher Criticism tends inevitably, whether its teachers realise the fact or not, to absolute rationalism and the discrediting of inspiration. If dates are erroneous, if scientific statements are wrong, if historical representations are misleading, if Jesus only fell in with popular views when he seemed to attribute the Pentateuch to Moses, is it possible to believe that the Almighty had much to do with the preparation of such a book?"

The *Church Review*, which is High Church Anglican, objects to Protestantism, and says "private judgment has led to most of the Agnosticism of the day, to say nothing of the enormous multiplication of private judgment sects, each of which anathematises the other."

The *Catholic Review* says: "As if to confound the presumption of those 'scientists' who, in all ages, have combated the idea of supernatural intervention in mundane things, as well as to strengthen the faithful in the belief which they fondly entertain that, when occasion calls for such displays, heaven will attest the divine character of the Church and the holiness of its saints, Christ has so endowed that Church that miraculous happenings are for ever occurring within its pale, many of which, however, passed unobserved by the generality of mankind. A miracle that never fails to attract notice, though, and which has not inaptly been called 'the standing miracle of the Church,' says a writer in the *Sacred Heart Review*, obtained mention the other day, when the press announced that the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius had taken place anew, with the traditional ceremonies at Naples." This miracle is one of the most glaring frauds of the Church, the phial containing not blood, but a red composition liquefied by the heat of the hand.

In a breach of promise case at Dublin, in which the plaintiff was a Protestant and the defendant a Catholic, the jury, like the parties to the suit, disagreed on the subject of religion. Mr. Justice Murphy had to quote the freethinking Lucretius to them. He is reported as saying: "A special jury cannot agree on what ought to be a simple case because the question of religion comes into it. *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*—Such a curse can religion induce."

There has been placed in the Egyptian gallery of the British Museum a specimen of ancient art in the shape of a head of a king of about the XVIII. Dynasty, B.C. 1500. The head is one of the few specimens of Egyptian sculpture, known as portrait statues, which seem to have suddenly ceased to exist about the time of the XIX. Dynasty, or shortly afterwards, probably owing in a great measure to Semetic influence, which we know was predominant about this time. This influence was similar to that expressed in the Commandment, or, rather, Prohibition: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." The Semites have never been sculptors, though their musical art is of high standing.

Mr. J. H. Wylie's third volume of the *History of England under Henry the Fourth* is profoundly interesting in its descriptions of the real life of the times. Our readers will be pleased to read the following account of the Miracle Plays, from which the people derived their ideas of "sacred history" before the open Bible was placed in their hands: "Each trade prepared its pageant or wheeled scaffold (towards the cost of which every craftsman paid his pageant silver yearly), and appointed its own pageant-masters to secure 'good players, well-arrayed and openly speaking.' From early sunrise the whole population was in the street; the pageant-wains were trundled from station to station along the appointed thoroughfares, and from half-past four in the morning to the close of the long summer day the old Scripture story was acted out in sections, from the Creation to the dreadful Day of Doom. At one street corner was Adam, with his lickerous wife, both 'naked and all bare,' God being played by a man in a linen coat with his face gilt, and Satan as an 'edder,' or a worm with an angel's face. At another was Noah, 500 years old, and 'out of qwart,' with his legs beginning to fold for fegginess of age, shedding his gown to work in his coat for 100 years at the Ark. When his wife will not come in without her gossips, he pulls her in, and gets 'a clout' from her ere she will let be her din. Then 'for a twelvemonth but twelve week' they feed the fowls and the cattle—*i.e.*, swans, dogs, cocks, hens, and as many strange beasts as they could find, the rest being painted on boards hung round the Ark, 'that their words might agree with the pictures.' After this they cast the lead to see if the water is waning; they give the Crow, the Doves, the Rainbow, and 'Hills of Hermonye,' till the beasts are unbraced, and the 'barnes,' with their wives, go out in God's blessing."

Our forefathers took the Bible stories in all good faith. They stuck at nothing. The stark nakedness of Adam and Eve did not offend their notions of propriety, and God was as familiar a figure to them as the Devil remained to their posterity. They possessed no taste whatever for metaphysical phantoms; their supernatural beings were good concrete realities.

I *(Truth)* feel curious to know how many answers have been received to the following advertisement in the *Engineer*. "Only earnest Christian men need apply" looks a trifle superfluous. Who else would? It will require an unusually earnest Christian, I imagine, to volunteer for the engine-room of a steamer on the Upper Congo: "Engineer.—Wanted, at once, a skilled and experienced engineer, capable of taking charge of a mission steamer on the Upper Congo; one who will accept the post for Christ's sake and the Gospel's at a small remuneration; only earnest Christian men need apply," etc.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—Saturday evening, March 7, Woodhouse, near Sheffield; 8, Sheffield; 15, Secular Hall, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby; 19 and 20, Nottingham; 22, Hull.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

C. Wright.—The saying, "God is on the side of the big battalions," ascribed to Napoleon, is taken from Voltaire, who says in a letter to M. C. Riche, dated February 6th, 1770: "*Dieu est toujours pour les gros bataillons.*"

L. Levine (Charleston).—We did not see the *Lancet*.

N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Daniel Baker, £2 2s.; H. A. Lupton, 10s.; Chatham Branch, £1 6s.; and parcel of clothing from an unknown friend.

N.S.S. Annual Children's Party (London).—Mr. Forder (treasurer) acknowledges: Mrs. McMillan, 5s.; A. Lewis, 2s. 6d.; S. Hampson, 5s.; per Master Harwood, 3s. 6d.; A. C. Brown, 1s.; F. Wood, 5s.; Seventeen Stone, 2s.

Hucknall Torkard.—You cannot post letters for a halfpenny by leaving them open. It is only circulars or invoices that can go in that way. Please *note* this. Mr. Grinstead, of Bristol, is not a person Mr. Foote has any desire to debate with. Mr. Foote has debated with Mr. Grinstead's superiors, and is ready to do so again. He must draw the line somewhere. Besides, this Mr. Grinstead—not to put it too broadly—is too Platonic in his love of veracity. The story he told at the meeting you attended, about Mrs. Harriet Law having taken out her watch at Glasgow and given God Almighty five minutes to strike her dead, was first started three years or so ago, many years after Mrs. Law had retired from the Freethought platform, by the Rev. J. M. Logan. Mr. Logan, on being taken to task, sent a lame sort of story, which we printed in the *Freethinker*. This, in turn, brought an emphatic denial (which we also printed) from Mrs. Law herself. This watch story has done service for nearly a century. It has been told of many "infidels." In short, it is just an effort of Christian imagination, and enables us to understand the origin of the Gospels.

Correspondents often ask Mr. Foote to contribute letters to controversies arising in their local newspapers. He is sorry to say that he has no time for such work. It is quite impossible for him to write letters to the press, except in cases of extraordinary interest and importance, where his personal intervention seems to be necessary. Mr. Foote takes this opportunity of adding that he really cannot sketch out essays for Debating Societies, or send something "by return" to persons who don't exactly know what they want. However willing the spirit may be, there are only twenty-four hours in each day, and some of them are wanted for sleep.

Subscriptions promised at the Annual Dinner, and since paid to Miss Vance:—Rossignol, 2s.; A. Fincken, 10s.; J. West, 2s.; Mrs. Roger, 2s.; W. Littlejohn, 2s. 6d.; F. Wood, 2s. 6d.; A. J. Marriott, 5s.

C. E. Smith.—Sorry you were "one of the many turned away at the Memorial Hall." Mr. Foote's address will probably be published, with the others, by the Humanitarian League. Will try to use the matter you send next week.

J. Close.—We also wish your two shillings for Shilling Month could have been two pounds. The Howard and Foote debate has to be postponed a little in consequence of Mr. Foote's indisposition. We hope to have it published eventually.

Glasgow Cross suggests that the Rev. Thomas Champness, who is a great friend of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, should hand over to Mr. G. J. Holyoake the evidences of the conversion of "Mr. X." Good! provided they are handed over to us afterwards.

A Wesleyan.—Copies of *Freethinkers* sent as directed.

Bower.—You want a good deal of practice before your verses would be up to publication level.

T. Dunbar.—Thanks for your little girl's subscription (1s.) to the Children's Party.

G. W. Blythe.—Received.

E. G. Taylor.—Sorry we cannot afford the space—quite two columns—for such a quarrel. We warned you against disputing with such creatures. Why waste your time in this way?

J. Sharrock.—Pleased to hear that you find a weekly treat in the *Freethinker*.

Anxious.—Mr. Foote is not as ill as you imagine. He does not feel the general springs of his life impaired. The very bad cold that broke him down in January left his throat and chest too sensitive, and the heavy lecturing work he plunged into before he was really well only made matters worse. A complete rest from platform work for a while will doubtless set him quite right again. He expects to be as active as ever in April. Meanwhile he will be extra busy with his pen.

J. Cherry.—Glad to see the report of Mr. Foote's lecture on "Life, Death, and After" has been reprinted in the *Brigg Star* from the Hull papers. Dr. Farrar's article shall be dealt with next week.

J. Matson.—We have no copies left of the *Freethinker* containing the cartoon, "God is Love," so cannot send you any for distribution.

A. R. Monro.—Your letters to the local press will do good. We hope the Hull Branch will live down all opposition. Our best regards to the veteran, Billany. We were delighted to see him again the other day, and to feel once more the grip of his honest hand.

A. Lock.—We do not know of any special reply to Professor Mivart's arguments on the origin of man in *Lessons from Nature*. Does he not accept the Darwinian theory as far as man's bodily structure is concerned?

Papers Received.—Sunday Companion—Eastern Daily News—Liberator—Open Court—Liberty—Crescent—Torch of Anarchy—Islamic World—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—New York Sun—Echo—World's Advance Thought—Universal Republic—Fur Unsere Jugend—Der Arme Teufel—New York Public Opinion—Humanity—Secular Thought—South Shields Free Press—Blue Grass Blade—Truthseeker—Twentieth Century—Literary Digest—Freethought Ideal—Free Review—Hull Daily Mail—De Dageraad.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

SHILLING MONTH.

My readers have not quite realised the fact that this is Shilling Month. I am giving them another opportunity of subscribing to the Lecture Scheme which I am managing, and which is universally admitted to be a powerful agency of Freethought propaganda. Every reader who can afford it should give something. The lowest sum I ask for is one shilling. There is no limit to the highest sum that may be sent me. I shall not refuse a thousand shillings; I should not return even a million. I want the rank and file of the party to assist in this new extension of our movement. It is not much to go to the Post Office and get an order for one shilling, or as many more as the spirit suggests, and to send it on to me at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. A pile of such enclosures should arrive in time for acknowledgment in next week's *Freethinker*.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

Horace Seal, £10; R. Gibbon, 1s. 7d.; J. Byers, 2s. 6d.; M. Christopher, 2s. 6d.; H. A. Lupton, 5s.; J. Sharrock, 2s. 6d.; J. R. Adams, 2s.; J. Shipp, 1s.; J. Close, 2s.; T. Dunbar, 1s. 6d.; S. J. B., 2s. 6d.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote spent last week at Hastings with a view to recovering his old state of health. Two days of the seven, however, he was obliged to pass in bed. It was impossible for him to lecture at Chatham—or rather New Brompton—on Sunday evening. His place was taken by Mr. William Heaford, whose address was highly relished by a large audience. Mr. Foote will visit New Brompton as soon as possible. Meanwhile he is obliged to cease from lecturing altogether, in order to give his throat and chest a fair opportunity of recurring to their normal condition. Mr. Foote will make no platform engagements during March, and will spend as much of the time as possible at the seaside.

It was impossible for Mr. Foote to leave Hastings without visiting "Toby" King. This fine old Freethinker has been confined for many weeks to his bedroom, but will probably get about again before very long. He is as bright and cheerful as ever. Mr. J. Brumage, another veteran, formerly of Portsmouth, is also living at Hastings, and is enjoying fair health.

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Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured for the Camberwell Branch of the N.S.S. The hall was filled by an enthusiastic audience. We are glad to hear that Mr. Watts had "a splendid reception," and that his lecture "caught on."

Saturday evening, March 7, Mr. Watts lectures in the theatre, Woodhouse, at 7 o'clock, under Mr. Foote's scheme. To-day, Sunday, March 8, he lectures three times in the Hall of Science, Rockingham-street, Sheffield.

Mr. Touzeau Parris lectured at the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening (under Mr. Foote's lecture scheme), to a good audience that much appreciated his discourse. Mr. Parris lectures at the Athenæum again on Sunday, March 15, his subject being "Sin Against God an Impossibility."

We have already explained that, owing to the insolent bigotry of the Chief Constable, who is a coward to boot, it is impossible to hire a hall in Hull with a charge for admission to Sunday lectures. Still, the place must not be neglected. Mr. Foote recently addressed very large audiences in St. George's Hall. Mr. Charles Watts will also lecture there on Sunday, March 22. This is one of the special cases dealt with under the President's lecture scheme.

Humanity (organ of the Humanitarian League) for March contains a careful summary of Mr. Foote's address on the Rights of Men and of Animals, and a hope is expressed that "his most eloquent and telling address will be printed in his own words at no distant date"—as it probably will. The League is preparing a "Democratic Protest against Vivisection," which bears the signatures (among others) of G. W. Foote, G. J. Holyoake, G. B. Shaw, and R. Blatchford ("Nunquam").

The *Manchester Guardian*, *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, *Westminster Gazette*, *Daylight*, and several other papers, have given Mr. Foote's recent lecture before the Humanitarian League very good notices. The following extract is from a leading article in the *Manchester Guardian*, of February 27: "The increased social passion and pity of our time have not wholly lost sight of our 'disinherited younger brothers.' Socialists are often accused of class-selfishness and materialism, but in this matter we are bound to say that they have been true to their principles, and have stood by the defenceless, even when they were only animals, and when no advantage except a moral and spiritual advantage could be expected from that attitude. The Socialist press is anti-vivisectionist almost without exception, and almost all the chief spokesmen of Socialism in this country have spoken strongly in that sense. The recent addresses at the Memorial Hall in London on The Rights of Men and the Rights of Animals' have also been extremely significant from this point of view. Men like Mr. Frederic Harrison and Mr. G. W. Foote, differing in many things, are agreed in this, that, as the former has put it, 'human duty involves and includes duty towards the animal kingdom, of which we are a part; and religion, as I understand it, implies religious reverence, and a sense of religious sympathy with the vast animal world, of which we are the head.' In this country, at all events, though we fear as yet in this country only, the conception of duty towards animals as well as towards men is certainly growing stronger. Human sympathy at one time included men of the same tribe or race only. The foreigner was excluded from it, and the slave was regarded as the animal. It has gradually been widened to include all mankind; now it is refusing to exclude even the animals from its purview."

A congress is being held this coming week to celebrate the centenary of phrenology, and commemorate the labors of Dr. Franz Joseph Gall, who, born at Baden on March 6, 1758, began to lecture on craniology in Vienna in 1796. Though some amount of charlatanism has attached to phrenology, it has certainly contributed to the study of the brain, and towards a tabulation of human character; and Dr. Gall deserves commemoration as a Freethinking pioneer.

Good old Parker Pillsbury, who is over eighty-five years of age, sent to Boston a contribution to the Freethinkers' Convention, held at the Paine Memorial Hall. Of Parker Pillsbury, Wendell Phillips wrote in 1853: "Could you know him and his history, you would value him. Originally a waggoner, he earned enough to get educated. When just ready to be settled, the Faculty of Andover Theological Institution threatened him that they would never recommend him to a parish unless he gave up speaking in anti-slavery meetings. He chose us, and sacrificed *all* the benefits (worldly and pecuniary) of his hard-earned education." His course since has been worthy of this beginning. One of his last publications is against putting *God in the Constitution*.

Mr. John Morley affirmed, instead of taking the oath, on entering the House of Commons as member for the Montrose Burghs. That he was able to do so is entirely owing to the courage, energy, and statesmanship of the late Charles Bradlaugh.

Ingersoll's *Oration on Thomas Paine* has been translated into German by Clemens Vonnegut, and is published by the Freidenker Publishing Co., Milwaukee.

A lot of good writing is put into the *Free Review*, which, if it does not command success, deserves it. In the number for March there are very smart articles on "Literary Snobbery," "Hymns that Helped Them," and "Lunatics at Large"; a review of Maitland's life of Dr. Anna Kingsford; Ernest Newman has a good paper on "Buckle and his Critics"; Mr. J. M. Robertson continues on "The Revival of Phrenology"; and "Chilperic" criticises Sayce and Boscawen under the title of "Reassuring the Laity." "The Return to Nature," by H. S. Salt, is well written, and closes in a strain of measured eloquence. From an article on "Conversions in China" we take the liberty of making an extract in another column.

"Chilperic," in his *Free Review* article, points out that, while in England men like Sayce are trying to discredit the Higher Criticism, in Germany Dr. Hugo Winckler is producing his *Geschichte Israels*, in which he goes further than the critics, endeavoring to show, by the aid of the cuneiform monuments, that the story of the Egyptian bondage was a delusion of the Israelites.

The Finsbury Branch of the National Secular Society will hold a general meeting on Sunday next, March 8, at the Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell-road, E.C., at 11.30 a.m. Members are earnestly requested to attend.

Mr. St. Clair (Freethinker) will bring his company of talented artistes to the Battersea Secular Hall on Sunday evening, March 8, and give a select entertainment for the benefit of the Branch.

Greece has at length, after all these years, erected a statue of Byron. Better late than never. But it is curious how long national gratitude takes to express itself in a practical fashion.

The writer of "Notes from Dublin" in the *Athenæum*, dealing with the Irish Education question, says that "most of the advanced party calling themselves Parnellites would rather keep the university question unsettled than see more endowments thrown into the hands of a clergy whom they declare to be quite unfit to educate modern men, or teach any knowledge except a knowledge of theology." This is one gleam of hope in a very dark prospect.

A new university, entitled *Université Nouvelle*, with power to confer degrees in all faculties, has been established in Brussels, under the control of Freethinking and Socialistic leaders. Among the professors are the geographer, Professor Elisée Reclus, and the jurist, Professor Enrico Ferri, both of whom were unable to hold positions in their own countries. The opening address of the rector, Professor Janson, urged that property should only be acquired by labor, and that the State should be the only heir. Sixty students were matriculated at the opening of the university, the future of which will be followed with interest.

A capital sixpenny pamphlet on *The Education Crisis* has just been issued by the National Education Emergency Committee (Surrey House, Victoria Embankment). It is a defence of popular management in public education, and, although not written from the secular standpoint, contains many facts and figures likely to be serviceable.

Mr. Bertram Dobell continues his loving labors on behalf of the late James Thomson ("B.V."). Last year he issued a collected edition, in two volumes, of Thomson's poems. He now issues the first volume of what is intended to be a collected edition of Thomson's prose writings. *Biographical and Critical Studies* is neatly printed and bound. It includes essays on Rabelais, Saint-Amant, Ben Jonson, Poems of William Blake, Shelley, A Strange Book (Garth Wilkinson's "Improvisations"), John Wilson, James Hogg, and Robert Browning. We have only just received this volume, and cannot notice it fully in the present number of the *Freethinker*. Our review will appear as soon as possible. Meanwhile we draw the attention of Thomson's admirers to the treat which is in store for them in this beautiful book.

The Hull *Daily Mail* notices the Rev. F. Ballard's sermon on Secularism, *apropos* of Mr. Foote's recent lectures in the town, and adds that "there is a great deal of practical 'unbelief' in Hull." Mr. Ballard is going to devote his discourse at Wycliffe Congregational Church, on the first Sunday evening in each month, to some theme bearing upon Christian evidences in relation to modern doubt. The great drawback is that Mr. Ballard does not invite discussion.

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He answers questions "in the vestry." Mr. Foote answers them in public.

The *Kirkintilloch Herald* reports a special lecture by the Rev. W. Brownlie in Lenzie Parish Church on "Secularism." The reverend gentleman admitted that men might lead a decent life without belief in God—which is more than some people manage who do believe in God. His great objection seemed to be to the "blank nothingness" to which Secularism finally led. But does he think that roasting in hell is preferable to lying at peace in the grave? However, we are glad to see the clergy lecturing on Secularism. It stirs up inquiry.

Mr. William Watson has a sonnet in his *Purple East*, entitled "A Trial of Orthodoxy," in which he writes thus of the despair of the poor outraged Armenians:—

"What wonder if you torn and naked throng
Should doubt a Heaven that seems to wink and nod,
And having moaned at noontide, 'Lord, how long?'
Should cry, 'Where hidest Thou?' at evenfall;
At midnight, "Is He deaf and blind, our God?'
And ere day dawn, 'Is He, indeed, at all?'"

THE DELUGE.

NOAH and his party were in the ark more than a year; forty days of that time it rained with a vengeance—"The windows of the heavens were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up"; the tops of the mountains were submerged in water. In order to cover the Himalayas (the most elevated and stupendous mountain system on the globe; its highest peak, Mount Everest, being more than 29,500 feet above the level of the sea) it must have rained to the depth of nearly six miles in forty days, or about one mile in 6⅔ days. Knowing the circumference of the earth to be 25,000 miles, the polar diameter 7,800, and the equatorial diameter 7,926 miles—also remembering that, as we diverge from the surface of the earth, its diameter increases, it seems the mystery of mysteries where that vast volume of water could have come from. Not even a one thousand billionth part of it could have been produced by natural means; it must, therefore, have been created out of nothing. Voltaire says that, "in order to cover both hemispheres to the depth of 500 feet, not only would an ocean of that depth be necessary over all the land, but a new sea would, in addition, be required to envelop the ocean at present existing, without which the laws of hydrostatics would occasion the dispersion of that other new mass of water 500 feet deep, which should remain covering the land." Proceeding upon Voltaire's formula, it would require nearly sixty new oceans, each 500 feet in depth, to entirely cover the highest point of the Himalayas. The person who wrote Genesis did not understand that rain was a natural phenomenon produced by natural causes. He had not read Hulton's *Theory of the Rain*, in which the great naturalist comes to the conclusion that "the rainfall is everywhere regulated by the humidity of the air on the one hand, and the causes which promote mixtures of different aërial currents in the higher atmosphere in the other."

We are told that the ark rested upon Mount Ararat. Ararat is nearly six thousand feet above the line of perpetual snow. More than a mile of this water would have frozen never to melt again. On vacating the ark, the animals of the tropics would have frozen instantaneously. Then there would have been the difficulty of returning these innumerable animals to their separate homes in different parts of the globe.

But enough of this absurd libel on truth. Similar myths of a great deluge were entertained by nations whose theogonies precede the Jewish plagiarism by many hundreds of years. Let those who will read the article on "Deluge," by the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A., in *Britannica*; certainly a clergyman could have no special motive in saying that the Hebrew narrative, like the Babylonian, has been thought to consist of two documents, an Elohistic and a Yahvistic. Between the Jewish legend of the flood and the Babylonian there has been found a striking resemblance, and Mr. George Smith and others have placed the Babylonian legend at a much earlier date.

Prominent among other reasons for believing the story of the deluge to be a falsehood is that in the history of nations contemporary with the Jews, of far greater antiquity, and in a flourishing state of civilisation, there is not the slightest allusion made to a universal deluge, which, had such a catastrophe occurred, would not have been omitted from the annals of any nation. Secondly, geologists bear witness against it. Hugh Miller says: "In various parts of the world, such as Auvergne, in Central France, and along the flanks of Etna, there are cones of long-extinct or long-slumbering volcanoes, which at least triple the antiquity of the Noachian deluge, and, though composed of the ordinary, incoherent materials, exhibit no marks of denudation. According to the calculation of Sir Charles Lyell, no devastating flood could have passed over the forest zone, Etna, during the last twelve thousand years. The existence of volcanoes furnishes an insurmountable argument against the flood. Such an immense quantity of fire, smoke, and lava, deluged with water more than five miles in depth, would have shattered the earth in fragments. Thirdly, archæology offers no support to the deluge. Evidence has been sought by earnest Christian believers; but the arts, sciences, philology, philosophy, literature, manners, customs, and, above all, the histories of antiquity, unite in one accord against the absurd stories of the Bible. Professor Draper says that "the views presented by the Mosaic record cannot be admitted. Repeated attempts have been made to reconcile the revealed with the discovered facts, but they have proved unsatisfactory. The Mosaic time is too short, the order of creation incorrect, the divine interventions too anthropomorphic." According to the Bible, the world was created in something short of 6,000 years ago; according to science, it has been more than 240,000 years since the beginning of the last glacial epoch. We are told in Genesis that God placed the rainbow in heaven, as a promise that he would never more destroy the earth by water. The Bible writer knew not that the rainbow was caused by the refraction and reflection of the sun's rays in drops of falling water. It was the belief of the ancient Hebrews, and even of the Christian Church until late years, that it was simply a pretty little bow placed in the heavens as a reminder. "The most careless observation," says the scientist, "shows us that, for the production of a rainbow, we must have a luminous body of moderate angular diameter, and drops of water; for it is never seen except by direct sunlight, and never in a cloud unless rain be falling from it."

Is it not time to discard the scriptures—dark legends of a benighted age? At the judgment bar of science faith must render an account to reason, and at the altar of eternal faith she must stand or fall.

As a system, the Church has had her day; her pseudo-morals and false dogmas are worn threadbare. The heart of mankind is turning against a religion of faith and fear. As Colonel Ingersoll says: "The Church is dying of dry rot." Religion may have its dupes to-day, but superstition is no longer king of kings and lord of lords. The Bible has been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Science has risen, and Freethought has sent her shining message across the waves of time.

—*Independent Pulpit.* MAY L. COLLINS.

SPRING SONG.

A WARNING TO LITTLE BOYS WHO HAVE GARDENS.

(See Matthew x. 29, also Luke xii. 6.)

THE reverend Mr. Jessop,
Of Mobile, Alabama,
Professionally a man of God,
Amateurly was a farmer.

Now, always in the pockets
Of his go-to-meeting coat
He carried lumps of sugar
Just to clear his reverend throat.

And in those self-same pockets,
That God's sparrows might be fed
When they came a-pecking at *his* peas,
He carried *poisoned* bread.

Once, feeling for his sweetie,
He swallowed the bread instead,
And the sparrows twittered on the caves
While the man of God lay dead.

M. D. H.

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CONVERSIONS IN CHINA.

AN excellent article on this subject appears in the *Free Review* for March. "Economist" gives a number of facts from Dr. G. E. Morrison's *An Australian in China*, and concludes as follows:—

Everywhere the story is the same: years of work with converts whose numbers can be counted on one's fingers. A man who was a French polisher in England has baptised six natives in three years, and considers his labors to have been "abundantly blessed." Yet he is convinced that those who hear him will inevitably go to hell unless they accept the doctrine he preaches. He is good enough to admit that Chinese who have not heard the gospel "will be judged by the Almighty as he thinks fit"—what a concession to the Almighty! But as for those who have heard the gospel, he is certain that unless they accept it they will—these are his own words—"assuredly go to hell." And yet this man, with his experience that not one in ten thousand of those to whom he "declares the gospel" will have it at any price, is deliberately ensuring an eternity in hell for great numbers of his fellow men, who, if he would only be silent, would have had a chance of escaping that fate. Why is it that theology makes men so diabolically cruel? Not all the missionaries are such fanatics. But the Catholics warn the natives against the Protestant missions, and Protestants denounce the Jesuits. The native does not understand the controversies between the rival Christians who are all so anxious for his "soul"; but he is amused. They provide life with a new diversion.

The emissaries of Christianity have apparently done their best to increase the difficulties in the way of making their creed—or creeds—intelligible. They are in a hopeless state of confusion as to the very name for God. The Chinese have heard of "High Heaven's Ruler," whom they name "Shangtien Hou." The Mohammedan invaders of China proclaimed Allah as the "True Lord" (Chen Chu). The Jesuits would not identify their God with either of these, and used first the term "Shang ti" (Supreme Ruler), and afterwards "Tien Chu" (Lord of Heaven). No good Protestant could think of adopting a term coined by a Jesuit; and so a variety of other names were invented. When a Chinese feels disposed to get converted, he is somewhat perplexed to choose among this array of Christian deities.

English civilisation, English science, English thought, have so much to offer that might benefit the Celestials that one feels indignant that an army of men and women should be sent into their midst to preach as true a set of beliefs rejected by the educated here. It is sad to read the story of the wasted efforts of enthusiastic workers to drive the gospel into unwilling minds. At Yunnan city a mission, opened in 1882, has in thirteen years converted one native, a "manure-coolie," employed by the mission. But "Satan tempted him, he fell from grace, and had to be expelled for stealing the children's buttons." The missionary, it should be mentioned, did succeed also in converting three native women—his children's nurse-girl, his wife's cook, and a "helper"!

In the whole province of Yunnan, "in a population of from five to seven millions of friendly and peaceable people, eighteen missionaries," writes Dr. Morrison, "in eight years have converted eleven Chinese." How long, he asks, will it take to convert the remainder?

Will facts, such as are stated so plainly and so simply in this book of travel, drive home to the English people the folly and the waste of the whole missionary system? He would be sanguine, indeed, who would anticipate any such result. There is more joy in Exeter Hall over the conversion of one illiterate coolie employed and paid by a missionary than over the relief of a thousand unemployed in London. The money of foolish philanthropists will still be poured forth by millions, recklessly squandered over a mad speculation in souls, Chinese and otherwise, until the inevitable day comes when the truths of science and of criticism will penetrate even into the Far East, and those on whom a presumptuous Christian missionary thrusts his unwelcome and uninvited "gospel" will bid him return to his native land and learn before he attempts to teach.

Mrs. Sarah Granger, the sister of Stephen A. Douglass, was waited upon once by a good Methodist minister, who, having complimented her upon her exemplary life, said that, to be consistent, she ought to make her peace with God. "God and I have never had any trouble," was the quick retort of the woman. "But," insisted the Methodist brother, "you want to go to heaven, and you cannot do it if you do not join the Church." The woman replied, respectfully: "The best woman I ever knew was my mother; the best man I ever knew was my brother, Senator Douglass. They didn't belong to any church, and if what you say is true, I want to go to hell."—*Freethought Magazine.*

WHY SHOULD WE ATHEISTS FEAR TO DIE?

'Tis asserted by parsons and tract writers pious—
Whose barefaced mendacity captures the cake—
That we Atheists always, when grim death draws nigh us,
Are stricken with terror, and tremble and quake.
But this we allege is an infamous libel—
A pious, malicious, unscrupulous lie,
As void of the truth as their fetish, the Bible;
For why should we Atheists fear to die?

We do not believe in that book the Church labels
"God's Word," "Holy Bible," and "Volume Divine";
And we say that its barbarous legends and fables
Have cast o'er our planet more shadow than shine.
That God was its author, or at his dictation
This vile book was written, we firmly deny,
And say, without doubt, 'tis of human creation;
Then why should we Atheists fear to die?

Its tales of aërial heavenly regions,
Where praising of God is eternally heard
From many-eyed monsters and angelic legions,
Seem most idiotic to us, and absurd;
We do not believe that in mis'ry eternal
The souls of vast millions will dwell by-and-bye
In Satan-ruled, bottomless regions infernal;
Then why should we Atheists fear to die?

'Tis an outrage on reason to say that "Our Father"
Created a hell and ordained us to fall.
Than believe in so fiendish a monster, we'd rather
Believe as we do—that there's no God at all.
We believe that for every wrong step we have taken
We suffer on earth; but in death we shall lie
Wrapped in slumber from which we shall never awaken;
Then why should we Atheists fear to die?

The creed of an Atheist is to endeavor
To slay superstition, men's deadliest foe;
Their onerous priestly-forged fetters to sever,
And brighten their lives while on earth here below.
And if there's an Almighty God in his heaven,
We can, if he's good, on his justice rely.
And if to do that which is right we have striven—
Say, why should we Atheists fear to die?

ESS JAY BEE.

DARWINISM: PAST AND PRESENT.

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, a thaumaturgical political mountebank of foreign extraction (one of Macchiavelli's little ones), told Sir Robert Peel, in the House of Commons: "The Conservative Government is an organised hypocrisy." Nobody knew better than he, and we must take his word for it. Not so the cheap sneer at Darwin and his theories. Many years ago he appeared before a Tory audience ("the stupid party," as he called them before he succeeded in educating them) and said: "The question, after all, is, whether a man is an ape or angel!" This *never* was the question at all. Then, putting his hands into the side-pockets of his velvet coat, the vain puppy strutted across the platform, and added: "As for me, my lords and gentlemen, I am on the side of the angels!" (*sic*). Great applause greeted this silly utterance, clearly showing the mental capacity of his audience. He ought to have been treated to a shower of rotten eggs. Darwin's theories have won acceptance among scientists all over the world. Another enlightened Tory asked: "What's the difference between a monkey and Darwin?" Answer: "One cracks nuts, and the other's nut's cracked." These and similar "*jeux d'esprit*" were highly appreciated by the clericals twenty-five years ago; but they would be ashamed of them *now*. The world progresses.

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

PREMATURE INTERMENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The allusion to premature burial in the interesting report of an address by Mr. J. Harvey Simpson, on "The Gospel of Love and Cremation," in the *Freethinker* of March 1, induces me to offer a few observations. The correspondence on this subject in the Press exhibits a considerable amount of public interest, and the wonder is that it has not been thoroughly ventilated before. Cases of premature burial and narrow escapes from such terrible occurrences—some at home, and others cabled from abroad—have not been rare. It has happened more than once that two recent cases have been reported in one issue of a daily paper; but the effect has been ephemeral, and no effort in medical literature, or in the lectures before the medical schools, as far as my reading and observation extend, has been made to prevent such horrible misadventures. It is true that the various cremation societies have framed rules requiring a much more rigorous examination of the dead, or supposed dead, than is adopted in ordinary cases; for, besides that of the usual medical attendant, a certificate from an independent doctor, in which the cause of death must be explicitly stated, is indispensable. This precaution, although lessening the risk of premature burial, is by no means an adequate safeguard, as the numerous cases cited by Dr. Franz Hartmann, in his much-talked-of volume, *Premature Burial* (recently published in London), show, and from which I quote the following: "Owing to some strong mental excitement, the Cardinal Spinosa fell into a state of apparent death. He was declared to be dead by his physicians, and they proceeded to open his chest, for the purpose of embalming his body. When the lungs were laid open, the heart began to beat again; the Cardinal returned to consciousness, and was just able to grasp after the knife of the surgeon, when he fell back and died in reality."

Were it not for occupying too much of your valuable space, many illustrative examples, after medical inspection and medical death certification, could be cited. Unfortunately for the public, cases of the kind seem to have been generally pooh-poohed by the practitioner, and overlooked by the heads of the profession. At all events, I may say that a diligent search through many volumes of leading medical journals has failed to discover a single practical suggestion for abolishing a terrible evil. To find a lucid and comprehensive treatise by an able English authority on the subject, you have to go back half a century. In France, Italy, and Germany, on the other hand, a very respectable library by able writers can be found, and various precautionary measures have been laid down.

I shall be happy to send a printed copy of "Suggestions for the Prevention of the Burial of Persons Alive," by an eminent surgeon, on receipt of a stamped and addressed envelope.—Yours faithfully, JAS. R. WILLIAMSON.

42 Stibbington-street, N.W.

BELLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I see Uncle Benjamin Bimbom ascribes a Buddhist origin to Bells. I read, however, in *La Nature* that, "according to Father Kircher, the invention of bells must be ascribed to the Egyptians, who announced with them the feasts of Osiris. They appear to have been known in China more than 2,600 years before Christ. It is certain that small bells were much used in antiquity; according to the narrative of Clement of Alexandria, the high priest Aaron had the rim of his robe trimmed with them. [These are mentioned in Exodus xxviii. 34.] Theocritus says that the ancients rang small bells during their sacrifices, as in the mysteries of the Corybantes and of Bacchus. The ass of Silenus bore a bell at his neck, like most beasts of burden." Animal bells serve purposes of utility, to prevent straying, as well as of superstition, to ward off evil spirits—the original purpose, I believe, of some of the brass ornaments on horses. The bells on the priests' robes were perhaps for a similar purpose, or to notify the god of their presence. One may imagine many things as said by church bells. To me they say, "Come to church, people," "Go away, Devil," and "Here we are, Jesus."

LE NEVUE DE MON ONCLE.

There are times when the inhumanity of a system stands out so red and foul, when the burden of its iniquity weighs so heavy, and the contagion of its hypocrisy is so laden with mortal plague, that no awe of *dilettante* condemnation, nor minute scruple as to the historic or the relative, can stay the hand of the man whose direct sight and moral energy have pierced the veil of use, and revealed the shrine of the infamous thing.—*Morley on Voltaire.*

THE DOCTRINE OF INSPIRATION.

THAT which is not a supernatural revelation may still, so far as it is good, be a manifestation of the Divine. As a manifestation of the Divine, the Hebrew books, teaching righteousness and purity, may have their place in our love and our admiration for ever; but the time has surely come when, as a supernatural revelation, they should be frankly, though reverently, laid aside, and no more allowed to cloud the vision of free inquiry, or to cast the shadow of primeval religion and law over our modern life, as they do when Sabbatarianism debars us from innocent recreation on our day of rest; for it is the Jewish Sabbath that is really before the Sabbatarian's mind. It is useless, and is but paltering with the truth, to set up the figment of a semi-inspiration. An inspiration which errs, which contradicts itself, which dictates manifest incredibilities, such as the stopping of the sun, Balaam's ass, Elisha's avenging bears, or the transformation of Nebuchadnezzar, is no inspiration at all. It requires the supplementary action of human criticism to winnow the truth from the falsehood; and the result of the process varies with the personal tendencies of the critics. Nobody would ever have thought of it except as an expedient to cover retreat. We do but tamper with our own understandings and consciences by such attempts at once to hold on and let go, to retain the shadow of a belief when the substance has passed away. The believers in verbal inspiration, of whom some still remain, desperate as are the difficulties with which they have to contend, stand comparatively on firm ground. Verbal inspiration is at all events a consecrated tradition; semi-inspiration is a subterfuge, and nothing more. These are troublous times; in politics, in the social system, and in religion. But the storm-centre seems to be in the region of religion. The fundamental beliefs on which our social system has hitherto rested are giving way. To replace them before the edifice falls, and at the same time to give us such knowledge as may be attainable of man's estate and destiny, thought must be entirely free.

—*Goldwin Smith, in "North American Review."*

PROFANE JOKES.

One of those men who say something which they had better left unsaid addressed the late Rev. Charles Spurgeon as he was passing out of church. Grasping the preacher by the hand, the man said: "I see you have forgotten me, sir; and yet you once did me the greatest service that a clergyman can render to anybody." "What service was that?" asked Spurgeon. "You buried my wife, sir," replied the man, his eyes suffused with tears.

A little girl was in the witness-box, and, as usual, before she was allowed to be sworn, she was examined by the presiding judge—Mr. Justice Maule—as to her understanding the nature of an oath and her belief in a future state. "Do you know what an oath is, my child?" asked the judge. "Yes, sir; I am obliged to tell the truth." "And if you always tell the truth, where will you go when you die?" "Up to heaven, sir." "And what will become of you if you tell lies?" "I shall go to the naughty place, sir." "Are you quite sure of that?" "Yes, sir, quite sure." "Let her be sworn," said Maule; "it is quite clear she knows a great deal more than I do."

Louise—"The Bishop looked awfully cross, didn't he?" Minnie—"No wonder; all the bridesmaids wore sleeves bigger than his."

Bobby—"Pop, why do they have a chaplain to pray for Congress?" Pop—"The chaplain doesn't pray for Congress; he prays at it. What he prays for is his salary."

Why Hell is Best.

While the burning at first
Perhaps would be worst,
Still, custom the anguish might soften;
But if you were bored
With praising the Lord,
You'd be more so with praising him often.

—*J. K. Stephen.*

At the Confirmation Class.

"Now girls, ye must be 'umble. Can you tell me why Jesus washed Peter's feet?" "Because they were sweaty."

"You know in heaven we shall be ever with the Lord. Now, which would you rather have—the glories of heaven or a thousand pounds?" Chorus: "A thousand pounds."

"Can you tell me who was the Savior?" "O Christ!" "That's right; but you should not speak out of your turn." "Please, sir, Jenny run a pin into me."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "Sin Against God an Impossibility." Tuesday, at 8.15, social party. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture VIII., Cancer."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, select entertainment by Mr. St. Clair's Company, for the benefit of the Branch. Friday, at 8, committee.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Man: Ancient and Modern."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, G. J. Warren, "On the Mile End Vestry."

FINSBURY BRANCH: 11.30, general meeting of members at the Club Union Building, Clerkenwell.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Socialism and Marriage."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Prophet and Priest."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Shepherds Bush): 7, musical selection; 7.30, R. Rosetti, "How I Escaped Death and Siberia."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, W. Heaford, "God as a Basis of Ethics."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, a lecture (see *Daily Mail*).

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Rev. T. Davies, "Dress Reform."

CAMBUSLANG: Friday, C. Cohen will lecture.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, H. Snell, "Charles Bradlaugh, Soldier and Chieftain" (illustrated with lantern slides).

DERBY ("Ye Olde Feathers"): 7, Mr. Wright, a paper.

DUNOON (Burgh Hall): Monday, at 8, C. Cohen, "Is Christianity True?"

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, C. Cohen, "The Scientific Basis of Morals"; 2.30, "Christianity and Slavery"; 6.30, "Scepticism: Its Meaning and its Value."

GREENOCK (Bank-street Hall): Wednesday, at 8, C. Cohen, "The Philosophy of Secularism."

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Ward, a reading, with music.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, F. J. Gould, "The Life of Charles Bradlaugh."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Millar, "Curiosities of Olden Times."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, S. R. Thompson, "Christianity and Slavery."

MOTHERWELL (Lesser Town Hall): Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "Is there a God?"

PAISLEY (Tannahill Hall, Moss-street): Tuesday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, Mr. Tamlyn, "Environment and Character."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 11, Charles Watts, "Science of Life, from a Secular Standpoint"; 3, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future"; 7, "The Religious Man." Tea at 5. Saturday, March 7, in the Theatre, Tannery-street, Woodhouse, at 7, Charles Watts, "Christianity Weighed in the Balance and Found Wanting."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 7, business meeting; 7.30, R. Chapman, "The Future of Liberalism."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—March 8, Glasgow; 9, Dunoon; 10, Paisley; 11, Greenock; 12, Motherwell; 13, Cambuslang; 15, Glasgow; 22, Edinburgh; 29, Leeds. April 5, Balls Pond; 12, 19, and 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—April 5, m. Westminster; 12, Mile End; 19, Camberwell; 26, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—March 8, Balls Pond; 15, Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road; 22, Athenæum, Shepherds Bush. April 12, Balls Pond; 26, Glasgow.

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The Freethinker

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

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THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

(*Continued from page 146.*)

A GOOD MAN GONE WRONG.

THE hero of a melodrama must never do anything wicked, but he must be thought capable of doing it, and it rather heightens the interest if he lies under a certain suspicion; for the virtue of the multitude is like that of some of the fine ladies in old comedies, who flared up at a positive attack on their virtue, but despised the man who never excited their apprehensions. All this is provided for in *The Sign of the Cross*, as it was provided for in *Claudian*. In both pieces Mr. Barrett plays the part of a good man gone wrong—not too wrong, but just wrong enough. You know he will come out right in the end, but meanwhile there is an appearance of uncertainty, which raises a half-pleasant alarm. Mr. Barrett's part in the new play is that of Marcus Superbus, Prefect of Rome. This high and mighty gentleman is a kind of Manfred. He is in very bad company, and there are hints of his questionable past. But his inherent nobility breaks through every hindrance and shines through every disguise, and eventually he dies in the fullest odor of sanctity.

Now let the reader observe the simplicity of Mr. Barrett's methods—I mean as a playwright. I have said that all his Pagans are wicked, and all his Christians virtuous. As a general statement it was true, but I have now to furnish the requisite qualification. Marcus Superbus is in the list of Pagans, but he is a good man gone wrong, who is bound to come right, and in the end he joins the list of Christians. Thus the exception only emphasises the rule. There was but one good man among the Pagans at the beginning, and he was obliged to leave them at the finish; which shows, not only that the Christians were good, but that every good man was sure to become a Christian.

THE CONVERSION OF MARCUS.

Marcus Superbus is Prefect of Rome under the Emperor Nero. The Christians are persecuted, and one of these unfortunates is a beautiful girl named Mercia. Sweetness and purity were not enough; beauty was also indispensable; for Marcus had to fall in love with her, and what was the use of a plain face under a Salvation bonnet? The part of Mercia is played charmingly by Miss Maud Jeffries. It is not an active, but a passive character. Mercia cannot strike into the course of events and modify it, but she can suffer the worst it may bring. And as I saw her devotion to "her people," beheld her renunciation of earthly joys, and watched her growing resignation to martyrdom, I thought of how the Church has always exploited woman, of how it has pressed her natural maternity into the service of its sinister supernaturalism.

Marcus desires this Christian girl. Her innocence is a condiment to his jaded palate. He tries solicitation, he attempts violence. Both fail, and at last he is touched by the passion of love. He would have Mercia as his wife. She is in the dungeon of the amphitheatre; her companions have gone out to the lions, and she is to follow them. A judicious interval is allowed by the officials for stage purposes. Marcus enters and begs her to save her life, and let him be her husband. She also confesses that she loves him. But how is her life to be saved? Marcus tells her. Let her renounce Christ. She refuses, and prefers death; whereupon Marcus becomes a Christian himself, claims Mercia as his bride for all eternity, and goes forth hand in hand with her to the hungry lions in the arena.

"All For Love; or, the World Well Lost" was the title of John Dryden's finest tragedy. Mr. Barrett's play might be called "All For Love; or, the Gods Well Lost." From an emotional, amatory point of view, the conversion of Marcus is intelligible; from a spiritual point of view it is simply ridiculous. Can a man become a Christian in three minutes? Is Christianity to be learnt from a woman's eyes? Has it no doctrines, no history; nothing which makes any sort of appeal to the intelligence?

I have been told that Marcus was becoming a Christian all through the play; to which I reply that he was falling in love all through the play. He was *not* a Christian when he besought Mercia to renounce Christ; he *was* a Christian three minutes afterwards; and the suddenness of the change is beyond all rational explanation.

Marcus Superbus is cheated at the finish, through Mr. Barrett's imperfect acquaintance with the teachings of Jesus Christ. Mercia could not be his bride for all eternity. There is no justification in the New Testament for supposing that a man who misses a wife here will gain her hereafter. This is the world in which we must marry, if we ever marry at all. Jesus Christ distinctly taught that there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage in the kingdom of heaven, but all are as the angels of God—that is, of the neuter gender.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

The third scene of the third act is laid in Marcus's palace, where a number of Christians are imprisoned, and amongst them Mercia. Marcus comes out from a noisy crew of male and female revellers, talks to himself about the beautiful Christian girl, contrasts her with the lewd women he has left (of course the women were *all* lewd in Rome—except the Christians), and finally sends for her. After some rather fantastic conversation, they are suddenly surrounded by the revellers, who have burst out to find Marcus. The women proceed to rate Mercia like fishfags. One of them actually invites her to work a miracle—as though that were a Christian speciality! Mr. Barrett is probably ignorant of the fact that the Pagans had as many miracles as the Christians. Neither side denied the actuality of the other's miracles; the point in dispute was this—Whose miracles are the work of divine, and whose of demonic agency? However, the wanton crew are driven away by Marcus, who then (curiously enough) solicits Mercia to impurity, and, on being repulsed, actually attempts outrage. The stage is darkened for this struggle, at the crisis of which there comes a flash of lightning; and Mercia, having somehow found a crucifix, holds it up in the limelight; whereat Marcus shrinks aghast and crouches in terror. It was a "fetching" piece of stage business, but it will not stand criticism. Lightning could be no great novelty to a Roman, and a cross meant nothing to a Pagan; or, if it meant anything at all, it was significant of the powers of generation—a most awkward thing to appeal to at such a crisis! Had nothing stood between Mercia and outrage but a cross, her honor would not have been worth a moment's purchase. We do not read that the Turks and Kurds spare Armenian girls on account of the crosses they wear on their breasts. The fact is that this sign of the cross—Marcus cowering, and Mercia holding aloft the crucifix—is simply a bit of stage clap-trap, quite in harmony with the sentimentality of the whole melodrama.

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The sign of the cross is introduced again in the last act. The boy Stephanus—a part admirably played by Miss Haidee Wright—shrinks from following his Christian companions from the dungeon of the amphitheatre to the bloody arena. He has been lashed and racked already, in a most brutal scene, which makes no appeal whatever to the intellect and imagination, but is a direct appeal to mere sensation; its interest, in short, if it *has* an interest, being not psychological, but purely physical. Stephanus is still suffering from the effects of that torture, and the consciousness of having betrayed his friends while under it, and Mercia tries in vain to arouse his fortitude; but at last he sees a vision of Christ beside him, and of the Cross before him, and he follows it cheerfully to his doom. This, again, is very pretty, but it is susceptible of improvement. It is easy to bring invisible characters and objects upon the stage. Something more definite should be produced in the nineteenth century. Surely the resources of science are equal to throwing a phantom Christ beside the boy Stephanus, and a phantom cross before him. We make this suggestion in good faith. Even melodrama should be as good as possible, and it is as well to "go the whole hog" in everything.

Mr. Barrett must pardon me for telling him, or reminding him, that the Cross has played other parts than the protector of virtue and the stimulator of fortitude. It was the sign of the Cross, we are told, that led Constantine, and through him his successors, to *force* Christianity upon their Pagan subjects. It was the sign of the Cross that led the multitude of Crusaders to pollute with cruelty and bloodshed the very land that had been trodden by the feet of their "Savior." The sign of the Cross was painted on the shirts of the poor wretches burnt for heresy by the Inquisition. Sometimes, by a crowning infamy, as a heretic was in the flames, a red-hot crucifix was pressed to his lips.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

THE LAST WORDS OF HAMLET.

"The rest is silence."

I SHALL not, with friend Gigadibs, attempt to show "the upshot of *Hamlet*," nor do I flatter myself with perceiving points in the character "unseized by the Germans yet." Yet it is not without cause that most all the critics, including Goethe, have fastened on *Hamlet* as taking us deepest into the thought of the great dramatist. *Lear* may have more poignant pathos, *Macbeth* more surging strength, *Romeo and Juliet* more passionate poetry; but in *Hamlet* we know we have the revised, matured work of the author. Though this may not assure us that it was his favorite work, yet the labored care spent on the revision is proof that Shakespeare deemed it worthy of that care, and no better instruction in the art of the great artist can be obtained than by comparing the rough edition of 1603 with the polished production of 1604. Act by act, scene by scene, line by line, he altered and improved the earlier play till what we have is, in part, rather a new version of *Hamlet* than a revision. Indeed, it is only the latter which can certainly be considered the work of Shakespeare, since *The Tragical Historie* of 1603 was probably taken down from the actors without any revision by the author.

Between the two versions many notable things must have occurred. One of which we have knowledge is that Shakespeare read Montaigne. His copy of Florio's translation (1603) is one of the supreme treasures of the British Museum, and Shakespeare's indebtedness thereto has often been pointed out.

In 1871 a certain German, named Stedefeld, published a translation of Emerson's essay on *Montaigne the Sceptic*, together with the thesis that *Hamlet* was a "tendency-drama" against the sceptical and cosmopolitan *Weltanschauung* of Montaigne. Mr. Jacob Feis, in his *Shakespeare and Montaigne* (1884), took still more distinct hold of the wrong end of the stick. He argued that *Hamlet* was written as a warning against the scepticism and inconsistencies of Montaigne. This is nonsense. Henry Morley, in his Introduction to Florio's translation, says rightly: "Shakespeare certainly was with Montaigne, and not against him."

Had Mr. Feis studied the development of *Hamlet*, he might have been spared committing himself to an absurdity. Had he but taken *The Tragical Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (1603), and the date also of Florio's *Montaigne*, and compared it with the later revision, he would have found that the whole tone of thought is brought more into conformity with Montaigne. In the famous soliloquy, "To be or not to be," we have in the earlier version (possibly mainly a report of the acted *Hamlet*):—

> "Bourne before an everlasting judge
> From whence no passenger ever return'd—
> The undiscovered country at whose sight
> The happy smile, and the accursed damned."

For which Shakespeare substituted: "The undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns"—in face, as Goldsmith notes, of the fact that Hamlet had just seen his father "piping hot from purgatory." So for "a *hope* of something after death" he substitutes "a dread" as the true factor. As Montaigne says of death, "*l'aultre nous effraye.*"

There is such a different cast of thought between the amended version of *Hamlet* and that of 1603 that we are tempted to consider that the *Tragical Historie* represents the early work which Henslowe acted in at Newington Butts in 1594. In the earlier version *Hamlet* smacks of the ranter, in the later of the thinker. Here are a few examples of the philosophy which is absent in the first edition:—

Act I., scene 2—"How weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable," etc.
Act II., scene 2—"Denmark's a prison," etc.
Act II., scene 2—"I have of late lost all my mirth," etc.

Examples might be multiplied. The difference between the two *Hamlets* is even more than that between the work of a man of thirty and a man of forty. It is the difference between one who accepts the world and one who ponders upon it; between one who says as his last words "Heaven receive my soul," and one who says "The rest is silence."

J. M. WHEELER.

BELIEF IN GOD AN EMOTIONAL FIGMENT.

(Concluded from page 147.)

To the emotional believer in a God the proclamations of the Hebrew prophets, the shouts of unlettered Arabs, the incantation of the priests, and the incoherent exclamations of the Salvationists are of greater importance than intellectual declarations, which are regarded by these lovers of uncontrolled emotion as being lifeless and cold. The prophet of an emotional God needs no learning; he only asserts and announces, without ever explaining the meaning and force of what he asserts and announces. He presents neither art nor science, but contents himself with assumptions, which are the creations of his own mind. Even believers who are not extremely fanatical indulge more or less in these drawbacks, and they candidly confess that they are unable to explain why they do so. We think it was Paley who said, "He alone discovers who proves." If this statement were accepted as a general axiom, half of the great theological "lights of the Church" would be extinguished, inasmuch as those who profess to have discovered a God can furnish no proof of their alleged discovery, for in their case fancy is relied upon rather than fact.

Many of the ancients attributed the first principle of all things to some one known agency, such as fire, water, air, etc., and each of these became the foundation or symbol of a religion; but such faiths made but little progress. They lacked the emotional feature which is prominent in the religions of Western nations. A good illustration is given of the ineffable and indefinable use of language, in reference to the incomprehensible, by Mencius, who says: "I fully understand language, and nourish well my vast flowing vigor." "I beg to ask you," said his companion, "what you call 'vast flowing vigor'?" To which Mencius replied: "The explanation is difficult. This vigor is supremely great, and in the highest degree unbending. Nourish it correctly, and do it no injury, and it will fill up the vacancy between heaven and earth. This vigor accords with and assists justice and reason, and leaves no hunger." Now, we submit that to a practical person, whose mind is not filled with ecstasy, this emotional condition does "leave hunger."

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The well-trained mind can be satisfied only by what it can be filled with, and there is nothing in such frenzied utterances as these to satisfy those who hunger for knowledge. A similar emotional figment is presented by English writers who attempt to describe the supposed supernatural, which is indescribable. To talk of "looking through nature up to nature's God" is mere rhetoric, destitute of any real argumentative signification. The discoveries of science are constantly driving the notion of an emotional God from the realms of intellect, and, as George Combe said, "Secular providence rules in his stead." If the God of the Theist had been a discovery instead of an emotional invention, this could not have happened. The banishment of the God notion from the human mind, so far as it has occurred, is the result of the scientific explanation of the movements going on in the organic and inorganic worlds. But here it has been discovered that formations and modifications can be traced to an endless succession of natural causes; and thus the supernatural has been removed into the spiritual world, and even here believers in Spiritualism have to confess that natural law prevails. Thus, in every realm the belief in an emotional God is becoming more and more ephemeral. A proof that this God notion is but a figment of the mind is found in the orthodox teaching of what is called the "Providential care exercised over the events of life." As Chaucer puts it—

> Be it of war, of peace, or hate, or love,
> All this is ruled by the sight above.

If this ruling be a reality, it is of a most extraordinary and cruel character. No man worthy of the name, even if he had the power, would be guilty of governing the universe as it is supposed to be governed by the supernatural Providence. If such a being exist as the "God of Nature," and he rules and controls natural events, he must certainly be the very incarnation of cruelty. Under his special government earthquakes swallow men, women, and children by thousands; cyclones, with their withering blasts, rob whole families of home and life; colliery accidents crush to death the hard toilers, thus depriving their loved ones of their only means of existence; and the tempests on the ocean consign thousands to watery graves. Under this "Providential care" all the malignant forces in nature are let loose, and no God intervenes to arrest or prevent the devastating work. Well may J. S. Mill exclaim that "nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another are nature's every-day performances. Killing, the most criminal act recognised by human laws, nature does once to every being that lives; and in a large proportion of cases often protracted tortures, such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their living fellow creatures.....Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyr, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous deaths in reserve such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed. All this nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and of justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and worst; upon those who are engaged in the highest and worthiest enterprises, and often as the direct consequence of the noblest acts" (Essay on *Nature*, pp. 28, 29). After fully reflecting upon the misery, sufferings, and horrors which these facts indicate, are we not justified in regarding the belief in God as nothing more than an emotional figment?

If a God of infinite knowledge, power, and goodness really existed, it is only reasonable to suppose that he would make his existence known to us. He must be aware that many persons have sought long and anxiously for evidence of his existence; but they have failed to discover the object of their search. If God be what his believers allege that he is, he possesses the power of convincing every honest mind of his reality. Moreover, if a knowledge of him would be an advantage to all of us, his goodness should prompt him to reveal himself. But he has not done so; therefore, what is the sincere and earnest inquirer to do? He cannot manufacture evidence in favor of that of which he is entirely ignorant. It is useless to aver that persons who do not believe in a Supreme Being are obstinate and perverse. That is an imputation as false as it is unjust. Besides, such an accusation implies that we wish to avoid conviction, which is the very opposite of the truth. To many of us it would be a source of great consolation if we could recognise grounds for believing that a being existed upon whom we could rely for help in the hour of need. The facts of life, however, do not appear to us to justify such a belief. We cannot think that a world in which there is so much wrong, so many gross inequalities, and such palpable injustice as we see around us, is directed and regulated by a God of infinite power and goodness. While injustice triumphs over justice; while wrong is clothed in purple and fine linen, and right is clothed in rags, begging for bread; while brutal force is allowed to trample ruthlessly beneath its feet the fairest flowers of maiden virtue; while nations are permitted to writhe in the agonies of famine, pestilence, war, poverty, squalor, vice, and crime; we say, while these blots deface the humanity of our race, we cannot believe that a God exists who could, but will not, destroy such agencies of desolation and despair.

Instead of gratifying our emotions upon the figment of theology, we prefer to turn to the facts of nature and to the truths of science, where ample scope is afforded for the fullest play of all our emotions. Who will deny that there is enough in nature to kindle within us the warmest rapture of enthusiasm. The massive rocks, the golden sunset, the glowing stars, the rolling waves, the rippling brook, the grassy mead, the trees with their luxuriant foliage, and the flowers of every variety of hue which have entranced and charmed mankind during all ages, are but the grand treasures and sights of nature. The poet who has revelled in these natural beauties, painting them in words which have stirred the emotions to their lowest depths, and made the objects themselves stand out in clear outline conspicuously to the reader, fascinating and enrapturing his mental vision, is the poet of nature, who finds in the external universe food for his highest powers.

In science we have also ample sources for emotional gratification. We have astronomy, with its worlds upon worlds, revolving around the sun; geology, with its fossil wonders, telling tales of ages long past; botany, with its variety of foliage; zoology, with its innumerable number of animal organisms; and last, but not least, the great science of man, who possesses a mind capable of the highest cultivation, an imagination prolific in picturesque representation, and aspirations lofty in their nature and consoling in their influence. These facts of science are more valuable to us than all the figments of theology, for it has been truly said: "Theology is a dark-robed demon of fear; science a white-robed messenger of love. Theology is an owl that haunts the night with doleful sounds; science is an eagle that flies upward towards the sun. Theology is the night full of dark, gruesome things, conjured up by the moral and mental nightmare of the race; science is the day full of health and joy, lit by the clear, shining sun, that drives away the very shadow of fear. Theology is a shroud covering the dead past; science is a banner inspiring the living with enthusiasm for a glorious future." CHARLES WATTS.

A BOUT WITH A BIGOT.

(Concluded from page 149.)

"ON page 314 of Dick's book I find the story repeated by you about the meeting of 'French literati,' who, being asked severally whether there was any such thing as moral obligation, answered in every instance, there was not; and Dr. Dick assures his readers that he had this on 'good authority.' We all know 'good authority'; it is cousin-germane to 'They say,' 'It is credibly reported,' and the widespread family of hearsay. You would not hang a cat on such tainted testimony; but any stick is good enough with which to beat the 'infidel' dog. The story, on the very face of it, is a preposterous fiction; but the contriver of it was not an artistic liar—he has over-reached himself. Whoever heard of any sane being disclaiming all moral obligations? It is possible that a party of French Atheists, such as that to which Hume was introduced (Hill Burton's *Life of David Hume*), might have disowned the Christian or supernatural sanctions of conduct; but there is not a line in the writings, nor record of the speech, of any 'infidel' repudiating all moral responsibility. The 'infidel' is always the first to insist on the duty of the individual to

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the society in which he lives; without the recognition of that relation, society is impossible. Do you really mean to say that you retailed this silly falsehood on the slender foundation of Dr. Dick's 'good authority'? If so, it only confirms me in the conviction that some Christians, like most of the Jews of old, do not extend the benefits of the Ninth Commandment to 'infidels.' I presume that the form of moral obligation to which you confess does not require the keeping of faith with, or the observance of the law of honor towards, 'infidels'; and perhaps, after all, you Christians find you have more than enough to do in 'hating each other for the love of God, and fighting like devils for conciliation,' without stopping to consider the trifling question of the duty of fair play towards your external enemies. It is a malignant lie to say that 'soon after the Revolution the great body of French infidels, who then ruled the nation, not only denied all the obligations which bind us to truth, justice, and kindness, but pitied and despised, as a contemptible wretch, the man who believed in their existence,' and that, during the Revolution, 'Atheism was publicly preached,' and 'a professor was even named by Chaumette to instruct the children of the State in the mysteries *(sic)* of Atheism.'*

"The party of philosophical Atheism in the Revolution was that of the Gironde, which perished through the machinations of the Robespierists, soon after the advent of the Terror in 1793.† To use Mrs. Besant's words: 'The Gironde disappeared from the Convention ere 1793 had run half its course, and only the basest malice, or the profoundest ignorance, can ascribe the bloodshed of the Reign of Terror to the party which was among its earliest victims, which was essentially the party of reasoned Freethought, which was the child of the sceptical philosophy of the eighteenth century. The non-Christian Theistic party was roughly that of the Montagne.'‡ Atheism may have been preached by individuals, but it was never enforced by the State, which, as we have seen, continued to pay the constitutional clergy. By the 'great body of French infidels,' who ruled France after the Revolution, Dr. Dick may possibly mean the Council of Five Hundred, or, less probably, the Directory; but in neither case is the description accurate, and it is simply outrageously incredible to say that either the post-Revolutionary Legislature or Executive pursued a policy of deliberate violation of justice, truth, and kindness. Dr. Dick's short and easy method seems to be that, whenever Frenchmen or 'infidels' are concerned, the acts of individuals incriminate the class or nation to which they belong; but whenever a Christian is naughty he is not a Christian.

"On pages 315–16 Dr. Dick paints in glaring colors, and presents in the most lurid light, a penny-show picture of the horrors of the French Revolution; but he discreetly omits to depict the butcheries of the 'White Terror,' carried out at the instigation of the Royalists—the Christian Royalists—in the provinces.§ But I daresay you look for a liberal discount off Christian atrocities, while the 'infidel' must pay interest at usurers' rates. Read the story of 'La Vendée' in *Louis Blanc's History*, or, if you prefer literature more nearly on a level as regards its subject, with the sanguinary evangelical tract, but out of all comparison with it as to style, Victor Hugo's *Ninety-Three*, as to the manner in which the priest-led Vendeans treated their Republican prisoners. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If the Parisian massacres prove the wickedness of Atheism, and are to be set down as its natural fruits, what of the devilries of the White Terror? Perhaps you will answer that they were the work of Catholics, and, therefore, ought not to be counted as unrighteousness to Christianity; but you Christians have a trick of including Catholics when you are seeking to prove the success of Christianity by counting heads. Either Catholics are Christians, or they are not; and, as you can hardly afford to renounce them, you must accept the responsibility for their misconduct. Do you really understand anything about the underlying and exciting causes of the Reign of Terror? Are you aware that it was precipitated by a nefarious combination of all the leading Christian powers of Europe? that the blustering Duke of Brunswick had openly boasted that within a given time he would seize Paris, raze it to the ground, and immolate all its inhabitants? that the Convention found itself menaced on all sides by the forces of the Allies and the craven-hearted emigrés on the frontiers, and by spies and secret enemies within the gate, even in the king's chamber and the Convention itself? Do you know enough of human nature to apprehend what even the best men, unnerved by constant work, anxiety, and dread, maddened by the thought that all their dearly-bought liberties may, at any moment, be snatched from them, may be driven to do? The continuous study of the sordid, abject life of the poor, the constant contemplation of its squalid tragedy, deranged Marat's wits. Can you wonder that the men of the Revolution, many of them of unstable, emotional equilibrium to begin with, and overstrung by the awful tension of the cumulative Revolutionary crisis, lost their heads in the figurative sense, before they lost them literally?

"Dr. Dick computes the total number of the victims who perished during the Revolution at three millions. As a matter of fact, there are no trustworthy statistics available. Dick's estimate is a ridiculously exaggerated one, even if we include in it the number of the French killed in the frontier battles with the Allies. But, in any case, suppose that we make up a *per contra* statement of the tale of the victims of Christian persecutions, religious wars, and the witchcraft delusion, how will Christianity emerge from the comparison? Do you plead that there is no doctrine of 'Christ's Christianity' which sanctions these crimes? While I do not admit that, I turn the plea against yourself. Point out to me any article of teaching in the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, Diderot, Condorcet, D'Holbach, Volney, or any French philosopher of the last century, that sanctions directly, or by implication, the barbarities of the Revolution. The 'tiger and the ape' in human nature are still often too strong for the Rationalist; yet in three hundred years of but meagre power and opportunity he has done more to tame them than your Christianity during the eighteen centuries of its almost undisputed sway. Why, only last Christmas you were all bawling 'Peace on earth, goodwill to men'; and before the echoes of your carols had died away you were swaggering about like so many cut-throats, vowing the vengeance of the sword upon Turks, Americans, Boers, and helpless Ashantees. So much for nigh upon two thousand years of Christian civilisation!

"I observe that you have drawn much of the inspiration and information of that part of your paper which enlarged upon the sombreness of 'infidelity' and the disconsolateness of 'infidels' in the presence of death, from Dr. Dick's book.

"Dick adduces the much-quoted fable about Voltaire, and the seldomer-mentioned one of Gibbon, in support of his view that 'infidels' dread death more than 'fidels.' His account of Voltaire's death-bed is a scandalous perversion of the facts. It is true that Voltaire had a priest; but the real reason for this was that, as, according to the *Christian* law of France, a heretic's body might be cast out to rot by the roadside, and as Voltaire, with pardonable weakness, desired that his corpse should be decently buried, he took the only course open to him—that of seeming conformity with the Church. His last words, uttered with perfect calmness ten minutes before his death, and addressed to his faithful *valet-de-chambre*, were: "Adieu, my dear Morand, I am gone."* In reference to Gibbon, whose expression, 'All is lost, irrecoverably lost,' in a letter on the death of Mrs. Posen, Dr. Dick takes as a characteristic avowal of the 'infidel's' anguish at the thought of the total extinction of friends by death, and of his own similar fate, I find it reported that when he came to die 'the *valet-de-chambre* observed that he did not at any time evince the least sign of alarm or apprehension of death.'† In Mr. Foote's booklet you will find sixty-four carefully authenticated accounts of the deaths of the most distinguished modern 'infidels,' and from every one of them there are totally absent those very manifestations of doleful foreboding and hysterical despair which Dr. Dick and you, who feebly mimic him, declare to be the necessary concomitants of disbelief in the consolations of a creed that, in the words of Holy Willie's prayer, 'sends ane tae heaven and ten to hell, a' for thy glory, and no' for ony guid or ill they've done afore thee.'

"It has been my painful privilege to stand by the death-

* Dick, *loc. cit.*, p. 314.
† Lamartine's *Girondins*, vol. iii., pp. 179-184.
‡ *French Revolution*, p. 235.
§ *Histoire de la Revolution*, par Louis Blanc, liv. xvi., p. 646, quoted by Annie Besant, *loc. cit.*

* For a list of authorities see G. W. Foote's *Infidel Death-Beds*, second edition, pp. 92-96.
† *Last Days of Gibbon* (in Milman's edition of Gibbon), vol. i., Introduction, quoted by G. W. Foote, *loc. cit.*, p. 45.

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beds of many Freethinkers, and never once have I witnessed the slightest sign of any fear of a beyond. On the contrary, apart from the sorrow of leaving those they held dear, most of the dying 'infidels' were firm and composed, even to the point of cheerfulness, sustained to the last by the principles which they had espoused, and which they had found sufficient amidst all the lights and shadows of their way of life. But, after all, what do death-bed testimonies signify? They do not prove the truth of the opinions held by the dying, else all systems are true, and the Mohammedan who, in his passing, has visions of Al Sirat, and bevies of houris flying to welcome him, verifies the existence of what the Christian flouts as sheer hallucination. Montaigne once said that we did not need a philosophy to teach us how to die; we want one to show us how to live. If it should happen that a man whose whole working, thinking life has been devoted to the service of Freethought did, in the delirium of mortal sickness, call upon that name of Jesus which he first lisped at his pious mother's knee, it would only mean that in the tumult of his brain some early impressions had surged to the surface. For, if the Master did not indite it, has not some later hand added with a master-touch that old Jack Falstaff, dying in Eastcheap, 'babbled o' green fields'? And so, to the poor wretch gasping his last in some noisome den, in gloom and stench, there comes back the fragrance of the open country on a spring morning, and the shimmer of cool, clear waters, and the song of birds, and in the lane, with its garniture of hawthorn, the sweet face of the woman he loved long ago.

"I have said before (in my oral criticism of your essay) that habitual cheerfulness or sadness and the morbid fear of death are commonly idiosyncratic. That is how the Christian puts it when you speak of Samuel Johnson's or Addison's horror of death, or of the profound melancholia that made Pascal's life a burden, and drove the poet Cowper to attempted suicide. If it is an Atheist who is in question, the Christian smells a causal connection between his Atheism and his pessimism. But, in point of fact, apart from that tension of temperament from which no belief, however optimistic, can entirely relieve its subject, the Atheist has more to gladden and less to sadden him than the Christian. He does not see in his neighbor, or it may be even in his own flesh and blood, a possible child of the Devil, bound for an eternal Hell. He does not hate and harass his fellow-men because they do not bow the knee to the God whom he worships, or look upon this world as a wilderness, as a state of probation, where we have no continuing city. On the contrary, he beholds the race of men marching on from a lower to a higher life. He greets every man as a brother, and he owes a grudge to nobody for opinion's sake who allows him to hold and utter his own unmolested. As for this world, it is to him wondrous fair, but capable of boundless enrichment and beautification if men would but exchange creeds for deeds, and seek for truth as earnestly as they now strive to perpetuate ancient and privileged Error.

"Are you still satisfied with your 'authority' for the statements made in your paper on 'Infidelity'? I think you owe me a rejoinder. I have preserved a copy of this for possible future public use."

The pith and quality of Mr. Hart's "rejoinder" are conveyed in the subjoined passages: "I do not intend to satisfy your curiosity by telling you who I think the most (*sic*) reliable authority—Dr. Dick or the names you mention. Further, I positively decline to discuss the subject with any man who can make such an outrageous statement that (*sic*) 'The Rationalist has done more in three hundred years to tame the "tiger and the ape" in man than Christianity has done in eighteen centuries of undisputed sway.' There must be very much of the tiger left in the man who can make such a monstrous assertion, and much more of the ape in the man who could believe it." Like God, like worshipper. Jehovah cursed and chastised Adam and Eve for being too curious, confounded the speech of the builders of the Tower of Babel because they wanted to get up to heaven and see what was going on there, and struck ever so many people dead because they looked into a box in which he lodged. Your mystagogue and trickster always hates people who ask inconvenient questions, and try to peep behind the curtain. Nobody cares a denarius for Mr. Hart's or my own opinion as to the value of this or that authority, as an authority; we are only concerned to know whose testimony is the more credible in reference to a given point. This expert in Christian Evidences, and most notable researcher in the history of "Infidelity," is so constitutionally careless, or, not to put a very fine point upon it, unconscientious, that he cannot even quote my words faithfully, although they were staring him in the face. There is a maxim in law that a witness found equivocating in one particular may be considered untrustworthy all round. If Mr. Hart is to be tested by that rule, it will go hard with him. The exquisite good taste and refinement of the personality based on the "tiger and the ape" phrase is worthy of that Christian charity which, next to Christian veracity, has come to be a "hissing and a bye-word."

What a fine, typical specimen of the genus *Christianus, orthodoxus, ignavus, ignobilis* (otherwise the orthodox Christian ignoramus of the baser sort) is this example from Garelochhead. As an individual his obscurity and incapacity render him a negligeable quantity, but as a type he is simply invaluable. Such specimens are yearly becoming scarcer. The survivors are found only in outlying rural stations, where their isolation protects them from the destructive competition of higher forms of life and thought. It is thus that the pouched animals of the Australian continent persist, while their congeners in other parts of the world have been fossils for ages. I add this Garelochhead specimen to my collection with great pride and joy. There is not a characteristic organ or structure awanting. The atrophied eye, the undeveloped brain, the marvellously prehensite hand, still grasping some hair and bones of the skeleton of the *Dickus Christianus* upon which it last feasted, all are represented to a nicety. My only difficulty is that of assigning the precise varietal value of my acquisition; but perhaps my readers will kindly classify it for me.

J. P. GILMOUR.

THE TURK AND THE CHRISTIAN.

FOUR great problems now engage the attention of Christian philanthropists, and I believe that all of them are embodied in measures at present before the various legislatures. They include the suppression of liquor drinking, Sabbath-breaking, prostitution, and the public exposure of the female form. If there is anything that can for a moment divert the energy of the reformers from these vast issues, it is the conversion of the heathen, particularly the Turks. Now, among the subjects of the Sultan there is no liquor drinking, no Sabbath-breaking, no prostitution, and females, when in public, conceal their persons from toe to topknot. Hence, before I inlist for reform at home or for conquest abroad, I want to know whether, by the suppression of the above reprehensible customs, we of this country are to be transformed into the moral image of the Turk, or whether, by converting the Mohammedans, these customs are to be introduced into the Ottoman Empire, and its inhabitants thereby made to become like us. In either case, what will be gained, and who will have gained it?

We might induce the Turk to take our Christ, who manufactured wine, as a substitute for his Mohammed, who prohibited that drink as a beverage. Our whiskey we might trade, bottle for bottle, for his sherbet. We could spare him our Roosevelt and meddling parsons to enforce that Sabbath observance which with him is at present voluntary. For his polygamy we could offer our "social evil," and for his veiled females, as unsuggestive as so many bales of dry goods, our *decolleté* dames who uncover just enough of their flesh to arouse the emotions without satisfying the eye, and to incite the imagination to unwholesome revelry. But would he be any better off? It seems to me that, upon balancing one thing against another, we should lose nothing by the bargain if we made an even swap, and gave him Anthony Comstock for a present.

The Turk's habits, custom, and religion are at least as good as those of Christians. All he needs is to be a white man instead of a Turk, and the fact that we can't make one out of him should not be overlooked.

—*Truthseeker.* GEO. E. MACDONALD.

An odd circumstance happened once at Winchester. As Dr. Wilson was one Sunday morning going through the streets towards the cathedral, he heard a woman cry: "Mackerel! All alive, all alive, oh!" And on his arrival at the church he began the sermon as follows: "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive, all alive, all alive, oh!" These last words the doctor proclaimed aloud in the true tone of the fisherwoman, to the great surprise of the congregation. But the good doctor was so studious and absent that he knew not what he had done.

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ACID DROPS.

It is astonishing how busy the clergy can be in answering a Freethought lecturer "next Sunday" or some other convenient time—after he has left the locality. When Mr. Foote was lecturing recently at Hull, the Rev. F. Ballard, a Congregational minister who fills one of the most important Hull pulpits, was present at the afternoon meeting. At least it is so reported. He did not, however, accept the opportunity which was offered for discussion, but reserved his criticism for a more suitable occasion. Writing in the local *Daily Mail*, a correspondent signing himself "Fairplay" comments rather severely on the discretion which appears to be, not only the greater part, but nearly the whole of the reverend gentleman's valor: "When Mr. Foote was in Hull 'mum' was the word, but now that he has gone the reverend gentleman can make short work of the infidel."

The religious census taken at Bolton disclosed such a "shocking" state of things that Mr. Walker, a local capitalist, offered £5,000 towards evangelising the town. Since then his tannery has been totally destroyed by fire. The damage is estimated at £150,000, and the loss is only partially covered by insurance. Alack and alas! There seems to be a poor chance of getting that £5,000 now.

Alluding to this Bolton census, the *Methodist Times* makes the confession "that it is to-day the exception for a Methodist chapel to be really full, and that the immense majority of the people of England are unreached by us or by any other Church." It appears, however, that the West London Mission, which Mr. Price Hughes bosses, is more flourishing than ever, though it suffers [Ah!] from "a great temporary lack of funds." "The crowd in St. James's Hall," we read, "is, if possible, more dense than ever, and there are constant conversions." No doubt; but Mr. Hughes will be ill-advised if he publishes any more narratives of them. The Atheist Shoemaker is not yet forgotten.

Lord Rosebery, the dreadful man who keeps race-horses and actually won the Derby, was bitterly and incessantly denounced by the *Methodist Times*. His lordship has not given up his race-horses, and he may win another Derby; but somehow or other he is forgiven, although he is unrepentant. "Lord Rosebery," says the Methody paper, "is getting to know the heart of England," and "Mr. Gladstone will have a successor."

Brigadier Lumsden, of the Salvation Army, has resigned. He has been chief cashier to the Army, and secretary of its Banking Department. "There is no doubt," the *Methodist Times* says, "that he has quite unique experience of Christian finance." This gentleman, who is so experienced on the mammon side of righteousness, has accepted a post under the West London Mission; and his co-operation (in the arts of Christian finance) will relieve Mr. Hughes of "an intolerable financial burden" and "add years to his life." We congratulate Mr. Hughes on this respite from heaven.

Mr. Price Hughes writes a letter on the Lumsden incident to the London *Echo*, denying that it has any sort of connection with Ballington Booth's revolt in America, or that it implies any sort of hostility to the Salvation Army. In the course of this letter Mr. Hughes states that "tens of thousands of Methodists have during the last twenty years joined the Salvation Army." We are glad to have this statement made thus publicly. It supports the contention that Booth's followers are, for the greater part, not "converts" at all, but Christians attracted by sensationalism from other denominations.

"General" Booth comes home to meet trouble. In "Our Auxiliary Letter," which is headed in large letters, underlined, "For Private Circulation," W. Bramwell Booth tells how Mr. and Mrs. Ballington Booth sent in their resignations dated January 31; how he sent out Herbert Booth and Eva Booth to entreat them to reconsider this; but these mediatory efforts have failed. Ballington Booth is reported to be energetically organising another Army.

Though this is the first time there has been a secession in the family, it is by no means the first time that men of ability, trained in the Army, have left, finding better results were to be obtained in other quarters.

Ballington Booth and his wife have started "on their own." They have chosen a motto, "Jehovah-nissi"—"the Lord is my banner"; which is all very well, but the Lord is already William Booth's banner, unless there is a big mistake in the prospectus. The name of the new organisation is not yet settled, but a great initial meeting was held on Monday evening in the Cooper Institute. Ballington Booth explained that he was not going to fight the Salvation Army. "We have resolved," he said, "to the best of our abilities, to do something that shall win over the middle and artisan peoples of this country to the cause of Christ." The new movement, the *Daily News* remarks, is to be for the genteel. "To this complexion," continues our contemporary, "has the equality and fraternity of Salvationism come at last. Mr. Ballington Booth is probably wise in his generation. He knows that Americans are very particular as to the company in which they are saved, and that they altogether refuse, for instance, to be saved in the company of the negro. Some of the white Young Men's Christian Associations will not admit colored members, and they, so to speak, extend the system of negro compartments to the voyage to Paradise."

The *War Cry* comes out with a very suggestive large front-page cartoon, representing Satan tempting Christ and saying: "All this will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." It looks like a personal slap at Ballington Booth.

The Bristol King-street Circuit *Church Record* for March has an article on "The Wonders Wrought by Faith," an interview with Mr. George Muller. This well-known gentleman of the Orphanage on Ashley Down has long claimed to be favored of the Lord. We are told that, "with unwonted fire and flashing eye, he swung his arm as if clinching the nail with a final blow of the hammer, exclaiming: 'Show me the man that has done it—point out the man!'" Done what? Raised and expended £253,000 in missionary enterprise. He had just mentioned this one item of his work. The apparent boastfulness was disclaimed with the swiftness of St. Paul, as the old man eloquently continued: "Beloved brethren, it is not in boastfulness I say this; it was obtained *by prayer*."

Mr. Müller forgot to add two words which might have explained all—"prayer *and advertisement*." Well he knows that every mention of the sums received by faith in prayer serves to bring more. He tells us, indeed, of his business relations with God: "I began to trust Him for a few sovereigns; now, for any amount you like, if I am persuaded that it is right." That is, Mr. Müller began like any other person in a small way, and increased as he saw his method succeeded. But, like many others who ascend the ladder of fortune, he quite leaves out of sight the method by which he mounted—his own ever-ready advertisements, and those received in the religious and secular press.

Our criticism, be it understood, is entirely on Mr. Müller's boasted methods of raising funds. His purposes, so far as the provision for orphans is concerned, are excellent; and the recognition of this fact, not by God, but by charitable human hearts, has enabled him to go on and extend the sphere of his operations. So far as he and other Christians alleviate human misery, we wish them good speed, even though we dissent from their theories and are sceptical as to their methods.

The Rev. G. Swinger Rowe is horrified to find his bookseller keeps popular novels to meet the demand for Bible Class prizes. The bookseller said that, to supply this demand, he first stocked Geikie's *Life of Christ*. He found, to his loss, that he had made a great mistake. This is of a piece with the present aspect of religion all round. Services must be made attractive and entertaining; the pill must be thickly sugar-coated; solos take the place of sermons, and pleasant Sunday afternoons of morning and evening service.

The little city of Morristown, forty-five miles from Knoxville, Tennessee, has a sensation. A maiden lady of that town gave birth to a female child. The mother vigorously protested her own virginity, and insists that her child is the Savior—that this is the second coming of Christ. It is reported that the woman's mother would have killed the child when she heard of its birth but for the interference of neighbors. The mother is said to be mentally sound, except in the matter of the divinity of her child. She contends that Christ was intended to come the second time as a female. This is altogether too modern a story to go down. To give it a fair chance, it ought to be dated over a thousand years ago.

The British and Foreign Bible Society announces that it has translated the Bible into 381 languages. It does not mention that some of those who used these languages have all been killed out by Christians. We remember reading how some learned bug had been well paid for translating the Bible into some North American Indian dialect. When he had finished, it was found there were only some half dozen persons spoke that dialect, and none of them could read.

The Bible as translated in Fijian, and the New Testament as translated into Hindustani, are Bowdlerised editions of the book as we know it, and all the startling passages which the bad boy in Sunday-schools picks out to show the girls

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are omitted. Now, what parson in authority will be courageous enough to propose that the obscenity with which our copy of the Bible teems be also omitted, in order that men and women may go to church without having to try and look unconscious when the filth is read out?—*Sydney Bulletin.*

It is reported that the Rev. Joseph Cook, of Boston, the imitator of Talmage in verbosity, and in abuse of those who do not believe in his hell and endorse his mathematics that three are one and one is three, is now in a madhouse. This is the culmination of such damnable teaching. If all the preachers who promulgate such absurd doctrines were confined with him, there would be little use for insane asylums for the next generation.—*Progressive Thinker.*

A burglar arrested in New York a few days ago had in his possession a kit of tools and some excerpts from the book of Proverbs. One passage which he had marked reads as follows: "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich."

Policeman X, in *Tit-Bits*, complains that the clergy neglect policemen. He has been for thirteen years living in a district where there are twelve policemen, who cover an area in which there are three vicars, nine curates, and thirteen Dissenting ministers; and during the whole of that time not a single visit has been made to these twelve policemen by any one of these ministers. We sympathise with Policeman X, but we think there is a mistake in his arithmetic. Surely three vicars, nine curates, and thirteen Dissenting ministers would find work for more than twelve policemen.

The Catholic *Weekly Register* continues its onslaught on Mr. Purcell for his "unnatural" *Life of Cardinal Manning.* He is, it appears, very ungrateful, for not having, when presented by Manning's executors with "materials worth a sum of money probably reaching thousands of pounds," written exactly such a life as the Catholic Church would have wished. In the March number of the *New Review* a warm attack on the late Cardinal comes from "Edgbaston," the name of the Birmingham Oratory where Cardinal Newman so long resided. "Edgbaston," whoever he may be, evidently understands the Romanist ways, and says, anent the executors first threatening legal proceedings against Mr. Purcell, and then, finding their threats did not prevent the issue of the book, declaring that they did not go to law on account of the expense: "If Manning was mistaken in his choice of a biographer, he was still more unlucky in choosing his executors; nothing is easier than to appraise at its just value the loyalty which measures its devotion to a dead chief's memory by the sordid test of pounds and shillings."

The *New York Tribune* says: "The Pope's encyclical of two years ago, advising Catholics to read and study the Bible, has not apparently had much effect. The archiepiscopal book store at Milan, probably the largest in Italy, does not sell a hundred copies a year of the Scriptures."

Mrs. Lowe, a wealthy lady, who had generously supported the local Baptist cause at Bewdley, was announced to conduct the service in the Baptist Church on Sunday evening. She gave out the hymn, and then fell dead in the pulpit. The cause was purely natural—heart disease; but had such an incident occurred on a Secular platform, what sermons would have been preached, and what articles written, on the "awful event."

In the *Animals' Friend* for March Bishop Bagshawe, of Nottingham, replies to Mr. H. S. Salt, of the Humanitarian League. The Bishop says: "I presume Mr. Salt does not mean to blame Almighty God because, on account of the sin of man, he causes the whole animal creation to die in suffering. They are belongings of man, and therefore share in his punishment. Every animal is either torn to pieces or eaten alive by some other animal, or it dies in the more prolonged agonies of sickness and starvation." This is God's method, according to the Bishop, who might have cited the case of Achan, in Joshua vii. 24, whose sons, daughters, oxen, asses, and sheep were burnt for his sin. It is fortunate man has got beyond imitating such a "divine" example.

Bishop Bagshawe says: "I consider that to procure valuable and health-giving exercise and recreation for a number of men is an adequate reason for the pain inflicted on the fox." Yes; and what a consolation it would be to the hunted animal could it know that this is all divinely arranged, and that, on account of the sin of man, He causes the whole animal creation to die in suffering—except those in the lethal chambers constructed by Sir B. W. Richardson.

"The infliction of a painful death upon animals on account of man's sin is not inconsistent with God's mercy and love. It is an act of God's justice, and man need not go out of his way to make exceptions to it." We suppose, then, those who provide a painless death for ownerless dogs and other poor creatures, whose lives are a round of misery, are going out of their way to thwart God's justice. The Bishop's God, who sends the mass of his human creatures to hell, and tortures animals for man's sin, is indistinguishable from a devil.

The Bishop continues: "Revelation and reason alike show that animals have not the faculty of reason, and that they are therefore separated by an impassable barrier from man, who has it. Man has rights, animals have not. To say they have is a 'detestable assumption,' and to base the cause of humanity on a ground so false and unscriptural is to deter every sensible man from joining with those who so speak in their endeavor to promote it. Better that animals should suffer than that men should be led into false and dangerous opinions. 'I have given them to you to be your meat; even as the green herbs have I given them to you.'" This represents the true theological, pre-Darwinian attitude, and Bishop Bagshawe well illustrates how far his creed is founded in savagery.

The dark places of the earth are being illuminated by the light of modern science. According to the *Electrical Review*, it is proposed to lay down machinery and plant for the electric lighting of the great Golden Temple, at Amritzar in the Punjaub, at a cost of three lacs of rupees; and special appeals are being made to the Sikh community for the purpose of raising this sum.

Professor Moulton, a University Extension lecturer, who has gone over and taken the English Literature chair in Chicago University, has issued a book on *The Literary Study of the Bible*, in which he makes the following complaint: "It is one of the curiosities of our civilisation that we are content to go for our liberal education to literatures which, morally, are at the opposite pole from ourselves; literatures in which the most exalted tone is often an apotheosis of the sensuous, which degrade divinity, not only to the human level, but to the lowest level of humanity. Our hardest social problem being Temperance, we study in Greek the glorification of intoxication; while in mature life we are occupied in tracing law to the remotest corner of the universe, we go at school for literary impulse to the poetry that dramatises the burden of hopeless fate. Our highest politics aim at conserving the arts of peace; our first poetic lessons are in an *Iliad* that cannot be appreciated without a bloodthirsty joy in killing. We seek to form a character in which delicacy and reserve shall be supreme, and, at the same time, are training our taste in literatures which, if published as English books, would be seized by the police."

Professor Moulton holds up the Bible as the opposite to all this—which only shows how a man may read a book without really knowing what is in it. The Bible is not a Temperance book. If it is, let the clergy answer Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer.* The Bible is not a Peace book either. The fighting in Homer is chivalrous in comparison with the brutal wars in the Old Testament, with their wholesale massacres of men, women, and children. Nor is the Bible a Purity book. It is often disgustingly and gratuitously obscene. There are things in it that would be "seized by the police" if they were published elsewhere. On the whole, it appears to us that Professor Moulton has simply given himself away. His three complaints against classic literature apply with still greater force to his own Bible.

The combination of mediævalism, music, and mummery, which is progressing in the Church of England, is well illustrated in the Passion Play which has been produced at the Romanising Church of St. Bartholomew, Brighton. Here the characters of the gospel story were taken by trained members of the congregation, a pretty sister in Eastern garb enacting the *rôle* of the Virgin Mary; her son being first taken by a choir-boy, and afterwards by an acolyte. Applause was rigorously suppressed, but we read: "One more than once got the impression that it was on the point of breaking out." In reverting to scenic representation, the Church may unconsciously be throwing an effective side-light on the very origin of its legends.

The Rev. Morgan Jones, vicar of Edgton, Shropshire, has got an easy sentence for perjury. Mr. Justice Grantham awarded him six days' imprisonment, which, dating from the opening of the assizes, terminated immediately.

The *Church Times*, noticing how the *Methodist Times* extols the "Christian School Board system," remarks: "It is a cardinal doctrine of Dissent that State patronage of religion is to be abhorred. Here we have a Dissenting journal gloating over a State-made and State-paid established religion, of which, to boot, they, and they only, approve." The Nonconformist Conscience has indeed got into a hopeless muddle on the education question through having deserted its fundamental principle, that religion is a private affair.

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According to the *Record*, there is at Cambridge a secret society containing some 1,200 members, all pledged to spread the Catholic faith in England. They are known as Companions of St. John, and some of the Companions of St. John are naturally members of the Society of Jesus.

It is not often now-a-days that parsons have the cheek to interfere with marital arrangements, but the Rev. A. B. Prole knows what belongs to his calling, and posts up "Instructions for Lent." Special reference is made to married people and to persons about to marry, and we give the remainder in Mr. Prole's own words:—

> Advent marriage doth deny,
> Hilary (Jan. 13) gives the liberty,
> Septuagesima says thee nay,
> Easter octave says you may,
> Rogation bids thee to contain,
> Trinity sets thee free again.

"This ancient rhyme teaches the prohibited times of holy matrimony, as well as those seasons of abstinence, during which St. Paul says (see 1 Cor. vii. 5, 29): 'It remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinence.'"

Dean Carmichael, of Montreal, thinks education is rendering the masses more dangerous than the ignorant mob who tore down the Bastille. Professor Youmans well says in reply: "A man does not become dangerous because he has learned to sign his name; but he becomes dangerous both to himself and others if he has been taught to dissociate cause and effect; if he has got it into his head that benefits may be obtained without labor; if his brain has been muddled with the notion that others are responsible for making him happy and prosperous."

Schlatter, the J. C. and faith healer of America, has an imitator in Rev. W. Bailey, of North Platte, Nebraska. Bailey has been working his miracles all the winter, and so endeared himself to the female members of one of the families who had believed in him that he became unduly frequent in manifesting his powers, and the husband ordered him to clear out and never return. He paid no attention to the order, and the husband, in sheer desperation, went along to District Judge Grimes, and asked what to do to get rid of the "healer," who was breaking up his family. The judge, in true Western fashion, donned his hat, went to the house, and ejected the intruder, who was ordered to leave the town. He refused, and an emergency tar-and-feather committee was formed among the citizens. After adorning the "healer," they turned him loose, and threatened to lynch him if he did not depart. He went, remarking that if the Lord ordered him to return he would do so.

Mr. Moody, the evangelist, tells that when a boy he used to go to church barefooted, carrying his shoes in his hand to save wear and tear, and putting them on his feet before entering the sanctuary. The Honolulu folks did the same when they got their first supply of clothes from the missionaries. They, however, waited till they got inside the church to put their clothes on, and the proceedings are said to have been lively.

There is a run on converted cobblers in the Methodist market. One, who was a miser, is brought to our notice in the *Methodist Recorder* of March 5. He has a bag of gold, and empties "the glittering coins upon the table until there rose a bright glowing heap." If he got them all by cobbling, he must have been a miraculous miser indeed.

To this miser enters the Rev. John Melville, a "frank, winsome, manly fellow," who sees that the cobbler is like J. C. in that "the world knew him not," which is the title of the story. A side character introduced is Davies, a storekeeper. "Now, unfortunately, Davies was a philosopher and an Agnostic." How very unfortunate for men of God that such people really exist outside stories.

Every illness of Pope Leo XIII. gives rise to speculations as to his successor. Cardinal Rampolla is first favorite as the special confidante of the Pope and the advocate of a democratic policy. The older order of ideas range round Cardinal Galimberti, who will have the support of Austria, as Rampolla has of France. In Papal conclaves, however, nothing is more likely than for a dark horse, hitherto unnamed, to come out a-top. The only thing certain is that he will be an Italian, and one who desires the restoration of the temporal power.

Canon Smith, presiding at a Christian Evidence lecture on "Is there a God?" at Swansea, said it might be that there were some who were surprised that a Christian audience could, in the present day, be assembled to discuss such a question. However, he was never surprised to hear of the deepest doubts and the darkest, gloomiest feelings that might come into the human mind. Of course, Atheism is everything that is inhuman and horrible; but even Canon Smith seems to allow that it may honestly come into the human mind. If so, and it honestly stays there, is the holder to be damned forever?

The Lord's Farm at Paskack, New Jersey, where Huntsman T. Mnason, *alias* "God, the Great One," and a band of "Angel Dancers"—nine males and seventeen females—live together after the style of the primitive Christians, has, it is said, given rise to an epidemic of contagious disease. The Lord's Farm was indicted as a disorderly house in 1893, and Mnason, who claims to be a prophet of God, spent a year in the State prison at Trenton, N.J. He had previously been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for "blasphemy" in declaring himself to be the son of God.

There have been terrible floods in Mesopotamia. More than 30,000 head of cattle and a nomad tribe of 600 Arabs have perished in the flood. Some such catastrophe as this may have given rise to the deluge legend.

The Moslem Ramazan, or month of fasting, falls this year at the same time as the Christian Lent. This is not usually the case, owing to the Moslem calendar being lunar; but, despite this difference, there is little doubt that the origin of the customs is the same. A fast in spring, when winter provender was falling short, was probably necessary and useful before it became part of religion.

Prophet Baxter used to have a lot of money in the provision business, and is said to have an eye on house property, which he has endeavored to cheapen ever since he published *Louis Napoleon, the Destined Monarch of the World*. Baxter now fixes April 24, 1908, for the final dissolution of the world. We have in our possession one of his prophetic announcements, in which this very year was given as the date of J. C.'s reappearance. Lieutenant Totten, the American crank, also announced 1896 as the consummation of the ages.

Dr. Boyd tells the following story in his new volume of Recollections: "Froude had been staying down in Devonshire in a familiar parish, and he had called on a farmer known since both were boys. In the state chamber of the farmer's dwelling there lay on a table a grand illustrated edition of the Bible. 'That is a beautiful Bible,' said the historian. 'No, it's not,' was the startling answer. 'I wish it had never come into this house!' 'Why so!' Then the farmer said, 'I'll show you.' He turned to a picture which represents the walls of Jericho in the act of tumbling down on a well-known occasion. 'That never happened,' said the farmer; 'it's a parcel of lies!' Somewhat scandalised, Froude asked how this conclusion had been arrived at. 'I'll tell you. After I saw that picture I got a ram's horn and made it into a trumpet. Then I went out and walked seven times round an old house that I wanted down, and I blew till I nearly burst myself, and the house never fell down at all.'"

This reminds one of the hero of Mrs. Linton's *Joshua Davidson*, who read in the New Testament that faith would remove mountains, and was astonished to find that it wouldn't shift a hill near his cottage.

Professor Ramsey's new work on St. Paul is fairly orthodox, as may be inferred from its publication by Hodder and Stoughton. But one admission he makes, on the famous *burking* case that was managed by Peter and the Holy Ghost, is worth reproducing: "The episode of Ananias and Sapphira v. 1 f. excites reasonable suspicion. That Ananias should be carried forth and buried unknown to his family, unmourned by his kindred and friends, is not merely contrary to right conduct, but violates the deepest feelings of oriental life." This has been said again and again by Freethinkers. It is now being recognised by Christians. Eventually they will admit that men and women could not be *burked* as Ananias and Sapphira are said to have been, in any province of the Roman Empire. The story is one of the monstrous historical absurdities which abound in the New Testament.

Canon Knox Little holds a post in connection with Worcester Cathedral worth £800. He is also vicar of Hoar Cross, Staffordshire, which is a small parish with a very small income. Such a great "friend of the people" is not, however, to be left in such poverty. His income is likely to be raised to over £1,000 a year, as he has been offered the living of Mortlake, which is worth about £400 per annum, with residence. Of course, the residence is not in the workhouse.

The Primate of Denmark died recently at Copenhagen. His name was Fog. What a splendidly appropriate name for a bishop!

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—March 15, Secular Hall, Leicester; 16 and 17, debate with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby; 19 and 20, Nottingham; 22, Hull; 29, Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, London.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

R. Wellings, 12 Dexter-street, Derby, is the new secretary of the Derby branch of the N.S.S.

Glasgow Cross.—The style of the Rev. J. T. Watts, of the *Methodist Recorder*, is not that of J. T. S., of *Joyful News*, as you wrongly surmise. J. T. S. is J. T. Smith, of 51 Whitevale-street, Glasgow.

Alpha.—Mr. Wheeler is unable to advise you in the matter.

H. B.—Received with thanks.

G. L.—(1) Your letter does not convince us of the necessity of flogging. We are profoundly convinced that brutality begets brutality. You are anxious to see cruelty *punished*, but we are rather anxious to see it *prevented*. Doubtless we both mean the same thing at bottom; the difference is one of method. (2) "How strange," you say, "that hundreds of pounds can be speedily collected in the cause of superstition, and scarcely any amount in the cause of truth and freedom." Well, you see, superstition appeals to other motives, such as worldly advantage, hope of heaven, and fear of hell. Still, we should like to see Freethinkers more liberal than they are in supporting their principles.

Petro.—An old story, which has done duty in many costumes.

W. H. Harrap.—Freemasonry may be useful in despotic countries. In a country like ours it seems a mere excuse for conviviality. One need not become a Freemason to recognise the principle of human brotherhood.

A. J. H.—Cuttings always welcome.

S R. Thompson, formerly of Wood Green, is now at Neslington Cottage, Grange-road, Ashton-on-Mersey. Friends will please note. We reciprocate this correspondent's good wishes.

Silverstone.—You have evidently a keen nose for a fabrication; but we cannot give all our energies to the fictions of the religious press.

W. Cody.—Glad to have your encouraging letter as well as your subscription to Shilling Month.

J. G. Dobson, secretary, Stockton-on-Tees Branch, reports two more successful lectures by Mr. Cohen under Mr. Foote's lecture scheme. Six lectures have been delivered there altogether under the scheme, and, as Mr. Dobson says, not one of them would have been delivered without it. They have cost £4 6s. 6d. locally, and the collections have realised £3 10s. 4d., thus leaving only 16s. 2d. to be paid by the Branch. Mr. Dobson naturally hopes there will be "a hearty response" to our appeal for funds.

W. D. Rolley.—Mr. Foote's pamphlet on the existence of Jesus Christ will certainly (barring accidents) be written this summer. We have not Butler's *Analogy* by us in answering your letter. His passage on reason is too famous to be in any danger of dispute. You will find an account of Hypatia in *Crimes of Christianity* (2s. 6d.), by Messrs. Foote and Wheeler.

T. Hibbott.—Advertisement inserted. It is true that we hear next to nothing from Freethinkers in the Rochdale, Bury, and Rossendale district, who might take a lesson from those at Bolton and Blackburn.

A. Whittit.—Sorry there are difficulties at Dundee, but hope, as you believe, that the prospect will brighten next winter. Our best regards to your wife. We hope to see you both again some day.

Policeman.—Cobbett's *Legacy to Parsons* is the best small book we can recommend you on the subject. It puts the origin and nature of the Established Church very clearly.

J. Grandoy.—Thanks for cuttings. Mr. W. T. Lee is a man of ability, and we regret to see him sinking below his natural level in the advocacy of Christian Evidences. It was a piece of critical violence on his part to present what he did at Swansea as Mr. Foote's opinion of the National Secular Society. Mr. Lee knows better, and means better; but the best men get more or less corrupted by bad company.

A. Monro.—You did not ask for the return of the cuttings at the time, and we do not keep such things when dealt with.

J. M. R. (Glasgow).—Thanks for cuttings. We were glad to see the obituary of Robert Ferguson in the *Daily Record*. Ferguson was a very brave old man. Nothing could exceed the quiet but stubborn heroism he displayed, ten years ago, in facing imprisonment for selling the *Freethinker*. Scotland may be proud that it breeds such men.

A. W. Stavers.—Your experience at the Rev. Mr. Moll's meeting does not astonish us. Christians require a lot of teaching before they understand fair discussion. But we must not lose temper with them; we must allow for their unfortunate training.

John Sanderson.—Always glad to hear from you. Mr. Foote is deriving great benefit from the rest he is giving his vocal apparatus, and expects shortly to be himself again.

John Hindle, of Stockport, a veteran Secularist, writes: "I am glad your lecture scheme has turned out a success. For more than fifty years I have seen the want of such an arrangement..... Your scheme, when fully developed, will obviate many difficulties, and spread Freethought in many quarters where it has not hitherto penetrated."

O. N. Weld.—You are quite right; it was John Stuart Mill, and not Beaconsfield, who called the Tories "the stupid party." We are afraid that your suggestion that the title of the *Freethinker* should be altered is hardly feasible; at the same time, we are quite willing to receive the opinion of our readers on the point. We fancy that *any* title would soon become obnoxious if associated with the principles we advocate.

Papers Received.—Cambria Daily Leader—Crescent—Post—Two Worlds—Sussex Daily News—Blue Grass Blade—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Humanity—De Dageraad—Bristol Church Record—Federalist—Our Auxiliary Letter—Zoophilist—Liberty—Animals' Friend—New York Public Opinion—Leek Times—Truthseeker—Progressive Thinker—Open Court—Hull Times—Independent Pulpit—Brisbane News—South Shields Free Press—Isle of Man Times.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

SHILLING MONTH.

Six months ago I appealed to the readers of the *Freethinker* on behalf of my Lecture Scheme, which was then in its infancy. Since then it has been the means of introducing Freethought to thousands of fresh auditors, through scores of lectures, in various parts of the country. I am now appealing again for the same object, and I trust there will be a liberal response. The gospel must be preached to the heathen, and a Freethinker who is saved himself, but will not subscribe a trifle to save others, was really not worth saving. Most of my readers could afford *one* shilling; some could afford *several* shillings. I ask them all to do something, and to do it promptly. I hope that no one will wait till March is over, and then regret that he did nothing. Now is the accepted time, now is the month of subscription. A single shilling, of course, is very little; but a few thousand shillings amount to a sum which would go far in propagating Freethought. My readers are thousands, and they have the shillings. Let them send the same to me at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

J. W., £5; G. L., 2s. 6d.; W. Waymark; J. W. F., 15s.; W. H. Harrap, 5s.; E. G., 2s.; R. Bulman; R. Griffiths, 2s.; T. Johnson, 2s. 6d.; W. Plumpton, 2s.; O. N. Weld, 2s. 6d.; A. Whittit, 3s.; T. Warwick; T. Hibbott; J. Jones, 2s.; J. Bevins, 2s. 6d.; Hermatite, 2s.; J. Chamberlain, 2s.; Alpha Junior; John Hindle, 2s.; Thor, 2s. 6d.; W. Cody, 10s. Per R. Forder: N. W., 5s.; Collected by Plymouth Branch, 15s.; S. H. Munns, 10s.; J. M. Munns, 10s.; E. Sayer; R. Carroll, 5s.; F. W. D., 2s. 6d.

The Annual (London) Children's Party, under the auspices of the N.S.S. Executive, takes place in the large hall of the Club Union, Clerkenwell-road, next door to the Holborn Town Hall, on Wednesday, April 1. Messrs. Foote and Watts and other well-known Secularists will attend during the evening. Subscriptions towards the expenses are urgently needed, and should be forwarded to Miss Vance, secretary.

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SUGAR PLUMS.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference will be held on Whit-Sunday at Glasgow. Of course the local "saints" are delighted to know that they will have an opportunity of welcoming Freethinkers from all parts of the kingdom. We hope the N.S.S. Branches throughout the country will lose no time in making arrangements to be represented at the Conference. The President has two proposals to make, one of which is by far the most important ever laid before the Secular party. Both will appear in due course on the Agenda, which is printed a fortnight beforehand.

Last Saturday night Mr. Charles Watts "broke new ground" at Woodhouse, a thriving village about five miles from Sheffield. His lecture, which was given under Mr. Foote's scheme, was attended by nearly two hundred persons, who listened very attentively to an examination of the orthodox claims for Christianity. At the conclusion of the lecture several questions were asked, and the Christian portion of the audience expressed their desire to hear Mr. Watts attempt to show, upon an early date, wherein he considered Secularism superior to Christianity. The arrangements for the lecture were made by Mr. S. Swale, of Chesterfield, who presided at the lecture. Several friends were present from Sheffield and the surrounding districts. Great satisfaction was expressed at Mr. Foote's scheme, and it was hoped that Mr. Watts would be able again shortly to visit Woodhouse under the same auspices.

On Sunday last Mr. Watts lectured in Sheffield to three excellent audiences, those in the afternoon and evening being particularly good. Friends from surrounding districts mustered in good force, and thirty sat down to tea, which had been provided for the visitors.

To-day, Sunday, March 15, Mr. Watts lectures morning and evening at Leicester. On Monday and Tuesday he debates with the Rev. James Hyde at Derby, and on Thursday and Friday Mr. Watts lectures at Nottingham. We hope our Derbyshire friends will make a special effort to attend the debate. The Rev. Mr. Hyde is a most gentlemanly disputant, and Mr. Watts's polemical force is well known.

Mr. Watts visits Hull next Sunday (March 22) under Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, as no hall can be obtained with a charge at the door, and the admission has, therefore, to be entirely free. Mr. Foote himself had splendid meetings there a few weeks ago, and no doubt there will be large audiences to welcome Mr. Watts. The posters offer "special terms" to the Rev. F. Ballard, who has been replying to Mr. Foote in his absence. Mr. Ballard having said that ten minutes was not enough for reply to an hour's lecture, the Branch offers him half-an-hour all to himself and a reserved seat on the platform. But will he come? We fear not; but it is well to give him a good opportunity.

We have run to earth, with the assistance of Mr. J. P. Gilmour, the actual writer of the story in *Joyful News* called "Conversion of an Infidel." Just as we are going to press we receive a letter from "J. T. S." himself—not giving his name or address. But we have both! The whole matter will be dealt with in our next issue. It is another pretty study in Christian ethics.

This Sunday the Camberwell Branch holds a social conversazione. These entertainments are always enjoyable and well conducted.

The Finsbury Branch held a well-attended meeting on Sunday morning at the Club Union Buildings. New rules were adopted and ordered to be printed, and the secretary reported that the arrangements were complete for the summer campaign on Clerkenwell-green.

"Sin Against God an Impossibility" is the title of Mr. Touzeau Parris's lecture this evening (March 15) in the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W. Admission to the back of the hall is free; reserved seats are sixpence and one shilling.

The *Independent Pulpit*, of Waco, Texas, where Colonel Ingersoll has been speaking to immense audiences, has now completed its thirteenth volume. Under the conduct of Mr. J. D. Shaw, the *Pulpit* has kept up a high standard. We hope it will continue its good work, and find increased support in the coming years.

The semi-centennial number of the New York *Home Journal* gives portraits of many persons who have been connected with its career. Three which interest us are Edgar Allan Poe, the poet; James Parton, the biographer of Voltaire; and Benjamin R. Tucker, the associate editor, of whom an account is given, carefully concealing the fact that he is editor of *Liberty*, and one of the most freethinking writers in the United States.

The National Sunday League, which was founded by Secularists, and in its struggling days almost entirely supported by them, has become a very prosperous body, although it has, we believe, dropped the more definitely educative part of its old program, and now confines itself to music and excursions—which, of course, are excellent in their way. On Monday evening the League held a meeting at Queen's Hall in support of the Bill to be moved in the House of Commons in favor of the Sunday Opening of National Museums and Art Galleries. One of the speakers, the Rev. Russell Wakefield, rather curiously remarked that the Sabbath was a day for recreation and reverence. This is a somewhat professional view of the matter, but it did not seriously impair the value of the meeting. The Bill, it was explained, has been carefully drafted—that is, we are afraid, it is drafted to suit the clergy. Museums are only to be open from two to six—which will not interfere with morning or evening service; no official is to be employed more than six days a week, and anyone who has conscientious objections is to be exempted from Sunday service.

Professor W. J. Youmans, the editor of the *Popular Science Monthly*, says: "A school-book, as the term is now and has always been understood, is one specially prepared for the uses and needs of the school, and containing nothing that is not required for purposes of instruction. This is not the case with the Bible, which was not written or put together with any such view, and much the larger part of which is quite unsuited to school use. In large part it is a repertory of mysteries which the ordinary certificated teacher has no recognised fitness for handling." Moreover, he says, "the fact cannot be ignored that there is much in the Bible which, from a scientific and historical point of view, does not harmonise with the general character of modern education."

"No secular history," says Professor Youmans, "would be read in our schools to-day, or in the schools of any enlightened community in which the fortunes of nations were represented as controlled by special divine intervention. The time has passed when plagues, earthquakes, and famines could be historically interpreted as expressions of divine displeasure; and the time has almost passed for any useful introduction of the doctrine of design in connection with the study of nature." This last is a notable admission from a notable quarter.

The *Popular Science Monthly* contains a portrait and well-written account of Professor Andrew Dickson White, the author of *The Warfare of Science with Theology*, and President of Cornell University, who has also occupied the position of ambassador of the U.S. to Russia. Professor White is a thorough Freethinker, and his work is in some respects superior to the similar one by Professor Draper.

DOUBT.

Men fear her, for they have not seen her clearly,
But from afar—a spectre in the night;
That space o'er-leapt, she is, when seen more nearly,
An angel-form of light.

With gentle voice she checks our blind submission
To that which was when man was in his youth,
And sends us forth, full armed for earnest searching
Of boundless space for truth.

She bids us "March!" where Faith's command is "Loiter!"
She bids us "Do!" where Trust would whisper "Pray!"
She bids us search the inmost heart of Nature;
She bids us know to-day.

Her fingers rend the veil of lies asunder,
Woven by knaves for superstition's face;
She melts the mists of Ignorance and Error,
And Knowledge grows apace.

What some have named "Too deep for understanding"
She, with Research, doth probe with keenest steel;
She all things proves, and them of worthy metal
Doth seal with Truth's own seal.

Then walk with her, for all her paths are pleasant;
She knows no future, fraught with weal and woe.
She lives and loves, and lights the golden present;
Her heaven is—To know.

—*Walt. A. Ratcliffe.*

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IN MEMORIAM.

ROBERT FERGUSON.

By the death of Robert Ferguson, at the great age of eighty-six years, a long familiar figure disappears from the Freethought circle in Glasgow. He had been ailing for some months, and a fall which he had a fortnight ago gave the finishing touch to the enfeebled action of a heart gradually failing through senile decay. Only on Tuesday the old man crept downstairs and sat for a little behind the counter of his well-known shop in Ingram-street; but all Wednesday he lay abed in a drowsy state, and early on Thursday morning his breathing grew fainter and fainter, until, almost imperceptibly, it ceased altogether.

Robert Ferguson was born at Sanquhar, a town rendered historic in the old covenanting times. His parents were both orthodox, and Robert was drilled strictly in Bible and Catechism; but, being made an apprentice to the carpet-weaving at Kilmarnock, the shrewd and greatly daring "wabster lads," in whose active brains all sorts of innovating ideas were continually seething, soon gave his thoughts a different turn. One of these, Thomas Wilson, a versatile genius, who, among his other accomplishments, dabbled in astronomy and composed music, lent Ferguson Owen's *New Moral World*, and, charmed with the prospect of a regeneration of humanity which it predicted, he became an ardent Socialist. Until about this time Ferguson had been a member of the Relief Kirk at Kilmarnock, but the arbitrary conduct of the minister in denouncing from his pulpit a publican who belonged to the congregation seems to have had the effect of showing him what clericalism really meant, and thenceforward he went to church irregularly, and at last withdrew completely. Ferguson now devoted his energies to political work, and, having removed to Ayr, on one occasion walked to and from Kilmarnock to hear Dan O'Connell. To the same period belonged some interesting experimentation in mesmerism. Ferguson became an expert "mesmerist," and used often to entertain me with accounts of the strange adventures of his clairvoyant subjects, one of whom he dispatched on journeys to remote parts, such as the Arctic Circle, of the scenery and inhabitants of which the clairvoyant gave characteristically vague descriptions. Once Ferguson ordered his docile Mercury to make a trip to hell; but, after a long interval of passivity, the subject reported that he had explored all the amplitudes of the three dimensions of space, without being able to find it, which was exactly what Ferguson expected. Coming to Glasgow about 1860, he pursued his calling of carpet-weaver, until, during a spell of dull trade, he took to book-canvassing, and, after a short time, as hall keeper for the old Eclectic Institute in Dunlop-street, he began business as a bookseller in the premises in Brunswick-street, occupied about a year earlier by J. H. McGuire. Subsequently he removed to the South Side, and finally to Ingram-street, where for the last thirteen years his shop has been a landmark to the Glasgow Secularists. The most notable and trying event in Robert Ferguson's otherwise tranquil but not inactive life came at an age when even the doughtiest fighter has earned the right to an honorable repose. In 1885 the tidal wave of resurgent bigotry, raised by the upheaval excited by Mr. Bradlaugh's parliamentary struggle, reached Glasgow, and some of the "unco guid and rigidly righteous" prevailed upon the local police persecutor to enforce a clause in the Glasgow Police Act, which makes the sale of "blasphemous or obscene literature" a punishable offence, and summons Ferguson for the sale of certain illustrated numbers of the *Freethinker*. That was ten years ago, and in our busy modern lives a decade's history is apt to crowd out any clear remembrance of what went before. Still, many of our readers cannot have forgotten the story of Ferguson's case. He was not a man to rush heedlessly or needlessly into danger. All his life through he walked circumspectly, avoiding every appearance of wanton aggressiveness, yet with a firm and unfaltering adherence to the principles which were dear to him, because he believed them to be good and true; but when danger confronted him, and compromise or surrender would have meant forfeiture of self-respect and betrayal of principle, the old man of eighty did not hesitate, but preferred the nobler part, and went uncomplainingly to jail, thus worthily maintaining, in a higher sphere, the martyr spirit of the sturdy covenanting stock from which he sprang. Ferguson was sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment, but the law agent whom we employed for the defence—founding on a technical issue, namely, that no prosecution for blasphemy, even in the constructive sense of the vending of "blasphemous" publications, was competent save under the general written or common law, and in a superior court—applied to the Supreme Court in Edinburgh for a bill of suspension and liberation; and pending adjudication upon the point Mr. Ferguson was released on bail, after undergoing nearly two days' confinement. Fortunately, he was not much the worse for the detention, although, being a big man, with a proportionately large foot, the prison officials could not supply him with slippers, and he was kept in his stockinged feet in an uncarpeted cell—a very real hardship in midwinter for such an old man. In due time the appeal was heard, the result being that the Glasgow stipendiaries' sentence was quashed; and Lord Young, one of the judges, took occasion to remark that such a case should never have been brought into that Court—which meant, of course, that the Glasgow police had blundered in entering upon the action. In addition to the moral defeat incurred by them, the Glasgow authorities had to pay their expenses, which must have come to several hundred pounds; so that it is highly improbable that we shall be exposed to similar molestation for a long time to come. So much for the moral gain, due to Robert Ferguson's spirited resistance to parochial intolerance.

Dr. Priestley was accustomed to say that he must have been born of a happy constitution, because he rode buoyantly even on the highest waves of his turbulent and changeful life. Robert Ferguson had the same order of temperament, happily without a corresponding tale of vicissitude; with a robust physical constitution and an equable, cheerful temper, he went on his unambitious way, unhasting and unresting, faithfully performing his daily round, and looking out upon the world with a friendly but fearless eye. Every Secularist lecturer of note during the last thirty-six years has known and trusted Robert Ferguson; and, down to the very last, he preserved an uncloyed interest in the world-wide movement of Freethought. I often found him absorbed in some American or Australian Freethought journal, and fully posted up in all that was going on under the Southern Cross, or on the Pacific slope. He was not only an indefatigable reader of general literature; he digested what he read, and was a well-equipped and widely-informed man; and a chat with him was always instructive and sometimes inspiring, charged as it was with memories of the notables with whom he had fraternised, and the stirring times in which he had so stoutly borne his part.

In spite of the unavoidably short notice, a large company followed Mr. Ferguson's body to its last resting-place in the Southern Necropolis on Saturday afternoon. At the house, and beside the open grave, the present writer delivered brief speeches. Mr. Foote had often expressed a wish that if, as was probable, Ferguson should pass away before him, he might have the privilege of paying the last mark of respect to so valiant a veteran in the grand army of Liberty; but his recent illness, from which he is only slowly recovering, made it impossible for him to come north. As the next best thing, the following passage from his letter was read at the grave: "Had I been well enough, I should certainly have attended Mr. Ferguson's funeral. He was a brave old man, and I shall always treasure the memory of his heroism in facing imprisonment at a time of life when it might well have been his death-warrant. Courage of that kind is far rarer than the world imagines. You say the funeral takes place at two o'clock to-morrow. Well, I cannot be there in person, but I will spend a little time with you all in spirit, and help to fortify my own soul with the thought of your brave old countryman's quiet, unostentatious, and stubborn devotion to the great law of conscience. I do not believe in a future life, but if there be one it ought to be well with that gallant spirit." J. P. GILMOUR.

March 8, 1896.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of the monthly executive meeting held at the Club Union Buildings on Thursday, March 5; the President in the chair. Present:—Messrs. C. Watts, S. Hartmann, J. Samson, W. Heaford, R. Forder, A. B. Moss, E. Bater, J. Potter, G. J. Warren, H. R. Clifton, W. Leate, S. Jones, H. J. Stace, A. F. Taylor, T. Gorniot, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement received.

The President reported the amount of the donations received at the Annual Dinner, which had hitherto been arranged by the London Secular Federation; in the circumstances it was resolved to discharge the last liability in connection with the Federation—*i.e.*, balance of printing account, and to hand the residue to the funds of the N.S.S.

An application to form a new branch of the society, to include Carlton and Netherfield (Notts.), was granted; and the Lewisham Branch fees were remitted.

Glasgow being the only Branch which had, up to the time of meeting, invited the Conference, it was resolved that the Conference for 1896-7 be held at Glasgow, and the Secretary was instructed to notify the Branches.

A discussion arose on a report circulated in connection with the Finsbury Park Branch. After much discussion Mr. Foote offered to give space in the *Freethinker* for any necessary explanation, and it was moved, "That we pass to the next business."

The Finsbury Branch delegate gave a brief report of the progress of his Branch, and the meeting closed.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Assistant Secretary.*

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THE MINE AT CALUMET.

Excoos! Be you the dominee
That folks calls Parson Boone?
Wal—Jane an' me has called to see
Ef you'll ride Monday noon
To Calumet to bury Jim—
James Baker—he is dead—
Death hil too strong a hand for him,
Es you hev often said.

"Perfess?" He didn't perfess. He hed
One simple way all through.
He merely practised, an' he said
That that would hev to do.
"Prayed?" Never—not es I hev known—
'Cept mebby with his han's,
An' 'stead of claspin' of his own
He clasped his feller-man's.

"Under conviction?" The idee!
He never done a thing
To be convicted fer; why, he
Wus straighter than a string.
Oh, say! He was a nifty man!
Oh, he was brave an' square;
His mighty heart wuz bigger than
That meetin' house out there!

Eh? "Jined the Church?" You don't catch on!
You couldn't a knowed 'im, pard!
To them as did, now he is gone
Your questionin' sounds hard.
I told 'em up to town to-day
"Above the sexton's dirt
Let Parson say his little say;
He can't do any hurt."

"Fire in the Osceola mine!"
Jim heard the awful cry
That rose from Level 29
Es he wus passing by.
An' down the burnin' shaft he went
To where the flames begun,
An' up the half-dead miners sent
Es fast es skips could run.

Through other drifts he searched around,
An' lyin' stifled there
A dozen helpless men he found,
An' dragged to light and air.
An' my boy, Timothy—my Tim—
He found, too weak to crawl,
An' got him in the skip; but Jim—
He didn't come up at all.

We waited fer him all night long,
An' watched an' hil our breath,
A sufferin', tearful, hopeless throng
Around that pit of death;
An' when the smoke blew out, my son
Crept down to learn his fate—
He reached him, but the worst wus done—
He found him—just too late!

He died adoin'
What he could find to do.
"Did he perfess?" Wal—
I never knowed him to.
Don't notice if my talk is broke,
An' if my eyes should leak;
'Tain't Tim—nor mother, but the smoke
Hes kinder made 'em weak.

What? "How about his soul?" Look here!
Intendin' no offence,
Your dumb-fool questions does appear
To show a lack of sense.
If I repeat 'em, like es not
When you come moseyin' down
You'd find our place most awful hot—
They'll make you jump the town!

Don't come! Hunt other souls to save!
His neighbors at the Green
Will gather round Jim Baker's grave
An' tell the things they've seen.
Ef God don't know what's good and true,
An' wants to punish him,
Why, rather'n go to heaven with you,
I'll go to hell with Jim!

—*W. A. Croffut.*

"In the last church fair did the ladies take part?" Mr. Slimpurse—"No; they took all."

"TO THIS DAY."

In the Second Part of *Henry VI.* (act vi., scene 2) Smith, the weaver, well illustrates low logic by his proof of the validity of Jack Cade's claims to be the grandson of Edward Mortimer. Cade having asserted that his father was stolen by a beggar woman when young, and brought up as a bricklayer, ignorant of his noble birth, Smith adds: "Sir, he made a chimney in my father's house, and the bricks are alive at this day to testify it." I have heard of a distinguished member of the now defunct Bible Defence Association who, in the very spirit of Smith, the weaver, used to go about carrying a portion of a brick from Babylon with him. This fragment of baked clay served equally to confirm the story of Jehovah coming down to see the tower of Babel, or that of Nebuchadnezzar having been turned into an ox, or the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah against Babylon.

It was a friend of the hero of the Babylon brick who, hearing I was inclined to be sceptical, recommended me to read the Rev. Charles Leslie's *Short and Easy Method with the Deists.* The method proved a long and hard one with me. Leslie's argument was like that of Smith, the weaver. The Bible yarns must be true because they had monumental evidence; and he devotes the major portion of his work to showing that the customs of celebrating the Passover and the Lord's Supper were just such monuments, dating back to the times when they were instituted. Leslie had never studied the history and antiquities of customs, or he would have found that it was quite a common thing to assign a legendary origin for them. Indeed, a considerable proportion of legends arises from the attempt to account for rites and customs, of which the real origin has been lost. No more unlikely stories than those giving the origin of the institution of the Passover and of the Eucharist are to be found in any mythology. In the one case we have to credit that God slew all the firstborn of Egypt, but that two million Jews were saved by, at a few hours' notice, each family killing a male lamb of one year old and putting the blood on the doorposts, so that when God saw the blood he would pass over. In the other case we have to credit that some man, sitting at a supper-table, offered bread and said: "Take eat, this is my body." If this were so, no wonder some people thought him mad.

With both these illustrations it is evident that we have stories invented to account for already established rites, and the fact that the rites exist to this day no more proves the truth of the stories than does the brick from Babylon prove that Nebuchadnezzar ate grass.

Some people fancy that when they see in the Bible the phrase, "to this day," that phrase is an interpolation. This is a very convenient theory to get rid of the evidence that the writing is a long way distant from the time of the event recorded. But it is quite an unsafe theory in dealing with ancient and alleged ancient documents. Internal evidence, containing signs of late date, is *prima facie* a sign of the late date of the whole document, unless there is direct proof that the other parts are earlier, or that the part with the sign of late date is by a different hand. But in no case can this be shown with respect to the Bible documents.

LUCIANUS.

A Dream.

The peculiarity of the Christian religion is that it is founded on a dream. Faith in Christianity is faith in the Incarnation, and the only evidence that God was incarnate and born of a virgin consists of a dream. The Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, calling him the son of David, and telling him, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." Can we suppose Archbishop Benson paying any heed to such a dream as this? If he had not a dream, but an actual visitation, he would probably remember that, according to 2 Corinthians xi. 14, Satan can transform himself into an angel of life, and that to recommend a condonation of adultery probably came from this source. But what we have is not even Joseph's account of his dream. It is only the statement of a document alleged to be "according to Matthew," who is not even said to have been in Joseph's confidence. The faith of Christendom in this matter rests on the unauthenticated report of a dream. No wonder the faith has sat on its believers like a nightmare. When they exercise their reason they begin to say, "I awoke, and behold it was a dream."

BRAIDBEARD.

A New York reporter has found that most of the leading orators there always have an afternoon sleep when they have to speak in the evening. Colonel Ingersoll makes it an invariable rule, Dr. Parkhurst is nearly always invisible from three to five p.m., and innumerable preachers spend Sunday afternoon in bed.

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BOOK CHAT.

Mr. W. S. Lilly says of Dickens: "I stand aghast at the inane insignificance of most of his personages, at the vapid vulgarity of most of his incidents, at the consummate crudity of much of his thought, at the intolerable ineptness of much of his diction. He was constantly talking—at least, in his later years—of his art. He seems to me one of the least artistic of writers." We will not dispute questions of taste with the lay Jesuit. Grant all these and more than these faults, there remains the fact that Dickens had the one quality which Jesuits try to crush, and yet which ever appeals to man—viz., *humanity*.

* * *

No. 20 of the brown-papered publications of the Humanitarian League is on *So-called Sport*. It contains papers on "Hunting the Carted Stag," by the Rev. J. Stratton; "Shooting Pigeons from Traps," by Colonel Coulson; and "Coursing the Bagged Rabbit." Their account of what is done by "gentle and simple" in the way of "sport" is enough to make a humane person ashamed of his species. In 1883 a Bill for the abolition of pigeon shooting, carried in the Commons, was rejected by the Peers, temporal and spiritual. We are glad to note, from the excellent Introduction by H. S. Salt, that the Humanitarian League has drafted a wider-reaching measure.

* * *

Dr. W. H. Brooks contributes to the *Popular Science Monthly* a review of the writings of Francis Galton, entitled "The Study of Inheritance." It was Galton who pointed out that the statistics of the lives of persons specially prayed for negatived the supposed efficacy of prayer. The present paper is largely concerned with the law of regression to the type of a race under which "the more exceptional the gift, the more exceptional will be the good fortune of a parent who equals, and still more if he has a son who surpasses, him." The papers are to be continued.

* * *

In the same number is a paper on "The Stamping Out of Crime," by Dr. Nathan Oppenheim, who says that "the teaching of science all over the world echoes again and again the words of Galton, that the way to better a race lies in preventing the more faulty members from breeding."

* * *

No. 9 of *Transactions of the Cremation Society of England* shows that this sanitary method of disposing of the dead is on the increase both at Woking, where last year 150 cremations were carried out as compared with 125 in 1894, and at Manchester, where 58 bodies were burnt. In Liverpool a limited liability company has been formed, and a crematorium will shortly be erected; while a new one has been opened at Maryhill in the suburbs of Glasgow. The Report gives a full account of cremation, and a bibliography of the subject. It is published at the offices of the Society, 8 New Cavendish-street, W., price 6d.

* * *

We are occasionally asked to recommend books for children free from theological nonsense and mere sentimental claptrap. Such books, unfortunately, are rare, and we are accordingly pleased to note that the series, "Animal Life Readers," published by George Bell & Sons for the Humanitarian League, and edited by Edith Carrington and Ernest Bell, exactly hit the mark. They are all concerned with animal life. But, then, what subject more interests children? They are attractive, brightly written, simply worded, full of stories and information, and excellently illustrated, as the name of the veteran animal draughtsman, Harrison Weir, sufficiently attests. The series of books, of which fourteen, divided into two complete sets for the seven standards, are being issued, range in price from eightpence to one shilling, and are admirably fitted for gifts from parents and friends, for prizes in schools and bands of mercy, as well as for school books under the new code permitting passages impressing on the children the duty of gentleness and humane treatment of animals. They are admirably calculated for this purpose, and since, as Tennyson says, "Manners are not idle," and sympathetic regard for all sentient creatures adds to the sweetness and dignity of human life, we are glad to accord unstinted praise to this admirable series of volumes.

* * *

The *Daily News*, reviewing a work on Spiritism, entitled *The Great Secret*, by a clergyman of the Church of England, mentions that he started a "mystic oratory," where a mystical service of prayer was held, and wherein assembled twice weekly "a knot of sincere and earnest inquirers," who reproduced under spiritual guidance as closely as could be "the conditions of the forty days between the Resurrection and Ascension." The promise had been given that, if such conditions were fulfilled, "the departed would come and fill the vacant chairs which we left vacant for them." The conditions were observed, but the promise was not fulfilled—no visitor from the dead came.

PAINE ON CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

The story of Jesus Christ appearing after he was dead is the story of an apparition, such as timid imaginations can always create in vision, and credulity believe. Stories of this kind had been told of the assassination of Julius Cæsar, not many years before; and they generally have their origin in violent deaths or in the execution of innocent persons. In cases of this kind, compassion lends its aid, and benevolence stretches the story. It goes on a little further, till it becomes a most certain truth. Once start a ghost, and credulity fills up the history of its life, and assigns the cause of its appearance! one tells it in one way, another in another way, till there are as many stories about the ghost, and about the proprietor of the ghost, as there are about Jesus Christ in these four books.

The story of the appearance of Jesus Christ is told with that strange mixture of the natural and the impossible which distinguishes legendary tale from fact. He is represented as suddenly coming in and going out when the doors are shut, and of vanishing out of sight, and appearing again, as one would conceive of an unsubstantial vision; then, again, he is hungry, sits down to meat, and eats his supper. But as those who tell stories of this kind never provide for all the cases, so it is here; they have told us that when he arose he left his grave's clothes behind him; but they have forgotten to provide other clothes for him to appear in afterwards, or to tell us what he did with them when he ascended; whether he stripped all off, or went up clothes and all. In the case of Elijah, they have been careful enough to make him throw down his mantle; how it happened not to be burnt in the chariot of fire, they also have not told us. But as imagination supplies all deficiencies of this kind, we may suppose, if we please, that it was made of salamander's wool.

—*Age of Reason.*

PROFANE JOKES.

"Freddie, when you said your prayers last night, didn't you ask God to make you a good boy?" "Yes, mamma." "Well, you've been as bad as ever to-day." "But, mamma, you can't blame me if God doesn't do just what I ask him."

May—"I don't see why they make so much fuss about Eve giving the apple to Adam in the Garden of Eden." Marie—"Why, think of the danger she ran of giving the only man in existence appendicitis!"

St. Peter—"What's all that disturbance about down at the gate?" Assistant—"A party of football players, who were killed in the V rush, have demanded admittance." St. Peter—"Well, tell them they can't come in." Assistant—"I did, sir; but they formed a rush-line and broke down the gate."

"Dear me," exclaimed the new arrival in Hades; "why here come the shades of people whom I knew to have been truly good. Well, I never." "That party," calmly explained the old settler, "doesn't belong here. It is merely making a slumming tour."

First Boy—"I'll go to heaven when I die." Second Boy—"Bet you don't." "Yes, I will, too. My maw says it ain't safe to leave me where there is a fire."

Professor of Shakespeare—"This morning we have cases of ellipsis. Definition. Yes?" Aspiring Sympathetic Student—"Omission of a word or idea easily supplied from the context." P. of S.—"Exactly. Example. Yes?" A. S. S.—"Shakespeare's frequent use of 'Go to—!'"

Teacher—"Cleanliness is next to godliness." Johnnie—"Then say, teacher, why is it wrong to go swimming on Sunday?"

CORRESPONDENCE.

A CORRECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I write to emphatically contradict a rumour which has been circulated to the effect that at a recent meeting of the Finsbury Park Branch Mr. Ward moved, Miss Robins seconded, and Mr. Pinnell supported a motion that the Branch secede from the National Secular Society. No such motion has been made at any meeting of the Branch, and there is not the slightest foundation for the rumour.

Trusting you will insert this letter in the next issue of your paper, so that no stigma may attach to a most loyal Branch of the National Secular Society,

Henry R. Clifton, *Honorary Secretary.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "Sin against God an Impossibility."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 7.45, F. Haslam, "What is Secularism?" Monday, at 8, free dramatic entertainment. Tuesday, at 8 30, dancing.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner, "England Abroad." Tuesday, at 8.45, social party. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture IX., Cancer."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, conversazione for members and friends.

EDMONTON (Angel Assembly Rooms): 8, W. J. Ramsey, "After Death—What?"

ISLINGTON BRANCH: 6.30, committee meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute.

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Shepherds Bush): 7.30, J. Rowney, "The Sermon on the Mount."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Dr. Kaines, "The Religion of the Knowable."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, F. Haslam will lecture.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, W. J. Russell, "Christianity in the Light of History."

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, R. Stone, "Slavery in the Mine."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, G. Standring, "Curiosities of the Church Prayer-Book."

DERBY ("Ye Olde Feathers"): 7, H. McGuiness, "Why I am a Liberal."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; 2.30, "An Hour with the Devil"; 6.30, "What Think Ye of Christ?"

HECKMONDWIKE (Lumbard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, a meeting.

LEEDS (Vulcan Club, Vulcan-street, Benson-street): 7, John Grange will lecture.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 11, Charles Watts, "Does Death End All?" 6.30, "The Triumphs of Secularism in Modern Thought."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Lawrence Small, B.Sc., "An Evening with John Davidson."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Newman, "Social Evolution."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Mr. Axe, "Geysers, or Liquid Earthquakes" (with lantern illustrations). Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting; 7.30, T. Thompson, adjourned debate, "The Future of Liberalism."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, important business.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—March 15, Glasgow; 22, Edinburgh; 29, Leeds. April 5, Balls Pond; 12, 19, and 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—April 5, m. Westminster; 12, Mile End; 19, Camberwell; 26, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—March 15, Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road; 22, Athenæum, Shepherds Bush. April 12, Balls Pond; 26, Glasgow. May 3, Failsworth; 10, Balls Pond.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

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BRISTOL.—St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street. Mr. MALCOLM QUIN will give Three Lectures on Positivism on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, March 17, 18, and 19, at 8 o'clock. All seats free.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—No. 12. SUNDAY, MARCH 22, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

(*Concluded from page 162.*)

MR. BARRETT'S "NERO."

IN his letter, before cited, to the Newcastle *Chronicle*, Mr. Barrett quotes a jumble of names as authorities for his picture of Nero. It is certain, however, that all subsequent historians have mainly relied upon Tacitus and Suetonius. What these relate of Nero is enough to stagger credulity. It is difficult to conceive that for so many years Rome tolerated such an unnatural monster. This much, however, must be admitted, that the Nero of Tacitus and Suetonius, but especially of Tacitus, is a study in degeneration, reaching at length to absolute insanity. Such a pathological case is profoundly interesting to the students of morbid psychology; but its historical interest is almost infinitesimal, for it can scarcely be argued that the character or actions of Nero had any serious influence on the development of the Roman empire; while as for the burning of Rome, in which it is hardly credible that he was implicated, it is certain that the catastrophe was as much a blessing in disguise as the Great Fire of London, since a finer Rome, as later a finer London, sprang from the ashes of its predecessor. It should also be remembered that the career of Nero was not terminated, and never could have been terminated, by Christian efforts. The teaching of Paul, in the very height of Nero's despotism, was one of passive obedience. Nero's power was ordained of God, and to resist him was to incur damnation. Such was the teaching of Paul in his epistle to the Romans. But such was not the old spirit of Roman liberty, which fired the hearts of Pagan senators to declare Nero a traitor to the State and worthy of death; and the suicide of the monster only anticipated the executioners sent to carry out the national sentence.

Mr. Barrett does not give the least idea of the *vice* of Nero. He almost represents him as a model husband, fondly devoted to Poppea, and dwells exclusively on his cruelty and hatred of the Christians. The subtle characteristics of neurotic vanity appear to be chiefly contributed by Mr. McLeay, who acts the part of Nero, and whose performance is certainly powerful, although it is marred by overacting.

Nero's vices would have made a shocking entertainment. But, bad as they were, they were not so singular as Mr. Barrett seems to imagine. Courts are seldom pure, and the worst records of ancient society are quite paralleled in the pages of a writer like Brantome; indeed, as Mr. Cotter Morison observes, it is difficult to see how the court of the later Valois "differed, except for the worse, from the court of Caligula or Commodus." And the royalties and aristocrats of France were at that time intensely religious, and ready to kill or be killed in the maintenance of Christianity. It was an age of intense piety and unspeakable filth.

Christian apologists systematically represent the old Pagan world as infinitely immoral, and their own religion as the divine agency which rescued mankind from utter degradation. This is not history, however, but partisanship. The vices of antiquity have been more than equalled in modern times; and, if we take the literary point of view, it is incontestable that, for every dirty book produced in Greece or Rome, dozens have been produced in Christendom.

MR. BARRETT'S HISTORY.

Mr. Barrett seems to believe that the Roman Empire was governed like Turkey. He appears to know nothing of its courts of law and its criminal jurisprudence. He imagines that men were commonly put to death without trial. By virtue of a mere rescript from Nero, Christians are put to death in this play as unceremoniously as the Turks dispose of Armenians. At the end of the second act a band of Christians arrange a secret meeting for worship in the Grove by the Cestian Bridge. By way of concealing themselves more effectually, I presume, they indulge in congregational singing. Before they have time to disperse they are pounced upon by a party of soldiers, headed by no less a person than Tigellinus, chief counsellor to Nero. Swords flash, shrieks are heard, and presently all the Christians (except Mercia, who is melodramatically rescued by Marcus) lie about in various attitudes of dissolution.

It is doubtful whether Nero ever murdered or molested any Christians, as will be seen presently. If he did so, there is no record of how they were dealt with by the tribunals. But there is such a record with respect to the more authentic persecutions of the second and third centuries, and it lends no countenance to the summary methods of *The Sign of the Cross*. "A modern Inquisitor," says Gibbon, with keen and polished sarcasm, "would hear with surprise that, whenever an information was given to a Roman magistrate of any person within his jurisdiction who had embraced the sect of the Christians, the charge was communicated to the party accused, and that a convenient time was allowed him to settle his domestic concerns, and to prepare an answer to the crime which was imputed to him." No such consideration was shown by the Inquisition, which butchered myriads of heretics. Over its prisons might have been inscribed: "All hope abandon, ye who enter here." Prisoners were not even informed of the charges laid against them. They were *questioned*—that is, *tortured*—and accusations were based upon the wild and wandering words they uttered in their agony. It was the *modern* Inquisition, too, which devised the crowning cruelty of seizing upon a condemned heretic's property, after burning him to ashes, and leaving his widow and children to absolute beggary.

One incident of Mr. Barrett's play is positively ridiculous. There is brought to Marcus Superbus, Prefect of Rome, a rescript from Nero, stating that the Christians conspire against his throne and life, and ordering their extermination. Kill them all, says Nero, men, women, and children. Marcus (Mr. Barrett) drops his voice, tremulous with horror and pity, at the word "children"—and the audience (or congregation) shudder in turn, as though the thing really happened. But it never did happen. No ruler of a civilised or semi-civilised state ever issued such an order. What is related in the New Testament of Herod is simply a falsehood. Certainly no Roman emperor ever wrote out an order for the massacre of men, women, and children. Such an order *was* written once, and Mr. Barrett forgot where he had read it. It is to be found in the book of Deuteronomy, and is the direct command of Jehovah. The Jews were directed, in the case of certain cities they captured, to slay all, men, women, and children, and leave alive nothing that breathed.

THE NERONIC PERSECUTION.

Mr. Barrett makes Nero and Marcus talk about Christ and Christianity as though both were perfectly familiar.

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This, again, is unhistorical. Marcus Aurelius, more than a hundred years later, as George Long says, knew nothing of Christianity. Renan says that Jesus was unknown to Marcus Aurelius. How, then, could Nero and Marcus have so well known both? Mr. Barrett has only to read the Acts of the Apostles to recognise his mistake. Christianity had not penetrated to Rome when Paul was taken there as a prisoner in the very days of Nero, and close to the time (A.D. 64) of Mr. Barrett's play. The people he called together and preached to were Jews. This same Christian document proves the absurdity of Mr. Barrett's opinion, which he puts as a declaration in the mouth of Poppea, that Nero gave liberty of worship to all his subjects but the Christians; for we read in the last chapter of Acts that Paul, who had appealed to Cæsar as a Roman citizen, when charged with stirring up tumults, was "suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him," and "dwelt two whole years in his own hired house," preaching Christianity every day under the very nose of his janitor, without the slightest molestation. Indeed, it is perfectly clear, as Gibbon demonstrates, that, whatever did occur in Rome under Nero, there were no laws or decrees in force against the Christians, nor was there any precedent for the conduct of a Roman magistrate, when Pliny, in the beginning of the second century, wrote to the Emperor Trajan for instructions with respect to those who were accused at his tribunal of being worshippers of Christ.

Even according to Tacitus the Christians were not punished *as* Christians. It was rumored that Nero had set fire to Rome himself, and to divert the public suspicion he had the Christians accused of the crime, many of whom were cruelly executed. The passage in Tacitus, however, never saw the light of day until the fifteenth century, prior to which there is not the slightest trace of its existence. But this matter cannot be treated in the present article, though it will be treated in the pamphlet I am preparing for early publication, in which I shall have room for further criticism of the extraordinary looseness of Mr. Barrett's melodrama.

G. W. FOOTE.

SAINT BUDDHA.*

SINCE the appearance of Max Müller's essay on "The Migration of Fables" (*Contemporary Review*, July, 1870), embodied in his *Chips from a German Workshop*, iv. 174, it has been well known that the religious romance of Barlaam and Josaphat, written in Greek, and ascribed to St. John of Damascus, of the seventh century, and versions of which are spread all over the Christian, and even over the Islamic and Jewish, world, is really an adaptation of the legendary life of Gautama Buddha, belonging to the pre-Christian era.† The late W. R. S. Ralston wrote: "About this there is no doubt, and it is equally certain that the *Martyrologium Romanum* includes the names of Barlaam and Josaphat—*sanctorum Barlaam et Josaphat, quorum actus mirandus sanctus Joannes Damascenus conscripsit*. The names of two fictitious personages, the character of one of whom was an adaptation of that of the legendary Buddha, have therefore found their way into the *Martyrologium Romanum*."

This fact is one of the greatest curiosities of literature and religion. It suggests, moreover, that much of Christianity may have come westwards from India. One of the most certain items of ancient history inscribed on the rock pillars of India is the fact that in the time of Asoka, in the third century B.C., Buddhist missionaries were sent to all parts of the then known world. These inscriptions mention by name Antiochus of Syria and Ptolemy of Egypt among those who received these missionaries. One of the Buddhist sacred books, the Milindapanha, reports a discussion held in the capital of Syria, between Nagasena, a Buddhist missionary, and Menander, who, we are told, was born at Alexander, and who is represented as becoming **a convert** to Buddhism. The victories of Alexander opened **a route** between Europe and India, and the spread of **Buddhism** westward explains the origin of Jewish **Essenism** and of Christian monasticism.

Mr. Jacobs says in his Introduction, p. xii.:—

> "Diverse as are the aims of the Christian **and of the** Buddhistic schemes, their methods are **remarkably** similar. They have **a** common enemy in **what is known** in Christian parlance as the World. The **pleasures of** the senses and the pride of power are the **chief forces** which deflect men from the paths of **Wisdom and of** Virtue. Till the New Man comes, who shall **synthesise** all four ideals, the Christian-Buddhist plan **of Renunciation** must remain the necessary pre-requisite **of salvation.**"

Mr. Jacobs might have pointed out that the **monkery alike** of Buddhism and of Christianity is as alien to **Judaism** as the doctrine of the Incarnation, which to this **day is to the** Jews a stumbling block, and to Freethinkers **foolishness.** He says:—

> "The similarity of the two schemes **extends far** beyond their general plan. The legend of **the founders** presents a remarkable set of parallels—**the Annunciation**, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Temp**tation in the** Wilderness, the Marriage at Cana, the **Walking on the** Water, the Transfiguration, find parallels, **more** or less close, in the Legend of the Buddha. **Both taught by** parables, and in several instances the **subject of their** parables is the same (*Sower; Prodigal Son; Seed and Soil*). Much of their teaching is similar. **The** stress laid on the spirit as against the letter, **the opposition** between riches and spirituality, the **inwardness** of purity, are equally insisted upon in both **systems.** The formation of a Brotherhood or Church **has been in each** case the cause of giving permanent effect to **the ideals of** the founders, and, as is well known, even **the external** cultus have many points of contact."

The developments of Buddhism in Tibet are **so like those** of the Catholic Church that Mr. Rhys Davids observes of the similarities of ritual: "If all this be **chance, it is a** most stupendous miracle of coincidence; it is, in fact, ten thousand miracles" (Hibbert Lecture, p. 193). *Such* particulars as monasteries, nunneries, bells, confession (public), penances, tonsure, pilgrimages, use of flowers and lights before altars, etc., were all certainly pre-Christian. James Ferguson asserts, in his *Rude Stone Monuments*, that the details of the early Christian Church were borrowed *en bloc* from the Buddhists. "Relic worship," he says, "was certainly borrowed from the East, and nine-tenths of the institutes and forms of Latin Christianity from Buddhist sources." Mr. Jacobs thinks that the whole case for the dependence of Christianity on Buddhism will have to be solved on Folk-lore principles. "In other words, till Folk-lore has become so much of a science as to be able to discriminate between foreign and independent origin, this question must remain an open one."

While I by no means affirm the question as settled, it is certain the evidence all leans the one way. Buddhism was the earlier faith. It was distinctly missionary in character, and this story of Barlaam and Josaphat shows that the story of Gautama Buddha's great renunciation did spread westwards, percolate through Christian countries, and amalgamate itself with Christian legends. The problem of the order of the derivation of the various versions of the story may be, as Mr. Conybeare points out, a complex one; but the fact that in the early Arabic is found the parable of the Sower by no means proves that version to be Christian, but may throw light on where the Christian parable came from.

It is, indeed, a notable circumstance that this story of Barlaam and Josaphat, which, in its essence, is Buddhistic, was the first and most popular of all religious romances in Christendom before the time of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. It exists in Icelandic, Coptic, Arabic, Armenian, Irish, Bohemian, and has even been preserved in the Spanish dialect used in the Philippines.

Buddha has not only got into the Roman calendar, where the date of Barlaam and St. Josaphat is November 27, but he also appears in the calendar of the Greek Church under August 26, where he figures as "the holy Josaph, son of Abener, king of India."

Max Müller, Mr. T. W. Rhys Davids, and others, have pointed out that Josaphat is simply a corruption of the word "Bodisat," that title of the future Buddha so constantly repeated in Buddhist works. The name Barlaam

* Bibliothèque de Carabas, vol. x. *Barlaam and Josaphat*. English Lives of Buddha. Edited and Induced by Joseph Jacobs. (D. Nutt; 1896.)

† This important fact was hinted at by the Portuguese historian, Diogo de Couto (Mr. Jacobs has it Conto), in 1612. Modern attention was first drawn to it by M. Laboulaye in the *Journal des Debats*, July 26, 1859.

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was that of an Antioch worthy of the fourth century, and Mr. Jacobs thinks his name must have been introduced into the Syrian version of the story from its accidental similarity to the Arabian Balauvar, a corruption of the Indian Bhagavan.

That the founder of a heathen religion, and one often accused of being an Atheist, should have become a saint of Christendom is one of those curious facts which should make an orthodox Christian ponder as to whether, in sooth, his religion has the monopoly of all the truth, beauty, and goodness in the world. For indeed, if he will inquire, he will discover that the Hindu heretic is far more worthy of remembrance and reverence than the great host of those celebrated in the calendar of Christian saints.

Of the priority of the story of Buddha there can be no question. Max Müller, in his essay on the *Migration of Fables*, mentions that, as the Chinese traveller, Fa Hian, "three hundred years before John of Damascus, saw the towers which commemorated the three drives of Buddha still standing among the ruins of the royal city of Kapilavastu, it follows that the Greek father borrowed his subject from the Buddhist Scriptures." He should have rather said "that they were prior." The Greek father did not write the story, and it is more probable that it percolated into Western literature through oral transmission than that it was taken direct from the Buddhist scriptures.

The English versions "edited and induced" by Mr. Jacobs are *The Lyf of Saynt balaam*, given by Caxton in his *Golden Legende*, and a chapbook of last century in doggerel verse by a "Reverend Divine." This last is of extremely little value, but the Caxton version from the *Legenda Aurea of Jacobus de Voraigne* is notable alike for its English and its incidents. It is hardly necessary to say that the book, like the rest of Mr. Nutt's publications, is admirably got up. Altogether, we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Jacobs for taking up this important subject and treating it in a style bright, breezy, and popular, and yet with the thoroughness and accuracy of a sound scholar.

J. M. Wheeler.

"THE CHRIST HAS COME."

I have just been reading, for the second time, a book bearing the above title, and written by E. Hampden Cook, M.A. This gentleman has been lecturing recently in London, and, I believe, in the provinces also, with a view of proving that the second advent of Christ upon the earth took place nearly two thousand years ago. It may be mentioned, however, that grave doubts are entertained by many thinkers as to whether he ever visited this planet the first time. Be that as it may, Mr. Cook tells us in the Introduction of his work that "the purpose of these pages is to briefly set forth the evidence that exists for believing that the second advent took place at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and was accompanied by a spiritual judgment of the Jews; a resurrection from Hades (the intermediate state) to a higher sphere of the saints who had previously left the earth; and by the translation to heaven of Christians of the first rank throughout the world, who were alive at the time; that the prince of darkness was then imprisoned in the abyss, and the kingdom of God (meaning, by those words, the kingship of Christ and his saints) established; and that the saints are at this moment reigning with the Lord Jesus in heaven, not *on*, but (as the Greek word may equally well be rendered) *over*, the earth, and doubtless also over the whole of humanity in the unseen world of spirits" (pp. 14, 15).

I have given this extract in full, so that it may not be thought that Mr. Cook is misrepresented in the few comments I shall here make as to his extraordinary claims. Before noticing the arguments he adduces, it may be as well to clearly understand what the New Testament teaches upon the subject. There appears to me ample evidence, according to the Gospels and the Epistles, that in Christ's time his second advent was expected; but this fact does not justify the assertion that he did appear as Mr. Cook alleges. Of such an appearance there seems to me to be no proof apart from the New Testament, and what is thought to be "evidence" therein is exceedingly doubtful. One of the most remarkable features about these Gospel stories is the utter ignorance of the disciples as to the nature of the events that were said to have occurred. They appear to have failed to grasp the meaning of what Christ is reported to have said and done. Hence we read, "They understood not this saying," and "they understood none of these things" (Luke ix. and xviii.). Even Peter, after looking into the tomb, "departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass" (Luke xxiv.). So unconcerned was he about the matter that he said to the other disciples, "I go a-fishing," and he went, taking his friends with him (John xxi.). Moreover, when "Jesus stood on the shore, the disciples knew not that it was Jesus" (*ibid*).

Notwithstanding this apparent ignorance upon the part of the disciples of one with whom a few days previously they had been on intimate terms, there is no doubt that the "second coming" of their Master was expected by the believers of those days. Such passages as John xxi. 22, 1 Thessalonians iv. 15, 16, 17, 2 Thessalonians i. 7, 8, 9, 2 Peter iii. 16, 17, and James v. 7, 8, evidently indicate this. I am not here concerned with the inconsistency of the expectation of the early second advent existing in the midst of the lack of comprehension upon the part of the disciples as to the meaning of the repeated references to the coming event. Contradictions and inconsistencies are prominent features in the Christian system. But the important point to be noticed is this: If the second advent did not take place, as foretold in the Gospels and the Epistles, the Bible is false; while, if it did take place, the Church, for nearly two thousand years, has been deceived, and has been imposing a delusion upon credulous believers.

Of course, in making this statement, I take the words of the Bible in their ordinary English meaning; this I regard as being the only reasonable course to adopt. If the language of the book does not mean what the legitimate use of the words justifies us in thinking they do, then its narratives are a delusion and a snare. Once allow the etymology of language to be ignored, and the Scriptures may be made to prove any nonsense. Upon this principle, as Shakespeare says, "the Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose." If the meaning of a leading term in any argument is changed, the conclusion arrived at will doubtless be varied accordingly. For instance, if one day means a thousand years, it will alter what a day may bring forth. If the word "generation" is understood as meaning a "dispensation"—that is, a period without limit, the whole aspect of the question is altered. It is not here overlooked that many of the Bible sentences are indefinite and mysterious in their signification. This is one of the characteristics of "God's Word," and Christ is reported to have defended such ambiguity (Mark iv. 11, 12). Certain it is that, according to the Gospels, he indulged in it freely. Thus, in Luke (xvii.), having said that "the kingdom of God is within you," and that "it cometh not by observation," he proceeds to mention a number of most wonderful things that were to happen at "the coming of the son of man"; and when he was asked, "Where, Lord?" he answered, "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." Such a reply is like the peace of God—it passeth all understanding.

There is one passage in Luke (xviii. 8) which some persons think throws a doubt upon the theory that Christ's second advent took place in the first century. The passage reads thus: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" It appears incredible that any doubt should exist as to faith being found in the first century of its propaganda. Had Jesus such scant confidence in the success of his system in the "pure days of the faith" that he was uncertain how far it would have "caught on" during his brief absence from this planet? It must, however, be remembered that, against the doubt conveyed in the record of Luke, there are the direct statements of an approaching second appearance in Matthew xxiv. Here it is explicitly stated that the sign of the Son of Man "shall appear in the heavens during the then present generation." Jesus told Nathaniel that among the wonderful things that he should see were "heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." On another occasion Jesus said: "There be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death till they had seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark ix. 1). Professor Sanday remarks that, from these words, Christ "seems" to imply his immediate appearance. Surely the word "seems" is not the term to

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be used here. If the language employed means anything, it is that many of those who were then alive would see the second advent; but most Christians to-day do not believe that the event has occurred even up to the present time. If they are right in their conjecture, Christ must have been mistaken in his prediction.

The various accounts of the alleged supernatural incidents in the career of Christ are so ambiguous that it is not surprising the disciples failed to comprehend the meaning of what was said. Even when Jesus spoke of his betrayal, death, and resurrection, they did not understand him (Mark ix. 31, 32). And when he was "upon the Mount of Olives," Peter, James, and others "asked him privately": "Tell us, when shall these things [referring to the destruction of the temple] be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?" (Mark xiii. 4). The answer they received was a most remarkable one. Jesus told them to look out for impostors, wars, earthquakes, famines, and a host of other fearful calamities. The stars were to fall, "and the moon shall not give her light"; and when these trifles happened, "then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost parts of the earth to the uttermost parts of heaven." "And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds." We should think that the vision of the spectators would be very indistinct, inasmuch as the two great lights, we are told, had been darkened. There was one very important precaution to be observed—namely, "pray ye that your flight be not in the winter." Now, to an unbeliever, it looks very strange that the state of the thermometer should have anything to do with the departure for heaven. It is true the presence of rain or snow may interfere with laying the foundation of an earthly paradise; but one would reasonably think that a journey to the Celestial City, under the guidance of the great "Light of the world," would be free from such mundane inconveniences.

Fortunately, the horrible calamities mentioned in the Gospels, referring to the supposed second advent, can have no terror for Freethinkers, who cannot believe such "idle tales." Moreover, even if such prophecies had been realities, they belong to ancient history, the period of the first century, for Mark tells us most emphatically that Christ said: "Verily, I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done" (xiii. 30). It is also some consolation to be told that, before any of the events were to take place, "the gospel must first be published among all nations." This, it may be relied upon, was never done in the past; and there is no reason for supposing that it will ever be accomplished in the future.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

MISSIONARY JOTTINGS.

IF an increasing demand for lectures, growing audiences, and frequent converts be any test of the value of the lecture scheme, then it must be pronounced an unqualified success. Although lecturing nearly every evening, I have been obliged to decline a large number of invitations to lecture in new places, or to make a longer stay in the places I have visited. As it is, I am delivering about six lectures per week, the gratifying results of which compensate somewhat for the continuous stress of work. My first halt after leaving London on January 18 was at Sheffield, where my audiences were the largest I have yet had the pleasure of addressing in that city. The lectures were heard very attentively, received favorably, and followed by a little discussion of a very poor quality; one gentleman roundly declaring that if evolution was true he was a fool. As evolution was certainly true, I told him that it would be better to leave the matter as he put it without further discussion—a statement that was not received by him with as much pleasure as I anticipated.

Under the lecture scheme, I next paid a return visit to Hoyland Common—a place which has undergone considerable improvement since Mrs. Besant was stoned there some years ago. A boycott had been placed upon the meetings by the various chapels; but, thanks to the labors of Mr. W. Dyson, the energetic secretary of the Barnsley Branch, and Mr. G. Crookson, whose services to the Freethought cause date back for many years, the meeting was much larger than on the occasion of my previous visit.

Huddersfield, Bradford, Heckmondwike, Cleckheaton, and Keighley—the last three the first fruits of the lecture scheme—were next visited, and fairly successful meetings held there. The new Yorkshire Branches are determined to justify their existence by steady attention to the dissemination of Secular principles; the members seem anxious to do their best, and it is to be hoped that time will witness no relaxation of their efforts in this direction. There are many disadvantages under which they labor at present, the greatest being scarcity of speakers. Mr. Grange is doing all that he can to supply this want; but, as he is engaged in a business which takes up most of his time, his work on the platform is necessarily very limited. An effective speaker, with time to attend to the matter of organisation, might perform wonders in a very little time in this district. From Bradford I went to Blackburn, where two very successful meetings were held. Blackburn forms a very good instance of what can be done by week-night lectures alone, the Branch there having been built up entirely by such means. When I first visited the town about nine months ago, I was informed that the members there were very few, and that to try and put life into the movement in Blackburn was a hopeless task. A few meetings, however, soon altered the position of affairs. Some very large open-air meetings were followed by lectures in one of the Socialist halls, from which we had to remove to a larger one, as it was too small to accommodate the audience. Good meetings soon led to an increased membership, a pleasing feature of which was the number of ladies who joined the party, and who are not by any means backward in promoting the interests of the cause. Altogether a very healthy society has been formed, and one which bids fair to bear good results in the near future.

The beginning of February saw me once more on the Tyneside, where I am getting to feel almost a native. Three Sundays at Newcastle and two at South Shields were accompanied by lectures in the district under the lecture scheme. Lectures were delivered at North Shields, Chester-le-Street, Bedlington, Willington Quay, Felling, Stockton-on-Tees, and South Bank, with very pleasing results. At Chester-le-Street, where I was booked for three lectures, the meetings grew in size on each occasion, some of the attendants walking quite a distance in order to be present. At North Shields the meetings were held under the auspices of the South Shields Branch, a body which possesses as much pugnacity to the square inch as any society in England. Only one meeting had been announced, but the success of the first led the Branch to arrange for a second one, which, despite very short notice, turned out still more successful. The only opposition (?) at these meetings came from a lady who didn't want to "argefy," but bade me a solemn farewell and "hoped to God that I might see the truth" before I died; and a gentleman who assured us that he was once an infidel, and a *drunken one*, and who then went upon his knees and, in sepulchral tones, imparted the startling information that he had God within him. The early Israelites carried their god about in a box; this man appeared to carry his in his stomach. Maybe it was only indigestion he was suffering from, and the pains of disordered digestive organs had been mistaken for religious yearnings—who knows? Taken on the whole, the Lord has a lively set of followers. The greater part of them seem to be composed of those who either brag of how bad they have been, and appear to feel a genuine sorrow that they were not worse, or imagine that the fact of their being upon the Lord's side dispenses with the necessity of decent behavior in public, or rational and truthful speech in discussion.

At Willington Quay the full responsibility of the meeting was borne by the Lecture Fund; but, thanks to Messrs. Bartram and Cresswell, the former of whom had the whole arrangement of the meetings under his control, the gatherings were good ones and the loss but trifling. These were the first Freethought meetings ever held in Willington, and would never have been given but for the lecture scheme. The same may be said of Felling, the next place to be visited. In conjunction with the Newcastle Branch, a few friends resident in the place had arranged for a lecture in the Mechanics' Institute on March 4. It was, I believe, the first Freethought lecture ever given there, although lectures have been given in the vicinity, and was one of the best week-night meetings I had yet held in the North.

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The hall, capable of holding about three hundred people, was filled; and, although the audience contained a fair shrinkling of local preachers and the like, there was no discussion. I have no doubt that the meeting will lead to a Branch being formed in Felling in the near future—a move was made in that direction before I left. Two lectures at Stockton-on-Tees and South Bank on March 5 and 6 concluded my work in this district for the present. I had many applications for lectures in other parts of Durham and Northumberland; but, as I find it impossible to lecture on more than seven evenings per week, I was obliged to refuse.

On Sunday, March 8, I had the pleasure of renewing my acquaintance with the Glasgow Branch, and, in spite of the beastly weather that prevailed, had better audiences than on my previous visit. During the ensuing week Mr. Gilmour, who appears to have taken the spiritual welfare of the whole district under his care, has arranged a course of lectures in neighboring towns, and I hope to be able in due course to report results equally as gratifying as those recorded above. On the whole, the Secular movement is making steady progress in Great Britain. People who have long held aloof are coming among us, and those of our own number seem to put more energy into the work. Perhaps the present attitude of the religious parties on Education and other matters has something to do with this. Numbers who looked upon theology as dead are beginning to see that it was only wounded, and might possibly recover; that we must either attack or be attacked, and that only by energetic fighting, strong organisation, and constant watchfulness is it possible to retain the liberties we have already won, and to remove those chains which still fetter our actions. C. COHEN.

Glasgow, March 9.

THE "JOYFUL NEWS" STORY.

MR. J. P. GILMOUR and another Glasgow Freethinker had their attention drawn to the fact that a Glasgow missionary named J. T. Smith was mentioned in the same number of the *Joyful News* which contained the story of the "Conversion of an Infidel," upon which I adverted in our issue of March 1. These gentlemen waited on the missionary at a Band of Hope meeting. Mr. Gilmour pulled out the copy of *Joyful News* for February 20, and asked him if he knew anything about the "Mr. X." story. He said he did. Mr. Gilmour continued that, as they were anxious to obtain confirmation of it, he would be glad to learn what reasons he had for accepting it as authentic. Mr. Smith said he was satisfied upon that point, because he knew Mr. Champness wouldn't insert anything inaccurate in his paper. Mr. Gilmour remarked that Mr. Champness was in a very happy case if he never fell into an error of judgment, as even expert journalists sometimes blundered. "Ah," interposed Mr. Smith unctuously, "but those are Secular papers, and this is a religious journal." Mr. Gilmour then pointed out that the initials appended to the contribution and those of Mr. Smith's name were the same, and asked, "Did you write it?" Mr. Smith replied: "I don't need to tell you unless I please." "Well, then," Mr. Gilmour rejoined, "do you deny that you wrote it?" "I neither assert nor deny that I wrote it; but write to Mr. Champness, and ask him to disclose the contributor's name, and if he chooses to do so, you can then deal with that person."

Probably Mr. J. T. Smith is aware that it is against editorial etiquette to disclose the names of contributors.

Subsequently Mr. Smith qualified the admission that he knew something about "X." Only meant that he had read it in *Joyful News*, then mentioned that he had seen the article in the *Freethinker*, and did they imagine that he would argue with anyone who called him a liar, as Mr. Wheeler virtually called the writer of "X." story? Mr. Gilmour's comment on this was that, unless the cap fitted him, he should not complain. Reverting to the question of the credibility of "X." narrative, Mr. Smith affirmed that, from its internal evidences, he felt convinced of its veracity. Whereupon Mr. Gilmour inquired: "Did you ever personally see an 'Infidel' on his death-bed behave in the manner there described?" "N—no." "You are a missionary, and you say you have many professional friends in the same line. Have any of them ever seen anything of the kind?" "I can't just remember."

Mr. Gilmour says "it was inevitable that we should carry away the impression that in J. T. Smith we had discovered the 'J. T. S.' for whom we were seeking, and that he would not give us any satisfaction, simply because he could not." Subsequently Mr. Gilmour received the following post-card:—

J. T. SMITH,
Missionary.

51, WHITEVALE STREET,
GLASGOW.

7/3/96.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have received a letter from the editor of the *Joyful News* asking me to disclose the authorship of "The Conversion of an Infidel." You will perfectly understand that I could not give any information without the editor's consent. This will satisfy you that I am the author, so will forward a reply to the editor of *Freethinker* at my earliest convenience.—Yours truly,

J. T. SMITH.

Mr. Smith was probably not aware that we should see this post-card, which was shortly followed by a letter to Mr. Foote, which came from Glasgow without either name or address:—

SIR,—My attention has only recently been called to the article in your issue of March 1, entitled "Another Conversion." In reply to Mr. Wheeler's query, "Is it true?" I am in the pleasant position to answer most emphatically in the affirmative. "The Christian cobbler" who figures so prominently in the story related it to me himself, and what is said of Mr. Gilmour can be as correctly declared of my friend—*i.e.*: "He is a *gentleman* whose accuracy and information can be relied on." He is well known in the district where he lives, and is very highly respected and greatly beloved. I have shown him the story as it appeared in *Joyful News*, and he says it is perfectly true, except, instead of my saying "near Glasgow Cross," I should have said near a Glasgow Cross. This clerical error was noticed by us a week prior to your reference. As several of the relatives of the deceased are living in the city, and not wishing to cause them pain, I thought it wise to leave out all names, either of persons or places. There are numerous "crosses" in Glasgow, and the one referred to is some distance from the Glasgow Cross.

I may say I have forwarded the name and address of the "Christian cobbler" to the editors of *Joyful News* for their private information, with a signed statement by my friend vouching for the accuracy of the story. I have also shown him your article, and he is so displeased with the *ridicule* thrown on the incident that he does not wish to open up any direct communication with you or your representatives.—Yours faithfully,

J. T. S.

The editors of *Joyful News* may have reason to be satisfied with the explanation of "J. T. S.," but assuredly I am not. He was not asked for his opinion, but for evidence. He offers none whatever. He does not even send his own name and address. His Christian cobbler remains a name, and nothing more. He is said to be so displeased with the ridicule thrown on the incident that he will not vindicate his own veracity. If he will do himself the justice to give the proof of a most unlikely story, I will apologise for my ridicule. The only sign of locality in the story, being palpably wrong, is now "a clerical error." But another means of identifying the converted Infidel remains. He is said to have appealed to God to paralyse his hands, and to have had them cut off by machinery. It is alleged he was an Infidel chief, and that "others of his followers became Christians." How happens it that none of the Freethinkers of Glasgow have ever heard of an infidel in that city who was so remarkably mutilated?

If the editors of *Joyful News* are satisfied to insert such stories without receiving evidence with them, I can only surmise that tales of the conversions of Atheists are a profitable form of literature, stimulating probably to the subscription to missions. That such stories are plentiful is only an illustration of the law of supply and demand. Their abundance argues the paucity of genuine cases. Even Christians are beginning to suspect this. My attention was drawn to the *Joyful News* story by a Wesleyan who would rejoice in a genuine case, but who cannot but suspect such a strange, unauthenticated story as that of "J. T. S."

Since writing the foregoing I have heard again from Mr. Gilmour, who informs me that a deputation of four, including Mr. Cohen and himself, waited on Mr. J. T. Smith, and asked him—since he had at first suggested that when "J.T.S." was discovered he should be applied to for confirmation of the story—to give the name and address of the Christian cobbler, so that they might satisfy themselves if he was a credible witness. They offered, if he was a modest and retiring person, to deal tenderly with him; and if they were convinced of the truth of the story, pledged themselves to openly state as much without using his name. It was all in vain; Mr. Smith flatly refused to give the authority for his story; and, as it was evident nothing further could be done with him, Mr. Gilmour plainly told him that he did not believe the Christian cobbler existed at all. My surmise that he was related to Mr. Hugh Price Hughes's Atheist Shoemaker must, it seems, be amended into a relative of the Mrs. Harris, of Sairey Gamp. Mr. Gilmour says the quest of the Christian cobbler is about as hopeful as the search for the Holy Grail. I well believe it.

J. M. WHEELER.

Free institutions can be properly worked only by men each of whom is jealous of his own rights, and also sympathetically jealous of the rights of others—who will neither himself aggress on his neighbors, in small things or great, nor tolerate aggression on them by others.—*Herbert Spencer.*

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ACID DROPS.

"God's American Volunteers" is the modest name of Ballington Booth's new Salvation Army. Its organisation is to be "military," like that of the great William's (no reference to the German Emperor). The simple fact is that Ballington is tired of being bossed, and has set up "on his own." It is announced that all official relations with his father are now at an end; which means that no more cash will be sent to England.

Shakespeare is a splendid source for apt quotations. Here is one for General Booth from the *Merchant of Venice*: "My own flesh and blood to rebel!" The speaker is Shylock.

It appears from New York *Public Opinion* (March 5) that Ballington Booth's resignation was accompanied by a charge against the "General" that he was not handling the Army right, and that his policy was wrong. But in what army are the subalterns allowed to have their way because they think their general wrong?

The *Times of India* sets down "General" Booth as an arrant humbug. It seems he tried to get money from the Indian Government to settle some lands in which the Army has invested at Guzerat. In its issue of February 14 it says: "What they want the Government to do, in effect, is to lend them eighty-five thousand rupees on land for the right to cultivate which they paid Government less than a thousand rupees three years ago. The coolness of this proposition almost takes one's breath away."

About this same settlement at Guzerat the Rev. R. Gillespie, called in the *Times of India* "the well-known missionary of Ahmedabad," declares that, although Booth claimed to have settled on the land five and twenty families, there is only one *bona fide* settler there. He states that the Army and its boasted work have completely collapsed in Guzerat; that its leader, after first promising in writing not to do it, began by attacking the native Christian Church, and "did his utmost, by the most unscrupulous means, to wreck and rend it," and achieved what he did achieve only by pandering to idolatry.

All these charges relate to matters not of opinion, but of fact, and must be susceptible of proof or disproof. According to the Army reports, they ought to have something like seventy-five thousand followers in Guzerat; whereas, according to Mr. Gillespie, they have scarcely any; though, if his information is authentic, there is not likely to be much difficulty in manufacturing a crowd of "soldiers" to welcome the "General" on his arrival in the district. He alleges that, in order to make a big parade before the "General" at a Saturday's field day in Samarkha, bales of red salvation jackets were being hawked about the neighborhood at less than cost price. Salvation Army jackets were, it is said, offered to the heathen natives at sixpence a piece to welcome the "General."

The *Times of India* (February 18) further asks an explanation of the dismissal of an officer named Himnat Singh. His own account of the matter is that he incurred the displeasure of his superiors by sending in reports that were unacceptable because they were truthful; or, to put it in another way, that they did not approve of his seeing only one convert where they reported ten.

The *Times of India* says of Booth's Guzerat scheme: "Although twenty thousand rupees have been spent upon the settlement in three years, it is not yet self-supporting. Before the resources of the State are put at the disposal of 'General' Booth and his collaborator, it will be well to take careful note of the result of this experiment, and to inquire, among other things, who is to be the responsible conductor of similar experiments in other parts.....We share Mr. Gillespie's scepticism as to the ability even of Mr. Booth-Tucker to superintend the outlay of £50,000 of Government money upon Peasant Settlements in various parts of India from the Salvationist headquarters in London."

The Bytham railway accident was a sad affair, but it had a humorous incident. "Mr. Peterson, of South Bermondsey," according to the *Daily Telegraph*, "in an interview stated that when the carriage left the rails a clergyman exhorted them to prayer, as it might be their last moment. While he was speaking he was partly thrown through the window." So much for the efficacy of prayer.

Mr. W. T. Lee, with whom Mr. Foote debated last May at Derby, has been interviewed at Swansea by a representative of the *Cambrian Daily Leader*. Mr. Lee finds that Agnostics, Atheists, and Materialists are not so ready to offer opposition as they were ten years ago. It is no less true that Christians are not so ready as they were to oppose Freethought lecturers. Mr. Lee says the old bitterness and incivility have passed away, but later on he admits that "It was largely the fault of our own people; our spirit was none of the best very often." This is putting it rather mildly. Insult and calumny used to be the regular stock-in-trade of Christian Evidence advocates, and still remain so with the baser sort of this profession.

Asked whether Secularism was gaining ground—what a question to ask one of its professional opponents!—Mr. Lee replied: "No, Secularism is a dead cause, or nearly so." For many years Mr. Lee fought this dead cause occasionally; he now devotes the whole, or nearly the whole, of his time to the work. It does not say much for his wisdom or his gallantry. But we should perhaps make allowance for the difficulties of being interviewed. When a man has to answer a point-blank question, he is apt to give a point-blank answer; and, of course, it would never do to say that Secularism was gaining ground, as it would be a reflection on the efficacy of Mr. Lee's exertions.

Secularism has always managed to keep alive a representative organ. The *National Reformer* lasted thirty years, and only died because Bradlaugh died. The *Freethinker* has lasted for fourteen years, and doesn't exhibit any signs of decay, much less of a speedy dissolution. But somehow or other it is impossible to keep a Christian Evidence journal alive for any considerable length of time. The dead ones may be counted by the dozen. One succeeds another in the same round of failure. Some success is achieved by reckless defamation of Freethought leaders, but that soon palls even on the taste of the most bigoted Christians; and when you have charged a man with most of the crimes in the Newgate Calendar, it is not easy to keep up originality in such accusations. The interest flags, and the paper falls into a consumption; which proves that, whatever its readers wanted, they did not want Christian Evidences.

Mr. Lee told his interviewer that "Mr. Foote has toned down a bit during the last few years." We scarcely understand this—it is so indefinite; but let it pass. "He is a wonderfully-improved man," says Mr. Lee, "and scholarly too." This is doubtless well-meant, but to those who have known Mr. Foote all along it will be rather amusing. The fact is, that Christians who never heard Mr. Foote, and never read a line of his writings, believed the lies told about him, and pictured him as a vulgar, illiterate ruffian. When they came across him they were undeceived. Sometimes they admitted that they were mistaken; but such an admission runs counter to human vanity, so they sometimes said: "He is wonderfully improved, and scholarly too." After all, however, what does it matter? No man worth his salt cares for the opinion of those who do not know him. What you *are*, is the only thing to care about; and what you *do*, is the only thing that tells in the long run.

The Rev. R. A. England, M.A., writes to the *Daily News* (March 11) comparing Asia Minor about 50 B.C. and in 1896 A.D. He cites Cicero's letter to his brother, the Governor of Asia Minor, half a century before Christ. Cicero said: "It seems to me that those who are under a Government should be as happy as possible," and "it is the duty, not only of those who rule Romans, but of those who have the care of slaves and cattle, to contribute to the welfare of those committed to their charge." Such were the sentiments of a heathen statesman who never anticipated the benefits which Christianity would bring on the world.

The new Clergy Discipline Bill will give more power than ever to the bishops. Under the existing state of things, an incumbent may become bed-ridden, or lunatic, or a fraudulent bankrupt, and yet he cannot be removed from his cure of soul. Lord Cranborne gave an instance in which an incumbent refused the sacrament to his wife for the purpose of extorting money, and had a grudge against a certain undertaker, refusing, when this undertaker was employed, to allow the body to be brought into the church. Of course, the congregation had in this case disappeared. But the incumbent stayed on. Under the new law the bishop may deprive without right of appeal.

The Jersey States have, by an overwhelming majority, passed the preamble of a Bill legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Eleven rectors voted like one against the change, which, if adopted, will lead to those who wish to indulge in this form of matrimony taking a holiday in the Channel Islands. The measure is legal in most of our colonies, but is invariably thrown out here by the piety of the peers and the unanimity of the bishops.

The English Church Union has had a meeting in Exeter Hall, declaring its view that the Divorce Act of 1857 has been productive of evil, and affirming that the use of the Church's service for the performance of marriage in the case of divorced persons is a degradation of sacred rites. The

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Church always wants to take the State's pay, and please itself as to how it shall do the State's work.

Talmage has been telling the good people of Washington, and, through the syndicate for publishing his sermons, the English-speaking world, that sixteen of "the twenty most celebrated infidels in Great Britain in our day" have "come back to Christ." He does not give their names. It would be an invidious task if we were to select the exact number of the most celebrated infidels. Certainly such a list must include J. S. Mill, H. T. Buckle, Harriet Martineau, H. T. Huxley, G. H. Lewes, W. R. Greg, Winwood Reade, F. W. Newman, W. K. Clifford, A. C. Swinburne, G. J. Holyoake, Charles Bradlaugh, and the author of *Supernatural Religion*. We have not heard that any one of these has "come back to Christ."

We fancy we know where Talmage gets his sixteen of the twenty most celebrated infidels from. Over a dozen years ago the Presbyterian, Rev. C. J. Whitmore, familiarly known as "bully Whitmore," published a widely-circulated leaflet entitled "What Becomes of the Infidel Leaders?" Whitmore gave the initials of sixteen persons alleged to have been converted infidel leaders. He was challenged to give the names, but wrote that he gave them privately, but "I will not play Mr. Bradlaugh's game by writing in his filthy print" (letter given in *Freethinker*, September 16, 1883). Of the names given the majority were unknown. Four only had any pretension to the title given, and one of these was never converted at all. The three genuine cases were well known and understood by Freethinkers.

Christians are apt to forget that the bulk of Freethinkers are converts from Christianity. That some few relapse is not surprising, especially when we remember how often their living depends on the goodwill of Christians. The life of an infidel leader is not a bed of roses, and if (as is often the case) the infidel is poor, dependent on Christian employers, and with Christian relations around him who constantly grieve at the lost condition of his soul, we cannot wonder if, here and there, one says with the poet:—

> Let the long contention cease!
> Geese are swans, and swans are geese.
> Let them have it how they will!
> Thou art tired, best be still!

That so many cases of infidel conversions, when examined, are bogus, indicates that the genuine ones are not as numerous as might be expected, considering Christian ascendency and Christian bigotry. In truth, the spirit of the Freethinker, however poor and dependent, is better represented in the poet's final word:—

> They outtalk'd thee, hiss'd thee, tore thee.
> Better men fared thus before thee;
> Fired their ringing shot and pass'd
> Hotly charged—and broke at last.
>
> Charge once more, and be dumb!
> Let the victors, when they come,
> When the forts of folly fall,
> Find thy body by the wall.

Mr. Skewes Cox, M.P., and Lord Dysart have a nice notion of what is "compensation" for taking common lands in the vicinity of the metropolis. Mr. Skewes Cox, who is an alderman of Richmond, told the House of Commons that, in return for taking the Petersham and Ham Lands, it was proposed to give four thousand pounds to the "voluntary schools" that the horrors of a Board school might be averted; and, moreover, there would be a contribution to the Vicarage Improvement Fund. The House of Commons smiled at this idea of compensation for taking public lands for private uses, and rejected the proposed measure by a majority of 144.

It is amusing to a Freethinker to see how the priests manage the religious business, in which God is but a sleeping partner. Hungary, for instance, is about to hold a festival in commemoration of the thousandth year of its existence as a kingdom. The festivities are to take place during Lent, a period in which the faithful must abstain from meat. But the Church is always willing to relax its rules when it is judicious to do so. Accordingly, the Primate of Hungary has given the people permission to eat meat even during Holy Week, with the exception of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Thus a certain action is made right or wrong solely by the authority of the Church.

The Rev. Albert Ernest Brett, pastor of the Jubilee Chapel, New North-road, has been summoned under the Affiliation Act to pay for the keep of the child of one of the members of his church, who was engaged in Band of Hope work, and who only confessed to the defendant being the father of her child at her confinement when in fear of death.

Arthur Frederick Underwood, a well-known officer of the Free Methodist Chapel, Southend, and a Sunday-school teacher there, has been committed to trial on the charge of indecently assaulting one of the singing-class of which Underwood is superintendent, within the chapel itself. The accused is fifty years of age, and the girl thirteen.

The Rev. William M. Ritchie, of Asbury Park, N.J., has been circulating the report that the Rev. Howard D. Widdemar, of the same town, is altogether too gay for a minister of the Gospel of Christ, because he is in the habit of getting into girl scrapes wherever he goes, and, besides that, he has never been regularly ordained to the Gospel ministry. The Rev. Mr. Widdemar denies these charges, and, having brought a suit against the Rev. Mr. Ritchie for $5,000 damages for slander, recovered only $750—probably quite sufficient compensation.

The Rev. H. J. Hunnycutt, a Baptist minister of Morillton, Arkansas, was arrested on the charge of infanticide, he having strangled to death his housekeeper's one-year-old baby, because he was enraged at the annoyance of its cries while he was preparing a sermon.

Another shocking instance of the Bible-supported belief in evil spirits comes from Ireland. James Cunningham, a shoemaker of Lisaphelim, Roscommon, killed his father just after kneeling down and repeating the Rosary, and doing this while under the belief in evil spirits. The whole family seems to have been demented upon the subject.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is, according to a writer in the *Echo*, a one-man Society. The Rev. Mr. Waugh declares that he is above all committees. He initiates expenditure, gives orders, buys houses, starts shelters, takes and dismisses officials without asking permission from committees. The cost of administration is set down at £17,220.

The Rev. B. Waugh receives £800 a year as director, and, in addition to this, his income-tax and travelling expenses are paid. His assistant, Miss Bolton, receives £225, *plus* income-tax, rent of chambers, and travelling expenses. The travelling expenses for these two have been, for the last six months, at the rate of over £500 a year.

An amusing correspondence has been going on between the Right Reverend Father-in-God, Dr. Gott, Bishop of Truro, and the Rev. John England, a Wesleyan minister, who is a chaplain at Devonport. The Bishop wrote reproving the Wesleyan for preaching in a Wesleyan church. The Wesleyan answered: "Your communication emphasises the thankfulness that many sincere and intelligent Christians feel that the Church is based on broader and firmer foundations than those laid by my Lord Bishop of Truro." The Bishop then wrote: "I generally write such letters as that which I sent you mostly or wholly on my knees." The minister then asked why the Bishop attacked a Wesleyan preacher on the strength of a newspaper report, and without consulting his clergy list. The Bishop explained: "My mistake arose from the public advertisement of your sermons in Cornwall, in which you were described as 'Chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces.'" He answered: "There are chaplains to Her Majesty's forces of other churches than those of the Establishment, so that your interference is not justified. I am surprised that one occupying the position of a Bishop does not yet know that these chaplaincies are no longer the monopoly of the Church of England. Your Lordship has admitted the mistake made, but surely one who generally writes 'such letters as that' which was sent to me 'mostly or wholly on his knees' ought to give some indications of regret for having incautiously passed censure on a minister over whom he has no jurisdiction."

The *Joyful News*, taking no notice of our challenge of its last converted Atheist, treats us to a fresh one in its number for March 12. Again the individual is nameless and placeless, and the writer signs himself "X." The story of "X." is a shade more plausible than that of "J. T. S." The Atheist, instead of wanting the Bible burnt when converted, burnt all his infidel books. He is reported as saying: "I should like to warn all young men against Socialistic and Infidel books. I have prayed and prayed to God to help me to forget a great deal that I have read, and, blessed be his name, he has burnt a good deal already out of my memory; but I do earnestly warn all young men against reading the poisonous books, which will do nothing for them but make them miserable and wretched in themselves and with everybody else. I hate the very sight of them now."

The nameless convert says: "I found that Socialism was not infidelity, but it led on straight to it, just as a twelve-inch plank leads you on to a scaffold. You have nothing to do but to go straight on, and you will get into downright Atheism."

This *Joyful News* Atheist appears not to have been a bad fellow. He is reported as saying: "I used to laugh and

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mock at all religion and at prayer, but I never mocked at her who used to pray for me. We have been married for nineteen years, and I can say that, though my wife has been a Christian from a girl, we have never had a quarrel since we were married. She has loved me, and I have loved her; but she has kept on praying for me all the time, and now her prayers are answered." Let us hope that now he is converted he will not hit her over the head with the motto, "God Bless Our Home," as we heard of one good Christian husband doing.

The Rev. Frank Ballard, of Hull, has been drawn into writing a letter to the *Daily Mail*. He does not see why he should be dragged into a public discussion. "Mr. Foote," he says, "comes to Hull to lecture whenever he pleases. If it be on a Sunday, and I—or any other Christian—give him a courteous hearing on the only part of the day free from regular public duty, why all this abuse because I decline to reply in two or three minutes to a prepared lecture of an hour and a quarter?" There is a certain force in this, but Mr. Ballard was offered *ten* minutes, not two or three; which is just ten minutes more than Secularists are usually offered after Christian discourses. Of course the Secularists of Hull have no right to demand that Mr. Ballard should discuss with Mr. Foote. It is a purely voluntary matter. Nevertheless, it is by no means impudent to *expect* him to do so. If Christianity be true, it ought not to be difficult for a man of Mr. Ballard's eminence to demonstrate its truth, even to the satisfaction of Secularists; and if only a dozen of them were converted, it would be at least twelve souls saved from everlasting hell.

Mr. Ballard will pardon us for saying that the word "abuse" occurs too frequently in his letter. Secularists "abuse" him, they also "abuse" Paul. But is not all this somewhat ridiculous? It appears to us that Christians are too sensitive—we might almost say conceited. To "criticise" them is to abuse them. When they criticise us, however, we are expected to regard it as a condescension.

Mr. Watts is lecturing in Hull to-day (March 22), and Mr. Ballard's time-limit objection loses its force in face of the offer publicly made to him of half-an-hour in reply to the afternoon lecture.

A later issue of the *Daily Mail* contains letters by "Fairplay" and A. R. Monro. "Fairplay" points out that Mr. Ballard answers questions privately in the vestry, while Mr. Foote answers them publicly from the platform. Mr. Monro charges Mr. Ballard with saying that he heard Mr. Foote say "there is no God"—which is untrue. He also charges Mr. Ballard with declaring from the pulpit that Mr. Foote told falsehoods. We hope Mr. Ballard is in a position to deny this.

John Edwin Pritchard, a local preacher, residing at Whitwell, near Chesterfield, Derbyshire, has all the usual characteristics of a child of God. He seduced Sarah Henderson under a promise of marriage, and then wrote to her a truly pious letter, in which he says: "I was preaching on Sunday morning, and addressing the Sabbath-school on Sunday afternoon at a neighboring chapel. I am giving myself up to do evangelistic work as soon as I can gain an admittance into some college. The work is now occupying all my time, and if I do get into a college I shall have to cease writing to you for a while, for I now conceive that I am not my own, but belonging to the Lord Jesus. I feel He must have all my thoughts and all my present love."

The Lord Jesus must be proud of the love of such a devoted and affectionate person as J. E. Pritchard. J. C. is reported to have required his disciples to give up father, mother, wife, and child for his sake; and Pritchard is prepared to throw up his affianced wife into the bargain. He declared, in his beautiful religious letter to the girl he seduced: "It may mean the breaking of earthly ties, but I am willing to do it, and leave the rest to God." The noble Pritchard also told the lady: "God will give you grace to bear any disappointment that may come." God does not seem to have given her sufficient grace, for she brought an action and obtained £50 damages.

It appears from an article on "Devil Worship in Malabar," in the *Madras Weekly Mail*, that the chief devil of Malabar has a cognomen very similar to that of Satan. He is known as Chathen. This demon, though powerful, is a dwarf. His worshippers seek, by mantras, spells, or prayers, to bring him under control. This Chathen, it is said, is sometimes enamored of the fair sex. He will, under these circumstances, display his preference for the woman in various ways, and she can command him without undergoing any preparatory *pujas* or rites of religious worship. If she be married, he will use every devilish device to keep husband and wife apart. Much the same beliefs were held in Christian Europe while the Bible-sanctioned notion of demonic influence lasted.

The infallible Bible has suffered some accidents; witness the following from the *Daily Telegraph*: "In addition to the 'Wicked' and the 'Bugge' Bibles, to which reference has been made, Dr. Wright enumerates the following, notable for their grotesque mistakes: The 'Breeches' Bible—'Then the eies of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed figge-tree leaves together and made themselves breeches' (Gen. iii. 7); printed in 1560. The 'Treacle' Bible—'Is there not treacle at Gilead? Is there no physician there?' (Jer. viii. 22); printed in 1568. The 'Rosin' Bible—'Is there no rosin in Gilead? Is there no physician there?' (Jer. viii. 22); printed in 1609. The 'Place Makers'' Bible—'Blessed are the place makers, for they shall be called the children of God' (Matt. v. 9); printed in 1561-2. The 'Vinegar' Bible—'The parable of the "vinegar,"' instead of the 'vineyard,' appears in the chapter heading to Luke xx. in an Oxford edition of the Authorised Version which was published in 1717. The 'Ears-to-ear' Bible—'Who hath ears to ear, let him ear' (Matt. xiii. 43); printed in 1810. The 'Standing Fishes' Bible—'And it shall come to pass that the fishes will stand upon it,' instead of 'fishers' (Ezek. xlvii. 10); printed in 1806. The 'Discharge' Bible—'I discharge thee before God' (1 Tim. v. 21); printed in 1806. The 'Wife-hater' Bible—'If any man come to me, and hate not his father.....yea, and his own wife also' (Luke xiv. 26); printed in 1810. 'Rebekah's Camels' Bible—'And Rebekah arose, and her camels,' instead of 'damsels' (Gen. xxiv. 61); printed in 1823."

The *Folkestone Herald* (March 14) reports that on the previous Sunday, the sky looking black, the authorities, thinking more of Tommy Atkins' clothes than his soul, ordered no parade. Church service was voluntary. The rain did not descend, and out of two thousand and more troops just three (two officers and a drummer-boy) attended church.

Last Wednesday, according to a writer in the *English Churchman*, was the nineteen-hundredth birthday of the Lord Jesus Christ. The writer says that Herr Johannes von Gumpach has demonstrated that the birth of Christ took place on March 18, A.U.C. 750 or B.C. 4. If he had been born later, Herod would not have been living.

Mr. T. G. Pinches, the Assyriologist of the British Museum, gives a new derivation of the word "Paradise" from a Babylonian tablet, in which the word occurs "Pa-ra-di-esu." This Mr. Pinches translates "Land of the God Esu." We wonder if J. C., when he said, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," understood the original meaning of the word.

It turns out that the Board school boy who is said to have answered to the question, "Was there a God?"—that he didn't know—is deaf, and had been well instructed in what they call religion. But the story is still being told as an illustration of the godless teaching of our too godly schools.

The *Church Review* laments that "so fashionable has 'honest doubt,' in which 'dwells more faith than half the creeds,' become, that even within the Church itself very rev. deans, very well-paid canons, and very well-placed incumbents consider themselves at perfect liberty to flout considerably more than half the creeds, although in every instance they derive their incomes from the lands of men who would have shed the last drop of their blood to defend them."

Father Barry has begun a course of lectures at the Royal Institution on "Four Masters of Modern Thought: Voltaire, Rousseau, Goethe, and Spinoza." Of course he seeks to show that these masters owe their influence to the imperfections of human nature. Beginning with Voltaire, he describes him as the Mephistopheles of the age—the spirit that denies and questions, the incarnation of criticism. Voltaire, said Father Barry, emptied the world of sacredness. He means emptied it of humbug. The Voltairean spirit, he said, had reappeared in the writings of Heine, Matthew Arnold, and Renan.

The Royal Institution seems to have largely got into the hands of the Catholics, for W. S. Lilly has also been lecturing there.

The Rev. David Macrae has brought together, in a volume entitled "Quaint Sayings of Children," a number of amusing anecdotes, one of which illustrates the fact that nature is no Sabbatarian, that flowers and animals procreate and grow on Sundays and week days alike. A little girl at Aberdeen brought a basket of strawberries to the local "meenister" early one Monday morning. "Thank you, my little girl," he said, "they are very beautiful; but I hope you didn't gather them yesterday, which was the Sabbath day?" "No, sir," replied the child, "I pulled them this morning; but they was growin' all yesterday."

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—March 22, Hull; 29, Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, London. April 5 and 12, South Shields.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

H. B.—Mr. Wheeler is much obliged for the books. You have exactly hit his taste.

A. G. LEVETT.—Received with thanks. Your cuttings are always welcome.

GLASGOW CROSS.—Thanks. See Acid Drops. The connection between leather and infidelity is almost as mysterious as the efficacy of sacraments.

PAGAN sends 2s. 6d. to Shilling Month, and invites a hundred other *bonâ fide* working-men to subscribe 5s. each. If they do so, he will send another 2s. 6d.

W. LAMB.—Mr. Foote is getting quite himself again, and looks forward to resuming platform work early in April.

J. H. R.—Belfast shall have a stirring up, if only a few of the old "saints" will act together in making local arrangements. Will you, or some one, see to this, and let us know?

NORTHAMPTON FRIEND.—Mr. Watts's lectures at Nottingham were delivered under Mr. Foote's scheme. Mr. Foote had even to be responsible for the local expenses in the case—rent, printing, advertising, etc. Now you understand.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—M. A. M., £1; Hermatite, 1s.; Larner Sugden, 3s. 4d.; F. Jones, 5s.

MRS. KNOWLES (Blackburn).—Our thanks to the subscribers. Highly pleased to hear from a lady secretary.

J. G. DOBSON (Stockton-on-Tees).—Subscriptions for Lecture Scheme acknowledged. Remainder handed to Miss Vance.

J. SAUNDERS.—That human beings suffer is no excuse for the infliction of suffering on the lower animals. It may be true that the abolition of what is rather facetiously called "sport" would throw many out of employment, but every improvement in human affairs changes the direction of labor. You yourself would like to abolish Christianity, and doing that would throw thousands out of employment.

L. D. HEWITT.—We merely expressed a general approval of benevolence. We do not know enough of George Müller's enterprise to praise or condemn it. If, as you say, his benevolence does not extend to helpless children, whose parents hurried them into the world without taking the trouble to get married, it is so far deplorably narrow; and if, as you say, the cost at his Orphanage of maintaining each child is £16 a year, it does not show excessive economy.

J. TOPHAM.—Shall appear. Glad to know you appreciate our "fearless advocacy," as you are good enough to call it.

SPIRO (Gateshead), subscribing to Shilling Month, writes: "Allow me also to congratulate you on your timely criticism of *The Sign of the Cross*. I trust your masterly article will be at once republished." The criticism *will* be republished after revision and considerable amplification.

J. SCOTT.—Pleased to hear from you again.

J. PROCTOR.—Our thanks to the Sunderland subscribers. Mr. Foote hopes to be visiting your district before long.

W. S. M.—Bristol is not exactly neglected. Mr. Foote is offering the Branch an early date.

F. S., an old friend of the movement, sends a cheque for £5, with "kind regards and good wishes for the success of your lecture scheme."

C. D.—Acknowledged as directed. Hope the trouble will soon blow over.

BATH FRIEND.—You are not too late. March is not yet over. Many are later than you. Their subscriptions haven't arrived yet, and perhaps never will.

E. TRUELOVE, the veteran Freethought publisher, and the oldest of the National Secular Society's vice-presidents, born in the same year as Mr. Gladstone, sends his subscription to Shilling Month for the President's lecture scheme.

J. F.—We also wish your subscription "were a hundred times as much." But we should have ample funds if all subscribed according to their means.

J. ROBERTS sends subscriptions from the Liverpool Branch towards "assisting Mr. Foote in carrying out his excellent scheme."

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) You were ridiculously misinformed at Nottingham. Mr. Foote had absolutely nothing to do with the last N.S.S. Conference not being held there. His only movement in the matter was to beg the Executive not to be hasty in deciding. He did not speak or vote on behalf of either Nottingham or Bristol. So much for "Mr. Foote's autocracy." The other things you heard at Nottingham were just as true. (2) We make it a rule never to express any opinion about other English Freethought papers. (3) Professor Dana can easily say that Genesis and science agree; what he has to do is to prove it. A mere *ipse dixit* is utterly useless in a controversy.

C. COHEN reports that he has had capital meetings, under Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, in south-west Scotland; a full report of which will be written by Mr. Gilmour. Mr. Cohen has unfortunately been troubled with a cold. We hope he will trouble that cold to emigrate.

W. SWEETMAN (Cardiff) writes: "Mr. Foote's articles on *The Sign of the Cross* are attracting a good deal of attention here, and would help the sale of the paper if we had an enlightened newsagent."

J. F. HAMPSON.—Thanks. Shall be noticed next week.

J. C. GRANT, subscribing to Shilling Month, writes: "In common with all here (Edinburgh) who have watched the working of the new scheme, I am delighted with the results you have been able to produce with so small a sum as was subscribed on the former occasion. I trust that on this occasion many who either did not subscribe at all, or gave less than they might, will do their utmost."

R. S. HOSE.—Pleased to hear the Camberwell social gathering on Sunday evening was a great success.

ZERO.—There is no truth in the statement that the late Charles Bradlaugh "on a certain public occasion"—how precise!—took out his watch and gave God Almighty five minutes to strike him dead. It is simply a Christian lie.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Of course we knew there was a good explanation somewhere. Your "Mystery of Evil" is capital, and will appear in due course. Poets are proverbially poor. If you subscribe to Shilling Month, the example ought to tell on others who make money instead of verses.

G. KERSLEY says: "I should like to see a whole page filled with acknowledgments for Shilling Month, and it would be so if all Freethinkers did their level best."

CHILDREN'S PARTY.—Per Charles Watts:—S. A. Gimson, 5s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Leeds Evening Express—Hull News—Cambria Daily Leader—Crescent—Literary Digest—New York Public Opinion—Dublin Herald—Newark Advertiser—Truthseeker—Dundee Advertiser—Isle of Man Times—Boston Investigator—Progressive Thinker—Leek Times—Two Worlds—Joyful News—Lucifer—Liberator—Cyclist—Nya Sanningar—West Briton—Pick-Me-Up—Twentieth Century—Secular Thought.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. G. J. HOLYOAKE has taken great pains over a work on Secularism, which he intends to be his final exposition and justification. It is divided into chapters with striking titles, and should prove of great interest and value, at least to the Secular public, and perhaps to inquiring minds still within the fold of Christianity. Mr. Holyoake has arranged to have this work published concurrently in England and in America. On this side the Atlantic it will appear, week by week, in the *Freethinker*, prior to publication in a separate form. The first instalment will be printed in our next issue.

A correspondent of the *Leek Times* desired to know when the debate was to take place between Mr. G. W. Foote and the Rev. W. W. Howard. Mr. Foote replied that the delay had arisen in consequence of his indisposition. "I am doing no platform work at all at present," he wrote, "as my throat and lungs require a complete rest. Fortunately I am improving daily, and I dare say I shall be able to undertake the debate in April. With this view I am communicating with my friends, who will act with Mr. Howard's nominees in making the necessary arrangements."

Mr. Foote's letter in the *Leek Times* was immediately followed by a curious epistle from the Rev. W. W. Howard, who advised the first correspondent to "write to Mr. Foote, who most certainly is blocking the way." Mr. Howard refers to "the last issue" of the *Freethinker* in a way which indicates that he is one of our regular readers. In that case he must have been well aware of the breakdown of Mr. Foote's health, compelling him to cease lecturing altogether for a time; and not to allude to this circumstance in his letter to the *Leek Times*, and even to accuse Mr. Foote of blocking the way, was a gross uncharity on Mr. Howard's part. Some would call it, in substance, a gross falsehood and imposition.

Mr. Howard now hints that he will not consent to the debate taking place in Leek "after what has passed here"

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—alluding to the protest of Nonconformist ministers. Mr. Howard further hints that he would prefer the debate to take place at Liverpool. Very well, he can be accommodated there. The Liverpool N.S.S. Branch will be delighted to bring him upon a public platform in opposition to Mr. Foote.

Mr. Charles Watts had two capital audiences at Leicester last Sunday, the gathering in the morning being the largest our Leicester friends have had for the last three years. Visitors from surrounding districts, who had walked five and eight miles, were present. Mr. Watts had a hearty reception, and both his lectures were enthusiastically applauded.

This week Mr. Watts is debating at Derby and lecturing at Nottingham. The lectures are given under Mr. Foote's scheme.

To-day (Sunday, March 22) Mr. Watts lectures three times in Hull, also under Mr. Foote's scheme. We hope the friends will muster in good force, as it is some years since our colleague last visited Hull.

A tea will be held at 5.45 in the same building in which Mr. Watts lectures, for members and their friends from a distance. The tickets will be 9d. each, children 6d. Mr. Monro, 41 Hutt-street, Hull, will be glad to receive as early as possible the names of those who intend to partake.

Mr. A. B. Moss, as a Camberwell vestryman, is made the subject of a biographical sketch in the *South London Mail*. According to the writer, Mr. Moss "is a very intelligent, far-seeing man, and there is absolutely nothing at all the matter with him but his politics and his creed." The *Mail* is Tory and Christian, and it hopes to "convert" Mr. Moss and "make him a better and a wiser man." We presume this will take some time. Meanwhile the *Mail* might give its readers a better portrait of Mr. Moss. The one printed with the biography is far from flattering.

The Bill for the Extension of Civil and Religious Liberty, commonly known as the Bequest Bill, and the Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill, are on the agenda for discussion at the Independent Labor Party's Congress, to be held at Easter, with a view to their being embodied in the Party's program of immediate objects. Dr. Pankhurst, the delegate for South Manchester, has given his word to fight for them at the Congress.

The Roxburghe Press will issue almost immediately a volume entitled *Carina Songs, and Others*, by Miss Amy C. Morant, a lady who is identified with most of the Labor and Social movements of the time.

One result of the Freethought missionary work in Blackburn under Mr. Foote's scheme is an address by the Rev. W. D. Watson, of Harwood-street Wesleyan Church, on "Secularism," which is reported in the local *Times*. Mr. Watson regarded Mr. John Morley as the chief exponent of Secularism in literature and public life. His account and criticism of Secularism indicated a wish to be fair, and it is pleasant to find a Christian minister warning his co-religionists to be "careful lest they brought railing accusations and misrepresentations against Secularists, which would only recoil upon themselves."

The Annual Children's Party, under the auspices of the N.S.S. Executive, is a little later than usual. It takes place on Wednesday, April 1, in the large hall of the Club Union, next door to the Holborn Town Hall. Individual members of the N.S.S. who desire tickets should apply to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., enclosing stamped addressed envelope. Branch members can obtain tickets from their secretary. The tickets admit children over five and under fourteen years of age. Parents and friends are admitted to the galleries by ticket, price threepence. It only remains to add that further subscriptions are wanted towards the expenses of this function. There ought not to be much begging for a night's happiness for the little ones.

Branches of the National Secular Society should all be making arrangements to be represented at the Annual Conference, which is to be held at Glasgow on Whit-Sunday. It is ten years since the Conference was held at Glasgow, which is the actual, though not the nominal, capital of Scotland. In addition to its commercial greatness, Glasgow has the advantage of being within easy reach of famous scenery of mingled loveliness and grandeur. Delegates and other members of the N.S.S. should contrive to spend a few days down the Clyde. Some of them might travel up the Clyde, and view its beautiful Falls, near which is New Lanark, where Robert Owen attempted the most successful of his social experiments. The Conference will be a rare opportunity of combining business with pleasure.

SHILLING MONTH.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

M. A. M., £10; F. S., £5; G. Holloway; G. Brittan, 4s.; C. D., 10s.; Bath Friend, 2s.; G. R., £1; E. Truelove, £1; J. F., 2s.; S. Holmes, 2s. 6d.; Pyrites; H. Leggett; F. Warwick; G. L. Mackenzie, 2s.; G. Kersley; Spiro (Gateshead), 10s.; F. J., 2s. 6d.; J. Scott, 2s.; Messrs. Buzzard and Reynolds, 2s.; John Proctor, £1; J. Crozier, 2s. 6d.; J. Proctor; Joseph Proctor, 2s. 6d.; Robert Proctor, 2s. 6d.; W. Taylor, 2s.; W. S. M., 2s. 6d; H. C. Byshe, £1; E. L., 5s.; Vegetarian Freethinker; T. H.; E. Belcher, 2s. 6d.; J. C. Grant, 5s.; J. Pruett, 5s.; Mrs. Beszant, 2s.; J. Topham; G. Thwaites, 5s.; J. G. Dobson, 2s. 6d.; W. Elcoat; T. Norton; Old Freethinker (per Bradlaugh Club and Institute), £1; Vickmount; T. Ollerenshaw, 2s.; J. Gledhill; Freethinking Spiritist, 2s.; Son of Crispin, 2s. 6d.; J. Hockin; J. D. Leggett, 2s. 6d.; Pagan, 2s. 6d.; W. Lamb, 5s.; J. H. R.

Per C. Cohen:—J. Mudd, 2s.; collection at Paisley, 12s.

Blackburn:—J. Umpleby, 5s.; Tithrington, 2s. 6d.; Ashworth; Whitehead; Harley; Hampson; Haworth; Mr. and Mrs. Ashworth, 2s.; H. Jones, 2s.; J. Leach, 2s.; R. Ashworth, 2s.; J. Knowles, 2s.

Per Miss Vance:—Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Nash, 4s.; A. F., 3s.; T. S.; Mrs. Penny, 3s.; Mrs. Macmillan, 2s. 6d.; J. Warren; Larner Sugden, 3s. 4d.; J. O., 3s.

Per R. Forder:—G. S. Towell; E. Calvert; T. H. S., 5s.; A. Waymouth, 5s.; S. Newson, 2s. 6d.; J. and Mrs. Clark, 2s. 6d.; J. E. Banks, 2s. 6d.; Old Devonian, 2s.; W. Sweetman, 3s.; F. J. Voisey; W. C. (Dorking), 10s. 6d.

Per Charles Watts (from Leicester):—S. Leeson, 5s.; W. Caunt and daughter, 2s.; W. Armstrong, 2s.; Messrs. Bolton, Johnson, Palmer, Wade, Swisham, Pell, Hunt, Hopkins, Drabble, Wilher, Potter, Wheatley, Letts, Wilkinson, C. P. and Mrs. Shorman.

Birmingham:—H. Lees Sumner, 4s.; J. H. Ridgway; R. Taylor; W. T. Pitt; C. H. Cattell; T. Yapp; J. Partridge; W. Hodgkins; J. Terry; S. Armfield; D. Bullows.

Liverpool:—Towers, 3s.; Allen, 2s. 6d.; Small, 2s. 6d.; Ross, 2s. 6d.; Young, 2s. 6d.; Balfour Bros., 2s.; Radcliffe; Russell; Roberts; Davies; H.

THE "D. T." ON DANIEL.

Among the many striking and picturesque figures which abound in the Scriptures Daniel holds a pre-eminent place, and his adventure with the lions has been the delight of children and the fortune of waxwork exhibitors for generations. A great mass of poetic and artistic lore has gathered around his head. Many people who have not forgotten the days of childhood's wonder will, therefore, hear with great grief and sinking of heart that in a sermon, which has been published, the Rev. Bernard Snell, of Brixton Congregational Church, one of the most popular divines belonging to that denomination, insinuates that reasonable doubts may be entertained of the existence of such a person. In fact, he plainly states that it is quite immaterial whether man, woman, or child believe in Daniel or not. Worse still, he treats the lions in the same sceptical manner. "If your children ask you," he says, "if this story of Daniel is true, say just what you believe about it. If you think it true, say so. If you are in doubt, say you do not know. If you do not believe it, then tell them that you do not. It is not of vital importance that they should believe in Daniel or the lion's den." Mr. Snell has the reputation of being very gentle and humane, and men of that description generally love to impart heartbreaking news by degrees, and after a soothing exordium. The suddenness of his blow against Daniel and the lions is, therefore, all the more surprising. It was bad enough to see last week the sacred tree of Kum-Bum in Thibet, with its mystical leaves and bark, ruthlessly abolished as an imposture by Mr. Thiselton-Dyer and other scientific gentlemen. Between its disappearance and the abolition of Daniel and the lions a reasonable time should have been allowed, in order to permit the public to regain part of its equanimity. If the hero of the lion's den is to go, who remains safe?

—*Daily Telegraph (March 13).*

It's mighty impressive to hear 'em compare
The comforts of heaven with torments elsewhere;
It makes ye ambitious to hear all these things
'Bout the music of harps and the rustle of wings,
An' the satisfied conscience, the feelin' of rest,
That comes when a feller is doin' his best.
Many times I've determined to go the right way,
But it's hard to be good on a dollar a day.

—*Life.*

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THOMAS PAINE AND EARL CHARLEMONT.

An accidental loan of a volume of the *Historical Manuscripts Commission** gives me the opportunity of placing before Freethinkers some interesting items, which will, I think, be new to a good many readers.

James Caulfield was born in Dublin on August 18, 1728; he was for many years the head of the military forces; and, though he was made earl in 1763 for quelling an insurrection in Ulster, it is probable that he received much more pleasure by being made president of the Royal Irish Academy in 1786; for, judging from his voluminous correspondence with literary men and scientific men and artists, booksellers, and engravers, he was too much a man of culture—in its best sense—ever to be a mere politician. He was a Liberal Whig in those days, and would be a good type of Whig Liberal to-day. That he, much like the Whigs of to-day, sometimes thought it well to sit on the fence will be seen in the answer to the first letter of moment in our connection, which was from Richard Sheridan, who, being called to the bar in 1774 and made a king's counsel, was in 1790 offered a seat in Parliament for the borough of Charlemont, Charlemont writing him a very flattering letter when begging its acceptance on April 10, 1790.

In a letter to —. Stewart on April 8 Charlemont says, writing of his intentions and wishes: "Sheridan, the lawyer, has long been the object of my wish.....He is a man beloved by all who know him, honorable and upright, of firm Whig principle, and, to my own knowledge, of considerable ability and natural eloquence."

In 1791 Paine published his *Rights of Man* in reply to Burke, and on April 11 Sheridan writes to his patron, Charlemont:—

> "Determined in my public conduct to seek and follow your lordship's advice, give me leave to solicit that advice on a circumstance which has made me very uneasy. I find from the newspapers that the Whigs of the capital (a society of which I am a member, and into which I entered with the best intentions) have, in my absence, and without my knowledge, named and published me one of a committee for disseminating Mr. Paine's pamphlet in reply to Mr. Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*. I have read that pamphlet; it appears to me designed to level all distinction, and to have this object in view—a total overthrow of the constitution. With this opinion I must naturally feel it indecent, in my public situation as a member of Parliament, a citizen [how he could be a member of Parliament if he were not a citizen he does not explain], a barrister, and (what I value least) one of his majesty's counsel, to disseminate that work; but I am at a loss how to act. My first intention was to contradict it publicly. I fear a misinterpretation of my motives, and I dislike public differences with men in whose cause I am an humble assistant. Will you, my dear lord, advise me in this, and make me happy by removing my doubt? Possessing your opinion, I shall be totally indifferent to every other."

Richard Sheridan *may* really have felt in doubt on general and public grounds, and really desired advice for that reason; but it seems more than probable that he was more concerned to know what line Charlemont meant to take, and act accordingly. He was naturally anxious not to offend his patron, whom he knew to be more advanced than himself, and of whose views he may have had a hint. What these views were we can gather from a letter to one of his most frequent correspondents, Dr. Alexander Haliday, of Belfast, Secretary to the Northern Whig Club:—

"CHARLEMONT TO HALIDAY.

> "1791, May 9, Dublin.—I did, indeed, suppose that Paine's pamphlet, which is, by the way, a work of great genius, would be well received in your district; yet, in my opinion, it ought to be read with some degree of caution. He does, indeed, tear away the bandage from the public eye; but in tearing it off there may be some danger of injuring the organ. Though I have always thought that political controversy is highly useful by conveying instruction throughout the land, and though I have been greatly entertained by his work and by that of his antagonist, perhaps I might be induced to wish that neither of them had been published. I confess myself to the last degree partial to the English constitution as it ought to be, and I cannot help thinking that a line might be drawn between the projects of the two projectors which would be practicable, rational, and safe.....There is no science in which theory and practice differ more than in the science of politics. Were all men virtuous, a perfect democracy would be the best of governments. But, alas, is that possible? Was there ever a Government more tyrannical than the democracy of Athens? There is undoubtedly much good sense and much sound argument in Paine's production. Nay, even where he may by many be thought eccentric, his arguments are not easy to be answered except by experience. But this ratiocination, though much too scanty and short for the subject, is much too long for my head and eyes. I feel also awkward in the hazard of differing from you in any respect, yet comfort myself by being confident that in the present instance we do not differ much, as I am well assured that your veneration for the English constitution in its true spirit is to the full as great as mine.....'

In a letter from Haliday to Charlemont, on June 16, 1791 (Belfast), it is reported that the Northern Whig Club had agreed to rejoice together on July 14, the anniversary of the French Revolution. And June 22 Charlemont, in a letter to Haliday, says: "Have you read Mackintosh's pamphlet? Barring a few errors, it is an excellent performance." This pamphlet is a fair-sized book, known as *Vindiciae Gallicae: A Defence of the French Revolution and its English Admirers against the Accusations of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke* (London, 1791).

Under date August 27 (Belfast) the jocular Doctor answers the query:—

> "This town advances rapidly in size, improvement, and prosperity. Religion and luxury with us go hand in hand, no ordinary partnership. We are building a new meeting-house and a new theatre, bane and antidote together, like Burke and Mackintosh, whom I have compelled to live in close union, under one common roof of good calves-skin. They are not likely, however, to attend *levée* together, where I perceive the former consistent gentleman is very diligent, conceiving, since his trouble, that he is a fit companion for those who he long observed were fond of low company."

To note this bit of pleasantry we have had to pass two important letters, as we have, in addition to further comment on Paine and Burke, references to the riots at Birmingham when Joseph Priestley was driven from his burning home.

> "1791, July 23, Belfast.—The troop was to have met you at Dundalk to escort you to Armagh, and our infantry to have met their beloved general there. By the by, my lord, I never saw our municipal guards more numerous or so well appointed as they are at present. This mortifying disappointment was in some sort compensated by an extract from your last letter to Sir Annersley (Stewart), which he had the goodness to send me, and by which we learn that both your Lordship and Lady Claremont had found considerable benefit from the (Bath) waters. Our procession on the 14th was truly splendid. I should be glad to have your lordship's opinion of the declaration. It was drawn up in Dublin by a late Belfast volunteer, has been translated into French, and transmitted to the President of the National Assembly, I believe through Mornbrat, the French consul, a sensible, well-informed man (particularly in botany), who happened to dine with me on Sunday last, as did another gentleman of strong reasoning powers from Germany, who stayed here a week that he might witness our festivity; both decided revolutionists, and both confident that French freedom is established without a great deal more confusion and disturbance than the drinking of its health has excited among the Birmingham brutes. Oh shame to England! O shame to what is affectedly called Protestantism exclusively! Go on, Burke, boast of our civil and ecclesiastical constitution and persuade us, against the evidence of our senses and the convictions of our minds, that the people of England are free and happy, liberal and enlightened. They are savages! Though Mackintosh has not put Paine's nose out of joint, he divides our suffrages with him; in truth, I think it, on the whole, a very masterly dissection of Burke's monster; while the one on Horace, with a face of beauty and an appearance of reason, has nothing at bottom but deformity, black, brutal, and offensive, to which all the light and gay feathers, scattered with profusion on the discordant members, cannot reconcile one."

To this Charlemont answers:—

> "July 30, Bath.—You wish to know my opinion of the Declaration. Though parts of it might perhaps be better, it appears to me, upon the whole, a good composition

* *Historical Manuscripts Commission.* Thirteenth Report, appendix, part viii. Manuscripts and Correspondence of James, First Earl of Charlemont, vol. ii. 1784–1799. (1894.)

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which does honor both to the head and the heart of the writer. There is, indeed, one point which I would wish to be inculcated in every publication on the subject which at present agitates the minds of men, but which, however, might possibly not have been suited to a declaration intended to be laid before the National Assembly. Though I admire Mr. Paine, I am by no means a convert to his doctrine concerning our constitution, and cannot help thinking that some approbation of this constitution, as it ought to be, should at all times be joined with the applause which we so justly bestow on the emancipation of a great people from utter slavery. Thinking thus, it is needless to say that I entirely approve the resolutions of the Northern Whig Club, wherein you conceive that the civil constitution of these realms, in its pure and uncorrupted state, is the best model for us. Among the toasts given at the general meeting you will readily point out one which does not meet my full approbation. On the subject you know my sentiments, which must, I fear, remain unaltered till I can discover some analogy between Ireland and any other country in Europe on this point, and till I can persuade myself that what is excellent reasoning in all other parts of the world is equally incontrovertible with us. A time may perhaps arrive, but it is not yet come, and from the bottom of my heart I am sorry for it. The Birmingham* brutes, as you justly call them, are a disgrace to England, a disgrace to humanity; and the letter of the gentlemen is, if possible, worse than the outrages of the rabble."

THOMAS SHORE.

(To be continued.)

THE NIGGER PREACHER AND THE BLACK CAT.

A DISPATCH from Bay Shore to the *New York World* says:—

"There is a big demand for rabbits' feet and other hoodoo destroyers among the colored Methodists here. It all came about because the pastor, Rev. J. F. Jackson, killed a black cat the other night. It was during service.

"Parson Jackson is now a man who walks alone. All his flock pass him by on the other side when they meet. They do not propose to have the result of his rash act visited upon them. A number of good elders are also talking about resigning from the church.

"Parson Jackson has been holding a revival meeting, and all his good sheep have avoided hen-roosts for a week, and were earnestly praying for the wicked. At the meeting the other night the preacher's appeal to those who have refused salvation was rudely interrupted.

"A jet tabby cat solemnly stalked down the centre aisle and meowed loudly. There was consternation. Dominie Jackson leaned over the pulpit and said: 'Who put that black thing in here? Take it out, some of you small boys.' But the small boys didn't.

"The cat was carefully hidden, and when a good brother was calling upon the youths to turn from the wrath to come, pussy was loosed. With a swift spring it landed upon an aged Methodist's shoulders. The congregation was startled. But the dominie was strong and quick. He suddenly yelled, and, leaping over the mourners' bench, grabbed the cat by the tail. Then, swinging it round and round his head, Pastor Jackson rushed from the church.

"Once outside, the poor cat was beaten to death against the side of the church. Then the preacher returned to his prayers. There were no converts that night.

"But, aside from the superstition of the colored folks, there is much indignation among the residents here. There is some talk of notifying the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and having the preacher prosecuted."

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

* The rioters at Birmingham, who, July, 1791, opposed the commemoration of the French Revolution, and burned the house and library of Joseph Priestley, D.D.

GOD AND I—(THE KAISER).

WE are a pair unique,
God and I;
Apart from ev'ry clique,
God and I;
He's strong and quick as winking,
And I am good at thinking;
We know no fear nor shrinking,
God and I.

The German folk we guide,
God and I;
We're both upon their side,
God and I;
My Colleague's inspiration
Gives me determination;
We, thus, both bless the nation,
God and I.

A "man of war"'s the Lord,
So am I;
He's partial to the sword,
So am I.
I am the Lord's adviser;
Than one, two heads are wiser:—
The Deity *plus* Kaiser—
God and I.

I hope and trust that we—
God and I—
Will never disagree,
God and I.
All jealousy we smother;
Each supplements the other;
We study one another,
God and I.

If ever we fell out,
God and I,
We'd both be put about,
God and I;
All other kings are, clearly,
His passive puppets merely,
But we are equals nearly,
God and I.

Of course, the Lord is chief
God, not I;
My life on earth is brief;
Soon I'll die;
But, when my days are ended,
And I've to heav'n ascended,
We'll have some matters mended,
God and I.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

The Fathers laid down as a distinct proposition that pious frauds were justifiable, and even laudable; and if they had not laid this down, they would nevertheless have practised them as a necessary consequence of their doctrine of exclusive salvation. Immediately all ecclesiastical literature became tainted with a spirit of the most unblushing mendacity. Heathenism was to be combatted, and, therefore, prophecies of Christ by Orpheus and the Sibyls were forged, lying wonders were multiplied, and ceaseless calumnies were poured upon those who, like Julian, opposed the faith. Heretics were to be convinced, and, therefore, interpolations of old writings or complete forgeries were habitually opposed to the forged Gospels. The veneration of relics and the monastic system were introduced, and therefore innumerable miracles were attributed to the power of saints, or to the prayers of hermits, and were solemnly asserted by the most eminent of the Fathers. The tendency was not confined to those eastern nations which had been almost always destitute of the sense of truth; it triumphed wherever the supreme importance of dogma was held. Generation after generation it became more universal; it continued till the very sense of truth and the very love of truth seemed blotted out from the minds of men.—*W. E. H. Lecky, "History of Rationalism."*

The Hebrew conception of the world, like the Arabic, inclines to a glorification of the nomadic life. The Hebrews refer the origin of agriculture to a curse imposed by God upon fallen humanity.—*Ignaz Goldziher.*

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CORRESPONDENCE.

THE DANGER OF HASTY BURIAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Too little cognisance is taken of the fact that, while the present want of knowledge in the examination of the supposed dead and the existing mode of granting certificates of death obtain, persons suffering from suspended animation in its various forms are in immediate peril of being buried alive; and this peril is greatly increased by the practice of early or hasty burial. In France thirty-six hours is the extreme time allowed for interment, except by special permission; in the province of Quebec, Canada, twenty-four hours is the minimum; and in Ireland, a well-informed clergyman writes, "interment usually takes place the day after decease, and *no certificate* as to cause of death is ever required. There is no safeguard whatever, and among the ignorant poor, I fear, premature burial is terribly frequent." Among the Jews early burial is the invariable custom. The condition most resembling death is trance, and persons have been known to remain in that state for days and weeks. Dr. M. S. Tanner, in a letter to the *New York Times*, January 18, 1880, mentions two cases where persons awakened from trance at the moment of sepulture described in turn what their feelings had been. Said one: "Have you ever felt the paralysing influence of a horrible nightmare? If you have had such experience, then you are prepared to conceive of the mental agonies I endured when I realised that my friends believed me dead, and were making preparations for my burial. Once I believed there was no hell; now I not only believe, but possess positive knowledge. The hours and days of mental struggle spent in the vain endeavor to break loose from the vice-like grasp of this worse than horrible nightmare was a hell of torment such as no tongue can describe or pen portray." The other case was that of Dr. Johnson, of St. Charles, Illinois, who, in the hearing of Dr. Tanner, and in the presence of a large audience in Harrison's Hall, Minneapolis, stated that "when a young man he was prostrated with a fever, and swooned away apparently dead. The attending physician said he was dead. His father was faithless and unbelieving, and refused to bury him. He lay in this condition apparently dead fourteen days. The attending physician brought other physicians to examine the apparently lifeless form, and all stated unqualifiedly, 'He is dead.' Some fourteen physicians, among them many eminent professors, examined the body, and there was no ambiguity in the expression of their conclusion that the boy was dead. But the father still turned a deaf ear to all entreaties to prepare the body for the grave. Public feeling was at last aroused. The health officer and other city officers, acting in their official capacity, and by the advice of physicians, peremptorily demanded that the body be interred without delay. On the fourteenth day the father yielded under protest; preparations were made for the funeral, when the emotions of the still living subject, who was conscious of all transpiring around him, were so intense as to be the means of his deliverance. He awoke from his trance."

People subject to trance, it may be observed, often fall down suddenly; they are incapable of motion; are medically certified as dead from syncope or "natural causes," and are buried without waiting for signs of putrefaction. Every day the papers announce "sudden deaths" of this description.

W. R. J.

The Poor Man's Complaint.

(Not by I. Watts.)

Whene'er I take my walks abroad,
How many rich I see;
What should I say about the God
That's so unfair to me?
Boasting of more than they deserve,
Yet grasping still for more,
They roll in wealth, while I must starve,
Or beg from door to door.

The Christian Creed and Insanity.

If a person should believe that a man now living had a virgin for a mother and a ghost for a father, and that he was a god, and the ghost was a god, and that the two had another father who was a god, and that the three gods were only one god, and that the son and the father and the grandfather were all of an age; and that he died and is still living, that he got up eclipses and earthquakes to order, and split rocks and could raise the dead, and even call up a whole troop of dead folks from their graves, and then, contrary to the universal law of gravitation, ascend from the earth with bones, flesh, and full stomach, would not such person be judged insane?—*John Peck.*

INVESTIGATING.

FROM what the Bible says of Gawd
We think Jehovah is a fraud.

When creed's sky-pilots cease to lie
How soon Faith's ghostly myths will die.

The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Take the lead of folly's host.

One road of bleak Sahara's sand
Is worth ten farms in the promised land.

The warning star in ignorance's night—
The ghost-begotten Israelite.

"Ducks" who depend on prayer for food
Were hatched from superstition's brood.

Christians profess full faith in prayer,
But straightway rise and show good sense
By acting as though each would swear
That every prayer is false pretence.

No creed can stretch to such a size
That it will cover all the lies
Which the poor pagan preachers tell
About the heat and hate of hell.

—*J. T. Reynolds.*

RELIGIOUS GOVERNMENT SUPERSEDED BY SECULAR.

MOST of us read in our earlier days the story of "The Pitcairn Islanders," which relates how some of the seamen who mutinied on the *Bounty* and turned their officers adrift "reformed" after exhausting themselves with murders and debauchery, and set up a religious community on Pitcairn's Island. The Pitcairners have been much petted by the Admiralty, and were settled many years ago upon Norfolk Island. It has appeared for a long time past, from the hints of passing travellers, that these pious people were not acting as they should; and matters have now become so intolerable that the Australian Government has had to interfere. The incident has given rise to a question in the House of Commons. We clip the report from the *Daily News*: "Mr. HOGAN asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government of New South Wales had been requested to assume the direct control and administration of the affairs of Norfolk Island; and, if so, whether he had any objection to state the grounds on which it was sought to deprive the inhabitants of that island of the large measure of local self-government they have hitherto enjoyed.—Mr. CHAMBERLAIN said the answer to the first part of the question was in the affirmative. As to the second part, he had to say that up to the present time the administration of justice, which was in the hands of two magistrates elected by the community, had been partial and unsatisfactory. Crime was rarely punished, and debts were not recovered. These circumstances, coupled with the fact that public buildings had been allowed to fall into a ruinous condition, and no effort had been made to develop the resources of that island—the condition of which was rapidly deteriorating—afforded, in the opinion of her Majesty's Government, sufficient grounds for effecting a change in the administration of its affairs."

PROFANE JOKES.

"Mamma, do you think our minister will go to heaven?" "I hope so, Johnny. Why?" "'Cause he won't if the Lord knows him as well as I do."

Sunday-school Teacher—"'And the prophet rent his clothes.' Johnny, what does that mean?" Johnny—"I s'pose he didn't have the price to buy 'em."

"Did you enjoy the sermon, dear?" said Mrs. Collingwood to her husband, after church. "No; I dreamt that a note for $1,000 was due, and I hadn't a cent to pay it with."

She—"I hope, dear, you were not thinking of business in church this morning. You know your thoughts should be of higher things." He—"Well, I was thinking of that three-guinea bonnet of yours. Is that high enough, think you?"

Tommy—"You don't know nothin' at all about how folks ought to be baptised. What does St. Paul say about it?" Sammy—"St. Paul! Yah! He don't say nothin'; he's dead."

Marley—"What did Mrs. Flyer ask the rector to pray for rain this morning for?" Parley—"Her four daughters have just received a new importation of stunning Parisian hosiery."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 7.45, lecture, followed by social gathering.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, R. Forder, "The Devil's Pulpit." Tuesday, at 8.45, social party. Wednesday, at 8.30, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac —Lecture X., Leo."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Harry Snell, "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist and Reformer" (with lantern illustrations).

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, F. J. Gould, "The Apostle Paul as an Ethical Teacher."

ISLINGTON BRANCH: 8.30, special general meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute.

LAMBETH BRANCH: 7, important business meeting at Mr. Rogers's, 114 Kennington-road.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Methodist Idolatry."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Shepherds Bush): 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "Life, Death, and Immortality."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-Street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Higher Criticism of the Bible."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Herbert Burrows, "Evolution and Ethics."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, a lecture.
HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, F. Haslam will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, S. Armfield will lecture.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Kenith Hunt, "The Objects of the N.S.S." Monday, at 8, soiree and dance. Tuesday, at 8, committee meeting at 60 Conduit-place, Ashley-road.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, C. James, "Science *v.* Creeds."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—Henry Moffat, "Olive Schreiner's Philosophy"; 6.30, A. Paul, "The Women of the Bible."

HULL (St. George's Hall): 11, Charles Watts, "The Religious Man"; 3, "The Bible and Civilisation"; 7, "A Plea for Unbelief."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Ernest Newman, "The Evolution of Humanity."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Haydon, "Machinery and Ethics." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 3, Joseph Hyder, "Can England Feed Herself? or, How to Make the Best of the Land"; 6.30, "Land Nationalisation: Its Necessity, Aims, and Methods."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Robert Law, F.G.S., "Is the Moon a Dead World?" 7, "Extinct Mammals of the Tertiary Period, and their Relation to those of the Present Day" (with lantern illustrations). Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7.30, "Voltaire."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—March 22, Edinburgh; 29, Leeds. April 5, Balls Pond; 12, 19, and 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—April 5, m. Westminster; 12, Mile End; 19, Camberwell; 26, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—March 22, Athenæum, Shepherds Bush. April 12, Balls Pond; 26, Glasgow. May 3, Failsworth; 10, Balls Pond.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Conversational meetings, open to all, at Mr. Coates's, 13 Derby-street, every Sunday, at 7.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

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The Freethinker

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

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PIOUS IMPERTINENCE.

AN OPEN LETTER
TO
MR. JEROME K. JEROME,
Editor of the "The Idler."

SIR,—

My attention has been drawn—as gentlemen who write letters to the press say—to an article on *The Sign of the Cross* in the current number of the *Idler*. It is the only unsigned article in the whole of the magazine, and is presumably editorial; at any rate you, as editor, must in the circumstances bear the responsibility for its general character, and certainly for its offences against common decency.

I do not believe, however, that you are actually the writer of this article. Its florid exuberance suggests the hand of Mr. Hall Caine. On a first reading I was tempted to cry as to its authorship—"Hall Caine or the Devil." But a second reading convinces me it is unworthy of the Devil, and I think it really unworthy of Mr. Hall Caine. Its authorship thus remains a mystery, which I am quite content to leave unsolved till the day of judgment, or even a remoter date. I will only say, in passing, that it *may* have been written by a Christian minister. He boasts of the eminent men of God who were present at the first performance of Mr. Barrett's play in London; he speaks of "baffled agnostics," and of Christianity as the subject of supreme interest to civilisation. I therefore conceive it possible, and almost probable, that the writer is neither a man nor a woman, but belongs to the third sex of clergymen.

One passage of what I must morally call *your* article concerns myself. I shall quote it in full presently. Meanwhile, for the sake of fresh or casual readers, I supply a little explanation.

Mr. Barrett's play, long before it was produced in London, was trumpeted as highly moral and religious. Laudatory opinions were printed from ministers of religion. I believe it was even blessed by bishops. And it was just *this* which excited my interest. It would never occur to me to cross the road, even with a free ticket, to witness one of Mr. Barrett's melodramas for its own sake. Even if I were miraculously tempted to do so, I have other work in the world than criticising such productions. But when I saw Mr. Barrett's new play advertised as a fresh piece of Christian Evidence, I conceived it my duty to test its merit and ascertain its worth. Accordingly I witnessed it at the Lyric Theatre. I went alone, to avoid all distraction. I sat, pencil in hand, and made such notes as were possible in the dim religious light which was deemed appropriate. For several days afterwards I turned the play over in my mind. I refreshed my memory—which hardly needs *much* refreshment—with regard to early Christianity, and its trials and sufferings. I went over again, with ample authorities before me, the old story of the Neronic persecution. Finally, I lectured on *The Sign of the Cross* at St. James's Hall. What I said of it I said openly, not surreptitiously, nor even anonymously; and an opportunity for discussion was allowed after my lecture, if any of Mr. Barrett's friends or admirers cared to defend his play against my criticism. I dare say I have my failings, like other men; but I never scamped a bit of work, I never lectured on a subject without trying to master it, and I never advanced an opinion without being prepared to defend it in open debate.

The reader will now be in a position to appreciate your reference to myself in the *Idler* article, which I conceive to be idle enough to justify its appearance in a magazine of that title:—

> "Of whole-hearted attacks, by able men; attacks stopping short at nothing in the way of adroit mud-throwing and fiery abuse, there were but two—the rancorous onslaughts of Messrs. William Archer and G. W. Foote. The latter delivered his in the familiar and offensive accents of blasphemous 'Freethought,' from the hired rostrum of St. James's Hall. The former hurled his contempt and contumely from a brief but comprehensive column in the *World*. Mr. Foote's invective will not bear reproduction in the pages of the *Idler*—but Mr. Archer's attitude as the outraged critic is worthy of note."

Mr. William Archer does not need my defence. He is well able to take care of himself. Even if he did need it, I would not be so impertinent as to make it without an invitation. I confine myself, therefore, to what you print about me; and I have to say, first of all, that this paragraph is an outrage. What do you mean by saying that my "invective" will not "bear reproduction in the pages of the *Idler*"? Is not this an intimation to those who did not hear my lecture that I indulged in scurrilous or indecent language? Every reader, who is otherwise ignorant of my methods of advocacy, would naturally come to that conclusion. But the conclusion is an absurdity—and *you know it*. I never uttered a word on the platform which I should hesitate to see in print. My own wife was present at my lecture, with many other ladies. One of my own children was present, and it is not in *such* company that a man is most liable to utter anything of which he should be ashamed.

You are careful not to give your readers the least idea of what I did say. Had you done so, you might have been put to the trouble of a reply. It was so much easier to bid your readers cry "Pah!" and call for "an ounce of civet."

You accuse me of "*abuse*," and you extend the accusation to Mr. Archer. This charge is repeated against him in a later article, which bears your signature. You appear to think that any criticism of a popular favorite, especially if he happens to be your friend, is "abuse." For my part, I am familiar with this trick of incompetent prejudice. I am so frequently told that I abuse the Bible, and abuse Christianity, and abuse Jesus Christ, and abuse all religion! And what does it mean? Simply this, that my opponents are hard-pressed; and, instead of arguing, they call names.

"Abuse" is not enough in itself; you must add the word "fiery"—which is another absurdity, for I came to the St. James's Hall platform from a sick room, and had to husband my strength. If I was "fiery" in such circumstances, I must be capable of setting up a perfect conflagration when I am well.

"Mud-throwing" belongs to the same species of rhetoric as "fiery abuse," and "rancorous" may be classed with it. I have really not enough interest in Mr. Barrett to be "rancorous." I believe I was rather sarcastic and satirical.

"Familiar and offensive accents of blasphemous Freethought" is a good mouthful. It smacks of the Christian Evidence platform, and betrays long-windedness—equal to that of Balaam's ass. But why is "blasphemous" introduced? Is it blasphemy to criticise Mr. Wilson Barrett?

I think I know what stirred the bile of this writer, and wherein consisted my blasphemy. Mr. Barrett brought

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upon the stage a rescript from Nero, ordering the extermination of the Christians—men, women, and children. I said that no Roman emperor, no head of a civilised state—mad, drunk, or wicked—ever issued such an order. I added that Mr. Barrett's memory had betrayed him. Such an order did exist, and he had forgotten where he read it. It occurred in the book of Deuteronomy, and was the direct command of Jehovah. "Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth," was the terrible order of this deity. Mr. Barrett, therefore, borrowed a horrible sentence from the Bible God, and put it into the mouth of a Roman emperor, who, wicked as he was, never rose to such supreme infamy. This I told my audience, and telling it was my "blasphemy."

Blasphemy! One is sick of the very word. It was flung at Jesus Christ, afterwards at Paul, and afterwards at all the early Christians; and when *their* religion triumphed, the Christians flung it at *their* adversaries. And they fling it still. It is a cry of bigotry and hatred. It is an abnegation of reason, and an appeal to passion. It is the first step on the road which leads to dungeons, torture chambers, and the fires of persecution. The word "blasphemy" should be banished from the vocabulary of civilisation.

So much for the passage which concerns me specially: and now let me ask you, sir, whether you really consider it fair and honest to let a personal friend of Mr. Barrett—one who dines with him at Hampstead, and receives letters from him when they are travelling apart; is it fair and honest, I ask, to let such a person cover Mr. Barrett's play with fulsome flattery, and cast personal insults at men who shrink from such a nauseous spectacle? If this is what you consider "criticism," I prefer Mr. Archer's "abuse"; I even prefer my own "blasphemy." It is all very well to appeal to "whatever is Christ-like in woman or man," but is it necessary to dispense with the antique virtues of veracity and honor?

G. W. FOOTE.

THE DEVIL'S CASE.*

MR. ROBERT BUCHANAN, original in all things, has set up as a publisher. If he could not otherwise get his volume fairly issued, I sympathise with his experiment, even while doubting if it can be commended to others from a business point of view. Although Mr. Buchanan has long since made a mark in literature, there are few publishers who would put forward such an outspoken work as *The Devil's Case*. The heresy of the *Wandering Jew* (noticed in the *Freethinker*, Jan. 29, 1893), which incited the controversy in the *Chronicle* on the question, "Is Christianity Played Out?" is not stronger than some of the utterances in this work, and perhaps I ought at once to mention that Mr. Buchanan says at the outset:—

> Please remember, Gentle Reader,
> Not to judge me line by line:
> Tho' I try to state it clearly,
> 'Tis the Devil's Case, not mine!

Man makes his Devil, like his God, in his own image. Indeed, to the civilised man, the god of the savage is a devil. The Devil of Mr. Buchanan looks remarkably like a deity in distress. As there are gods many and lords many, so are there many devils, and each shows some of the idiosyncrasies of his creator. The poetic devils are the most interesting. The Mephistophilis of Kit Marlowe is like Luther's *Teufel*—a downright barbaric devil, audacious and indecent, with the seven deadly sins in his train, and all unlawful things—

> Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
> To practise more than heaven by power permits.

Milton's Satan, the real hero of *Paradise Lost*, is a superb, self-respecting rebel against Omnipotence, who in his revolt carries a third part of the angels with him, and maintains eternal defiance amid eternal despair, holding it "better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven." The Mephistopheles of Goethe's *Faust* has none of Satan's strength. He is a cultured, sneering German—ignoble, impudent, steeped in impurity, but devilish clever, and flippantly addresses the Lord himself:—

> Pardon, high words I cannot labor after;
> Though the whole world should look on me with scorn,
> My pathos certainly would stir thy laughter
> Hadst thou not laughter long since quite forsworn.

Mr. Buchanan's Devil is a benevolent philanthropist, profoundly sympathetic with human suffering, whom the poet, when in distress and with youth's illusions gone, meets on Hampstead Heath on the night after a Bank Holiday. Marlowe's Mephistophilis wore the garb of a Franciscan friar, and Mr. Buchanan's Devil is in clerical attire and reads the pink edition of the *Star* in the moonlight. The Devil's Case is the result of the interview. The Devil calls his attention to all the suffering, disasters, and horrors in the paper, and professes himself to be anxious for their alleviation:—

> If there *is* a God, He blundered;
> Man is here to set Him right.

Mr. Buchanan deems himself an efficient interviewer, and even devil's advocate, since he holds something in common with Nickie ben:—

> I, the Interviewer hated
> Cordially by cliques and critics;
> Railed at in a hundred journals
> As a Scotchman lost and lorn;
>
> He the Interviewed, for ages
> Outlaw'd by the cliques of Heaven,
> Who for ever and for ever
> Roll the Log and praise the Lord!
> . . . . .
>
> Still we keep as our possession
> One thing even the angels envy—
> Power to stand erect, while cravens
> Roll the Log and bend the knee;
>
> Power to feel and strength to suffer,
> Will to fight for Freedom only,
> Zeal to speak the truth within us
> While the slaves of heaven are dumb.

Naturally, the Devil appoints Mr. Buchanan his Laureate to justify his ways to mortals. It is curious that the present Poet Laureate should have written what he himself calls "a philosophic poem of no mean kind" on *Prince Lucifer*; but Mr. Alfred Austin's Prince is a maundering windbag, who is hardly worth saving or damning. Mr. Buchanan's Devil has some grit in him. He shows the poet all the kingdoms and the religious leaders of the past, and professes to have been the inspirer of all that has tended to the welfare of humanity. This gives a good opportunity for comment upon the faiths of Greece, of Buddha, Zoroaster, Mahomet, etc., and to show the triumphs of intelligence and democracy ascribed to the Devil. The hero says:—

> I'm the father of all Science—
> Master builder, stock improver,
> First authority on drainage,
> Most renowned in all the arts.
>
> While the Priests have built their Churches
> To a God who does not heed them,
> I have fashion'd decent dwellings,
> Public hospitals, and baths.
>
> "Take no heed about To-morrow,"
> Said the Man-God; "do no labor,
> Be content with endless praying,
> And eternal *laissez-faire*."
>
> But the Devil, being wiser,
> Knows that he who fails to reckon
> With the morrow will discover
> That To-morrow is To-day!

Satan is, in short, like Prometheus, the spirit of human science, the civiliser, in rebellion against the cosmic necessity of things, the spirit of Freethought antagonising the dogmas of religion. This view is not so original as Mr. Buchanan seems to think. In 1869 the Italian poet, Carducci, wrote his famous *Inno a Satana* ("Hymn to Satan"), which excited a great rage among the clericals. The Satan of Carducci personifies the belief in reason and in human happiness opposed to Christian faith and asceticism. He sings:—

* *The Devil's Case: A Bank Holiday Interlude.* By Robert Buchanan. (London: Robert Buchanan, 36 Gerard-street, W.)

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Hail to thee, Satan!
Hail the Rebellion!
Hail, of the Reason, the
Great Vindicator!

Sacred to thee shall rise
Incense and vows!
Thou hast the God
Of the priests disenthroned

Mr. Buchanan's Devil compares himself with Christ.

I, the Devil, as they style me,
Have dispensed a benediction!
He, the Christ, self-styled, self-chosen,
Has become a wingèd curse!
. . . . . .

While the countless priests were lying,
I was preaching and beseeching—
Crying, "The eternal godhead
Helps but those who help themselves."
. . . . . .

God, who knoweth, feeleth nothing,
Cannot help you! Tho' 'tis written
Not a sparrow falls without Him,
Ne'ertheless—the sparrow falls!
. . . . . .

Mine the seers and mine the poets,
Stoned and slain in every nation!
Even those who most denied me
Learned through me to stand erect.

This Devil boasts a good deal, and we feel inclined to say, "The gentleman doth protest too much, methinks." It must be confessed that the orthodox have given abundant cause for this in ascribing to the Devil all the pleasures and attractions of the world, as well as the use of carnal reason, in preference to divine faith. He is, in fact, according to them, the real benefactor of mankind from the time when he tempted Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. One wonders, if this is Mr. Buchanan's Devil, what sort of Deity he possesses. We seem to get a glimpse in the fine Litany which serves as epilogue to the volume, from which I make one extract, illustrating rather the thought than the poetic power of the author:—

Thou hast set these Rulers above us, to bind us, to blind our eyes;
Thou hast sent these Priests to lure us with creeds and dogmas and lies;
Thou hast built Thy Church on the sands still shifting and tremulous.
From Churches and Priests, and Liars, good Lord deliver us.

The volume is full of vigorous heresy. The poet sometimes put in a feeble word for orthodoxy, but the answer is usually crushing. Thus, to the argument that Evolution is working out the will of the Almighty Father, comes the reply:—

Say, can any latter blessing
Cleanse the blood-stained Book of Being?
Can a remnant rendered happy
Wipe out centuries of sorrow?

The Devil's advice is, therefore:—

Waste not thought on the Almighty;
Seek, with all thy soul's endeavor,
How to make thine earthly dwelling
Bright and fair, in God's despite.

Mr. Buchanan may disclaim the Devil's teaching, but, for my part, I am free to say methinks the Devil hath much reason. The review of the past gives Mr. Buchanan as fine opportunities as the subject of the *Wandering Jew*. At times he takes advantage of them. Take, for instance, this on Voltaire:—

Diabolically smiling,
Up to Priest and Prince he strutted,
Tapp'd his snuff-box, and politely,
Crack'd his jokes at the Madonna!

Nought of holy reputation
'Scaped the ribald rascal's laughter;
Far away as Rome the Churches
Echo'd with his jests profane.

Then, behold, a transformation!
Suddenly he rose, transfigured;
Periwig and snuff-box vanished,
And an Angel stood revealed.

In his hand my sword of Freedom
Flashing on the eyes of Europe—
While the hounds of persecution
Paused, and Calas, kissed his feet!

The *Devil's Case* is full of "go" throughout, and, as the ideas it suggests are in a Freethought direction, I heartily hope that the fact that Mr. Buchanan has constituted himself his own publisher will not stand in the way of its circulation.

J. M. WHEELER.

"THE CHRIST HAS COME."

(Concluded from page 180.)

IT may be useful to here emphasise a point to which attention was called in my previous article upon this subject, which appeared in last week's *Freethinker*. Mr. E. Hampden Cook, M.A., is evidently right in claiming that the Gospels and Epistles teach that the second advent of Christ was to happen in the first century; but he fails to produce any evidence that the event really took place. Thus the majority of professed Christians to-day are in the dilemma of either anticipating an event that has already occurred, or of admitting that at least, so far as the supposed second coming of Christ was concerned, the writers of the New Testament were in error.

Let us now further consider what Mr. Cook has to say in defence of his position. He says that Jesus "took back with him to their heavenly home those of his disciples who, in eager anticipation of his return, were at the time living really saintly and consecrated lives." The truth of this statement is invalidated by Mr. Cook's admission that Saint John is believed to have died early in the second century. It is evident, therefore, that Jesus did not take John with him, and we may reasonably expect that, if the second advent had taken place during his lifetime, John would have mentioned the fact. Mr. Cook fails to give any adequate explanation of this difficulty. He says that "a divine restraint prevented him recording the fact." Of course such a view of God's conduct is based only upon mere conjecture. Moreover, if the advent had taken place, such "divine restraint" showed a lack of wisdom and good policy. For the marvellous phenomena which are said in the Gospels to have taken place, crowned by the advent itself, would have been so startling in their character, and so very important to the Christian faith, that it is incredible to a non-theological mind to suppose that God would restrain one of his "inspired" penmen from proclaiming to the world such an extraordinary proof of what is regarded by many as supernatural power. The silence of St. John, together with that of the historians of the period, as to the events recorded in Matthew xxiv. is to me a strong argument against their reality. Mr. Cook says: "The silence of history proves nothing either way, it being equally impossible to prove from history that Jesus was not seen on the clouds of heaven in 70 A.D." And then he makes the astounding statement that "the burden of proof in the argument rests, not on those who assert, but on those who deny, the past advent." Was ever a more glaring instance given of the sacrifice of the rule of logic to the exigencies of theological assumption? According to the law of reasoning, no one is called upon to prove a negative; the proof of any allegation should come from those who affirm. But the fact is, no one denies the historical evidence of the second advent, for the good reason that there is none to deny. Then Mr. Cook undertakes to give the reason why history is silent. It was because no one was permitted to see and report of "that solemn and august interview between the Creator and his creatures." Referring to Acts i. 11, he says the "second coming would not only be personal and visible, but also private and restricted to a limited number of individuals." In such a case, "the world in general" cannot be reasonably expected to believe in an event in which they were not concerned, and were admittedly not informed of. It is, indeed, strange that, considering the theological pretensions of the Church, so many of the leading features connected with the "supernatural" character of Jesus are enveloped in obscurity, and that a knowledge thereof is not only limited to the comparative few, but that such limitation is especially enjoined. It is so with most of the superstitions of the world. Natural facts, the only ones of which we know anything, are always open to universal recognition, their limitation being regulated only by mental capacity. It would be impossible, perhaps, to discover a more complete defence of the Freethinker's position in refusing to accept as facts the Gospel narratives of the second advent than Mr. Cook's book

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furnishes. He admits not only the silence of general history as to the scriptural recorded events, but he also admits the silence of "Church history," and the incompleteness of the New Testament records. He says: "The Gospel of Mark was apparently left unfinished by the author, the last twelve verses having to be added by another hand. The narrative of the Acts of the Apostles ends abruptly, leaving us uncertain as to the fate of Paul and other Christian workers. And, indeed, the annals of the Church, for nearly a century after the destruction of Jerusalem, are *almost a blank.*" If this be true, which no doubt it is, where is the evidence to be found to justify the fanciful notion of the second advent? Mr. Cook admits that "the past second advent vastly changes the aspect of the New Testament," and that "this at first sight may appear very perplexing." But it involves more than this—namely, a confession that, for the last eighteen hundred years, the Christian Church has been the victim of a most manifest delusion.

While it must be admitted that Mr. Cook has dealt a very powerful blow at orthodoxy, it is equally clear to the impartial mind that *his* position is based only upon assertion and inference. He assures us that all sects who do not recognise the truth of his theory "must cease to exist." Let us hope that, if this is the case, his sect, if he has one, will share the same fate. His theory is quite as absurd and visionary as the orthodox one. He states that the word "millennium" denotes "a thousand years, during which the dethroned ringleader of evil is placed under restraint, and the saints reign with Christ." He further alleges that this millennium began at 70 A.D., and has "not yet terminated." But surely this is more than "a thousand years." Where does the superiority of his theory of the orthodox assumption appear in such absurd talk as this? Besides, the idea of the Devil having been "under restraint" ever since 70 A.D. is opposed to the notions of all leading theologians of modern times, who allege that he is still as busy as ever, for it is supposed that every criminal in England to-day is instigated to do wrong by his Satanic Majesty. Although science and common-sense have long since shut up hell and killed the Devil, the theological fiction of their realities is still the trump card of the priests in their theological business. When the masses are rescued from the devilish delusion, the doom of priestcraft will be sealed.

There is another feature in Mr. Cook's theory that is not in accordance with fact—namely, that "the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus and his saints was established over the earth more than 1,800 years ago." According to his own confession, the mission of Jesus, although all power was conferred upon him, has failed to remove "the awful sin and misery and oppression that are around us." Where, then, was the advantage of either his first or second advent on the earth? We are told that Jesus "wants to make use of us in diminishing and destroying the evils that abound in the world." If this be so, why does he not exert the influence which he is stated to possess? But here it may be fairly urged that, before asking for human assistance, it should be shown what good results followed from Christ's advent (if it ever occurred), either in the first or second instance. We are told that he is to make a third visit; but, judging from the two previous ones he is alleged to have made, what may we expect from any future visitation from him? Assuming that he came, as stated, he left this world in much the same condition as he found it. All great reforms and improvements have been achieved since he left, and in many instances in direct opposition to his teachings. Personally, I do not believe that the Christ of the New Testament has ever appeared, or that he ever will appear, among us; but, if he should come, his professed followers will in all probability have nothing to do with him. It is reported that of old he came unto his own, but they received him not; and in the event of his coming again my opinion is that he would meet with the same fate. But the great difficulty would be, in the event of his coming, how to recognise him; for we are told upon Bible authority that "false Christs" shall appear, and "shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect." This is rather awkward, because among the weak and credulous the same deception that has deluded so many believers during the Christian era may be continued.

It is quite time that the folly and absurdity of the beliefs in fancied Christs should be frankly censured. They are but the outcome of perverted imagination and theological duplicity. The cant of the Church, the hypocrisy of many of the clergy, and the credulity of their flock have perpetuated this grievous evil; and it should be the constant endeavor of all Secularists to counteract the misfortune by persistently enforcing the power of self-reliance and the dependence upon secular effort, as being the only true remedies for the existing impediments to intellectual discrimination and to the happiness of mankind.

CHARLES WATTS.

THOMAS PAINE AND EARL CHARLEMONT.

(Continued from page 188.)

THE next letter of the series, No. 162, dated August 8, is from Edmund Burke to Charlemont, with which, perhaps, we need not much concern ourselves, beyond noting that the writer is very complimentary to the Earl, and somewhat apologetic for himself. As to his book (the *Reflections*), he says: "I could not tell what your notions might be concerning my book on France. For that reason I did not send it to you; and, because I did not send it to you, I did not send it to anyone in Ireland." He goes on to mention that his party has disowned him; but he still claims to be no worse a Whig than the Sorners, Godolphins, and Jekylls.

It seems more than probable that Burke felt there was so little likelihood of a favorable reception for his book that he did not care to risk any unfavorable expressions of opinion, and this would especially be the case if he knew of the existence of a committee to organise the distribution of his opponent Paine's book.

No. 163, Charlemont to Edmund Burke:—

> "1791, August 13, Bath.—Accept my most sincere, my warmest acknowledgments for your more than kind letter, which has, in the highest degree, flattered both my heart and my pride, as an undoubted evidence of your unaltered friendship, and as, by placing me upon an equal footing of correspondence, it exalts me, in your partial idea, to a level with those incomparable men, the Duke of Portland and Lord Fitzwilliam. You express some doubt with regard to the perfect coincidence of our political sentiments upon a late important occasion, and your doubts are not entirely void of foundation. Though I admire you as the first of writers, though I love you as the best of men, though there be not a word, even in your first pamphlet, which does not, if possible, increase my admiration for your genius and my love for your heart, still I must confess that my feelings and prepossessions will not allow me to coincide in all your opinions. But what of that? Is an affection founded upon the firm basis of perfect esteem, and nourished by the unvarying influence of every social quality which can endear man to man, to be lessened by a difference of opinion? Surely not. Besides that, in some of the most essential points we do not greatly differ. With you I despise the French philosophy; with you I disapprove many of the proceedings of the National Assembly; with you I abominate the brutal excesses of a ferocious, though, perhaps, justly enraged, people: with you I deprecate the contagion of French example in a country circumstanced like ours; and with you I love and venerate the British constitution, though I think that in some instances it may and ought to be reformed according to its genuine spirit. But, while I lament the miseries too frequently attendant even upon well-conducted revolution, I cannot but rejoice that so large a portion of my fellow-creatures have, at any rate short of destruction, been emancipated from a tyranny grievous indeed, and which, in spite of all the boasted, though, as I have always thought, superficial and unreal, suavity of manners, was the more oppressive, as, by the unchecked despotism of a widespread nobility, it was brought even to the door of every individual. Thus much have I said, because thus much I could not help saying, since, in writing to a dear friend, the uppermost thoughts of my heart must and will have vent. . . ."

Next is the jocular letter of August 27, already given, and then No. 166, September 1, from Hon. Robert Stewart to Earl Camden, a most interesting letter on "The State of France." As it covers fifteen pages of close type, it is far too long to give now beyond one short extract, where the writer ventures to prophesy:—

> "I am equally persuaded, whatever changes time may produce, whether gradual or in the shape of a counter revolution, that neither the king, the nobility, nor the clergy

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> can ever regain that situation from whence they have been driven. . . . . Nor will that feudal tyranny ever revert to them which laid the people at their feet. The possessions of the clergy will soon become the property of a class of men too powerful to be removed. The ecclesiastical body will continue pensioners on an impoverished treasury, till, in a course of years, the kingdom of France may, perhaps, become as destitute of priesthood as it is at present of religion."

In this the Hon. Robert was pretty near the mark, although the work has not gone on quite so rapidly as he thought and others hoped.

No. 168 is from Halliday to Charlemont, November 5, 1791, Belfast, which refers to a new development of the Irish question, and the publication of Theobald Wolfe Tone's *Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland;* and the general liberality of the writer is shown in one passage at the close, and which is pertinent to-day when the action of the Catholics in connection with education is borne in mind: "One thing should certainly be done—the gates of education should be thrown open to the Catholics; the statute that bars them is a reproach and a curse to us." And we are getting these curses back home to us now.

No. 169 is another letter of fifteen pages from the Hon. Robert Stewart to Earl Camden on the state of France, containing some interesting matter on the part religion was playing in the great struggle.

No. 170 is from an Indian official, and contains some complimentary references to a name well known to Freethinking students—Sir William Jones, the great oriental student.

No. 172 (Halliday to Charlemont, December 4, 1791) deals almost wholly with Irish politics and with Catholics, but contains another reference to Burke which shows how that writer must have been objurgated for his work.

> "The liberality of America and France hath had a wonderful effect on the public mind,—the more, for the contracted illiberal system of Burke, and the discussions which his rash and unwarrantable publications have occasioned."

No. 173 is Charlemont's answer to Halliday's 168 and 172, interesting by reason of its details, but more so by the side-light shown into the writer's own mind. The pity is that it is too long to give four and a half pages—what letter-writers these people were! One little passage is, however, so delightfully English that it must be given. After admitting that something will have to be done by way of Parliamentary reform, but expressing much doubt as to whether the Catholic rulers would be as good as the English, he writes:—

> "No constitution, indeed, is firmly established but the British, which, in spite of the ill-effects that time, wealth, luxury, and consequent corruption have wrought, spite of Paine's ingenious, but not solid, animadversions, I must still regard as the best that ever was devised, principally for this reason, among many others, that it exclusively possesses the almost divine power of renovation, and the innate faculty of repairing its defects without departing from its genuine spirit, but merely by a legal recurrence to its first principles."

There is more in the same vein, a comparison of the French and American with the English, and some very interesting matter on the Catholics' education, etc.; and No. 175, from Halliday to Charlemont, is of value as the answer of the democratic Irishman to the English noble's aristocratic doubt.

No. 180 is Charlemont's answer to Sheridan's inquiry (No. 150), which was dated April 11, 1791, the answer being dated April 13, 1792, Dublin, and which is undoubtedly a mistake of a year and two days in the dates. A footnote states that the date 1792 is in the MS., and I have placed it as found, as an example of how errors can creep into chronology:—

> "Thinking exactly as you do of Paine's very entertaining, very ingenious, but very dangerous performance, and too vehement a lover of the constitution in its purity not to be offended with its slanderer, I was, I must confess, vexed at the resolution to which you allude, and still more so at finding your name, without your consent as I well knew, published as one of the committee. Yet how to advise upon this occasion I do not well know. A serious public contradiction would not be pleasant, and possibly not innoxious. Perhaps the best method may be to expostulate between jest and earnest with some of your brethren on the liberty they have taken, and to declare in all companies, without being too serious, your real opinion of the tendency of the pamphlet, giving it, however, its due praise, for much merit it certainly has, and laughing at your being put upon a committee to disseminate that which you do not approve. This is, I confess, all that immediately occurs to me, and I only mention it for your consideration, and as a hint on which you may improve. Men connected with the popular party will often be brought into scrapes of this sort, as the people who do not sometimes go too far will seldom go far enough. But prudence and unvarying rectitude will finally prevail, and set everything to rights."

In that letter is a very typical example of a politician's politic, the whole art of sitting on a fence; and a few pages later on we have another justification of Hosea Biglow's lines:—

> I du believe in Freedom's cause,
> Ez fur away ez Payris is;
> I love to see her stick her claws
> In them infarnal Phayrisees.

France, being so much nearer than Poland, must be the explanation for the tone when writing of the French revolutionists and those of Poland—

> "the frivolous, the luxurious, the barbarous French, epithets which I have always thought they deserved, but to which they have now indisputably proved their just claim.....But for the poor Polanders my heart bleeds, and my understanding assures me that it ought to bleed for them.....Individuals in England will, I doubt not, do all they can. Would I had money, and I also would subscribe; but the subscription of individuals is only a satire, and a just one, heaven knows, upon the minister."

And then follow some remarks not very flattering to Russia.

From the next letter (August 20, 1792) we learn that Charlemont is studying the question of evolution, as in writing to Malone, whom he had previously asked to get a copy, he says: "I have procured here the *Loves of the Plants*"—this being, I take it, Erasmus Darwin's book, which had not long been published.

Under date October 17, 1792, we have a letter from Halliday to Charlemont, from which we gather that the Whigs of Belfast are getting a bit scared at the pace things are going in France. Endorsing some verses which it would seem his lordship had asked for, Halliday says:—

> "If you have patience, my lord, to read or listen to that tedious, democratic stuff, I beg you may recollect the occasion of my first mentioning it to you, that I sent it in obedience to your lordship's commands—sacred things to me; that it was wrote a quarter of a century before the publication of Paine's monstrosities, or the commencement of this too subversive revolution. What a reverse in the affairs of France!"

THOMAS SHORE.

(To be concluded.)

A FREETHINKER'S THOUGHTS.

To make all men honest would diminish the number of priests and ministers.

If God is everywhere, it seems strange that no one can see him.

Priest, nun, and holy see is the trinity of the Catholic's worship.

If anyone wishes to find a mean man, he need not go beyond the nearest church to do so.

The religion of a great many young women is most fervid when the minister is unmarried.

Prayer is a gun that never brought down any game. It is a hook that never caught any fish.

Christians are worshipping the dead gods of heathenism—the played-out deities of other religions.

There are lots of persons always looking for an opportunity to benefit by the suffering of others.

Christianity writes humanity in small letters, but earth knows no nobler thing than a human heart.

L. K. WASHBURN.

Men foolishly think that gods are born like as men are,
And have, too, a dress like their own, and their voice and their figure;
But if oxen and lions had hands like ours, and fingers,
Then would horses, like unto horses, and oxen to oxen,
Paint and fashion their god-forms, and give to them bodies
Of like shape to their own, as they themselves too are fashioned. —*Xenophanes*, B.C. 569.

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THE "MYSTERY" OF EVIL.

THE "mystery" of evil has perplexed
A thoughtless world, and formed a fruitful text
For swarms of pious preachers,
Whom Christ, or cash, has called to humbly join
The ranks of those whose chief reward is—coin:
Our mystifying teachers.

The "mystery" of evil is as clear
A mystery as ever did appear;
'Tis one of contradiction
'Twixt what we know and what we merely think;
'Twixt vagrant thoughts and facts bound link by link;
'Twixt proven fact and fiction.

The scientist who seeks for nature's "laws"
Conceives a likely theory of cause,
Then looks for facts to try it;
And if he finds that facts will not agree,
He knows his notion's false, and feels 'twould be
Dishonest to deny it.

And if he *thinks* his theory's exact,
Despite admitted proven adverse fact,
We know—and who'll dispute it?
He's mad; for normal thinkers all agree
That fact is fact, and theories must be
Ignored, or framed to suit it.

No "mystery" in science contradicts
The principles of science, nor conflicts
With fact that's been detected;
For each hypothesis of facts obscure
That contradicts the facts of which we're sure
Is ruthlessly rejected.

We all are *forced* to *know* that evil *is*,
Whilst "God" is but a mere *hypothesis*—
Than which a *fact* is stronger:
Let all, then, bow to facts, like thoughtful men,
Nor clothe a *fancied* God with *goodness*, then
There's "mystery" no longer.

The "mystery" is *made* by minds inane
That grant the adverse facts, and yet maintain
The cause of contradiction;
They know they're wrong, 'tis shown in all their acts;
And yet they wail: "We can't deny the facts!
But spare, oh! spare our fiction!"

G. L. MACKENZIE.

PRE-DARWINIAN SPECULATION.

As a curious instance of how nearly some predecessors of Darwin came in the direction of evolution without hitting upon it, I note the following passage in *An Essay on the Origin and Prospects of Man*, by Thomas Hope (London, 1831; vol. ii., p. 389):—

"As of monkeys the higher sorts seem only the last and highest of brutes produced prior to human beings, so of human beings themselves some species seem only the rude sketch of that ideal which nature has reached in others; but what may at first seem extraordinary is that, precisely in the latitudes in which naturally arise the highest of brutes, the orang-outang, or wild man of the mountains—namely, the regions of Austral Asia—seem precisely to have been those in which the human race itself remained lowest and least perfect in body and in mind; as if in those regions nature had wasted so much of its richest elements on the brute creation as to have had but little left to expend on the still higher human race."

Hope goes on to speak of how "the higher races, as they more extend and want more room and substance, generally end by destroying the lower tribes, and ultimately leave no trace of these."

Hope seems to have believed in spontaneous generation, and his book, though out of date, is still worth scanning for his curious speculations. He is best known by his *Anastasius*, a work of fiction admired by Lord Byron. BEN.

Whoever thinks that men might have full sympathy with their fellows, while lacking all sympathy with inferior creatures, will discover his error on looking at the facts.—*Herbert Spencer.*

ACID DROPS.

THE Prince of Wales is not a great man, though he weighs a good deal; but we rather like one of his points—namely, his superiority to Sabbatarianism. This very point, however, has brought him into disgrace at Aberdeen. A Sunday Observance meeting was recently held in the granite city, and one of the speakers denounced "Wales" for taking part in a yacht race at Hyères on the previous Sunday. This indignant Sabbatarian declared his opinion—for what it was worth, and he evidently thought it worth a lot—that "if the heir expected to sit on the throne and to outrage divine institutions in this way, it was more likely, looking towards the future, that the throne would sit on him." Poor "Wales"! He knows what to expect if he goes to Aberdeen.

Another speaker at this Sunday Observance meeting was a retired farmer, who said that thirty years ago he was asked to bring milk to town on Sunday, but he wouldn't. He asked the people to take the milk on Saturday evenings. All his customers agreed to the proposal except one rich lady, and she died a few weeks afterwards! Such is the fate of those who object to stale milk on the Lord's Day.

The Khalifa who succeeded the Mahdi cannot read or write. He has thirty wives, so he is pretty well occupied. He pretends to act under divine inspiration, and the people believe his pretensions. It is not surprising to learn that he is cruel and malicious, and is never so well pleased as when he is robbing and murdering. Half the people in some districts have been killed, and whole tribes have been blotted out in others. The Khalifa would have made a first-rate Grand Inquisitor. He has all the marks of the godliness which used to harry the Western world in the fine old ages of faith.

Mr. Gladstone is telling the world all about the Future Life in the *North American Review*. He may be a greater authority on that subject some years hence; but there may then be certain difficulties in communication.

Wesleyan Methodism has just profited to the extent of about £120,000 by the death of Lady Lycett. Sir Francis Lycett, who died fifteen years ago, left all his estate ultimately, with the exception of about £50,000, to this denomination. It is a splendid windfall, and the Secularist who reads of it understands how largely the Churches subsist on dead men's money. He also understands why the Churches maintain a law which prevents Secularism from enjoying such means of subsistence. Thousands of pounds have, to our knowledge, been lost to Secularism in this way during the last four or five years. Whereat the Christians smile, for they know this is more fatal to Freethought than a hundred persecutions.

They have a miraculous Madonna at Ostra Brama, at Wilna, in Russian Poland, and the *Tablet* (March 21) tells a good story of a miracle wrought there. Some large candles were offered before her shrine, but at midnight the watcher heard a voice saying, "Put out all the candles," and he did so. Upon examination they turned out to be filled with gunpowder.

Another miracle has occurred in the island of Lesbos. Mgr. Nicephorus Glykos, the Orthodox Greek Metropolitan, died, or was believed to have died, on the 3rd inst., at the age of eighty. According to custom, he was laid out in state, but on the third day he rose again, quite as much according to the Scriptures as J. C., since the Old Testament says nothing of rising again. It seems he had fallen into a state of coma, and but for being a dignitary he would have been buried alive.

It is said that the Pope, instigated by Cardinal Vaughan, will authoritatively declare that Anglican orders are invalid. This, it is presumed, will have a disquieting effect on men of God who are inclined to Romanism, and precipitate their taking orders in the Roman Church, as some Church of England clergymen are said to have already secretly done.

A Scottish correspondent writes to the *Tablet* to say that the work of the late Archbishop Smith, on behalf of the canonisation of Mary Queen of Scots, has been taken up by his successor. Pope Pius V., who excommunicated Elizabeth, is said to have regarded her as a martyr. This may serve as a warning as to the kind of characters who shine in the calendar as saints. If they did not live well, they made a good ending.

Father Cormack, writing in *St. Peter's Chair*, reminds Catholics that cremation is "offensive to Christian sentiment," and that, by a decree of the Holy See in the year

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1886, Christian burial is refused to such as are cremated by their own instructions.

Colonel Ingersoll was invited by the Rev. Dr. Rusk, of the Church Militant, Chicago, to address that body, which claims to be unsectarian. The Colonel expressed his willingness to comply; but it seems that the Church Militant holds its services in Willard Hall, which is under the control of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. A delegation was appointed by that body to wait on Rev. Dr. Rusk, and asked that the great Agnostic would not be allowed to make a public address within the precincts of the Woman's Temple. Mrs. Carse is reported to have said: "We will not permit Mr. Ingersoll to desecrate Willard Hall, unless he comes to confess." Subsequently, however, a meeting of Rusk's supporters affirmed that the great Agnostic should have the use of the hall.

Louise Moore, fifty-nine years of age, wife of a cutler of Spitalfields, died in circumstances that necessitated an inquest. Getting out of bed, she knelt down and prayed, and suddenly she fell over on her side and expired. Death was due to convulsions caused by enlargement of the liver. It was a singular answer to prayer.

Another inquest was held the same day on Abraham Cohen, a Jewish tailor, whose death was due to heart disease. After eating some dinner he became ill; then he prayed—and then he expired.

Near Lime-street, Liverpool, there is said to be a parish clerk who combines with his ecclesiastical office the business of a leather-seller, and the following notice appears in his window: "Office for Banns of Marriage. All sorts of muzzles kept in stock."

"Peter Lombard" says in the *Church Times:* "A good many people were distressed on Easter Day, when a London incumbent announced as the subject of his evening sermon 'The Resurrection of Sodom,' and on another day 'Jane Cakebread.' But I learn that no less a dignitary than the Dean of one of our cathedrals has taken for the subject of his Lent course, 'The Sorrows of Satan,' and that he takes Miss Corelli's book up into the pulpit and reads copious extracts from it as well as from 'Barabbas.'"

A Catholic missionary in Africa is reported in the *Church Times*, mind you (page 356, March 20) as writing: "The members of my congregation refuse to abandon their habits of cannibalism; but I am happy to say that, thanks to my efforts, they have learnt to eat with knives and forks." If not true, this is still suggestive as to the results of Christian civilisation.

In the *Church Times*, February 28, the Rev. H. C. Corrance, rector of West Bergholt, near Colchester, made the statement that a child in a Brighton Board school had been forbidden by the teachers to say the Lord's Prayer, and was, consequently, withdrawn by the mother from the school. John Carden, the clerk to the School Board, writes to say that Mr. Corrance has been asked for the name of the school, but has failed to give it. A careful inquiry has been made, with the result of showing that the rev. gentleman, in his endeavor to damage the Board schools, has been guilty of gross misstatement.

Professor A. H. Sayce has discovered a fresh mare's-nest. He now writes to the *Academy* (March 21) suggesting that the "Tidal king of nations" of Genesis xiv. is Tudkhula, king of the nomad Umman-Manda. The efforts of reverend Assyriologists to fit in discoveries with the statements of the old book become absolutely ludicrous in their contortions and distortions.

Sayce has put out a new work on *The Egypt of the Hebrews and Herodotus*. An alternative title might be "The Egypt of Fiction and of Fact."

Bessie Bellwood, the music-hall star, in a recent County Court action, got out in evidence that she was a Christian. We are not surprised to hear it. The lady's language, on occasion, is said to be founded on the strongest parts of the Bible—and betters the instruction.

The Rev. Mr. Maynard is a sporting Hampshire parson, who won a prize with a pigeon he had from a dealer on approval. The dealer claimed the sum, and Judge Leonard, sitting at the Portsmouth County Court, in awarding it, told the defendant that his conduct was disgraceful for a man in his position.

On March 5 two hundred colored people assembled in a church in Montgomery, Ala., in expectation that the end of the world had come, and that they would be caught up into heaven. Acting on the advice of some evangelists, many of them had given away their worldly goods and are left destitute.

The Bishop of Newcastle, in giving an address to business men on "Christianity and Life in Reference to Books," mentioned fiction. He is reported as saying, What had religion to do with fiction? A great deal, he would answer. The bishop spoke truer than he intended. Religion has all to do with fiction. Fact is the province of reason and science; the bishop's dealings are in the vast realm of fiction.

The Bishop referred to the Old Testament and to the book of Revelation, "which was entirely an appeal to the imagination." Truly, when the fictitious element is eliminated from the Bible, its bounds will be very considerably narrowed.

The Rev. Morgan Jones, vicar of Edgton, Aston-on-Clun, South Shropshire, is charged by William Broome and Thomas Evans, his parishioners, with taking improper and indecent liberties with Helen Scholding, the schoolmistress. On one occasion he said to her: "I feel like Adam in the Garden of Eden; but what is the use of being Adam when all the fruit is denied me?" When she threatened to write home about his treatment, he said: "Oh, no; suffer little children to play together." Subsequently it was alleged the man of God became most unkind, and persecuted her in every way he possibly could in order to get her out of the parish. The case was heard before Dr. Tristram, Chancellor of the Diocese of Hereford, and the defendant denied the charges. Judgment was, as usual, reserved.

There has lately arisen in Perm, and the neighboring provinces of East Russia, a sect of Anarchists by religious conviction, known as the Neplatyelshtchiki, or Those-who-do-not-pay. They are convinced that all the institutions of Church and State are a fraud, because the affairs of the world are at present in the hands of Antichrist. Upon this ground they refuse to pay taxes of any kind, and claim the free enjoyment of the land as "God's land." They declare that, seven thousand years having now elapsed since the beginning of the world, the age of religious symbolism has given way to the age of the Holy Ghost, and they therefore condemn all religious rites and emblems. They meet frequently to read the Bible and the Russian fathers together, shun the society of all but their fellow sectarians, and drink no wine.—*Daily News* (March 19).

In Major-General Blacksley's book, *Footsteps of the Lion*, he records that there is a small town not far north of Montserrat where every respectable dog wears a black crape bow on its tail during Lent, and where all animals, including the pig, are compelled to fast on Good Friday. They have evidently the true logical spirit of religion.

Referring to the aggressions of Christian nations against inferior races, the *Echo* (March 20) says: "So far as we know the facts and can judge, the only voices raised against these repeated perpetrations of gigantic iniquity come from the Irish party in Parliament, and from Agnostic and Secularist assemblies."

A despatch from Orel, Russia, states that in the recent terrible snowstorm which swept over the province 130 persons were frozen to death in one night, while a number of horses and cattle also perished. The Lord's tender mercies are over all his works.

The Jersey States, discussing the Bill for legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister, adopted the first article, legitimatising such marriages already contracted, by 27 votes to 15, the Dean and the whole of the clergy again voting in the minority. The men of God are opposed to any relaxation, because it will undermine the authority of their canons, although their fetish book absolutely orders that when a brother's widow is left childless her husband's brother shall take her to wife (Deut. xxv. 6). This some consider to be a relic of consanguine marriage.

William Q. Judge is dead. He was the hero of the forged Mahatma letters which deceived Mrs. Besant, who in turn deceived the public. Mrs. Besant tried to patch up a rather scandalous peace over this matter, but the exposure in the *Westminster Gazette* compelled her to defend her own reputation. Accordingly she went for Judge, and got him excommunicated in this part of the world. The sentence did not, however, extend to America, where the Theosophists stood by their own countryman. It is very lucky, in the interest of general honesty and sanity, that Judge did not die till the fulness of time. The exposure of his tricks is on record, and will supply an interesting chapter to the future History of Imposture.

The *Westminster Gazette*, in which Mr. Garrett wrote the articles entitled "Isis Very Much Unveiled," recalls the quarrel of Judge and Mrs. Besant, and how W. Q. J. sent

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round to the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society a pamphlet in which he announced that Mrs. Besant was, in effect, possessed of a devil, and that the Mahatma (under whose direction she also professed to be acting) had ordered him to depose her altogether, and take over the whole thing himself; which, in a formal "Order," he accordingly proceeded to do.

The *Westminster Gazette* concludes its notice by remarking: "His death comes as the end of a somewhat variegated, and not particularly honorable, career; and it will be of some interest to see if anyone seeks to succeed him as he sought to succeed Madame Blavatsky—seal and missives, of course, included." W. Q. Judge probably will not want a successor. While credulous dupes abound there are sure to be cunning charlatans who will take advantage of their credulity. The rogue-crop thrives on the ground of the fool-crop.

Lady Isabel Burton died a day after Judge. Of course she was a very different character from that charlatan, but, as a faithful Catholic, she did her best (or worst) to minimise her husband's Freethought. It is hardly doubtful that Burton was really a complete sceptic. As a mighty traveller, he had seen too many religions to believe in any of them.

One of the last of the old school of theologians has departed in the person of Archdeacon Denison, who died at the good old age of over ninety. A determined opponent of the *Essays and Reviews*, of Bishop Colenso, of the consecration of Bishop Temple, and of *Lux Mundi*, the champion of the faith has passed away after seeing all he thought worth fighting for thrown out piece by piece from the Christian cargo.

The staid *Spectator* tells this story of Brigham Young:—The Mormon chief was asked by a United States Commissioner whether he was a Christian. "Yes, sir," was the reply. "Then you acknowledge that if you are hit on one cheek you ought to turn the other?" "I always do, sir; but if he hits *that*, I give him hell."

Joyful News seems to be an emporium for stories of converted infidels. The number for March 19 has a story by the Rev. Josiah Mee of one who is said to have been converted by one of Spurgeon's sermons. Curiously, this nameless converted infidel was made to say that he saw 666, the number of the beast, was on the habit of smoking. It happens that Spurgeon was very fond of good cigars. We wonder if his convert saw the sign of the beast on the eloquent pastor's Havanas.

Joyful News has some curious Requests for Prayer. The following are first on the list in its last number:—

Prayer is earnestly requested that a young man deeply convinced and the subject of many prayers may be saved.

Please join four of God's little ones in praying that a dear sister in Christ may soon learn to love the Shepherd's voice.

Pray that a widow may be brought through a business difficulty this month, and be able to glorify God.

Freethinkers should keep the following paragraph constantly by them; it is extracted from the London *Sun*, of Monday, March 23: "The first English ship regularly engaged in the slave trade was commanded by Sir John Hawkins, and was named *The Jesus*. Queen Elizabeth commissioned the commander, and gave him as a crest a fettered African slave."

What on earth, or what in heaven—or, for that matter, what in hell—was Jesus doing while a ship bearing his name was starting that regular slave trade, which was finally well described as the sum of all villainies? Surely he might have sunk her with a thunderbolt or a waterspout. If he couldn't do that, he might have insisted on having his name painted off the ship's bow or stern—whichever end bore the pious inscription. No honest man would have allowed his name to figure on such a ship, and no honest god would have done so either.

The *Speaker* remarks on the compulsory attendance of undergraduates at University chapels as an instance of how far we are still under the old monastic influence at our seats of learning.

One of the applications for a licence at the Blackheath Sessions on Tuesday week was described as "recently in holy orders." The man of God probably expects his second spiritual calling to be the more profitable.

The Rev. William Bailey has been working miracles of faith cure in imitation of Christ at North Platte, Neb. He endeavored to imitate the Holy Ghost in one of the families who had believed in him, but the husband ejected him from the house, and a mob gave him a coat of tar and feathers.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, like Her Majesty, spends his spring on the Continent, and returns in time for the May meetings and garden parties at Lambeth Palace. The path of religion is a pleasant one on £15,000 a year.

The Unitarians have been having a forward movement. If the *Baptist* is to be credited, it is needed. It states that from 1878 to the present time there has been an actual decrease of at least fifty congregations in the Unitarian body. If they wish to succeed, they should appeal, not to the classes, but the masses, and consistently throw over the pretence of regarding the Bible as God's word.

The Jews of England are going to memorialise the Czar, on the occasion of his coronation, in favor of an amelioration of the lot of their unfortunate brethren who are his subjects. The *Jewish World*, however, says that, "though personally, perhaps, the present Czar is less inimically disposed towards the Jews than was his late father, the reasons are not very obvious that should make an appeal from London on their behalf just now more acceptable than was the Mansion House Memorial so contemptuously treated in November, 1890."

The Rev. W. P. Mears, in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, points to China as a dreadful example because the literary aristocracy have, under the influence of Confucius, lapsed into "thorough-going Agnosticism, Materialism, and religious indifference." Mr. Mears would have preferred them to lapse into superstition, for then the case might have been more hopeful for their becoming converts to Christianity.

A commission of American men of God was appointed by the American Board of Foreign Missions to examine the state of Christian missions in Japan. One of the rumours which disturbed the Board before the deputation left for Japan was that a vast number of the native Christians had receded from their faith and had become infidels and Atheists, and that the opinions of these backsliders had exerted an untold influence on the native Christian Church. This influence, it was further said, had made itself especially felt in the institutions of learning. The commission report that the departures are not quite so bad as they were led to expect. It seems that rationalist views are chiefly held by the Japanese who have visited Europe and seen Christianity in actual operation. The commission have to report that in the Doshisha University, Kyoto, established in 1875, "the state of affairs from a religious standpoint is such that the members of the commission are in doubt as to whether the University can still be called a Christian institution."

Armenian atrocities still make hideous the columns of the *Daily News*. After a sickening record in the issue for March 20, the writer ended as follows:—"But God still reigns. He is faithful and true, and His promises sure." Bad grammar, and nauseous sentiment! The man who says that God still reigns, while men are murdered and women are outraged and children are starved, all in the name of religion, is really a fit inmate for a lunatic asylum.

The Kilmun heresy case will be considered at the ordinary meeting of the Presbytery to be held at Dunoon on the last Tuesday in March. Mr. Robinson, the heretic in question, sits tight upon his pulpit, and his orthodox opponents will have to come to the sticking-point if they want to get rid of him.

Mrs. Harkin was a "strong-minded" woman. An ordinary woman would make one will; Mrs. Harkin made eleven. The last was in favor of Dr. Nulty, the Catholic Bishop of Neath, which is a long way from Liverpool, where Mrs. Harkin resided and made her money. Litigation at the Liverpool Assizes, before Justice Vaughan Williams, resulted in an arrangement between the Bishop and Mrs. Harkin's niece. The Church gains a few thousand pounds, anyhow; and, of course, 'tis all for the glory of God. The suspicion of any other motive is simply blasphemous.

I saw the sun burn o'er the sterile sands
Of low-lying Egypt, and the mighty flood
Of the Nile, stained with rushing human blood;
And by a broken temple in waste lands
There knelt an old priest wringing anguished hands,
And moaning ever: "Can Osiris die?"
And then, behold! I saw another sky,
Clothed with the glory of the northern lights,
Flashing and sparkling ever overhead;
But on the wind that swept from icy heights
Wailed a wild voice: "Baldur is dead—is dead!"
And then it seemed to me that I was led
Past a wan cross, round which the low wind, sighing,
Sobbed in mine ears: "The Nazarene is dying."

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—March 29, morning, North Brixton Gladstone Club; evening, Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, London. April 5 and 12, South Shields.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—F. Jones 5s., and reminds our friends when casting off clothing that the applications to the fund are more numerous than the supplies.

MISS VANCE begs to acknowledge toys from Mrs. Penny and from an unknown friend for the Children's Party. Further donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged, and should be sent to 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. Early application should be made for tickets, in order to give some idea of the number that will be present at the tea.

SHAREHOLDER.—Now that the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company is being wound up, as was inevitable, it is of course open for any shareholder to devote his share-money, whatever it may be, to some live object—say Mr. Foote's lecture scheme.

T. DOBSON.—The cutting will be useful. Mr. Foote has often lectured on social questions, and there are many social references and illustrations in his Freethought addresses.

J. FULTON, sending £1 to Shilling Month, writes:—"I expect to repeat it ere long. I am sorry you are not getting so many of them as I would like to see, as I consider your lecture scheme a noble one, deserving hearty support from all Freethinkers."

J. F. HAMPSON.—Best regards to you and yours.

R. JOHNSON.—Thanks for your subscription. If all subscribed according to their means, we should be able to send the torch of Freethought into every benighted part of the kingdom.

J. WILLEY.—Glad to have your encouraging letter as well as subscription.

CHEESEMONGER.—We are not surprised. Bigotry is an old acquaintance of ours.

ANNUAL CHILDREN'S PARTY FUND.—R. Forder, Treasurer, acknowledges:—Battersea Branch, 6s.; F. Smith, 5s.; J. O., 1s.; Geo. Anderson, £3; E. Bater, 5s. 9d.; J. Warner, 2s.; Mrs. Henderson, 11s.; M. Christopher, 2s.

J. S. B.—We have two reports of the Derby debate. Mr. Cattell's was first. See our next issue.

A. J. LOVELL.—Hope to see you all at Sunderland shortly.

A. CORLEY.—The Derby debate between Mr. Foote and Mr. W. T. Lee is in course of publication. The proofs of the last sheets are delayed through Mr. Lee being away from home on a lecturing tour. We hope to announce the publication definitely in our next issue. The price of the volume will be one shilling.

G. WHITE.—Our regards to the South Shields friends. Mr. Foote is nearly himself again, and, though not lecturing till April, makes his first public appearance since his illness by taking the chair for Mr. Charles Watts, his loyal friend and colleague, this evening (March 29).

H. D.—Mr. Foote is immensely improved by the rest he has given himself from platform work, which, of course, is only a part of his heavy labors.

R. E. HOLDING.—We have the highest regard for your skill as a scientific draughtsman, and hope your lectures will (as they deserve) be well attended.

VICE-PRESIDENTS of the N.S.S., some of whom have already been called upon, should not give further relief to a member of the Liverpool Branch who is now in London. He should be referred to Miss Vance, who will lay his application before the Benevolent Fund Committee. He has been twice relieved from the fund already.

A. R. MUNRO.—Glad to hear you had a "red-letter day" at Hull on Sunday. Keep it up. You have a splendid field there, and Mr. Foote will do his best to supply you with lecturers. Your bigoted chief constable will not be allowed to kill our propaganda in Hull. If we cannot charge for admission, we will let the people in free—and get three times as many.

A. B. H. (Derby).—Mr. Watts has met James Marchant in debate, and has declined to meet him again; his reason being that James Marchant lacks ability and is very vulgar.

J. ROBERTS.—We hope you will have the pleasure of bringing the Rev. W. W. Howard into public debate with Mr. Foote at Liverpool. But past negotiations are not very encouraging, and there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip.

E. SMEDLEY.—Darwin was still living when Dr. Aveling wrote his *Darwin Made Easy*. Darwin's *Life and Letters* has been published since, showing what the great naturalist's religious opinions really were. See Mr. Foote's *Darwin on God*, where you will see that Darwin regretted having used the terms "Creator" and "Creation" in the *Origin of Species*—a work written while he was still a Theist.

J. M. R.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. STANWAY.—Thanks for your earnest and encouraging letter. We are much pleased to hear that you intend to support the adoption of Liberty of Bequest in the program of the Independent Labor Party. Mr. Foote has repeatedly stated his willingness to visit Hanley if any decent hall can be obtained, and to do so at his own risk.

O. P. Q.—Your letter on Secularism in the *Greenock Telegraph* is well written, and should do good. Freethinkers should seize every opportunity of ventilating Secularism in their local newspapers.

T. E. M.—Received and under consideration.

J. PROCTOR (Sunderland).—Sorry that "R. Sears, 1s." was omitted from your list by the printer.

J. M. HEADLEY, 21, North Howard-street, Great Yarmouth, will be glad to hear from Secularists who are willing to help in starting a local branch of the N.S.S. We hope many of our readers will communicate with him immediately.

W. S. CLOGG.—Glad to have your approval. Mr. Foote has made several attempts to organise lectures in the East-end, but without success. It is not a question of neglect—at least on his part.

THORNEY.—Glad to read your high appreciation of Mr. Wheeler's articles.

R. S. HOSE.—Much amused by your account of W. R. Bradlaugh's lecture against Atheism in the Peckham Public Hall. Thanks to Messrs. Ben Ellis, Hartmann, and Sabine, who gave him such a very bad quarter of an hour, and induced him to beat a hasty retreat from the platform.

R. J. MURRAY (Nottingham Freethought Society).—Your "correction" is an absurdity. Mr. Watts's lectures at Nottingham *were* delivered under Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, and Mr. Foote *was* responsible for the local expenses. He handed Mr. Watts the money to pay for same. Your Society only volunteered to pay the local deficit at the last moment, when Mr. Watts was leaving Nottingham; and, after consultation with Mr. Foote, he has returned the 24s. you paid him.

J. MARTIN.—Sorry to hear that the Battersea Labor League will not support Secular Education, from fear of losing its Christian members.

J. P. GILMOUR.—A Monday excursion to Loch Lomond after the Conference is a good idea. Let us know more of this in due course.

P. H. ECHLIN.—Acknowledgment was according to what we thought your directions.

J. T. CONGREVE.—Consider his great age.

G. CROOKSON.—Pleased to know you have been "intensely interested" by our articles on Mr. Barrett's play. But why call them "cruel"? It is no part of our business to dissect ordinary melodramas. Mr. Barrett boasts, and lets his friends boast, that his play is an appeal on behalf of Christianity, and this is the justification of our criticism.

A. FORRESTER.—The Glasgow friends have acted nobly. Instead of humming and ah-ing, they have given the President's lecture scheme a trial, as loyal members should; and finding it "good business" they have persevered with it, instead of bullying him for hitting upon a good idea. Make any suggestions you please. You are bound to find out "wrinkles" as you go along, and the President has really too much humor to lay claim to omniscience. Of course the small deficits on local expenses here and there will be met from the Fund. Let us know the exact amount.

W. H. MORRISH, the Bristol veteran, would like to see a whole number of the *Freethinker* filled with Shilling Month subscriptions.

G. PROCTOR.—The Lecture Scheme will be extended everywhere, if the funds permit. What hall can you obtain at Gainsboro?

FREETHINKER (Kettering).—The *Two Worlds* is published at Cheetham-street, Manchester.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Horwich Chronicle—Echo—Brighton Gazette—Liberty—Burton Gazette—New York Public Opinion—Truthseeker—Brann's Iconoclast—Liberator—Der 'Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Dunoon Observer—Federalist—Isle of Man Times—Humanity—Free Review—Nya Sanningar.

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SHILLING MONTH.

MARCH has not yet ended. There is still time for hundreds, and even thousands (if they only *will*), to take part in this subscription towards the expenses of my Lecture Scheme, the success of which has been so frequently reported in the *Freethinker*, and the *continued* success of which must depend upon the support I receive in response to this appeal. All bodies have to go in for a "Forward Movement" in the present age, and this is the Forward Movement of Freethought. Those who have any faith in me, those who value the labors of my colleagues who are helping me to carry out this scheme, those who wish to see Freethought propaganda carried on vigorously

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all over the country, will send me a token of their sympathy before the thirty-first of March. If all send who can send, I shall have a splendid record of successful work to lay before the Annual Conference.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

T. Dobson, 2s. 6d.; J Fulton, £1; E. Birkbeck, J. F., F. D., J. W. Phillips, H. Smith, R. B. Harrison; R. Johnson, 10s.; J. Willey, 5s.; G. Billing, 2s.; R. Goodman, 5s.; Cheesemonger; J. Fish, 3s.; F. Jones, 2s.; R. Brookes, 2s. 6d.; A. Newson, 2s. 6d.; J. Hayes, 2s. 6d.; J. Dennis, 3s.; Thorney; F. W. Sirett, 7s. 6d.; C. Williams; Castor, 2s.; W. C. Stuart, £1 1s.; P. H. Echlin; James and John Crabtree, 2s.; G. Crookson, 10s.; W. S. Clogg, 2s. 6d.; Cheshire Branch, 5s. 6d.; C. J., 5s.; J. Beverley; J. Unsworth; W. H. Morrish, 5s.; Two Gainsboro Friends, 3s.; A. Haynes; A. J. Lovell, 10s.; J. B. H.; A. Corley, 5s.; J. Stainway, 2s. 6d.; A. G. Lupton, 10s.; Lancaster Freethinker, 10s.; N. Billany (per C. Watts), 5s.; W. Darton, 2s. 6d.; Bob.

Bolton:—T. Holstead, 4s.; Mrs. Hampson, 2s.; J. F. Hampson, 2s.; Annie Hampson, Louie Hampson, W. Ayre, W. Collins, C. Atkinson.

Glasgow:—J. Williamson, 10s.; L Speirs; T. Robertson, 5s.; J. Woodburn; W. Craig, 2s.; N. Stevenson, 5s.; D. Halstead, 2s.; F. G.; J. Simpson, 2s.; A. McCrone, D. Irvine, S. Adamson, A. McConnachie; R. Webster, 3s.; A. Campbell, 2s. 6d.

South Shields:—Peacock; Gompertz, 2s.; Philipson, 2s. 6d.; Chapman, 1s. 6d.; Profit, Charlton, Fothergill, White.

Liverpool:—Owen, 2s.; Ross, Friend, Hall, Dinsdale, Dickson, Miss Dickson.

Per Miss Vance.—A. W. Marks, 10s.; Mrs. B. E. Marks, 10s.; M. Christopher, 2s.; J. Potter, 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, 2s.

Per R. Forder.—J. Williams, 2s.; S. P. McDougall, 2s. 6d.; B. Waterhouse, £1: A. Lewis, 2s. 6d.; J. Warner, 2s.; F. H. (Macclesfield), 2s.; L. W. R., 1s.; A. C. Brown, 2s. 6d.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Holyoake desires us to hold back for a week or two the publication of his new work on Secularism, in order to secure concurrent publication in England and America.

Mr. Charles Watts is back in London after ten days' absence in the country, where he has been debating and lecturing, largely under Mr. Foote's lecture scheme. In the next issue of the *Freethinker* he will give an account of his tour. Meanwhile, we may state that he had three splendid meetings on Sunday last at Hull, and the local friends tell us that he was in first-rate form. In the afternoon, partly owing to the expected presence of the Rev. F. Ballard, the hall was crowded to excess. Mr. Ballard *was present*, and spoke after the lecture, but he did not really discuss, and he declined the offer of a set debate. Friends came to the meetings from York, Withernsea, Hornsea, Grimsby, Barton, Goxhill, New Holland, and Beverley; and nearly forty sat down to tea between the afternoon and evening lectures.

Hull has been worked by Mr. Foote, and now by Mr. Watts, under the President's lecture scheme. The admission has been free, the audiences have been extraordinarily large, and the collections have been really satisfactory. If a Freethought millionaire would come along, and put down £5,000, we would undertake to place Freethought before multitudes of people in this country, and revolutionise Freethought propaganda.

Mr. Watts lectures this evening (March 29) at the Athenæum in Tottenham Court-road. Mr. Foote will take the chair. This is his first public appearance since his recent illness. The hall should be crowded.

Mr. Cohen, who left London in the middle of January, is still lecturing in the provinces. He returns to London on April 2, by which time he will have delivered *thirty-eight* lectures (besides others) under Mr. Foote's scheme. Mr. Cohen is now conducting a Freethought mission at Leeds, where he delivers to-day (March 29) the first *Sunday* lectures that have been delivered in Leeds for some time. Mr. Foote would have inaugurated the new course of Sunday lectures there, had it not been for his recent indisposition. Mr. Cohen will make an excellent substitute.

The *Dunoon Observer* gave excellent reports of Mr. Cohen's recent lectures at Dunoon, and severely censured the interrupters who turned the first meeting into a bear-garden. The editor also continues to insert letters on the Bible and Christianity. Of course he is favored with letters from bigots who censure his impartiality, and impudently tell him that he ought not to open his columns to anything against Christianity; but the editor replies that he doesn't believe in burning or burking sensible letters on any public question. The Christians, he says, must "meet rational criticism with rational criticism—a thing surely not beyond their power." This last clause is rather sarcastic.

The Glasgow Branch, finding that the President's lecture scheme is the cause of a Freethought revival in south-west Scotland, is making a fresh collection for the Lecture Fund. A first instalment arrives this week. More will be acknowledged as the collecting sheets in members' hands are sent in to the secretary.

The Annual Children's Party, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, takes place on Wednesday evening (April 1) in the large hall of the Club Union, next door to the Holborn Town Hall. Applications for tickets should be made at once to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts will both be present during the evening.

Tea, cakes, etc., will be provided for the children, with a variety of amusements. During the evening the laughable farce of *Good for Nothing* will be played, in which Miss Katie Watts will appear as "Nan."

On Easter Sunday the Battersea Branch holds a tea party, and invites members of other Branches and isolated Freethinkers. A good entertainment will follow; the St. Clair family will attend, and a farce will be played by the members of the Dramatic Club. There will be plenty of dancing. Tickets (only 6d. each) can be had at the hall, or at outdoor meetings at the Park Gates on Sunday mornings.

Mr. Robert E. Holding, zoological artist, is giving courses of lectures on various aspects of animal life, illustrated by diagrams. He has recently been at the South West London Polytechnic Institute, and, from the syllabus sent us, we judge his discourses to be interesting and instructive.

The Rev. J. Ira Maltsberger, a Baptist clergyman of Turner, Kans., has refused to preach again, and has announced himself to be an out-and-out infidel. He states that, after a great mental struggle, he resolved to make this announcement, his conversion to unbelief having been caused principally by the weakness of the answers of the clergy to the arguments of Colonel Ingersoll.

We receive from the office of *Secular Thought*, 6 Adelaide-street West, Toronto, a copy of the first number of a new magazine entitled *The Dominion Review*, a Monthly Record of Events and Opinions in Politics, Religion, and Science. The review opens with an article entitled "'Hell' Not in the Bible," by the Rev. W. E. Manley. Papers on "Is the Sun Habitable?" "The Evolution of Mind," and "Goldwin Smith as American Advocate" follow; and there is some well-written verse by W. A. Ratcliffe and A. W. Herdman. Under the title of "From Our Own Observatory," the editor gives lively liberal comments on Canadian affairs. The *Dominion Review* is well got up, and we hope it will have a successful future.

The *Free Review* for April opens with a summary and review of "Schopenhauer's Views on Women," by E. S. Galbraith. A smart paper on "The Ethics of Renan" follows. F. C. Huddle contributes a Freethought story with the title, "The Foundations of Belief." Those who like argument will find plenty in three papers on "Free Love Fallacies," and the conclusion of a discussion on "Socialism and Anarchism." G. Whitfield has a word of protest against the muzzling of dogs, and "Geoffrey Mortimer," under the title of "Protect Arcadia," has a seasonable and well-written word on the protection of wild birds, plants, etc. Some reviews of new books make up a capital number of this bright and interesting magazine.

How to Help Us.

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

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

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

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

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

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MR. COHEN'S TOUR IN THE WEST OF SCOTLAND.

Mr. C. Cohen's lectures in Glasgow on Sundays, March 8 and 15, were well attended and highly successful. On the second date, in spite of most inclement weather, the audiences were appreciably larger, and the lecturer's stimulating and suggestive handling of his subjects won the lively approbation of the mass of his hearers. There was hardly any discussion worth mentioning. On the afternoon of the 8th, when the subject was "Christianity and Slavery," one of Mr. Foote's opponents at Camberslang turned up, armed with a sheaf of paper, and fully prepared to traverse a multitude of points which Mr. Cohen ought to have raised, if only he had been forewarned of the nature and scope of his critic's researches. As it was, the polemist in question simply recited some of the assertions made by him at the Camberslang meeting as to the condemnation of slavery by General Councils of the Catholic Church—a contention decisively disposed of by Mr. Cohen; but he omitted to explain to the meeting why he had failed to keep the promise which he made to Mr. Foote to send for insertion in the *Freethinker* the passages from the decrees of the Œcumenical Councils which pronounce chattel-slavery to be wrong in principle. The claims of Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme were assiduously pressed at all the meetings, and a good many new members were added to the Branch.

The week-night campaign opened at Dunoon on Monday evening, 9th inst., under conditions that recalled the pioneer times of the fierce struggle with lawless bigotry. The meeting took place in the Large Burgh Hall, and, as the district has been in a state of brisk effervescence since Mr. Foote's visit in February, it was not surprising to find the room filled. During his lecture on "Is Christianity True?" Mr. Cohen received a passably attentive hearing, and the earlier part of the discussion passed of peaceably enough, thanks to the vagaries of a local buffoon, who spent most of his time in reading an extract from the *Freethinker*, bristling with technical biological terms, some of which he was compelled to spell letter by letter. The tumult began with the appearance of a rude, blustering fellow, who was recently associated in Glasgow with the odious creature who fabricated the Hall of Science libel. This ruffler and his gang had come for mischief. At the close of his harangue he gave what the chairman knew to be a false name (Dr. Tanner), and the latter announced that, as this person had been guilty of deliberate deception, he would not be permitted to speak again. This greatly irritated the fugleman's faction, and they listened with ill-disguised impatience to a new Christian speaker. A subsequent remark of the chairman's, that as there were no fresh speakers he would call upon Mr. Cohen to reply to the gentlemen, whom he presumed were the representatives of the clergy of Dunoon, was the signal for a systematic outbreak. It was in vain that the chairman and Mr. Cohen strove to make themselves heard; all that Mr. Cohen did manage to make intelligible was that, on account of the misbehaviour of a part of the audience, he felt that it would be his duty to return the following week and give them a lesson in good manners. Then "Dr. Tanner" jumped on a seat and began to bawl a doxology, an exercise from which he suddenly desisted, in obedience to an emphatic remonstrance, coupled with moderate muscular pressure, from our staunch friend, Mr. Black. An ex-chief magistrate of Dunoon (Mr. Mackay) mounted the platform and endeavoured to restore order; but the spirit of lawlessness had broken all bounds, and there was nothing for it but to dismiss the meeting. Afterwards, on our way home, we were accompanied for some distance along the streets by a motley rabble, which regaled us with musical honours.

It must be recorded to the credit of some of the order-loving and fair-minded inhabitants of Dunoon that they warmly protested against this discreditable exhibition. Mr. Mackay and other prominent citizens came to us in the side-room to say how grieved and ashamed they were at the occurrence, and both the local newspapers, which gave copious reports of the meeting, explicitly saddled the opposition with all the blame in the case. The *Observer*, in a refreshingly outspoken article, animadverted strongly upon the rowdyism displayed, and one of its paragraphists pithily remarked that "boos" and hisses were not Christian evidences, and did not count as arguments with level-headed Christians. It will readily be understood that in the circumstances we regarded it as a point of honour that we should return to Dunoon at the earliest possible moment. Accordingly, when we learned for certain that Mr. Cohen would be free at the beginning of the following week, we requested the Dunoon friends to arrange for a meeting; but here a difficulty arose. The disturbance at Monday's meeting had furnished the bigots with a pretext for lodging a complaint, and the convener of the Halls' Committee declined to let the hall to us until he consulted the commissioners, whose decision would not be known until the afternoon of Monday, 16th, rather too late for a meeting on the same night. However, as the Dunoon friends were confident that their application would be granted, they bade us hold ourselves in readiness for immediate action. On Monday forenoon they wired that a meeting had been arranged for that evening, at Sandbank, a township about three miles from Dunoon; and, having hastily mobilised our flying corps, we sped down the Firth, only to find that, after a solemn, and perhaps prayerful, scrutiny of the Deed of Gift, the trustees of the Sandbank Public Hall had discovered that, as it stipulated that the building should not be used for any purpose that would tend to corrupt the morals of the community, it would not be lawful for them to let it for a Freethought lecture. Hallelujah! As an offset to this disappointment—for the Lord always tempers the wind to the shorn lamb—we were overjoyed to hear that, by a majority of 9 to 2, the Dunoon Commissioners had authorised the convener to give us the hall, but that, as the large hall was already engaged for Tuesday, the small one had been taken for Mr. Cohen's second lecture. That event passed off without a hitch. The room was packed to suffocation, and hundreds were turned away. Groups of eager listeners gathered outside, at the windows, on the chance of catching an occasional sentence; and the deportment of the audience was most exemplary. The only ripple on the otherwise serene surface of the evening's proceedings was raised by "Dr. Tanner," who made a desperate and despicable attempt to work in an extraneous reference to the "Leeds Orgies"; but this was vigorously ruled out of order, and the pitiful coward collapsed. The meeting separated with all the sedateness and decorum of a conventicle; and, although the vestibule was lined with people who had just come down from a religious meeting upstairs, and there was a considerable crowd waiting outside, I only heard a solitary hiss, and such sporadic *voces populi* as, "Aye, that's yin' o' the infidels," "Is that him? Ach, he's no' sae ill-looking efter a'," and "Whit are they comin' here fur w' their fause doctrine?" I was informed of two somewhat amusing incidents connected with the meeting. A drunken man staggered into the vestibule, and asked the way to the "infidel" meeting. Some good Samaritan, anxious for his spiritual welfare, directed him upstairs to the religious function. After sitting for a while, it at last dawned upon even his obfuscated intelligence that there must be a mistake somehow, and he said so, with more energy than politeness. A policeman was summoned, but refused to act, and the ulterior fate of that inebriate is shrouded in mystery. In the other case two sailors were seen coming down the stairs precipitately, and heard using flamboyant language. One of our friends solicitously inquired, "What is the matter?" "The matter?" blurted out one of them, with an expression of ineffable disgust and chagrin; "why, we thought it was an efflorescent concert; but incinerate my optics if it ain't a cerulean, purpuraceous, and sanguinary prayer-meetin'"; and as they moved off there was a further pyrotechnical display. We are pardonably proud of what we may venture to call our conquest of Dunoon. The bigots and bullies there have had a practical proof of the spirit and policy with which Secularists meet all attempts to overawe or stop them in their propagandist work, and the prestige which our movement enjoys of being always in the forefront of the battle for free speech has at least been preserved inviolate. On behalf of Mr. Cohen and the Glasgow Branch, I proffer sincere thanks to the small but compact and loyal body of Dunoon stalwarts, who have helped us to plant the standard of Secularism firmly in their burgh. They are already planning new modes of attack, one of those being to serve an invitation to debate upon every clergyman in the neighborhood, and to let the public know what has been done by an advertisement in the local press. It is not often that one comes upon men of such spirit, worth, and enterprise. It has been both a pleasure and an honor to stand shoulder to shoulder with them. May we always find friends as trusty in the hour of need.

After Dunoon it was inevitable that the other week-night meetings should seem somewhat tame and prosaic; but, judged on their own merits, they were really most interesting and fruitful. Paisley gave Mr. Cohen a good audience, but a very poor babbler as an opponent. The Branch there is thriving apace, and the secretary handed Mr. Cohen a substantial subscription for the lecture scheme. At Greenock, on Wednesday, the 11th, there was a fine, intelligent gathering; but the criticism was paltry, when it did not sink to the lower depth of detraction and malignity, as when an Irish Orangeman revived the filthy calumny which once coupled the names of Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. A list was drawn up of local Freethinkers willing to form a Branch, and as more than the complement was obtained, there is little fear of the success of the project.

The Motherwell meeting was in some respects the most encouraging of the series. It was large, animated, and responsive. At the suggestion of a friend, Mr. Cohen made reference to an odiously familiar and scurrilous leaflet which had been distributed at the door. By way of answer to its stereotyped question, "Where are the hospitals, etc., built by Secularists?" Mr. Cohen pointed out some of the legal and moral disabilities under which Secularists and Secular Societies still labor, and protested warmly against the

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shameful injustice of such taunts from the very people who had deliberately despoiled us. Here also a quorum of names was enlisted in order to the inception of a Branch, and I have since heard that a preliminary meeting has been held for that purpose.

The two outstanding features of Mr. Cohen's week-night itinerary are the magnitude of the audiences and the dearth of efficient criticism. Even making allowance for the attraction of a free lecture, the first circumstance points to a quickened interest in Freethought questions, and shadows forth the vast possibilities of expansion that lie before Secularist propaganda, if only its resources are replenished and developed. The masses of the people are slowly emerging from the slough of indifference and despond into which the collapse of the old faith has plunged them. The hunger for knowledge is springing up in their minds, and the promise of the future is with this great multitude, who are groping blindly after some settled scheme of thought and rational method of life. Transitional periods are crises in growth, and may as easily lead to degeneration as to progress. If the Rationalist is not at hand to give salutary nourishment and direction to the nascent habit of independent thinking, the irrationalist is always ready to administer some nostrum to allay intellectual unrest and paralyse the judgment. There is nothing like a stated succession of meetings for arousing and sustaining an active interest in Secularist doctrine. In each of the places visited there is hardly anything else talked about in the interval between the lectures; and while innuendo and slander are busy, the antagonising forces that make for truth and justice are also at work, and in the end Secularism is not only justified, but also strengthened and advanced.

The absence of creditable opposition is profoundly significant. It means that Christianity has fallen so low that not even its professional teachers and apologists dare to defend it openly. The cultured lay or clerical Christian is too painfully conscious of the infirmity of his creed to risk any exposure of it. And thus, in its dishonored old age, historic Christianity is embodied in dogmas and institutions; is creeping back for an asylum into the affections and keeping of the despised rump of the once widespread horde of the uncouth and unlettered, who fostered its puling infancy. Thus religions, like men, may pass into their second childhood.

J. P. GILMOUR.

JESUS OF NAZARETH DOETH A GUY!

AN EASTER HYMN.

(With Apologies to Moody and Sankey.)

WHAT means this noisy, frowsy throng?
There surely must be something wrong.
Why are they so excited, pray,
And just like Bedlamites astray?
I will explain the reason why:
Jesus of Nazareth draweth nigh,
And they are anxious to espy
Jesus of N. as he passeth by.

Who is this Jesus, why doth he
Send people off their n-u-t?
How is it that he hath the skill
With such a mob the streets to fill?
Hush! hush! you fools, is my reply,
Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.
Yes, there he goeth; look! Oh my!
On a couple of asses he passeth by!

What is his destination, pray?
And is it very far away?
Why doth J. C. so wildly bolt
Astride that donkey and that colt?
Those "mokes" were stolen, I reply,
Jesus of Nazareth doeth a "guy";
They are not paid for, that is why
Jesus of Nazareth bolteth by!

Why do the people's cheers resound?
Why spread they out upon the ground
Old clothes, and branches off the trees,
And follow Christ like swarms of bees?
This is the reason, I reply:
They think 'tis a God that is passing by;
They therefore laud and glorify
Jesus of N. as he passeth by!

. . . . . .

What is this dreadful change of scene—
Christ on a cross—what can it mean?
How could they murder and deride
The God they'd lately glorified?
It is not true—'tis all my eye,
To say that their "Savior" they left to die;
To say that, mocking his bitter cry,
Jesus of Nazareth they passed by!

ESS JAY BEE.

PALEY'S PLAGIARISM.

THE famous work on *Natural Theology*, by Dr. Paley, has long been the text-book upon the subject at universities and theological colleges. Most people regard it as an impregnable argument, original, at least, in its illustrations with Paley himself. It is neither the one nor the other. It is a piece of sophistry, founded on the work of another man, to whom Paley, who said he could not afford to keep a conscience, acted with gross unfairness in keeping his name and work concealed. The leading arguments and illustrations of his *Natural Theology* are taken from a book of the same nature, written by Dr. Bernard Nieuwentyt, published in Holland over one hundred years before Paley's treatise made its appearance in England. Nieuwentyt's work was translated into English by Mr. Chamberlayne, a member of the Royal Society, under the title of *The Religious Philosopher* (three vols., 8vo; 1718-19).

To show the connection between Mr. Chamberlayne's *Religious Philosopher* and Dr. Paley's *Natural Theology*, I give the plan of both publications in parallel columns. The reader will see their almost complete identity:—

General Arrangement of Dr. Paley's "Natural Theology."	*General Arrangement of Dr. Nieuwentyt's "Religious Philosopher."*
Dr. Paley lays down his "Statement of the General Argument" in two or three sections.	Dr. Nieuwentyt has his "General Epistle to the Reader," in which the same "General Argument" is employed.
Paley commences the application of his argument of design with an examination of the structure of the human body. Chaps. 3 to 11 inclusive contain his illustrations. Chap. 9 is devoted to the muscles.	Dr. Nieuwentyt also commences his application of the argument of design by an examination of the human body. "Contemplation" 10 is devoted to the muscles—containing 16 sections, illustrated with many plates.
Paley commences his 12th chap. with Comparative Anatomy.	Nieuwentyt enters upon the consideration of Comparative Anatomy.
In the 20th chap. Paley commences with the structure and nature of Plants.	The nature of Plants is considered by Dr. Nieuwentyt.
Paley makes his observations on the "Elements," Air, Water, Fire, Light, etc.	Nieuwentyt makes observations on the "Elements," etc.
Paley's 22nd chapter is on "Astronomy."	The 24th "Contemplation" of Nieuwentyt is on the "Visible Heavens."
Paley concludes with some general remarks on the nature and existence of a Deity.	Dr. Nieuwentyt ends his disquisitions on Astronomy, etc., with remarks of a similar nature on the same subject.

Not only is the general arrangement similar; the particular instances are alike. Voltaire had said before Paley: "I shall always be convinced that a clock proves a clockmaker"; but the particular illustration of the watch is found in Nieuwentyt, who says: "Let us suppose that in the middle of a sandy down, where few people are used to pass, anyone should find a watch, showing the hours, minutes, and days of the months, and, having examined the same, should perceive so many different wheels, nicely adapted by their teeth to each other, and that one of them could not move without moving the rest of the whole machine; and should further observe that those wheels are made of brass, in order to keep them from rust; that the spring is steel, no other metal being so proper for that purpose," etc. These are almost the very words afterwards used by Paley without any acknowledgment. Paley does, indeed, mention the name of Nieuwentyt once, and this in a very disingenuous manner. He says: "Dr. Nieuwentyt, in the *Leipsic Transactions*, reckons upon one hundred muscles that are employed every time we breathe." Paley, instead of referring to the work which would have proved his whole indebtedness, mentions the inaccessible *Leipsic Transactions*, in which it made its first appearance. Of course, it is quite true that Paley utilised his material as an able special pleader may the brief drawn up for him by a solicitor; and to the reputation of a special pleader Paley is fully entitled. But the main thought and the main illustrations of his work were not his own, and this, in common fairness, he should have mentioned.

Now let me, with the fairness wanting in Paley, acknowledge that the above matter was ventilated in the columns of the *Athenæum* as far back as 1848, pp. 803, 907, 934. As, however, editions of Paley are multiplied without any acknowledgment of the truth, it is not out of place to again call public attention to the facts underlying this vaunted piece of Christian evidence.

LUCIANUS.

When Andrew Halliday told Fred Lawrence at the Savage Club that St. Peter would not let him into heaven, "Won't he, though?" said Lawrence. "Egad! if he don't, I'll serve him with a copy of Holy Writ."

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BOOK CHAT.

"You have committed the offence of plain speaking, and I fear it cannot be pardoned," wrote Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Purcell, the author of *The Life of Cardinal Manning*. Gladstone accurately measured the bitterness of the Catholic party, who, by their numerous articles against Mr. Purcell, show how deeply they resent the shattering of an idol.

* * *

Those who do not care to tackle Mr. Purcell's bulky volumes on Cardinal Manning will find much of his information condensed in a sixpenny *brochure* by Miss M. F. Cusack ("the nun of Kenmare"), entitled "A Modern Cardinal."

* * *

Mr. Lecky's new work, "Democracy and Liberty," discusses the influence of democracies, aristocracy, upper chambers, nationalities, in connection with religious liberty, Socialism, labor questions, woman questions, etc.

* * *

The *Times* (March 24), noticing Mr. Lecky's work, says it "is worthy of his reputation, and a veritable encyclopædia of information." It seems that Mr. Lecky considers the *Referendum*, an appeal to the genuine opinion of the country, as a device full of promise, not less so because it would lower the authority of the House of Commons. The *Times* notices that, wide though the range of Mr. Lecky's inquiry be, he passes over the bearings of science on democracy.

* * *

Percy Bysshe Shelley, Poet and Pioneer, is the title of a study by Mr. H. S. Salt, shortly to be published by William Reeves. The book is partly the reprint of a work already noticed. Mr. Salt claims that the verdict of time not only pronounces Shelley a great poet, but corroborates his social and freethinking views.

* * *

In his newly-published work, *What I Think of South Africa*, Mr. Stuart Cumberland tells the following story of "Oom Paul": "Some time ago his Honor accepted the invitation to open a new synagogue at Johannesburg. After the usual preliminaries he, to the amazement of the Chosen who were there assembled, announced, in his loudest tones, 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I declare this building open.'"

* * *

The *Labor Prophet* for March devotes its front page to an article on "The Humanitarian Movement," by Mr. H. S. Salt, of whom a portrait is given. Mr. Salt explains what he means by a humanitarian. "I mean," he says, "one who feels and acts humanely, not towards mankind only, or the lower animals only, but towards *all* sentient life—one who adopts the principle that 'it is iniquitous to inflict unnecessary suffering on any sentient being.' I should not regard as humanitarians, for example, those 'philanthropists' who, having made a fortune by commercial competition, in which the depreciation of wages is a recognised method, afterwards give back a portion of their wealth as charity. This may perhaps be philanthropy, but it is not humanitarianism. Nor do I think that the name should be given to those 'zoophilists,' or so-called animal lovers, who keep useless and pampered animals as pets and playthings, wasting on them time and money which might be better spent elsewhere, and, indeed, wasting the lives of the animals themselves, for animals have their own lives to live as men have." (London: 72 Fleet-street; price 1d.).

* * *

The new edition of Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* will have as frontispiece a photogravure of a recently-taken portrait of the author. Over 80,000 copies of this remarkable work have been sold.

* * *

A series of articles by Olive Schreiner on "South Africa and the Boers" will commence in the April number of the *Fortnightly Review*.

* * *

With the delivery of an address by Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, on "The Theosophical View," the Humanitarian League's course of lectures on "The Rights of Men and the Rights of Animals" was brought to a close on Tuesday evening, March 17, at the London Memorial Hall. The six addresses, which have shown a remarkable consensus of opinion on the principles of humanitarianism, among speakers otherwise representative of widely-divergent schools of thought, will be shortly published as a volume by Messrs. George Bell and Sons.

In all ancient Christian literature there is not one word that tells the slave to revolt, or that tells the master to liberate the slave, or even that touches the problem of public right which arises out of slavery.—*Ernest Renan.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

THAT CONVERTED ATHEIST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am greatly astonished with your latest reference in the *Freethinker* to my story which appeared in the *Joyful News*. In the first place, the account you give of the interview contains discrepancies, and is highly coloured, as is vouched for by a gentleman who was present when *my answers* to their inquiries were given. If this is the way reports of interviews are to appear, further investigations—even if permitted—would be useless. In the second place, a post-card sent to Mr. Gilmour for his own private information, and, I believe, marked "private" for that purpose, is sent to you and printed in your columns without permission. This is evidently unfair to me. Thirdly, you state that the reply you received from me was without my name and address. I have a competent witness to the fact that I enclosed a private note for you, with the letter for publication, requesting you to publish my letter, but only to give my initials. As the letter for printing reached you, I reasonably conclude that the other also did. Under these circumstances I absolutely decline any further communication with you or your representatives.

JOHN T. SMITH.

51, Whitevale Street, Glasgow.

P.S.—I was greatly surprised to learn that Mr. Gilmour knew the contents of my letter to you *a week prior to its publication*. I may add that the conduct of the deputation of four compelled me to write to Mr. Gilmour respectfully suggesting that my only means of future communication *re* my article would be through the Press.

[Mr. Smith's post-card to Mr. Gilmour was *not* marked "private." He sent *no* private letter to us with the one intended for publication in the *Freethinker*. He has a competent (anonymous) witness for everything he is unable to substantiate otherwise. We quite understand Mr. Smith. He prates of *privacy* after concocting a converted infidel story for *public* consumption, and stands upon his dignity to avoid a damning exposure. It is the Price Hughes business over again.—ED.]

THE SUNDAY LEAGUE AND A THEOLOGICAL SUNDAY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—What is the Sunday League coming to when, through its President and Secretary, it gives itself away to Dr. Peake and the rabid Sabbatarians by *denying* that its object is to destroy the "theological" Sunday? May we not ask the League the meaning of its Sunday Excursions and its Sunday Concerts, if not to change the theological into a rational Sunday? And yet, in all the daily papers, we see letters signed by Alderman Treloar and Henry Mills disclaiming any intention or purpose to do so. Alas! we sigh for the good old times when Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, in her Freethinking days, pleaded so eloquently on the platforms of the League for a rational Sunday. But the League was young then, and strong and confident in its principles. We fear it is growing old now, faint and fearsome, when its President and Secretary proclaim to the world the abandonment of their leading object and main purpose to bring about a rational way of spending the weekly day of rest. Even Mr. Massey Mainwaring could not rid himself of this old figment of the sanctity and sacredness of the holy Sabbath day; but a higher note was struck, and a broader view advocated, by Sir John Lubbock, who presented a petition from the Sunday Society, frequently referred to in the debate when the proposal was unfortunately made by the mover to limit the hours of opening from two o'clock to six. It is but fair to say that Mr. Lough, Mr. John Burns, and others, emphasised this view; but, in the interests of "sanctity" and "sacredness," the advocate of the Sunday League yielded to pressure on this cardinal point, and the nightmare of a "theological Sunday" will still darken the horizon and rob the Sunday of its brightness and joy, and as well the opportunities of intellectual and moral elevation, by closing our Museums and Art Galleries at six instead of nine or ten o'clock. The debate is still going on in the daily papers, and Dr. Peake is clinching his argument by quoting the words of Lord Hobhouse at a public Conference of the National Federation of Sunday Societies, held in London last year, of which the Sunday League is a member. In the printed report of the Federation, now lying before me, Lord Hobhouse said: "They thought that the use of Sunday should be the *rational* as opposed to the *theological*"; and this is the only true and logical position of any Sunday League or Society claiming public attention and support. We trust all the other members of the Federation will disown and repudiate so mean and degrading a position. J. TOPHAM.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, Charles Watts, "The Science of Life."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 7.45, select entertainment. Good Friday, at 8, social gathering.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, G. J. Holyoake, "The General Behavior of the Devil." Tuesday, at 8.30, social party.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. Standring, "What is the Old Testament?" Good Friday, 8.30 to 2, ball.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, Miss E. J. Troup will lecture.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Mormonism and Salvationist Folly."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-Street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Bible as a Text-book of Morals."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (Athenæum, Godolphin-road, Shepherds Bush): 7.30, S. E. Easton, "Where will you Spend Eternity?"

WESTMINSTER BRANCH N.S.S. (42 Vincent-street): 8, members' monthly meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 12, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, W. Heaford will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, W. H. Whitney, "Thomas Paine."

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, annual meeting—important business.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, Stanley Jones, "The History of Culture."

DERBY ("Ye Olde Feathers"): 7, Mr. Briggs, "The Limits of the Artificial."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—D. Baxter, "Freethought Gleanings from the *Herald*"; 6.30, social meeting.

LEEDS (Vulcan Club, Vulcan-street, Benson-street): morning, C. Cohen, "Darwinism and Democracy"; afternoon, "Christianity, Woman, and Morality"; evening, "Scepticism: Its Meaning and its Value."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, musical and literary evening.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, F. Woollett, "The Mormons and their Religion."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 3, annual meeting of members; 6.30, social party.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 3, monthly business meeting.

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, business meeting, to arrange for Mr. Watts's lectures.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, lecture or reading by a local gentleman.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting; 7.30, R. Chapman, "The Future of Secularism."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—March 29, Leeds. April 5, Balls Pond; 12, 19, and 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—April 5, m. Westminster; 12, Mile End; 19, Camberwell; 26, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—April 12, Balls Pond; 26, Glasgow. May 3, Failsworth; 10, Balls Pond.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Conversational meetings, open to all, at Mr. Coates's, 13 Derby-street, every Sunday, at 7.

Information and literature may be obtained from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will be willing to consider applications to deliver lectures on Positivism gratuitously and without expense, where such lectures may be desired.

THE PATH OF PROGRESS:
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The Freethinker

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

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EASTER AND ITS CUSTOMS.

EASTER is the Sunday following the first full moon after March 21. The fact that it is a movable date should suggest that it was an astronomical festival, and not one celebrating any human event. If some crucified Jew rose from the dead, he must have done so on a particular day, and the anniversary of that day should be regularly kept. But Christians have never fixed even the year when their man God is said to have crossed swords with Death and won. The ascription of the crucifixion to a Friday, the first day of the Passover, is incorrect, for, according to fixed rules of the Jewish calendar, the first day of Passover never can fall on a Friday, and to suppose that Jesus was crucified during the sacred festival is as absurd as to allege that some English criminal was hanged on a Sunday or Christmas Day!

The name Easter, from Eostre, the Saxon goddess of the East, standing for the dawn and spring, expresses its real meaning. The Saxon Oster means "to rise." The resurrection celebrated at this time is that of vegetation, the bursting of life from the underworld, the triumph of light, warmth, beauty, and promise of plenty over winter and scarcity.

The determination of Easter by the moon is a sign of its antiquity.* Our hot-cross buns on Good Friday are really similar to the cakes which Jeremiah xliv. 19 speaks of as made for the queen of heaven. All the chief customs in connection with Easter show both its antiquity and its foundation in nature-worship rather than in Christianity.

Easter time brings in various games. Many of these, such as marbles, whipping tops, battledore and shuttlecock, are really portions of ancient magic. Ball-playing was an ancient rite, and formerly was practised both outside the church walls and inside the church at Easter.†

The custom of wearing new clothes, like the sports of Easter, is probably part of the Sympathetic Magic to which I have devoted a chapter in my *Footsteps of the Past*, in which, by the way, I have given fuller explanations of some Easter customs than is here possible. Few in the towns now take heed of the old admonition—

> At Easter let your clothes be new,
> Or else be sure you will it rue.

But in some parts of the country this is still an article of popular belief and practice.

Much has been written on Easter eggs. Early philosophy places the seat of life not in a cell, but in an egg. The virtue of the egg was supposed to go into the eater. In parts of Ireland still the custom prevails of the young men eating eggs on Easter day till they become well-nigh ill. In a more refined form we find the idea in the blessing of the eggs in the Roman missal. In Germany the plough is driven over a loaf, and an egg buried in the field, in order to secure a fruitful harvest; and the ploughman will eat two new-laid eggs on the newly-ploughed field. Thus the virtue passes not only from the egg to the eater, but from the eater to his possessions. Or, again, a loaf and an Easter egg are put into the first sheaf to ensure an abundant crop in the new year. Another custom was once common to England, Scotland, and Germany, where the boys neither eat the eggs nor bury them, but simply roll them over the fields to enrich the seed corn beneath.*

To this day it is the custom in Jerusalem for the priests to pretend that miraculous fire descends at the Holy Sepulchre at Easter, and their votaries assemble to obtain light from the holy fire. Similar customs are almost world-wide. The ancient Germans used to go to the priest on Holy Saturday, that he may strike new fire from a flint, whereat they lit their own. Bishop Boniface wrote to Rome to ask if they knew the custom there. Pope Zachary replied that they knew it not.† But the Church, ever quick to see how pagan ceremonies might be transformed, took up the new fire, and embodied it in the Office for Holy Saturday. A similar ritual existed among the ancient Mexicans.‡

Brady, in his *Clavis Calendaria*, says of the old custom of "lifting" at Easter: "The Resurrection on the third day was originally designed to be typified by this indecent usage; and we have much to lament that so abominable a violation of Christian purity and simplicity should have triumphed over such a considerable lapse of time." I rather suspect that this was a charm or an imitation of sacrifice. At any rate, it typified not the raising up of Jesus Christ, but the elevation of vegetative life from the underworld.

It is certain that this resurrection was in olden time enacted, typified in a mummery that probably was intended to bring it about. In my *Footsteps of the Past* I have sought to show that the custom of electing an Easter king, and that of watching the sepulchre, are remnants of this. Many of the analogies are brought out in that most suggestive book, *The Golden Bough*, of Mr. J. G. Frazer. The subject is too vast to be considered within the limits of the present article; but I must allude to the notable fact that such an enacted resurrection takes place to this day in Jerusalem. A figure of a dead person is placed in a sepulchre on Good Friday, and brought out arrayed in gorgeous garments on Sunday. Such customs were once as wide as Christendom. In Belgium, says the Rev. T. E. Bridgett (*Blunders and Forgeries*, p. 168), there is still to be seen a crucifix used formerly in the ceremonial of Holy Week. On Good Friday the arms could be depressed, so that it could be laid, together with the blessed Sacrament, in the sepulchre until the sacred host was placed inside the breast of the figure behind a crystal. At the Resurrection the figure was gorgeously dressed and placed seated above a high altar, with one arm raised in benediction.

Wriothesley records in his *Chronicle* that on November 29, 1547, being the first Sunday of Advent, Dr. Barlow, Bishop of St. David's, preached at St. Paul's Cross against idolatry, where "he showed a painted figure of the resurrection of our Lord made with vices [devices, movable joints], which put out his legs of sepulchre, and blessed with his hand and turned his head." Small wonder if the ignorant took such "vices" for miracles, like the weeping and winking virgins still extant on the continent, as is supposed to have been the case with the Rood at Bexley, Kent. Naogeorgus refers to the custom in his *Popish Kingdome*:—

> An other image doe they get, like one but newly deade,
> With legges stretcht out at length, and handes upon his body spreade:
> And him with pomp and sacred song they beare unto his grave,

* See articles on "Moon Worship," *Freethinker*, December 8 and 15, 1895.

† *Footsteps of the Past*, p. 172.

* *Antiquary*, April, 1882.

† Mannhardt, *Der Baumcultus der Germanen*, 503-518 ff.

‡ H. Bancroft's *Native Races of the Pacific*, iii., 393 ff.

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His bodie all being wrapt in lawne, and silks and sarcenet brave;
And lest in grave he shoulde remaine without some companie,
The singing bread is layde with him, for more idolatrie.

On Easter eve the fire all is quencht in every place,
And fresh again from out the flint is fetcht with solemn grace.
The priest doth halow this against great dangers many one,
A brande whereof doth every man with greedie minde take home.
The image and the breade from out the grave (a worthie sight)
They take, and Angels two they place in vesture white.
Another image of a conqueror they forth doe bring,
And on the altar place, and then, they lustily doe sing,
That gates of hell asunder burst and Satan overthrowne,
Christ from his grave is risen up and now alive is known.

Mr. Ernest Gardner, director of the British School of Archæology at Athens, gives the following account of the Easter ceremonies at Thebes, in Boetia: "On Good Friday the sacred picture of the dead Christ was laid on a sort of bier or structure resembling a four-post bed. The picture itself, the four posts, and the overhanging canopy were covered with flowers and green leaves. Every person came up to the bier, kissed the sacred picture, and carried away a flower or leaf from it, with the intention of keeping it until the Easter of the following year." Here the meaning of the festival is as clear as daylight. The dead Christ represents the life of the world departed in winter, but raised again at the crossing of the sun over the vernal equinox.

Easter, born in archaic times, the outcome of simple delight at the return of vegetation and brighter days, has grown with humanity and gathered to itself memorials of many religions. The Queen of Feasts is long antecedent to Christianity, and may long survive it. We keep the old Pagan festivals with new meanings, but they are still links which join us in old-world communion with nature and with our kind.

> What custom wills, in all things should we do it;
> The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
> And mountainous error be too highly heap'd
> For truth to overpeer.

Yet much is to be said for the maintenance of old festivals that bind us at once to the fathers who have gone before and to the children who will follow after us.

J. M. Wheeler.

A GREAT ATHEIST'S PROSE.

James Thomson, who wrote for so many years in Freethought periodicals—such as the *National Reformer*, the *Secularist*, and the *Liberal*—over the initials of "B. V.," was for long a close personal friend of Charles Bradlaugh. Both were uncompromising Atheists in their intellectual maturity, and that was their one point of similarity, as perhaps it was really their one strong link of attachment. In other respects they were widely different. Bradlaugh was very tall, and Thomson might be called short; Bradlaugh was big and strong, and Thomson was slim and somewhat frail; Bradlaugh was a man of action, and Thomson was a dreamer; Bradlaugh looked after lots of people, and Thomson could barely look after himself; Bradlaugh was a magnificent speaker, but comparatively no writer, and Thomson was a magnificent writer, and no speaker at all except in private conversation; Bradlaugh won a great reputation as a propagandist, a politician, and finally as a statesman—and Thomson won, or did the work which is winning, a great reputation as a strong, original poet and a prose writer of singular force and distinction.

Owing to his poverty and obscurity, and the unpopularity of the journals to which he contributed, Thomson never made a figure in what is called the literary world. Some general recognition of his powers was accorded during the last year or two of his unhappy life, but it was too late to be more than an ironical gleam on his short pathway to the grave. And had it not been for the devotion of Mr. Bertram Dobell, the poet's death might have destroyed all chance of much further recognition for another fifty years. Mr. Dobell has published Thomson's works at his own expense, and with a very doubtful prospect of return; for Thomson's stern intellectual integrity, and utter absence of sentimentality and meretricious adornment, stand in the way of his ever becoming popular. He has already found an audience, however, fit though few; and this audience is bound to increase—thanks very largely to Mr. Dobell's constant self-sacrifice on the altar of his dead friend's reputation.

Mr. Dobell published last year a collected edition, in two volumes, of Thomson's poems. Many of these productions had never been published before, but were printed direct from the poet's manuscript. Some day or other, and before long if possible, I hope to say something more about these precious volumes, which ought to be on the library shelves, and often in the hands, of every Freethinker who appreciates lofty poetry. Meanwhile, I desire to bespeak a Freethought public, and of course Freethought purchasers, for a beautiful volume of Thomson's prose, which Mr. Dobell has just issued. *Biographical and Critical Studies* is its title. It is complete in itself, though it is intended to be the first volume of a collected edition of Thomson's prose. "But it must be understood," the editor says, "that it will depend upon the reception of the present volume whether the publication of the remainder is proceeded with." May that reception be cordial enough to encourage Mr. Dobell in his disinterested enterprise; may it lead to the completion of this noble project; and when Thomson's prose, as well as his verse, is fully placed before the English-reading public of the whole world, the poet's lovers from of old will all cry "Well done!" feeling that in Mr. Dobell's case love has been stronger than death, and friendship has defied the grave.

And now for a little fault-finding; it is *very* little, and may as well be dispatched immediately. Mr. Dobell mentions all but one of the publications in which these collected articles first appeared. Is there any reason for not stating that the long notice of Garth Wilkinson's *Improvisations* first appeared in the *Liberal*? And has not Mr. Dobell made an awkward mistake in not following his own editorial policy in the collected edition of the poems, where he gives the dates of composition? This is not a matter of trifling importance, for Thomson's passage to Atheism was slow and painful, and long after rejecting supernatural Christianity he clung to a half metaphysical and half poetical Pantheism. When the date of composition is appended to every article, the reader is able to understand the contradictory opinons of the author, as simply marking the different stages in his mental and spiritual development; but, without the help of this chronology, the author's self-contradictions are bewildering. I have seen Thomson's opinion quoted against "Materialists," that "Blake and Swedenborg and other true mystics (Jesus among them) undoubtedly had senses other than ours." Thomson did, indeed, write thus in 1863, but in the article on "A Strange Book" (Garth Wilkinson's) sixteen years later he poured fierce scorn on Swedenborg's "rigid and frigid system," and pointedly disowned all belief in this "other senses" theory of mysticism. This is what he wrote then:—

> "Divine inspiration, influx of the Spirit, and such phrases, are convenient for conveying a person's consciousness of being in ecstasy, lifted beyond his ordinary self, as they are consecrated by long usage; but I disavow any theological or mythological dogmas which others may conceive involved in them. To myself, ecstasy, trance, inspiration, vision, revelation, are no less simply human and natural, though so much less common, than sleep and waking; are just as susceptible of scientific explanation, though our science is not yet subtile and comprehensive enough to pervade them, as spring-tides or summer flowering and fruitage, or the *aurora borealis*. If a man be eight feet high, or only four feet, he is of very uncommon stature; but in the one case he is not above, and in the other he is not below, the limits of humanity. You must prove the insufficiency of nature for any effect, before you can fairly claim our attention to assertions of the supernatural."

This extract is sufficiently decisive, and it occurs in a remarkable article, the conclusion of which is a piece of well-sustained eloquence, beginning with a final censure of Swedenborg's "dreary, monstrous madness which kept piecing and patching away, year after year, for a whole generation, all the shreds and tatters of Hebrew old clo's, in the desperate delusion of thus making a sufficient and everlasting garment for the illimitable Universe of Life."

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The articles which rightly precede this one deal with Blake and Shelley; they are very finely written, but they must be read (we repeat) with a constant view to their date of composition. The article on Blake abounds in poetical criticism. Burns, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, and Browning, are all admirably appraised. Mrs. Browning is rightly accused of making "her style rugged with pedantry," and in *Aurora Leigh* she "sets out determined to walk the world with the great Shakespearean stride, whence desperate entanglement of feminine draperies and blinding swirls of dust." Thomson concludes his article on Shelley by styling him "poet of poets and purest of men," a description which he repeated in his dedication of *Vane's Story* to Shelley's memory.

The articles on John Wilson and James Hogg are well done, but such indifferent themes did not permit Thomson to kindle. How different are the succeeding papers on Robert Browning! Here we have Thomson at his best, and then he is hard to beat. Here is Thomson's view of Browning as man and poet:—

> "I look up to Browning as one of the very few men known to me by their works who, with most cordial energy and invincible resolution, have lived thoroughly throughout the whole of their being, to the uttermost verge of all their capacities, in his case truly colossal; lived and wrought thoroughly in sense and soul and intellect; lived at home in all realms of nature and human nature, art and literature: whereas nearly all of us are really alive in but a small portion of our so much smaller beings, and drag wearily to the grave our for the most part dead selves, dead from the suicidal poison of misuse and atrophy of disuse. Confident and rejoicing in the storm and stress of the struggle, he has conquered life instead of being conquered by it; a victory so rare as to be almost unique, especially among poets in these latter days."

The longest article in this volume is on Ben Jonson. Originally contributed to *Cope's Tobacco Plant*, it deals largely with Ben's references to "the divine weed." This part of the article, even to a deep smoker, will perhaps be tedious; but all the rest is capital work and capital reading. There is a shorter, but most delightful, article on Saint-Amant, an early French poet, wit, smoker, and hard drinker; interspersed with deft renderings of select bits of versification. The opening article is on the great Rabelais, king of French humorists, who was always one of Thomson's favorites. Nothing equal to this has been written on Rabelais in English. Walter Besant is good, but he is so much thinner than Thomson. Rabelais is by no means a clean writer, according to present-day standards; but, as Coleridge said, his "caricature of filth and zanyism" shows "how fully he both knew and felt the danger in which he stood." Robert Burns reminded Tam O'Shanter that "in hell they'll roast thee like a herring," but they roasted you this side of hell in the days of Rabelais. He had seen his own friends burnt for thinking too freely, and he did not mean to share their fate if he could help it; so he covered his heresy with buffoonery, which did not hide it from the wise, though shielding him from bigots and persecutors. Speaking of the filth and dirt of this great writer, Thomson says he "had to use so much for mere disguise, like one crouching in a foul ditch in order to escape his enemies." Here is Thomson's summing-up on Rabelais:—

> "I am inclined to look up to Rabelais as the greatest genius in French literature. Perhaps the very finest work in that literature has been done by Pascal, but Pascal's finest work is a series of fragments; and while as profound, he is narrow as an artesian well, in comparison with the oceanic amplitude and energy, as well as depth, of Rabelais. Of the humor I say nothing—it is proverbial; a frank, jolly laughter, unrestrained, diluvian, immense, inextinguishable as the laughter of the gods. His enormous erudition and knowledge are mere toys for his playtime; but throughout his whole work, or play, he gives you the sense of easiest power and mastery—at home in everything, rising with its theme as readily as it falls, never strained or fatigued, able to do what it likes, equal and more than equal to far more arduous things if it cared to undertake them; in short, with an indefinite reserve of capacity in all directions: and this I take to be the impression which only a supreme and Titanic genius can produce."

Such admirable writing ought not to lie buried in the columns of a defunct periodical, and I for one am thankful to Mr. Dobell for rescuing it from such oblivion.

G. W. FOOTE.

GOD AND HUMAN HAPPINESS.

THE endeavor to promote the general happiness of the community is a duty which we should all recognise, and one that we should, as far as possible, practically carry out. Whatever is calculated to aid in realising this desirable object of existence should have our hearty support. The popular theological notion is, that the happiness of mankind cannot be attained without a belief in God. It is further assumed by orthodox adherents that a disbelief in a supernatural providence is necessarily attended with personal misery and national disorder. Believing that such a notion and assumption are contrary to fact and to general experience, we propose to consider if there is any necessary connection between the belief in God and the enjoyment of human happiness; and also whether disbelief in such a being is the source of individual misery and societarian misfortunes. We are not here concerned with the question, Does God exist? but simply with the inquiry, Is faith in him indispensable to the tranquility of the mind and to the progress and well-being of society? It is not denied that God-believers are sometimes happy in their belief; but our contention is that there are persons who can be, and who are, supremely happy without such belief; and, further, that the world's advancement in all that adds to its brightness, dignity, and welfare depends upon natural, not supernatural, agencies.

This fact has been admitted, not only by some of our greatest philosophic and scientific thinkers, but also by some of the most eminent theologians. Jeremy Taylor, Drs. Blair, Hooker, and Chalmers, have all given it as their opinion that it is possible for a man to be moral independently of any religious belief; and the Bishop of Hereford, in his Bampton Lectures, says: "The principles of morality are founded in our nature, independently of any religious belief, and are, in fact, obligatory even upon the Atheist." Theodore Parker observes: "Atheists are men who aim to be faithful to their nature, and to their whole nature.....They are commonly on the side of man, as opposed to the enemies of man; on the side of the people as against a tyrant; they are, or mean to be, on the side of truth, of justice, and of love." Bacon says: "Atheism did never perturb States.....and we see the times inclined to Atheism (as the time of Augustus Cæsar) were civil times; but superstition hath been the confusion of many States" (Essay on *Superstition*). The Right Hon. William Pitt truthfully acknowledges that "Atheism furnishes no man with arguments to be vicious"; and Professor Tyndall remarks: "If I wished to find men who are scrupulous in their adherence to engagements, whose words are their bond, and to whom moral shiftiness of any kind is subjectively unknown; if I wanted a loving father, a faithful husband, an honorable neighbor, and a just citizen, I should seek him and find him among the band of Atheists" (Lecture on *Science and Man*, pp. 27, 28). In the *Weekly Sun*, March 25, 1894, Hector Graham writes: "I have associated with a great number of Agnostics in my time, and am constrained to admit that I have always found them happy, honorable men.....I put the question seriously: How many Atheists destroy themselves? Hardly any. How many thorough unbelievers are found in gaol? How many promote bogus societies and victimise the fatherless and widows? Alas! the press too often shows us that the promoters of such societies and companies have been looked upon with respect and adoration, and have been Christians of an eighteen-carat stamp." These testimonies accord with our experience that human happiness abounds where there is no belief in God. It would be against the very nature of things for misery to be the result of thoughtful scepticism, inasmuch as such a mental condition, being the outcome of honest investigation, has around it the cheering halo of sincerity and fidelity.

It is frequently alleged that a belief in God and his providence is the grand dividing line between the human species and the "brute creation." But even if we grant this, it does not, therefore, follow that human happiness is the result of such a belief. The New Testament tells us that "the fowls of the air" are fed by the "heavenly Father," that the "lilies of the field" are arrayed in a glory surpassing that of Solomon's, and that the grass of the field is clothed (Matthew vi.). Yet these providential attentions are not attributed to any belief; why, then, should it be expected that man, who belongs to the great world of

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sentient beings, should be otherwise dealt with by nature's impartial hand? Supposing God does care for his creatures; is it fair to him to allege that he is less mindful of man than of the lower animals and of the vegetal world? If he bestow his blessings upon the one without belief, why should he not do so upon the other? To say that the one has the power to believe, and that the other has not, is not a sufficient answer, because there are thousands of human beings who are unable to believe in a deity. They may not deny his existence, but they cannot recognise any evidence to justify them in believing in him. Are they, therefore, on that account to be regarded as being "of all men most miserable"? St. Paul might have thought so, but he lived a long time ago, and his theology prompted him to form a very low and grovelling estimate of human nature and its capabilities.

Those professed Christians, who consider that it is in the "order of God's Providence" that belief in him is necessary to human happiness, appear to overlook the fact that the teachings of Theism vary in different ages, and among different sects; also that this acknowledgment of God's existence is purely a matter of faith, and that is not possible to some minds. The absurdity of the Christian position here referred to will appear obvious to the unprejudiced mind if we note the different inferences that have been drawn from the supposed acts of God by Roman Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. The unhappiness and terrible sufferings of the people in that country have been ascribed by Protestants to the endowment of Romanism; while the Catholics consider that their national suffering was caused by Protestant rule and the heresy of its faith. The fact is, it cannot be shown that either was right. Archbishop Whately, who was a professor of logic, failed to see that the "judgments" in either case could be proved to have come from God. Still, very inconsistently we think, Whately admitted that in the old Bible times God did punish people for holding wrong views; his objection was to men presuming to pass judgment in Ireland upon what was supposed to be God's acts. But if, as Whately puts it, it was an act of presumption upon the part of men in Ireland to judge that the nation's unhappiness was caused by Roman or Protestant belief, was it not equally a presumption upon the part of the Bible writers to do a similar thing? There is no more incongruity in God sending a famine to Ireland than in his destroying nearly the whole of the world's inhabitants by a flood. So far, however, as Ireland is concerned, the matter should be settled by the fact that similar miseries and privations to those which devastated that country have been experienced where Catholicism and Protestantism were not in conflict.

If it were true that God averts misery and secures happiness to those who believe in him, the plagues, pestilences, famines, and wars that have decimated professed Christian nations ought not to have occurred. The failure of crops in England, the storms that visit its coasts and destroy thousands of lives, while the majority of the inhabitants profess to believe in God, should be sufficient to refute the fallacy that such belief secures human happiness. We assert that personal suffering and national disasters continue in spite of prayers offered up to the "God of heaven." It was recently urged, in support of the theory that deity does interfere in human affairs, that there was an evident relation between the late Russian persecution of the Jews and the visitation of the cholera to that country. It seems, however, to have been forgotten that both the Russians and the Jews believed in God, and that both alike fell victims to the epidemic. If an infectious disease is allowed to spread unchecked by natural means, as it was in the good old godly times, no amount of belief in God will arrest its deadly work. The war between Germany and France was made the subject of an appeal to God by both parties, but only one of them thanked God for victory. The inutility of the belief in God was shown by the fact that he did not make them both victorious. We suppose the most he could have done would have been to have made it a drawn battle; but even this he did not do. Both France and Germany are God-believing countries, and, in spite of this, they were plunged into the most fearful misery; and a terrible sacrifice of human life took place, and no God interfered to prevent the calamity.

Of course, we know the methods adopted by orthodox believers to escape the logical issues involved by their theory; but such methods are only subterfuges and evasions. They tell us that victory in war, good trade, and plentiful harvests are blessings bestowed by God upon a righteous people; while misfortunes in war and the failure of crops are penalties inflicted upon a nation for its sins. This is the old orthodox theory, that national calamities are essential to human happiness, because it is through such sufferings that men are brought to a knowledge of their dependence upon God. The believer's position is that all these misfortunes are "blessings in disguise"; that they are really for the good of the human family. If so, God does indeed move "in a mysterious way his wonders to perform." This orthodox notion of "apparent evil being positive good" is a theological delusion. The belief in a God that lighted the fires of Smithfield, that inspired the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and that filled the Inquisition with victims, cannot be an influence in promoting the happiness of well-balanced minds. The man must indeed be infatuated with his belief who can expect "protection and favor" from one

> Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
> A hero perish or a sparrow fall.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THOMAS PAINE AND EARL CHARLEMONT.

(Concluded from page 197.)

THAT Paine was credited with an enormous influence, and feared accordingly, can be judged by an extract from Malone to Charlemont, which is dated London, Dec. 3. Although vastly interesting in the details it furnishes as to the inner working of the political world, it is too long to give in full; but one passage relating to Paine is of moment to us:—

> "After I had written the above I was obliged to go into the city upon business. The stocks have not verified my prediction; they have only sunk to 74. This morning the King's proclamation was pulled down at an early hour in every part of the town in which it had been posted, as Mr. Reeve's address, printed on a broad sheet of paper stuck up in various places, had been served every day last week. The villains who wish to throw all things into confusion perform these feats in the night or before daybreak. In the city to-day it has been resolved to have parochial meetings in every parish, to ascertain the inhabitants, that we may know our friends from our enemies, and who are the authors of these audacious proceedings. For several weeks past not less than four thousand per week of Paine's despicable and nonsensical pamphlet have been issued forth, for almost nothing, and dispersed all over the kingdom. At Manchester and Sheffield the innovators bribe the poor with drink to hear it read."

And then, further on, we have a quite droll connection of names and acts:—

> "Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Lord Temple were both dismissed from the service on Saturday for the part they have acted.....Did you observe several odd sums subscribed for the assertion of French liberty, as it is called? 52s. frequently; this is the price of two muskets. Can anyone imagine that five or six hundred pounds—for that is all they have got—will be transmitted to a nation now overrunning the world, and who, besides, have one of the most fruitful mints that ever were employed? But those same muskets may either be employed at home, or, supposing nothing of that sort in contemplation, those respectable persons, Mr. Thomas Paine and Mr. Horne Tooke, the latter of whom is the principal agent in this business, may employ the money in dispersing seditious pamphlets through England."

Under date December 22, 1792, we have another of Malone's Tory presentments, in course of which he says:—

> "That vain fellow, Erskine, had been going about this month past, saying he would make a speech in defence of Paine's nonsensical and impudent libel on the English constitution, that would astonish the world, and make him to be remembered when Pitt, and Fox, and Burke, etc., were all forgotten. After speaking for four hours, and fainting in the usual form, the jury, without suffering the Attorney-General to reply, or going out of the box, found Paine guilty."

And still some of us to-day think that Erskine was more correct in his prophecy than Malone in his judgment.

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It is pretty certain that, canvassing the first thousand people crossing London Bridge to-morrow morning, one would get a fuller and more detailed account of Thomas Paine and Thomas Erskine, his counsel, than of Burke, Lord Kenyon, or of the whole of the corrupt ministry who caused the prosecution put together. Still, from Malone we get the next reference to Paine and his influence. November 15, 1793, in a long letter to Charlemont, Malone dealing almost wholly with his labors on Shakespeare at Stratford-on-Avon, etc. He tells how his work on the quarto has been hampered by the person engaged on the engravings for it:—

> "This person, a Mr. George Robinson, is unluckily, too, a determined republican, on which account alone I am sorry that I have employed him. In consequence of his political phrenzy, he at this moment is apprehensive of judgment being pronounced against him by the King's Bench for selling Paine's pamphlet, and may probably be punished for his zeal in the 'good old cause,' as they called it in the last century, by six months' imprisonment. I shall not have the smallest pity for him. To do any act whatever that may tend to forward the principles maintained by the diabolical ruffians of France is so highly criminal that I hope the chief justice will inflict the most exemplary punishment on all the favorers of that vile system whenever he can lay hold on them. I hope most sincerely that the editors of two seditious papers, which are published daily (the *Morning Chronicle* and the *English Chronicle*), who have the audacity publicly to support our enemies by every means in their power, will soon feel the vengeance of the law; an opportunity of laying hold of them has not yet occurred, but I make no doubt it will. If, however, Mr. Robinson does not enter on my work with spirit immediately after Christmas, I am determined to put it into other hands."

Whether Malone was gratified or not I am unable to say.

In Sherwin's *Life of Paine*, p. 138, among the list of those prosecuted for publishing Paine's works there is an entry, August 10: "Messrs. Robinsons, *Rights of Man*; fine"; but whether this refers to the same Robinson I am not sure. Anyhow, Mr. J. M. Robertson may note critic Malone's venom when issuing a new edition of *Toryism and Barbarism*.

In the same vein again Malone writes, November 7, 1794, of Thomas Hardy and Horne Tooke:—

> "But the arch traitor of all is Horne Tooke, a renegade priest, a venal hireling, an Atheist, and a coward. Of every one of these characters there are decisive proofs. Yet I am afraid he is so cunning that he will escape the fate he so well deserves."

And then there is another gird at Erskine.

Most Freethought readers and students of comparative religion recall Richard Payne Knight only for his worship of Priapus and kindred works, and it will be news to some that he was also a poet of some merit.

Charlemont expresses to Malone much pleasure that in "Knight's Landscape"—a poem on gardening—"we have a modern poem perfectly free from fashionable verbiage." In another place he says he "likes it exceedingly" (p. 263).

Charlemont was certainly Catholic in his tastes and reading, and in a long letter to his eldest son, admonishing him as to some excesses of conduct, we learn some personal details as to his own early life and studies, in which, among other things, he says: "With David Hume for my early friend, I have preserved my religion unperverted. With Jack St. Leger for my early companion, I have kept my principles of morality unchanged."

In letter 284, November 21, 1796, we have the dawnings of our wonderful electric system of communication in a letter to Lord Charlemont from Richard Lovell Edgeworth, giving an account of some dealings with the Duke of York and other officials in connection with the art of carrying secret and swift intelligence by tellograph, in which matter, in the usual fashion, the inventor was sat upon by the red-tapists.

The last reference to Paine is the closing sentence of a letter to Haliday, Dublin, February 1, 1797: "So Paine has now attacked Washington! No wonder; he has lately dared to attack heaven." This is a reference to the pamphlet, *A Letter to George Washington, President of the United States of America, on Affairs Public and Private*, by Thomas Paine, author of the works entitled *Common Sense, Rights of Man, Age of Reason*, etc. (Dublin, 1797; 8vo).

With this we have to quit the still tempting pages of this volume of old letters, believing that, though long, the extracts will be enjoyed and appreciated by all lovers and students of Paine and his work.

We are convinced that it is right to make these extracts as widely known as possible, for the reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission do not fall in the way of every reader of the *Freethinker*, than whom none are more interested in Paine.

That these interesting letters form a body of new material we know, for, having at the Paine Exhibition shown the volume to Mr. Moncure D. Conway, to Mr. J. M. Wheeler, and several other authorities on Paine, they all expressed their pleasure at such a find.

To successfully glean after two such scholars one may be a little bit proud, and it may be hoped that the idea of such a reward will incite others to give some attention to the most valuable volumes of this particular department of State publications, in which one is sure to find much of entertainment and profit.

THOMAS SHORE.

ABOUT PRAYER.

LAST Sunday night I went to church to hear a couple of female solo singers. The minister, a noted Methodist Toronto divine, opened by praying long and fervently for all possible good things that I could think of. He closed by nearly a repetition of it. Several hundred people, apparently, joined him in his prayer. I judged that, from the posture, sighs, and moans accompanying his varied requests. After the usual closing, he begged the entire congregation to remain for a fifteen minutes' prayer-meeting. I protested by quietly walking out. Then I sat down and cogitated about prayer in general. That prayer was offered in one small church out of the many thousands on this continent. If we only knew how far off heaven was or is, and the rapidity with which an ordinary prayer travelled, and taking account of the time difference between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, we might make a reasonable calculation of the number of words per second reaching the ear of the Great Infinite. We would probably come to the conclusion that, no matter how compassed by environment, the Almighty would at least need an infinite ear to hear all the words, and an infinite patience to listen for a whole Sunday.

And I asked myself, "How can apparently intelligent, honest adults lend their countenance to such seemingly meaningless performances?" I could only answer: "It must be due to the influence of heredity and the impressions of early youth, coupled with the intense natural laziness of the ordinary human mind."

"Where two or three are gathered together in my house, I will hear them and answer their request" is supposed to be the solemn pledge of the Great I Am. It is often quoted. If such is the case, why waste the vast energy expended on prayer? Why not have the two or three do the praying for the whole world? It would conserve the energies of the world, and surely relieve the Almighty of a fearful amount of worry.

"How can Christians consistently pray to an unchangeable God?" is another conundrum. If God intends to do what they ask for, he will do it without prayer; if he does so intend, then with an unchangeable being prayer must be fruitless. Then why pray?

If ever in human experience there was an undoubted case of prayer being answered (as a result of the prayer), then logically it would be all right, however inconsistent. But no human mortal up to the present has ever been able to lay his finger on a fact in the history of the universe that became a fact as the result of prayer.

Such proof is impossible from the nature of the case. The positive and negative sides are equally incapable of proof. If the Infinite Inscrutable Something behind all phenomena be the action and reaction of blind force and insensate matter, what effect will prayer have? If there be a supreme, unchangeable intelligence, from which animal intelligence is but an emanation, how can prayer affect the former? Can the finite influence the conditionless infinite?

If this world is governed by a personal God who is infinite (the Christian contention, but an infinite absurdity), who is all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, and all-good, why

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should pigmy man tell him anything or ask him anything? If he exists, he knows what is best, and, having all those other attributes, will certainly do it. Then why pray? Countless billions of prayers, earnest, honest prayers, have been uttered on this earth alone since man became a conscious being and lost himself amid the perplexities of nature, not one of which has borne any apparent fruit. Countless billions more prayers of the same character will yet be offered, with logically the same result. Then why pray? If the united earnest prayer of all the Christians on the continent could not induce God to show Colonel Ingersoll the error of his ways, then what is the use of asking for any other reasonable thing? If there be a God, he evidently knew best what to do in Ingersoll's case, as he does in all others.

Prayer is a condition of mental abstraction in which men and women get lost in the unknowable and unthinkable. They herein find mental relief from the tedium and monotony of life, much as the Hindoo philosopher finds the same mental condition from contemplation.

Billions of good, kind, honest, sincere people have prayed to thousands of different deities (hazy, mental images only), and received pleasure therefrom. That is the only good that has ever come to man from prayer. Mental content and pleasure. Content and pleasure from doing a supposed duty. Supposed duty done, of any kind, always produces the same result. The moment a person concludes that prayer is useless and absurd, the pleasure and content are gone. Repugnance is the mental state. I have no objection to people praying, who believe in it, who consider it a sacred duty, who thereby derive pleasure from it. No liberal mind can object. But I would like to convince such people that prayer is useless, illogical, absurd, and degrading; that in rationalism the mental pleasure and content can be accentuated a hundredfold. The old fear is replaced by a vast content. All the philosophies then open to the mind for pleasure and recreation. Then the intellect runs riot in pleasure and surprise.

Mental pleasure is the only good that comes from prayer. But there is a grave evil which comes from it and the habits of thought it induces. People who pray sincerely are always rather expecting an answer. They rely on some unseen providence instead of themselves, thereby deteriorating as citizens. Untold providence, sorrow, pain, and distress have arisen in the world from the mental habit of waiting, like Nicholas Micawber, for "something to turn up." But it never turns up except by some human effort or interference. One good act is worth a million prayers. Reliant self-endeavor has done more for the world than all the prayers uttered. J. A. ROLLINS.

—*Secular Thought.*

PROPHET BAXTER.

THE Rev. Mr. Baxter, of prophetical fame, has got into a somewhat awkward fix at Southampton. A few days ago he was delivering a couple of lectures showing that there is to be "a general bust up" in Europe and Asia almost immediately. At the first lecture a Mr. Worrall appeared and reminded the prophet that ten years ago he had visited the town and told a similar tale of woe, and, on a challenge being given, he had promised to pay £100 to the Royal South Hants Infirmary if the predictions did not prove correct. "Now," said Mr. Worrall, "I want £100 for the infirmary on account of unfulfilled prophecies." The Prophet Baxter called for evidence that he had made the promise, and Mr. Worrall said he would produce it the following evening. True to his word, Mr. Worrall appeared with a copy of a Southampton paper recording the fact, but the prophet was absent, and his substitute said that he had gone to Bournemouth on business. Mr. Worrall unkindly declared that the prophet had run away.

Thirty years ago Mr. Baxter published a book entitled *Napoleon III., the Predestined Monarch of the World.* Unfortunately, he died. Then Mr. Baxter set up the poor Prince Imperial as "the Beast" of the Revelation. But he died also, and so Mr. Baxter set up Prince Jerome. But Jerome died. So Mr. Baxter fixed on Boulanger, who was "a dead cert." Did not Boulanger fight a duel and get wounded? Did not the Book of the Revelation speak of "the Beast who had the wound by the sword and did live"? Nothing could be clearer—only, last of all, Boulanger died also. Mr. Baxter has not quite made up his mind whether "the Beast" is Kaiser William, or Oom Paul, or the Kalifa; but he still comes up smiling. He really ought, however, to plank down that hundred pounds.—*London Star (Mar. 27)*

ACID DROPS.

THE House of Lords has carried the second reading of a ridiculous Bill, which surely will never be allowed to pass through the House of Commons. It empowers the judges to prohibit the publication in newspapers of any evidence they choose to think inimical to public morals, and if their prohibition is violated they may imprison the offender for contempt of court. This is really setting up a new Star Chamber. Judges can keep a man in prison as long as they like for contempt of court. They are also judges of the offence itself. There is no trial by jury, and no appeal whatever against their decision.

The author of this Bill is Lord Halsbury, late Sir Hardinge Giffard. He is a professional Tory, a warm Christian, and a thorough bigot. It is to the credit of the judges, including Lord Chief Justice Russell, that they are opposed to it.

Reynolds's Newspaper is very outspoken on this matter. "After all," it says, "so far as indecency is concerned, the book which is placed in the hands of every young person in this country, the Bible, contains scores of passages worse than anything which appears in a newspaper. We shall have the Lord High Jobber bringing in a Bill one of these days for the suppression of the Bible."

The clericals are hardly likely to be satisfied with the Government Education Bill. A special grant to poor schools, whether Board or Voluntary, the abolition of the 17s. 6d. limit, and the exemption of elementary schools from local rates, represent the minimum of their expectations. The serious item, the raising of the limit, will not be regarded by educationalists as deplorable, if only it carries with increased public expenditure increased public control.

Doubtless the object of the measure is to hinder the spread of Board schools. But it may only serve to make the voluntary ones less voluntary. The State, already providing the bulk of the means for all the schools, is entitled to insist that there shall be one standard of secular teaching in all of them, and that as high a standard as is feasible.

The school system at present is really an establishment of religion with a creed varying according to the votes of each district. The old Nonconformists, who swept away church rates and tests by their plain contention that the State has nothing to do with teaching religion, have given place to an elastic Nonconformist Conscience, which seeks to manipulate religious teaching in the chapel rather than the church interest. When they see the church triumphs they may return to the old position, that secular teaching should be national, but religious instruction left for the parents and churches to provide by their own voluntary efforts.

Mr. Augustus Birrell has given the following accurate definition of a voluntary school: "A voluntary school is one at which attendance is compulsory, of which four-fifths of the expense is contributed by the taxpayer, and which is as much under the absolute control of the vicar of the parish as was his own potato bed or his Bible class." The total income of these schools is £3,629,967, of which endowments and voluntary contributions combined realise only £768,915, while £2,658,331 is contributed from the public funds.

In Rome they baptise a Jew every Good Friday. It is said that the same member of the chosen race serves every year. Mr. W. W. Story, in his *Roba di Roma*, suggests in illustration the verse which says: "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves."

"Next year in Jerusalem," repeats every Jew at Seder night in keeping Passover. Yet the English Jews show an entire lack of interest in the schemes of Mr. Holman Hunt, and other good people, for getting them back to the Holy Land. Nor are they likely to, unless on the distinct understanding that Palestine is intended for the poor devils of the chosen race, and not for themselves.

The Rev. James Gall, struck by the fact that in the Greek as in the Revised Version the assertion is plain that Jesus should arise after three days, has written a book to show that his Lord and Savior was crucified on Thursday. His work is entitled *Good Friday a Chronological Mistake.* Mr. Gall hardly makes the story any the more probable by crowding out another day from the many events of Holy Week.

The bare enumeration of the things said to have transpired on the morning of the Crucifixion should suggest doubts as to their historic character. Jesus is brought before Caiaphas and accused of blasphemy; then before Pilate and accused of treason. Then Pilate sends him to Herod, and Herod sends him back to Pilate, who seeks repeatedly to

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release him, finding no fault in him, yet at last consenting to his being crucified. He carries his own cross to the place of execution, and hangs there from the third to the ninth hour (*i.e.*, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.). Such a rare morning's work never took place in the law courts of civilised people either before or since.

Professor Joseph Estlin Carpenter, reviewing Professor Salmonds' book on *Immortality*, in the Unitarian *Inquirer*, says: "It is obvious, for example, that the word 'eternal' must have the same meaning as applied to punishment and to life in Matthew xxv. 46." This is fairly giving up the usual Unitarian position, and admitting that the barbarous doctrine is taught in the New Testament. Only Professor Carpenter argues that, if Jesus lived now, he would frame his thought differently. That is, he might be expected to be a little more humane.

The Romanising English Church Union is hard at work trying to prevent divorced persons marrying a second time. Yet even the Pope permits this for a consideration, and has just allowed one John Keefe, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, to do so.

How far some of our Romanising Anglicans go may be judged from the confirmation papers of the vicar of St. Matthew, Sheffield. Among questions asked are: "How often should people go to Confession?" and "Do you intend to come regularly to this Sacrament?" In other questions the boys and girls are asked to describe "the pains of Purgatory," and say how they can be lessened, and to state the effect of the "Sacrament" of extreme unction.

The ridiculous Legitimists of the White Rose League, who say that Mary of Burgundy is the rightful occupant of the British throne, are now concentrating their efforts on the canonisation of the immaculate Mary Stuart. If they have anything to do with it, her sanctity will probably end in a fizzle.

Dr. Lyon Playfair, in a speech which he once gave on Sanitary Reform, said that "For a thousand years there was not a man or woman in Europe that ever took a bath." The statement may have been a slight exaggeration, founded on a phrase in Michelet's *Sorcière;* but the fact is unquestionable, that the Dark Ages were the dirty ages. When divinity triumphed then disease was rampant. The ages of faith were also the ages of filth. St. Thomas à Becket, when martyred, had under garments in a state which Sir Henry Irving would rather resign his profession than reproduce on the stage.

It is not usually good policy to circulate the literature of antagonists; yet there are two Catholic works which so admirably show the true inner spirit of religion, and what Catholic religionists would like taught in the schools, that they have often been advertised on Freethought platforms. These works are Father Pinnamonti's *Hell Opened to Christians* and *The Sight of Hell*, by the Rev. J. Furniss. Mr. Lecky, the representative of Dublin University, has called attention to their teachings. Of course, Protestants have taught the same doctrines; but their works are now generally hid out of sight, while the Catholic ones are still on sale at leading Catholic publishers.

Latimer, for instance, was a sturdy Protestant who taught a literal fire. In his *Remains* (p. 236) he says: "I would advise every man to be more careful to keep out of hell than trust he shall find no fire in hell. There is fire burning, there is pain without pleasure, torment without easement, anguish, heaviness, sorrow, and pensiveness, which tarrieth and abideth for all liars and hinderers of the truth."

Even the sainted Jeremy Taylor, in his sermon on "Christ's Advent to Judgment," describes hell in most literal fashion. He says: "The pains of hell have no rest, no drop of water is allowed to cool the tongue; there is no advocate to plead for them, no mercy belongs to their portion but fearful wrath and continual burnings." Wesley, too, in his *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 176, speaks of hell as if he had been there: "There is no grandeur in the infernal region, there is nothing beautiful in those dark abodes; no light but that of liquid flames; and nothing new but one unvaried scene of horror upon horror." Many similar quotations will be found in Mr. Wheeler's *Christian Doctrine of Hell*, showing that Catholicism preserves only what was once the accepted Christian teaching.

Richard Rolle de Hampole, who wrote *The Pricke of Conscience* in the Northumbrian of the fourteenth century, tells us a good deal about hell, which he locates in the middle of the earth, like the hollow in the yolk of an egg. He says the Devil will alternately torment with heat and cold:—

> The fire es thar of swa grete pousté,
> That it may never mar slekend be,
> And swylk filthe and stynk es in that ugly hole
> That nan erthely man mught es thole.

Hampole says:—

> The devels, that ay salle be fulle of ire
> Salle stopp (stuff) the synfulle ay in the fyre
> Swa that thai salle glowe ay al fyre brandes.

So Burns has good authority for addressing the Devil as one—

> Wha in yon cavern, grim and sootie,
> Closed under hatches
> Spairges aboote the brimstane clootie
> To kill puir wretches.

The American papers, generally speaking, take the side of Ballington Booth against the "General." The New York *Sun* (March 14) plainly calls the old man "both a humbug and tyrant." On his calling for prayers for the seceders it says: "That is an old trick. By praying at a man you can both gratify your malignity by slyly casting upon him an imputation of wickedness, and impress people with your own pious superiority."

The Baltimore *Catholic Mirror* says of the Salvation Army split, that the proceedings of orders, counter-orders, and manifestoes remind one of broad-stage burlesque. "The whole thing, in fact, with some comic lines and a topical song or two, and a little marching and dancing, would make a capital subject for a piece at one of the minor theatres; and in this spirit the incident has been received by the readers of newspapers."

Ballington Booth's lady recruits have rebelled against the dark-brown color which had been chosen for their uniform. They were horrified at the proposed hue, so dowdy, snuffy, and funereal, gained their point, and will be clad in heavenly blue. *Sacré Bleu!*

You have to go abroad for the news. The New York *Sun* reproduces from the *Ave Maria* a statement from the *Freeman's Journal*, of Sydney, that someone has the testimony of an eminent bishop that the Prince of Wales was baptised a Catholic. It says that when the time came for the baptism of Albert Edward two dignitaries of the Church of England arranged to divide honors on the occasion, with the result that one poured the water, while the other read the form of baptism. This was the perfection of Protestant politeness; but, all the same, it was a blunder which made the baptism invalid.

After the ceremony, the story continues, the Queen of the Belgians, who had been an observant witness, spoke to the Queen privately, and pointed out that the interesting infant had not been made a Christian in the proper way. Victoria was much troubled, and asked: "What can I do?" "Oh," said her Belgian Majesty, "it is easy enough," adding: "I have here in the palace a Belgian priest, my chaplain; let me call him in to baptise the child properly, and no one will be any the wiser." This, we are to believe, was accordingly done, and the paper goes on to state how, ever since, the Prince has shown his sympathy with Catholics. Any rot seems good enough to cram down the open gullets of credulous religionists.

Dr. Paul Carus writes in *Open Court* on "Goethe a Buddhist," and of course finds passages to illustrate his view. This reminds us of those who write to prove that Shakespeare was a lawyer, a physician, or a soldier. This is not strange, coming from Dr. Carus. We believe he calls himself a Christian and a Buddhist at the same time.

Colonel T. W. Higginson, in an article in the *Christian Register* on "Prayers," has this to say of his experience with Unitarian ministers in the matter of "saying grace" at the table: "Last winter, having occasion to preside at a literary dinner of perhaps a hundred ladies and gentlemen, I asked one of the most eminent Unitarian clergymen, who sat near me, whether he thought I had better invite anybody to say grace. He said promptly that it was ceasing to be customary, and advised against it. It was not done. Last summer another eminent Unitarian minister, one of the elders in Zion, happened to dine with me, and I asked him, as a matter of courtesy to him, to ask a blessing. He did so; but it seemed as if he did not expect it, and I thought it would be better not to take the thing for granted again." It must be very embarrassing for a Unitarian minister to go through the insane mummery of asking God to bless the food before them before so intelligent a sceptic as Colonel Higginson. We had hitherto supposed that the Colonel was a merciful man.

A press dispatch from Carthage, Ill., says: "James McAvois, a groceryman, has gone crazy over religion. A protracted meeting has been in progress, and McAvois was baptised in a creek through the ice. The excitement maddened him. While being taken to the asylum, he continued to shriek: 'Help! Help! The crucifixion.' He claims to have witnessed the sublime tragedy." Can any of our orthodox friends cite an instance where a person was

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ever thus affected by listening to a lecture by a Freethinker or a scientist?

A painful scene was witnessed in the Congregational Church at Kilburn, near Derby, on Sunday evening. Mrs. Bullock, a middle-aged lady, was taken ill just before the sermon, and died before medical assistance could be obtained.

The *Tattler* (March 19) reports the elopement at Halstead of the wife of a well-known local man with a bandsman of the Salvation Army. He left a note saying: "I have taken Emma, and will take care of her. God bless you. You will hear from me in a day or two." He was as good as his word, and wrote to say that "Emma is all right." If this informal certificate does not console the husband, it is at least a proof that the bandsman is satisfied, and has been spared the disappointment of finding that after stealing another man's wife she was "all wrong."

John Markle, of Anderson, Ind., went insane, says a press telegram, a few days ago, as the result of taking too much interest in a revival meeting. He got away from his guards and ran to the church, where he broke the doors to pieces, entered and completely cleared the church, demolishing furniture and causing general damage. He was captured, and is now under heavy guard. Poor fellow! He was too heavily charged with religion. This is not an isolated case.

The Rev. Albert Brett, pastor of the Jubilee Church, in the New North-road, Hoxton, went into the witness-box and swore he was not the father of the child of Miss Hardwick, one of his congregation. He even swore he had never put his arm round her waist or kissed her. He put his wife into the witness-box to say she believed him, and the Rev. Mr. Trengode and the Rev. Mr. Bourne to give him a most excellent character. But Mr. Corser held that the evidence of the girl was corroborated. He made the usual order of 5s. a week to support the child, and allowed five guineas costs.

Considering that a jury has just awarded £12,000 for aspersions on a woman's character, we think the Rev. Mr. Brett gets off remarkably cheap for having injured a young girl's prospects for life. We wonder if his congregation will, like that of the Rev. Mr. Crosby at Battersea, pass a resolution of sympathy with their pastor. The case illustrates the danger of pastoral visits and spiritual ministrations.

H. J. Philo, one of the Rev. J. Wilson's rescue band at Woolwich, was charged with improper conduct with a female in the public street, and bound over in a sum of £5 to be of good behavior for three months.

The Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association recently held its thirty-ninth annual meeting at the premises of the Young Men's Christian Association in Aldersgate-street, London. The chairman was Mr. John Jenkins, late President of the Trade Union Congress. The other speakers, however, were very curious working men. The list included Prebendary Webb-Peploe, Mr. A. A. Woods, and the Rev. Richard Roberts (Wesleyan). Of course the Association is run in the interest of Sabbatarian piety. The ministers of religion dare not let the working men speak for themselves on this question.

Mr. Charles Hill, the secretary of this bogus Working Men's Association, "deeply regretted the resolution adopted by the House of Commons in favor of opening the national museums and galleries on Sunday." His regret is natural; it may even be called professional; but it will hardly induce the House of Commons to rescind that wicked resolution.

Lord Young has given at Glasgow an important decision with regard to fortune telling, palmistry, and spirit mejums. He holds—and Lord Trayner concurs with him—that the practice of these do not constitute an offence unless intent to deceive, or roguery, is also proved.

"Infidels" are supposed to be fond of Bible burning, but the pastime in our experience is exclusively a Christian one. The *American Sentinel* reports a case in the interior town of Giboya, in the State of Bahia, where the vicar, who was also the mayor of the town, had the books of a colporteur seized, and subsequently forty-seven Bibles, fifty Testaments, and one hundred gospels were saturated with oil and set on fire in the market-place.

The *Methodist Times* gives an analysis of the collection at one of Mr. Price Hughes's recent Sunday afternoon meetings in St. James's Hall. There were 2,357 separate pieces of money in the collecting boxes. "Gold is rarely given at St. James's Hall," and there was not a solitary gold piece on this occasion. There were 2 half-crowns, 19 shillings, 168 sixpences, 128 threepenny-bits, 1,661 pence, 322 half-pence, and 7 farthings. This gives a total of £13 2s. 5½d., and, reckoning the audience at 2,500, the average contribution is 1½d. each. This is about the general average of collections, we believe. The love of Jesus doesn't seem to make much difference at St. James's Hall.

The *Sydney Bulletin* appends to a picture of a squatter, leaning on a gate and talking to a parson, the following dialogue: Selector—"There won't be a bite o' grass for the winter; this 'ere drought will ruin me." Rain-making Parson—"I fear, my friend, you have not looked above for aid." Selector—"Well, no; we mostly get our rain from the nor'-west."

In an Adelaide suburb the Wesleyans erected an imposing edifice, and dedicated it "to the glory of God." Shortly afterwards the Anglicans ran up a small wooden mission-hall right opposite the front door of the other place, and inscribed over the door: "Erected to the greater glory of God." Yet the unification of the Churches is talked of.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

The blood accusation against the Jews has turned up again in Hungary. But not with the old success. The Catholic priest who charged a Jewish tradesman at a Hungarian village with the "ritual" murder of a peasant child of five was sentenced at Budapest to a fortnight's imprisonment and a fine of fifty florins.

The writers in *Joyful News* seem to keep stories of the conversion of infidels on the stocks. They are fond, too, of hymns. We should think a favorite must be the lines—

I love the old, old story,
Although it is not true;
It satisfies my longings
As lies alone can do.

It is calculated that 9,500,000 head of sheep have been lost in Australia through the drought of last year.

Ladies wear just as large hats at church as they do at the theatre; but there is no church-hat question, while the theatre-hat question is one of the most pressing social problems of the day. A man behind a big hat in a theatre inwardly swears; but behind a big hat in a church he inwardly prays.

"May the day be long distant," says President Steyn, of the Orange Free State, "when the Afrikander shall forget his Bible and his gun." Bible and guns have always gone well together.

Rev. Sebastien Bowden, of the Brompton Oratory, is seeing through the press a book on Shakespeare, in which he maintains that the great poet was a Catholic. We shall read this book when it is published, and criticise it in the *Freethinker*. We are decidedly of opinion that Shakespeare was a Freethinker.

Priests.

They have the strongest interest in the depravation of the human intellect; for the demand for their services for the temporal aid of the deity altogether depends upon human ignorance and incapacity, and is exactly proportional to it. Why does a man apply for the divine assistance? Because he does not know how to accomplish his ends without it, or how to procure the requisite apparatus for the purpose. If he knew any physical means of attaining it, he would unquestionably prefer them. Every extension, therefore, of physical methods in the gratification of our wishes displaces and throws out of employment by so much the labor of the ærial functionaries. No one prays for the removal of a disease by supernatural aid when he once knows an appropriate surgical remedy. He, therefore, who lives by the commission which he charges on the disposal of the former has a manifest interest in checking the advance and introduction of the latter.—*Bentham and Grote, "Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion," p. 124; 1866.*

How to Help Us.

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

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

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

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

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

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—April 5 and 12, South Shields. May 3 and 4, Birmingham; 10 and 17, Plymouth. June 7, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Mother.—Pleased to know you are grateful for our criticism of ecclesiastic views on the infliction of pain upon animals.

E. Smedley.—We really cannot undertake to confute every Christian falsehood you happen to meet—and you seem to meet plenty. Some of the things you appear to regard as staggering are simply ridiculous. The fellow who says that Ingersoll was a friend of slavery might just as well say that Bradlaugh was a champion of the House of Brunswick. Do you *read* the *Freethinker?* If you do, it is difficult to understand why you ask such questions.

R. Davidson wishes the £5 he invested in the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company to go to Mr. Foote's lecture scheme.

J. Byers (Belfast).—A special effort will be made in your city very shortly. Mr. Foote hopes to take the matter in hand himself.

Celsus (Hull).—(1) The poor Christian creature who asks in the Hull *Daily News* when the N.S.S. issued its last balance-sheet is either very ignorant or a liar by suggestion. The N.S.S. publishes a balance-sheet every year. It is sent to all the Branches, and to all individual members who apply for it. It is also handed to press representatives at the Annual Conference, though, of course, it is not inserted as a paid advertisement in Christian journals. (2) Glad to hear your theatrical friends thought so highly of our articles on *The Sign of the Cross*, which are being reprinted in pamphlet form.

H. P. Ward.—An article on "Christianity and Hospitals" in the *Westminster Review*, October, 1877, should be consulted.

Mr. T. J. Thurlow notifies that his address is 350 Old Ford-road, E.

J. Nicholson.—We think with you that Mr. Bradlaugh is well entitled to a place in the series of "Remarkable Men."

Liverpool Chorister.—Many thanks. The reference will be very useful. Mr. Foote is amplifying and revising his articles on *The Sign of the Cross*, which will be published next week in pamphlet form.

S. R. Thompson.—We hope you will be able to do something at Rochdale. The apathy of the local Secularists is unintelligible.

C. Lewis.—Many thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

P. D.—Will answer next week.

Martin Weatherburn.—Highly gratified to have your appreciation of the lecture scheme. Mr. Foote's health is improving. He will resume lecturing next Sunday (April 12) at Chatham.

Annual Children's Party Fund.—S. Gimson, 5s.; per Miss Brown, 7s. 6d.; Mrs. Thompson, 2s.; W. W. Roberts, 2s.; per S. Hones, 4s. 6d.; A. Cottrell, 1s.

Benham, subscribing to Shilling Month, says: "Your Lecture Scheme is a good idea, and I am glad to see the execution has not fallen behind the inception, as far as the money at your disposal allowed. You got a valuable recruit when you secured Mr. Cohen." This correspondent thinks the *Freethinker* has improved latterly, and particularly enjoyed our articles on *The Sign of the Cross*.

G. Brady.—Thanks for your good wishes with the subscription.

H. A. Cumber writes: "Pleased to read your exposure of scurrility in the *Idler*. There will be no reply, as usual. Without a torture chamber and a stake, Christians cannot defend their faith. Freethinkers should be proud of your pen."

A. Baxter.—These attempts to suppress insuppressible Sunday trading—for some of it is a sheer necessity—nearly always die out in time. The disease breaks out, now here and now there, probably because the Sabbatarian organisations must do something for their livings.

D. Kay (Rochdale) regards the President's Lecture Scheme as an "excellent method for reaching the masses," and thinks Shilling Month should come oftener.

J. Brazer.—Glad to hear you will join the N.S.S. All Freethinkers should do so.

Much correspondence stands over till next week in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence from London.

Papers Received.—Nya Sanningar—Hull Daily News—Secular Thought—Independent Pulpit—Liberty—Liberator—Tattler—Dunoon Observer—Echo—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Workers' Friend—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Cheshire Observer—New York Public Opinion—Truthseeker—Isle of Man Times—Open Court—Freethought—Crewe Chronicle.

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

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

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

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured at the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening, Mr. G. W. Foote being in the chair. Mr. Watts's lecture on "The Science of Life" was a very admirable one, and was evidently much appreciated. One auditor said he had travelled a hundred and fifty miles to be present, and was more than satisfied. Mr. Foote made an appeal, which was well responded to, on behalf of the Children's Party. He also made an announcement with respect to future propaganda in West London—as to which more will appear in next week's *Freethinker*.

Mr. Watts lectures three times to-day, Sunday, April 5, in South Shields, and during the week in the surrounding districts. He will also lecture three times in South Shields on Sunday, April 12.

Mr. William Heaford is devoting the Eastertide to a lecturing tour in Scotland. He delivers two lectures to-day (April 5) at Edinburgh, and three lectures on the following Sunday at Glasgow. On the intervening week-nights he delivers five lectures, under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, as follows: April 6, Dunoon; 7, Paisley; 8, Motherwell; 9, Hamilton; 10, Cambuslang. No doubt Mr. Heaford will have excellent meetings everywhere, as he deserves to.

The debate on "Theism or Atheism: Which is the More Reasonable?" which took place last May at Derby between Mr. Foote and Mr. W. T. Lee, the ablest speaker in the Christian Evidence camp, is now published as a handsome booklet, after revision of the reporter's transcript by both disputants. It runs to nearly a hundred pages, is handsomely printed on first-rate paper, and is bound in strong paper boards. The price is one shilling. No doubt it will have a very large sale, and we may invite Freethinkers who purchase a copy to lend it to their more orthodox friends after reading it themselves.

The ladies' party in connection with the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school was a decided success on Saturday, March 28. The tea was a good one, and an attractive program of singing, dancing, etc., was gone through during the evening. The chief event was the presentation, by the teachers, scholars, and friends of the school, of an illuminated address and the complete works of the Lancashire poet, Edwin Waugh, to Mr. John Pollitt, as a recognition of his valuable services to the school. Mr. Pollitt, replying to the address of Mr. Warren, mentioned that his connection with the school extended over a period of forty-five years, the last thirty years being an unbroken one. During that time he had been in almost every position in the school, from a scholar upwards, and he recounted many anecdotes of the past.

Correspondence still continues on Secularism in the Hull *Daily Mail*. "Fairplay" contributes another keen epistle on the Secular side, and the Rev. Frank Ballard explains why he does not care for public debates. He admits Mr. Watts's courtesy, but appears to fear his skill in discussion. "Fairplay for Both Sides" is a Christian. His grammar is abominable, his statements are false, his manners are vulgar, and his tone is malignant. How up-to-date he is may be inferred from his announcement that Thomas Cooper and Joseph Barker have left the Secular Society, and his accuracy from the statement that the Sydney Secularists built a Lyceum at a cost of forty thousand pounds!

The recent Secularist lectures have stirred up a controversy on the subject, "Is Christianity True?" The editor of the *Dunoon Observer* very fairly admits letters from all parties, and our Glasgow friends may congratulate themselves on their forward movement down the Clyde.

Humanity, the organ of the Humanitarian League, for April, contains a report of the last of the addresses at the Memorial Hall on "The Rights of Men and of Animals," by Mr. Loadbeater, who gave the "Theosophical View." We see that the League's annual meeting takes place at 32 Sackville-street, Piccadilly, on Tuesday, April 21, at 4 o'clock.

The Huxley Memorial will, it is stated, take the form of a statue at the Natural History Museum, and a medal at the Royal College of Science.

It is a curious fact that the statue of Giordano Bruno, recently erected in the courtyard of the University of Naples, is opposite that of another Dominican, St. Thomas Aquinas, who is hailed as the greatest philosophical glory of the Christian Church.

Mr. Waugh, Secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, once encouraged the Bishop of Chester

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in stating that the worst ill-users of children were Secularists. We denounced the statement at the time, for it is a subject on which we feel keenly, and called upon both these clerical gentlemen for proof or retraction. They vouchsafed neither, but maintained a "dignified silence." At a recent meeting of the Chester Branch of this Society, however, as reported in the *Crewe Chronicle* of March 28, Mr. Waugh spoke as follows: "He once said one of the causes of cruelty to children was materialism—infidelity. He wished to withdraw that now. It was an early statement made upon inadequate data. They had found cases of cruelty where there had been religious teaching, and even religious habit." It is better late than never, but Mr. Waugh need not have taken years to withdraw a baseless accusation.

SHILLING MONTH.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

J. Cherry, 2s.; Ixion, 2s.; H. Good, 2s. 6d.; Bensham, 10s.; T. B., 5s.; J. C. B., 5s.; G. B., 5s.; W. Hardiman, 1s. 6d.; H. A. Cumber, 2s.; Celsus, 2s.; A. Firth, 4s.; T. Thelwall, 2s. 6d.; J. Cuff, 5s.; J. Barrett, J. Goodson, Mother; Le Diable, 10s.; G. Childs, 2s.; Walters Family, 5s.; T. H.; Tom Beach, 2s. 6d.; Martin Weatherburn, 5s.; C. H. Gask, 2s. 6d.; J. Sumner, junr., 3s.; C. H.; H. Barratt, 4s.; Cayford, Quinney; R. Wilson, 2s. 6d.; F. Morgan, 2s. 6d.; Alchem, 5s.; G. E. Lupton, 10s.; D. Bass; A. Baxter, 5s.; D. Kay, 2s. 6d.; J. Leipper, 5s.; R. Green, 2s. 6d.; W. C., 1s. 6d.; J. Kimberly, 2s.; F. Simons; W. Holroyd, 2s.; W. H. Twyman; D. Jones, 2s. 6d.; Miss Hull, 5s.; J. Edmonds, 2s.; J. Whitby, Mr. Arnold; R. H. Side, 5s.; "Amigo," 5s.; B. Dundas; A. Hurren, 2s.; C. Conway Monk, 3s.; W. W. Roberts, 3s.; Mr. Ives, J. H., W. H. Paskey; W. Lake, 2s.; H. J. Dangey, 5s.; J. Beazer, 2s.; J. Primrose, 4s.; Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull, 2s.; D. Prosser, 1s. 6d.; G. G.; F. Rogers, 5s.; G. Dixon, 2s.; G. Rolff, 2s.; J. Bramhall, E. Drewen; C. Atkinson, 2s.; S. Hudson, 5s.; Servant Girl; A. Banks, £1 1s.

Barnsley:—A. Addy, T. Wombwell, E. Creedy, W. West, E. Wadmore, J. Wadmore; G. Irving, 2s. 6d.; J. Savage, 2s.; G. Pankhurst, 2s. 6d.; H. Smallwood, G. Almond, W. Dyson.

Per Miss Vance:—W. Caisey; William Davey, 2s. 6d.; Ipswich; F. Cotterell, 2s. 6d.; C. Shepherd; S. E. C., 2s.; Mrs. Bater; E. Bater, 2s.

Chester-le-Street:—N. Richardson, T. Birtley, T. Lowther, W. Shiply, J. Clark, J. Carr, R. Hamilton.

SALVATION ARMY AFFECTION.

THE "KISS OF PEACE."

In the St. Kilda (Victoria) Police Court a series of cases were heard arising out of quarrels between two families connected with the local branch of the Salvation Army. There were four charges—namely, Charles J. Collis *v.* J. Richardson, using threatening language; Louisa Collis *v.* Matilda Richardson, unlawful assault; A. Z. Collis *v.* J. Richardson, application to bind to the peace; and Matilda Richardson *v.* C. Collis, assault.

Mr. Gaunson, in opening the case for the Richardsons, said the young man Charles Colis had been "keeping company" with Matilda Richardson. As a result the girl became a mother, but the infant had died. On Sunday, January 19, Miss Richardson, meeting Collis in the porch of the Salvation Army Barracks, called him a "coward," when he turned and struck her a swinging blow on the face. With that the girl's father closed with Collis, and a general scrimmage took place.

Matilda Richardson gave evidence bearing out Mr. Gaunson's statement. Witness admitted having slapped Collis first when he sneered at her. He had ruined and deserted her. Mr. Gaunson: Did you consent to your ruin?—No. He pulled me into the room and locked the door. A meeting was going on in the barracks. The captain was reading the Bible. The door in the partition was unlocked. What was there to prevent you calling out?—I could have called out. Was that the only act of impropriety you allege against this young man?—Yes. He had attempted to assault me before. I know Captain Freeman. He was in the habit of giving me a "kiss of peace" perhaps twice a week. Was this kiss public or private?—Well, he didn't kiss me before everybody. (Laughter.)

Mr. Morgan, in opening for Collises, said it was no wonder the Army grew—when such luxury as kissing such delicate cheeks as had been exhibited there that day was carried on. He called Wagland (a well-known cricketer), Louisa Collis, Anne Dowall, and Ada Wells.

The Bench, after a short retirement, decided to dismiss all the cases, each side to pay its own costs.

—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

LECTURING NOTES.

On Saturday, March 14, I left London for ten days, during which time I delivered eight lectures and held two nights' debate. My first lectures were at Leicester, where I had two capital audiences, the forenoon gathering being the largest, the local friends informed me, they had had on a Sunday morning for many years. In the evening, of course, the hall was full. Many present spoke very highly of Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme, and the sum of £1 5s. was subscribed to aid its usefulness. The Sunday-school at Leicester is in a flourishing condition under the able superintendence of Mr. S. A. Gimson.

From Leicester I proceeded to Derby, and debated two nights with the Rev. James Hyde. The Christian portion of the audience was not large, inasmuch as members of the various orthodox churches failed to support my opponent, who is a Swedenborgian, and, therefore, holds but few religious views in harmony with the popular faith. The subject for discussion was "The Christian Deity," but it was difficult to get from Mr. Hyde a description of the Bible God that any but the followers of Swedenborg could possibly understand. My opponent held the very convenient opinion that the language of the Bible has a double meaning, real and apparent. Hence he urged that all the texts of the book which favored his conclusions contained "real truths"; while those passages either in the Old or in the New Testament that were opposed to his views contained only "apparent truths." It is not for me to express any opinion as to the merits or demerits of the discussion, except to state that Mr. Hyde is an earnest and gentlemanly disputant, and that the audiences behaved admirably on each night.

On Thursday and Friday, March 26th and 27th, I lectured in Nottingham under Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme. The audiences were good, but not so large as I have had upon previous occasions. Nottingham has not been very active of late. The Freethinkers there are numerous, and there are also a few hard and earnest workers; but their influence is sadly impaired by a small band of grumblers, who waste their time in spreading scandal, rather than in directing their attention to useful and much-needed propagandism. For some time past certain malicious reports, emanating from Nottingham, in reference to our President, have been in circulation. Unsolicited by Mr. Foote—who, however, made no objection when I told him what I intended to do—I, as Vice-President, determined to ascertain, if possible, what truth (if any) there was in such reports. I was prompted to adopt this course purely in the interest of our movement, for nothing retards the progress of the Freethought cause more than insinuating charges against those to whom the arrangements of the affairs of the N.S.S. are entrusted. If there are any reasons for making damaging charges, those reasons should be frankly stated. It was feeling the necessity of this course being acted upon that induced me to invite the two principal officers of the Nottingham Secular Society to confer with me upon the rumors in circulation as regards our President. But, after two hours' consultation with these officials, and subsequently with several of the members, I could elicit nothing in justification of the reports, which appear to me to be as false as they are vindictive. I told the Nottingham officials that, unless they attempted to prove their case, or withdraw their imputations, I should deem it my duty to record the result of my inquiries. They would do neither, and I have therefore expressed my opinion upon their conduct; and there the matter ends, so far as I am concerned. There is plenty of practical work to be done in order to advance the interests of Secular advocacy, and the friends throughout the country will see by whom it is being accomplished.

Sunday, March 29, was a grand day in Hull, when I gave three lectures under Mr. Foote's scheme. In the morning four hundred persons were present, and in the afternoon and evening more than seven hundred attended each meeting. Admission was free, and the collections were exceedingly good. There was a brisk sale of *Freethinkers* and of general Freethought literature. Captain Munro, who presided morning and evening, and my old friend, N. Billany, who officiated in the afternoon, made excellent chairmen. The Rev. F. Ballard attended in the afternoon and spoke briefly, not in reply to my lecture, but to inform the audience that he should reply elsewhere. He positively declined to meet me in set debate. The Christians mustered

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in good force and listened very attentively; and I was pleased to find so many ladies present at each meeting.

The large audiences at Hull show what good is being done by the carrying out of the Lecturing Scheme; and the general desire among our Secular friends throughout the provinces, as well as in London, is that, with the aid of this Fund, further successes may be achieved in other large towns, and also in the surrounding districts. I am now arranging a fortnight's tour in the North, and also one in Plymouth, and other places in the West. Personally, I feel proud of the good results of Mr. Foote's scheme, and I sincerely hope that it will receive the pecuniary support which it deserves.

CHARLES WATTS.

A VISION OF HEAVEN.

IT was in the year of our Lord, 1893, the seventh day of the ninth month, hour midnight. The editor had toiled all day trying to harmonise the two wings of the Texas Democracy—had held out the olive branch of peace until his arm ached. He was now reclining on a pile of exchanges in the sanctum, listening to the dreamy rhythm of the music that floated in from an adjacent beer garden, the monotonous clickety-click of the Morgenthalers and the impromptu observations of the office cat to a visiting Thomas feline on the back gallery. The music of the beer-garden orchestra gradually swelled into a mighty anthem, the office cat's sad complaint became a pæan of praise, the rat-tat-tat of the Morgenthalers, the click of golden slippers keeping time to celestial music on the ballroom floor of a house not built with hands, and the fitful gleam of an arc light filtering through the dust and grime of an uncurtained window—a Jacob's ladder, on the top rung of which a seraph poised with outstretched wings, like a bluejay on the top twig of a Washingtonian cherry-tree.

"Ascend," he commanded, and the editor complied.

"What's the matter, now?" he asked the seraph, as the latter gave him a lift and pulled in the ladder, like a country belle taking the cube-root of a yard of gum. "Has another rebellion broken out in heaven?"

"Naw," said the seraph, with a shrug of his wings; "I thought perhaps you'd like to write up our town. Of course, if you do so, it must be for its news features. We are not placing any advertising at present. Times are too hard, and corner lots in the New Jerusalem are not what they were during the city's boom days. Immigration has fallen off to such an extent that St. Peter says the entrance fees don't pay for greasing the hinges of the gate, and he's thinking of padlocking it and applying for a new job. The committee on ways and means say we'll have to pave the streets with silver, and set the throne with stage jewels, if business doesn't improve pretty soon."

"What's the trouble?"

"Too much hide-bound orthodoxy and too little Christianity. Now, were you to suggest that St. John had a bad case of the jimjams when he saw all those funny things, the people down below would probably mob you. The preachers would thunder against you from the pulpit, and Deacon Twogood pronounce you a blasphemous Atheist. Of course, every man's an Atheist who doesn't see God through Deacon Twogood's telescope, and every man a blasphemer who applies historical criticism to the Bible—who attempts to separate the word of God from the folly of the redacteurs. Still, these good people continue to built palatial churches in which to practise hypocrisy, while men with families to support are glad of a chance to toil from sun to sun three times a week for a dollar a day! A man in that condition naturally becomes an Anarchist, if not a criminal; and if his children do not turn out thieves, and his wife a prostitute, it is no fault of either society or the Church. I think the Almighty is getting tired of lending his name to such religious layouts, and I don't blame him. If he ever asks my advice, I'll tell him to smash with his thunderbolts every church on earth that cost more than $5,000, and start the fool-killer on the trail of every preacher who prattles about blasphemy while children are begging bread and women are dying of want. What the old world needs is a religion of humanity—one broad enough and liberal enough to take up into its bosom every creature created in the image of God."

By this time the editor and the other seraph had reached a narrow gate, over which was inscribed in golden capitals, "Orthodox Heaven." The seraph pulled the bell, and St. Peter peeped out through the wicket. Seeing that it was a newspaper man, he threw wide the gate and removed his crown as a mark of respect.

"I'd best give you a return check," he said. "You're from Texas, and you'll want to go back in an hour or two."

"Where's Judas Iscariot?" asked the traveller.

"Oh," said the man on the door, "Judas has been in hell nearly 2,000 years. You see, he sold his Savior for thirty pieces of—"

"Yes, yes; but he had the decency to go hang himself Now, there was another disciple who went back on his Master because he feared the rabble would ride him on a rail, then sat down and bawled like a spanked baby because he was born a coward and—"

But St. Peter was pointing out to a Populist the shortest road to Perdition, and evidently did not hear. A man of majestic mien, and carrying a golden harp, came forward and grasped the wanderer's hand.

"Do they still read my poetry down below?" he asked eagerly. "What do the modern critics say of it?"

"Permit me to introduce King David," said the seraph. "Davy, this is the editor of the *Great Religious*." The psalmist was delighted, and wanted to present the pilgrim to Mrs. David, No. 923; but the editor checked him. He didn't care to make female acquaintances in a strange city.

"Let's see; aren't you the party who despoiled Uriah's wife, then had that gentleman murdered to conceal your crime?"

"Oh, please don't put that in the papers," pleaded Saul's successor. "Of course, on earth little things like that are charged up to a fellow, but they make no difference in the orthodox heaven. If a man is only pious and strictly orthodox, all things are forgiven him. Ah, here is my distinguished ancestor, Father Abraham. Allow me to present you."

"Come, nestle in this bosom with Lazarus," said the patriarch; but the pilgrim, being somewhat choice of his bedfellows, dodged the embrace.

"Are you the party who gave up his wife to the lustful Orientals, saying, 'She is my sister'? Are you the party who preferred the life of a cuckold to the death of a gentleman?" But he had already seized a harp and joined in the serpentine dance about the throne, crying with his cracked voice: "Holy, holy, holy."

Lot and his two daughters came tripping by to the sound of timbrels. The seraph beckoned the husband of the pillar of salt, and he came to a standstill.

"You are the party whose righteousness saved him when Sodom and Gomorrah did the Herculaneum act?" He nodded. "Well, I'd just like to ask you, for the information of the medical fraternity, how a man who is dead drunk can accomplish what you did in the cave at—"

"Don't mention it," pleaded the beloved of the Lord, and he blew a blast on a golden trumpet, pulled his crown about his ears, and joined in the sacred dance with his youngest daughter for partner.

"Who are those people bearing down upon us with crashing cymbals and loud hosannahs?" asked the scribe.

"That," replied the seraph, "is Murderers' Band. Those people were all hanged for infamous crimes; but when they found they were in for it—that they could not get a commutation of sentence to life imprisonment—repented and were jerked to Jesus. That fellow who leads the procession, and whose hallelujah is particularly unctuous, murdered his mistress, a sweet little girl whom he had debauched, and whom he compelled to enter a house of infamy to supply him with whisky money. The papers printed an account of the crime and his execution some time ago."

"Catch the celestial bird and give him to me," pleaded the scribe. "I long to hear him warble." He came with his ambrosial locks streaming wide on the celestial air, a song in his mouth, an instrument of melody in his hand.

"Hello, Jim! How did you break in here? Where's Julia?"

"Oh, Julia's in hell!" said Jim, gaily, as he swept the strings of his instrument and cried, "Glory, glory, glory."

"You see, she didn't have time to repent. She tried to shake me, and I brained her with a hatchet. I got religion, and here I am, with two pair of reversible wings—came direct from the scaffold. But Julia's frizzling in everlasting fire. Strike the timbrel, blow the trumpet, and let there be joyful noise unto the—"

"Whoa! Shut off that sanctified 'Ta-ra-ra-Boom-de-aye,' and tell me about Julia. She was a child; pure as a lily, sweet as the incense that rises from Buddha's altar. You led her astray. You dragged her down to the lowest depths ever touched by womankind. You beat her. You brought Chinamen to visit her, took the price of her shame, bought whisky, and murdered her because she dared plead with you not to further humiliate her. You say that she is in hell. Do you ever go to see her? Do you ever carry a cup of cold water to cool her parched lips? Does her agony haunt you? Does it cause the anthem to die on your lips, and the hot tears to scald your cheeks? Do you pray God to allow you to change places with her?"

"What are you giving me? Tink I'm a chump? We'uns up here don't worry about der lost. That's their biz; see?" And he was gone—chanting Solomon's assignation song.

Just then John Calvin came along. "Where's Servetus?" asked the scribe. "Where should he be but in hell?" retorted John. "He was a heretic, and I burned him. Of course, he was an honest, truthful, kindly-hearted man, with more brains in his little finger than I had in my head; but he got wrong in his scriptural views, and, as in duty bound, I made a bonfire of him. Praise the Lord God Almighty,

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who is a merciful God!" And he drifted on to meet Henry VIII., who was gaily whistling, "Katharine, my Katharine."

"Have you any respectable people up here?" asked the scribe, pulling the seraph aside by one of his pin-feathers.

"Well," said he, glancing about apprehensively, "to give you a straight deal, I think the respectable people are all in hell. And, to tell you truly, I believe they are far happier down there than this job lot of pious murderers and sanctified hypocrites up here. Of course, the climatic conditions are not conducive of ecstasy, but the society is infinitely more select, and there's such a thing as human sympathy and love among the lost. Of course, I don't want you to give me away, but—"

"Nine columns short—wires all flat—two machines kerflummixed—news editor tearing his hair—foreman cussin' a blue streak—what'n Helen Blazes we goin' t' do? Say?"

It was the "devil." The "Vision of Heaven" vanished, and the weary editor cried out in agony, "This is Hell!"

—*Brann's Annual.*

THE DEBATE AT DERBY ON THE CHRISTIAN DEITY.

Being fond of listening to debates, and wishing to see if our champion, Charles Watts, the hero of so many fights, still retained his old form, I journeyed from Birmingham to Derby specially to hear the discussion between him and the Rev. J. Hyde (Minister of the New Jerusalem Church).

Derby, judging by the number of churches I saw there, appears to be a very orthodox place, and it is strange that the unco' guid did not attend in larger numbers to support the rev. gentleman in his endeavor to crush the exponent of Secular views.

The Freethinkers mustered in good force, and I gathered from the expressions of opinion after the event that they were well satisfied with the way their side of the question was stated and defended.

From a private source I heard that at any rate one member of the rev. gentleman's congregation "felt sorry for Mr. Hyde." So did I, for, without prejudice, it must have been apparent right through both evenings that he was no match for Mr. Watts.

The rev. gentleman opened the debate with an essay on what he called "The Mode of Procedure." He laid it down that the Revelation from God had two sides—human and divine—that there were in the Bible general and apparent truths, and that the contradictions in it were only in the vehicle, not in the substance. The divine mind clothed itself in the imperfections of the human in order that it might be better understood. The Bible in one part stated that God was infinite—which Mr. Hyde said was a "real truth"; all other statements in the book seeming to infer that he was not were only "apparent truths." The infinite mind he described as limitless and inexhaustible.

Mr. Watts, in his opening speech, called attention to the fact that although, as the chairman had stated, Mr. Hyde had sat down six minutes before his time had expired, he had given no description or definition of the word God. Mr. Watts asked that the words of the Bible should be accepted in their ordinary sense as meaning what they said. If the Bible were a divine revelation, it ought to contain something not known to man before. If God has given a clear revelation, as Mr. Hyde alleged, how is it that there are so many different ideas concerning God, and so many sects having different conceptions as to what the Bible taught? These he described as trifling obstacles he should like cleared away. Wherein lies the difference between the human and divine? What was the difference between the natural and supernatural? How was it that a knowledge of God was so limited? Was God the creator of the universe? If so, there must have been a time when it was not. Could the rev. gentleman conceive of such a time? Should not God's intelligence be superior? Does it govern the world on principles of mercy and justice? If not, why not? Mr. Hyde professed, like his master, Swedenborg, to have a light that other unfortunate people have not.

In reply, Mr. Hyde said we must go to the Bible for a description of God. Man cannot discover what is infinite; but it is revealed in its proper place in the Bible. I am here, said he, to discuss the Bible God, not my opinions. He repeated this five or six times, as Mr. Watts subsequently pointed out; but he afterwards left the subject alone, and all the efforts of Mr. Watts to draw him back to it were unavailing: he was content to impress on us once more the difference between real and apparent truths. Pressed over and over again, he at last said God was infinite love and infinite wisdom, and that by divine he meant that pertaining to God. Mr. Watts caused considerable laughter by saying that his opponent had only an idea of an idea of which he had no idea at all. In the course of one of Mr. Watts's speeches some Christian friend shouted out: "That is only *your* opinion." "Just so," retorted Mr. Watts; "that is all it is—a matter of opinion, and mine is worth as much as my opponent's."

On the second night Mr. Watts said that his opponent had left it to him to commence the debate by telling the audience what the Christian Deity was according to the Bible. He proceeded to give chapter and verse to show that God had sanctioned adultery, murder, deceit, and falsehood, and asked: Could we ascribe to a God of infinite love acts of gross brutality which we would not think of being guilty of ourselves? He instanced the cruel tests imposed by God upon Abraham and Jephthah, and caused a burst of applause by his passionate rejection of the doctrine of hell and eternal torments. No human father would be guilty of such barbarous punishments as were attributed by the Bible to God.

Instead of replying to this speech, Mr. Hyde read another prepared essay on real and apparent truths, and said that, if Mr. Watts had kept in view what he said on this point in his opening speech, all would have gone well. He then proceeded to quote passages contradicting those quoted by Mr. Watts. All Mr. Hyde's quotations were real truths, and all Mr. Watts's quotations were apparent truths, conveyed by the imperfect condition of men's minds. Hell was made by man's wickedness, and not by God. Mr. Hyde contended that God and Christ were one and the same person, despite Mr. Watts's quotations from Christ's sayings to the opposite.

In his concluding speech Mr. Watts claimed that the Agnostic position was the only safe one, and that we could lead a good and moral life without a profession of belief in the Christian Deity. Mr. Hyde, in winding up, argued that God had given us talents which should be used in God's interests, and that it was immoral teaching to tell man to use those talents in his own interests. He is the power by which we live.

One satisfactory feature of the debate was the closing speech of the Chairman (Councillor Wilkins), who said he had listened to Mr. Watts with much pleasure, and that he was of opinion—and the conviction strengthened as he grew older—that God would judge us by our actions, and not our belief. This little speech proved to me that Mr. Watts had not labored altogether in vain. It only needs more public debates, followed up by the President's scheme of free lectures, to make our principles more extensively known, and they would soon become more widely appreciated and professed. The members of the Derby Branch of the N.S.S. are to be congratulated on their activity in bringing about such a debate.

C. H. Cattell.

LOOKING FOR THE LORD J. C.!

(*Tune:* "Looking for a Coon like me.")

What jugginses those people are
Who are looking for the Lord J. C.!
For long ago he "crossed the bar,"
Yet they're looking for the Lord J. C.!
From Nature's book Freethinkers learn
A man, once dead, can ne'er return;
But Nature's teachings Christians spurn,
And they're looking for the Lord J. C.!
Chorus.—Oh! they're balmy,
It seems very evident to me,
For they turn their eyes towards the skies—
Looking for the Lord J. C.!

Long since has passed the promised date
For the coming of the Lord J. C.!
Yet patiently the "mugs" still wait
For the coming of the Lord J. C.!
Said Christ—whose statements were "no class"—
"This generation shall not pass
Till all's fulfilled"; yet many an ass
Is looking for the Lord J. C.!
Chorus.—Oh! they're balmy, etc.

The Prophet Baxter hoardings fills
With announcements of the Lord J. C.
The date is printed on his bills
Of the coming of the Lord J. C.!
Each year a new date's prophesied;
And, though each date is falsified,
The "mugs" accept him as their guide;
And they're looking for the Lord J. C.!
Chorus.—Oh, they're balmy, etc.

They're all bamboozled and misled
Who are looking for the Lord J. C.!
We wish they'd look to earth, instead
Of looking for the Lord J. C.!
For mis'ry, poverty, and crime
Would vanish soon from every clime
If Christians wasted not their time
In looking for the Lord J. C.!
Chorus.—Oh! they're balmy, etc.

Ess Jay Bee.

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BOOK CHAT.

Mr. Bertram Dobell, 77 Charing Cross-road, has followed up his publication of Thomas Taylor's translation of *Iamblichus on the Mysteries* by his version of *The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus*, in the introduction to which Taylor contends that these hymns are not only genuine, but that they were the actual invocations used in the Eleusinian Mysteries. Taylor was so thoroughly steeped in this literature that his opinion must always be of some weight. The consensus of modern criticism is against this view, and the eighty-seven hymns comprised in this volume are usually set down as the production of the Neo-Platonic school. It must be confessed it is not easy to see how these hymns could be composed when Paganism was in decay. Taylor seems to have believed them the composition of a personal Orpheus. To us it seems more likely that, like the Psalms attributed to David, they represent the work of various individuals and various ages, extending perhaps from the time of Onamacritus, B.C. 520, to their redaction in their present form by the philosophers of the Alexandrian school.

* * *

Be this as it may, the Orphic Hymns are certainly of high interest and value for the light they throw on the philosophic character of Paganism. The learned Heinius called them "a true liturgy of Satan," while Thomas Taylor, their translator, regarded them as little less than divine. Here, too, Taylor himself appears as a poet, or at least with the adornment of rhyme. His notes are numerous, and of almost as great interest as the hymns themselves. The hymns are not only addressed to the gods and goddesses, but to Ether, Health, Sun, Moon, Zephyr, East Wind, Death, etc. The book is excellently printed, and is, indeed, all that a reprint should be.

* * *

The Greater Victorian Poets, by Hugh Walker, M.A. (London: Swan Sonnenschein), is a series of studies on Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold. There can be little doubt that the author has selected the names of the poets who have done most in shaping the thought of their time, though some might wish to see also the names of Swinburne, Morris, Thomson, and Meredith. Mr. Walker says: "The idea of a universal reign of law, grasped, before the present century, only by a few choice minds, but now the property of all who can think; the idea of the ultimate oneness of the great forces of nature; above all, the idea of evolution, the master-thought of the century: these appeal to the imagination; they alter our whole conception of the relation of man to the universe; and they not only may, but must, leave their mark upon poetry." The critic regards poetry as a criticism of life, and judges it by its influence upon thought as well as upon the feelings.

* * *

Mr. Walker goes through all the chief works of Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold in chronological order. He often compares them, but never as if the abilities of one were a disparagement of those of another. His criticism is, indeed, a disinterested endeavor to display the best. He treats his author specially in relation to the Poetry of Nature, the Influence of Science, their Social and Political aspects, and their attitude in regard to Faith and Doubt. Arnold is described as the poet of doubt, who points to another faith. He says: "Arnold from the beginning rejected the popular creed, but he did so with pain." His view was that we must abandon our "all too human creeds," and look within for veracity. This Mr. Walker might have illustrated more fully than he has chosen to do from Arnold's masterpiece, *Empedocles on Etna*. Mr. Walker says: "Arnold never retracted these negations. If his poetry left the question in any doubt, his prose would settle it. But in one of his latest poems, *Geist's Grave*, he speaks of death as the

> Stern law of every mortal lot,
> Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
> And builds himself, I know not what,
> Of second life I know not where.

He rejected the supernatural wholly from his belief and his life. Some will think that in doing so he rejected religion, and that consequently the discussion of him in his religious aspects is, except negatively, rather futile. Such, however, was not his own view. He believed in a scheme of things surely setting towards righteousness. His life was guided and his verse inspired by that belief, and to ignore it would be to ignore its vital principle."

* * *

In *The Greater Victorian Poets* Mr. Walker finds everywhere the thought and the life of the time in which they live. He says the great practical task of the century has been the reconstruction of society after the upheaval of the French Revolution; and we find each of the three poets, in his own way, engaging in the task—Arnold insisting over and over again on its magnitude and difficulty, and on the need of lucidity and a wide outlook to accomplish it; Tennyson on his belief in ordered progress, and his desire to "conserve the hopes of man"; Browning proclaiming his own debt to freedom, and his wish that everyone should enjoy it. To those who care for the critical appreciation of these three great poets Mr. Walker's work may be heartily commended.

* * *

Magic Squares: An Introduction to the Study of their Formation, by Thomas Squire Barrett, F.S.S. (Berkhamsted: Slater, 210 High-street), is a concise explanation of how to make the various kinds of squares which were regarded as talismanic in their occult virtues by the ancients, to whom the properties of numbers appeared divine. The little book will be very interesting to all who delight in arithmetical and mathematical recreations. The author is the writer of the article on "Magic Squares" in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, and is also author of *A New Theory of Causation*.

* * *

There was not much of the poet about Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, but he wrote a parody of Tennyson's *Despair* in the *St. James's Gazette*, which was, at any rate, characterised by sterling common sense. The lines ended—

> "In the world in which we are living there's plenty to do and to know;
> And there's always something to hope for till it's time for us to go.
> 'Despair' is the vilest of words, unfit to be said or thought,
> Whether there is a God and a future state or not.
> If you really are such a wretch that you're quite unfit to live,
> And ask my advice, I'll give you the best that I have to give:
> Drown yourself by all means; I was wrong and you were right;
> I'll not pull you out any more, but be sure you drown yourself quite."

* * *

Mr. Bertram Dobell in London, and the Labour Press in Manchester, will shortly issue Mr. Edward Carpenter's new work, *Love's Coming-of-Age*, and a new issue of *Towards Democracy: Complete Poems*, from the same pen.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ROMAN CHURCH AND ANIMALS' RIGHTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Students of the history of the broader humanity know that in the Dark Ages, when Christianity was rampant, the two great causes which the priests succeeded in persecuting out of open existence were those of Freethought and Humanity. Nor need we go back into the far past for examples of the Roman Church's attitude towards the lower races; for there is to-day the school of the Rev. Joseph Rickaby, S.J., who holds that animals are as stones, and of Bishop Bagshawe, of Nottingham, who says that animals have no rights because they have no reason; and the paradox of the thing is, just as the Roman Catholics then burnt man at the stake because he *had* "the radical capacity for pure reason"—the worst of heresies in the eyes of the priests—so now they hold that animals have no rights, because they have "*no* radical capacity for pure reason." Compare this awful inhumanity with the simple words of the great jurist, Jeremy Bentham: "The question is not, Can they reason? but, Can they suffer?"

Joseph Collinson.

PROFANE JOKES.

Rector (going his rounds)—"Fine pip that, Mr. Dibbles; uncommonly fine!" Contemplative Villager—"Ah, yes, sir; if we was only all of us as fit to die as him, sir!"

Dolly (to her brother Tommy)—"Do you know, Tommy, that you come from heaven?" Tommy—"Did I?" Dolly—"Yes." Tommy—"Well, I must have come down a devil of a whop."

A sky-pilot went to visit a restless sufferer, a good woman, and her friends asked him to read a chapter of the Bible to her. This he proceeded to do. In a few minutes she was sound asleep. "Ah," said a friend, "see the soothing power of the Word!"

The Sunday-school superintendent was telling the wee small folks of the custom in certain countries of chaining the prisoner's hands and feet together. "And," she asked, "don't you suppose that if someone came and released them they would be very happy and grateful?" It was unanimously agreed that they would. "And," continued the superintendent, coming to her point, "Jesus was sent to the world to release people from their sins. Are any of you here bound with the chains of sin?" "No," piped the four-year-old offspring of the minister; "I'm not, but you might speak to my grandmother about Jesus—I've heard her say that she is."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 5.30, tea and soiree.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, C. Cohen, "Christianity, Woman, and Morality." Wednesday, at 8.45, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture XI., Leo" (continued). Saturday, at 8.30, concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Jesus Christ."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, G. Spiller, "Jesus of Nazareth."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Messrs. Banham and Fletcher, "The Marriage Laws."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Resurrection."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James, "Can we be Saved?"

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, S. E. Easton will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, E. Calvert, "Is the Right of Free Speech Conducive to Truth and Progress?" 3.30, "Religious Symbolism."

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street): 11.30, J. Rowney, "Our Easter Problem."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Morality."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, Arthur B. Moss, "Paganism and the Sign of the Cross."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butcher's Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BARNSLEY (Black-a-moor Hotel): 8, members' meeting; friends invited.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, social gathering. Good Friday, 10.30, meet at Bristol Bridge for ramble to Dundry.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, musical entertainment—special talent.

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "Four Scientific Men who have Modified the Thought of Intellectual Europe."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class accompanies W. Gilmour to Paisley; 6.30, J. P. Gilmour, "The Revival of Phrenology" (illustrated with anatomical specimens and diagrams).

HAMILTON (Lesser Victoria Hall): Thursday, at 8, W. Heaford, "Is the Bible Reliable?"

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Trumper, "*Merrie England.*"

KILMARNOCK (Large Temperance Hall): Friday, at 8, W. Heaford, "A Better Creed than Christianity."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Read, "What Must I do to be Saved?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. G. Taylor, "The Education Question."

MOTHERWELL (Lesser Burgh Hall): Wednesday, at 8, W. Heaford, "A Better Creed than Christianity."

NOTTINGHAM (Morley Hall): morning, Touzeau Parris, "Christianity Modified Paganism"; afternoon, "Causes Leading to the Formation of the I.L.P."; evening, "Sin Against God an Impossibility."

PAISLEY (Tannahill Hall, Moss-street): Tuesday, at 8, W. Heaford will lecture.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street) 7, musical and other recitals.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, Charles Watts, "Cromwell and the Commonwealth"; 3, "The Atonement a Theological Delusion;" 7, "Is Man a Religious Being?"

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (Boro' Hall Dining Room): Thursday, at 7.45, Charles Watts, "Is Man a Religious Being?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 6.30, W. Dyson, "Resurrection of Jesus."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 3, S. R. Thompson, "The Christian's Guide Book." Special business meeting after the lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—NO. 15. SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

INGERSOLL "LIES."

THE present article will not deal with lies told *by* Ingersoll, but with lies told *about* him. To write about the former would be like making bricks without clay. To write about the latter is to face the opposite difficulty; one is overwhelmed by the abundance of material, and hardly knows where to begin and when to leave off.

But before I go farther I may as well say something about the word "lie." Two years ago I was taken to task for applying this word to a conversion story written by an eminent Wesleyan minister. This gentleman had steadily refused all investigation of his narrative, although the hero of it—at any rate as depicted—never had any real existence. He stuck to his story through thick and thin, and finally made a desperate effort to shelter himself behind the person of a friendly Freethinker. Happily, by a quite "miraculous" stroke of good luck, I was enabled to expose the whole plot. I found the family of the Atheist Shoemaker; I traced out with them the house in which he had lodged, and interviewed the landlady; I also traced out with them the place where he had worked, and interviewed his shopmates. The result was an absolute disproof of all the leading features of the Atheist Shoemaker story. Everything that gave it interest and importance was utterly false. But the reverend author of this pious concoction still boasts himself a perfectly honorable man. The attitude he takes is that he couldn't lie if he tried. This is the attitude taken by nine out of every ten prisoners tried at the Old Bailey, but as their attitude does not bar a fair trial they are often found guilty and punished accordingly.

I called, and I still call, that reverend gentleman's story *a lie*. In doing so I know I offend a handful of finical persons, who think more of etiquette than of honesty in this matter. They say I should have called the story *inaccurate*. But that word does not express my meaning. I mean that the author deliberately palmed off fiction as fact; I mean that he took every precaution against investigation; I mean that he refused to modify his story even when persons who were in a position to know pointed out that some parts of it were clearly untrue; I mean that he kept all the evidence against it from the eyes of his own readers; I mean that, although he no longer has the courage to sell the book, he continues to tell the public, when he is questioned, that its contents are as true as gospel. What is the use of asking me to call this story *inaccurate*? I am not built that way, and am glad I am not. I call it *a lie*. And if there were any stronger word in the English vocabulary I would use it. As it is, I use the noun, and let every reader preface it with a well-selected adjective.

Let me say once for all that, in my opinion, wickedness is worse than plain language; that it is worse to *tell* lies than to *call* them lies. When one man cuts another's throat, I call it murder; those who like can call it unjustifiable homicide; but don't let them try to hang me instead of the other fellow.

Colonel Ingersoll does not scruple to use the word "lie" when he thinks it necessary. The following passage from his pen will serve as an excellent finish to my introduction:—

> "Countless falsehoods have been circulated about all the opponents of superstition. Whoever attacks the popular falsehoods of his time will find that a lie defends itself by telling other lies. Nothing is so prolific, nothing can so multiply itself nothing can lay and hatch so many eggs, as a good, healthy, religious lie.....There are thousands and thousands of tongues ready to repeat what the owners know to be false, and these lies are a part of the stock-in-trade, the valuable assets, of superstition."

Ingersoll himself has been the subject of hundreds of lies. The clergy of the United States slander him recklessly. They cannot answer him, and they know it; and they know that he knows it; so they resort to the cheap and easy method of defamation, relying upon what Ingersoll calls "the wonderful credulity of the believers in the supernatural," who "feel under an obligation to believe everything in favor of their religion, or against any form of what they are pleased to call infidelity."

The happy idea occurred to Mr. E. M. Macdonald, editor of the New York *Truthseeker*, to wheel a big counter out into the street and nail a lot of these lies down in sight of the American public. *Colonel Robert Ingersoll As He Is* forms a handsome little volume of 160 pages. Its sub-title declares it to be "A Complete Refutation of His Clerical Enemies' Malicious Slanders." The cover bears a capital portrait of the great Freethought orator, and the price is only twenty-five cents—about one shilling of English money.

One great merit of Mr. Macdonald's work, and one that much enhances its value, is that he gives chapter and verse for everything. Name, place, and date are printed on every occasion. If a newspaper is quoted, the exact issue is mentioned, so that the doubting Thomases of orthodoxy may hunt up the reference for themselves.

This book ought to be widely circulated in England, and it ought to be put into the hands of Christians. Some of the blackguards who shuffle along in the gutter of Christian Evidences are very active in circulating here a libellous account of Colonel Ingersoll's career. The proper answer to such stuff is a horsewhip, but as it is an expensive luxury to thrash a Christian in a Christian country, this counsel of perfection is too dear to follow. The next best thing is to send a refutation after the lie. It will not catch the lie everywhere, but it will in some places, and the truth will get a chance now and then.

The libellous account circulated in England, and partially cited by that amiable Yankee revivalist, the Rev. H. L. Hastings, appears to have emanated from a South Dakota minister, the Rev. J. D. Houston. This creature got a big congregation one Sunday night on the pretence that he was going to reply to Ingersoll, but instead of answering the Colonel's arguments he spent an hour in slandering his character. It is a wonder that some Christian did not kick the fellow when he got down from the pulpit. Not satisfied with calling Ingersoll a drunkard, he declared that the Colonel actually made his own daughters drunk at the dinner-table, so that they had to be assisted out of the room. Any Secular lecturer who talked in that way about a Christian advocate would be pulled off the platform, but there appears to be no limit to what Christians will stand in this direction.

Ingersoll is not a teetotaler, neither is Mr. Gladstone, neither is the Pope, neither was Jesus Christ. He does not believe in Prohibition, neither does the Archbishop of Canterbury. "The trouble with Prohibition," he says, "is that it fills the country with spies—makes neighbors suspicious of each other—fills the community with meddlers—with people who poke their impudent noses into the business of others. Besides, Prohibition does not prohibit—it does not even prohibit the Prohibitionists." Nor is

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Ingersoll an anti-tobacconist. He enjoys a good cigar, like the late Mr. Spurgeon, who declined to drop his havannah, and declared he would smoke it to the glory of God.

Drinking a glass of wine, however, is not drunkenness. Ingersoll's friends all know him to be a lover of temperance. How otherwise could he have worked so hard? His law practice is very extensive, and although he is turned sixty he goes on a lecturing tour for weeks together, travelling every day and lecturing every night. Could a man do that on intemperance? It is really too ridiculous for discussion. Besides, those who assert that a man is intemperate must prove it. It is infamous to let the bigotry of the jury serve in the place of evidence.

Ingersoll has been accused of eulogising good whisky, and this by Christians who go to church and drink the Blood of Christ in bad port wine. In April, 1887, his young friend Brown—now his son-in-law—was laid up with pneumonia, and the doctors prescribed whisky in small doses. A friend of Ingersoll's had presented him with a jug of very old whisky, and a bottle of it was sent to Mr. Brown, with the following letter, which got into the newspapers:—

> "My Dear Friend,—I send you some of the most wonderful whisky that ever drove the skeleton from a feast or painted landscapes in the brain of man. It is the mingled souls of wheat and corn. In it you will find the sunshine and the shadow that chased each other over the billowy fields; the breath of June; the carol of the lark; the dews of night; the wealth of summer and autumn's rich content, all golden with imprisoned light. Drink it and you will hear the voices of men and maidens singing the 'Harvest Home,' mingled with the laughter of children. Drink it and you will feel within your blood the star-lit dawns, the dreamy, tawny dusks of many perfect days. For forty years this liquid joy has been within the happy staves of oak, longing to touch the lips of men.
>
> "R. G. Ingersoll."

This letter is the composition of a poet, and poets do not always speak on affidavit. Besides, it was a letter to a sick man, and meant to be as medicinal as the whisky.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

Chapter I.

OPEN THOUGHT THE FIRST STEP TO INTELLIGENCE.

"It is not prudent to be in the right too soon, nor to be in the right against everybody else. And yet it sometimes happens that, after a certain lapse of time, greater or lesser, you will find that one of those truths which you had kept to yourself, as premature, but which has got abroad, in spite of your teeth, has become the most commonplace thing imaginable."—Alphonse Karr.

One purpose of this series of articles will be to explain how unfounded are the objections of many excellent Christians to secular instruction in Board schools. The secular is distinct from theology, which it neither ignores, assails, nor denies. Things secular are as separate from the Church as land from the ocean. And what nobody seems to discern is that things secular are in themselves quite distinct from Secularism. The secular is a mode of instruction; Secularism is a code of conduct. Secularism does conflict with theology; Secularist teaching would, but secular instruction would not.

Persuaded as I am that lack of consideration for the convictions of the reader creates an impediment in the way of his agreement with the writer, and even disinclines him to examine what is put before him; yet it is nevertheless possible that some of these pages may be open to this objection. If so, it is owing to want of thought, or want of art in statement; and it is no part of the intention of the writer.

He would have diffidence in expressing, as he does in these pages, his dissent from the opinions of many Christian advocates—for whose character and convictions he has great respect, and for some even affection—did he not perceive that few have any diffidence or reservation (save in one or two exalted instances*) in maintaining their views and dissenting from his.

Open thought, which in this chapter is brought under the reader's notice, is sometimes called "self thought," or "free thought," or "original thought"—the opposite of conventional, second-hand thought, which is all that the custom-ridden mass of mankind are addicted to.

Open thought has three stages.

The first stage is that in which the right to think independently is insisted on, and the free action of opinion so formed is maintained. Conscious power thus acquired satisfies the pride of some; others limit its exercise from prudence. Interests which would be jeopardised by applying independent thought to received opinion keep more persons silent, and thus many never pass from this stage.

The second stage is that in which the right of self-thought is applied to the criticism of theology, with a view to clear the way for life according to reason. This is not the work of a day or year, but is so prolonged that clearing the way becomes, as it were, a profession, and is at length pursued as an end, instead of a means. Disputation becomes a passion, and the higher state of life, of which criticism is the necessary precursor, is lost sight of, and many remain at this stage, when it is reached, and go no farther.

The third stage is that where ethical motives of conduct, apart from Christianity, are vindicated for the guidance of those who are indifferent about theology, or who reject it altogether. Supplying to such persons secular reasons for duty is Secularism, the range of which is illimitable. It begins where Freethought usually ends, and constitutes a new form of constructive thought, the principles and policy of which are quite different from those acted upon in the preceding stages. Controversy concerns itself with what *is*; Secularism with what *ought* to be.

It is pertinent here to say that Christianity does not permit eclecticism—that is, it does not tolerate others selecting portions of Christian Scriptures possessing the mark of intrinsic truth, to which many could cheerfully conform in their lives. This rule compels all who cannot accept the entire Scriptures to deal with its teachings as they find them expressed, and for which Christianity makes itself responsible. All the while it is quite evident that Christians do permit eclecticism among themselves. The great Congress of the Free Churches, recently held in Nottingham, representing the personal and vital form of Christianity, had a humanness and tolerance unmanifested by Christianity before, showing that humanity is stronger than historical integrity. If anyone, therefore, should draw up, as might be done, a theory of Christianity solely from such doctrines as are represented in the elliptical preaching, practice, and social life of Christians of to-day, a very different estimate of the Christian system would have to be given from that with which the author deals in the subsequent chapters. In them Christianity is represented as Freethought has found it, and as it exists in the Scriptures, in the law, in the pulpit, and the school, which constitute its total force in the respects in which it represses and discourages independent thought. Science, truth, and criticism have engrafted themselves on historic Christianity. It has now new articles of belief. When it avows them it will win larger concurrence and respect than it can now command.

Chapter II.

THE QUESTION STATED.

> "Look forward—not backward;
> Look up—not down;
> Look around;
> Lend a hand."*
>
> —Edward Everett Hale, D.D.

Where a monarchy is master, inquiry is apt to be a disturbing element; and, though it be exercised in the interest of the commonwealth, it is none the less resented. Where the priest is master inquiry is sharply prohibited. The priest represents a spiritual monarchy in which the tenets of belief are fixed—assumed to be infallible, and to be prescribed by Deity. Thus the priest regards inquiry as proceeding from an impertinent distrust, to which he is not reconciled on being assured that it is undertaken in the interest of truth. Thus the king denounces inquiry as sedition, and the priest as sin. In the end the inquirer

* Of whom the greatest is Mr. Gladstone.

* Dr. Hale did not popularise these energetic maxims of earnestness in the connection in which they are here used; but their wisdom is of general application.

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finds himself an alien in Church and State, and laws are made against his life, his liberty, property, and veracity.*

Thus, from the time when monarch and priest first set up their pretensions in the world, the inquiring mind has had small encouragement. When Protestantism came it merely conceded inquiry *under direction*, and only so far as it tended to confirm its own anti-papal tenets. But when inquiry claimed to be independent, unfettered, uncontrolled—in fact, to be *free* inquiry—then Papist, Lutheran, and Dissenter alike regarded it as dangerous, and stigmatised it by every term calculated to deter or dissuade people from it.

But, though this combined defamation of inquiry set many against it, it did not intimidate men entirely. There arose independent thinkers, who held that unfettered investigation was the discoverer of truth and dangerous to error only, and that the freer it was the more effective it must be. Still, timorous-minded persons remained suspicious of *free* thought. At its best, they found it involved conflict with false opinion, and conflict, to those without aspiration or conscience, is disquieting; and where impartial investigation interfered with personal interests it was opposed. No one could enter on the search for truth without finding his path obstructed by theological errors and interdictions. Having taken the side of truth, all who were loyal to it were bound, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, to withstand the Apollyons who opposed it, and a combat began which lasted for centuries and is not yet ended. But, though theology was always in power, men of courage at length established also a free platform and a free press for the publication of the results arrived at. These rights were so indispensable for progress, and were so long resisted, that generations fought for them as ends in themselves. Thus there grew up, as in military affairs, a class whose profession was destruction, and Freethinkers came to be regarded as Negationists. When I came into the field the combat was raging. Richard Carlile had not long been liberated from successive imprisonments of more than nine years' duration. Charles Southwell was in the Bristol Gaol. Before his sentence had half expired I was in Gloucester Gaol. George Adams was there; Mrs. Harriet Adams was committed for trial from Cheltenham. Matilda Roalfe, Thomas Finlay, Thomas Paterson, and others, were incarcerated in Scotland. Robert Buchanan and Lloyd Jones, two social missionaries—colleagues of my own—escaped disabling consequences only by swearing they believed what they did not believe—an act I refused to imitate; and no mean inconvenience resulted to me from it. I took part in the vindication of the free publicity of opinion till it was practically conceded.

At the time when I was arrested in 1842 the Cheltenham magistrates, who were angered at defiant remarks I made, had the power (and used it) of committing me to the Quarter Sessions as a "felon," where the same justices could resent, by penalties, what I had said to them. On representations I made to Parliament, through my friend, John Arthur Roebuck, and others, Sir James Graham caused a Bill to be passed which removed trials for opinion to the Assizes. I was the first person tried under this Act. Thus, for the first time, heresy was ensured a dispassionate trial, and was no longer subject to the jurisdiction of local prejudice and magisterial resentment.

When overt acts of outrage were no longer possible against the adherents of Freethought, some from fairness, and others from necessity, began to reason with them, and asked: "Now you have established your claim to be heard, what have you to say?" The reply I proposed was: "Secularism—a form of opinion relating to the duty of this life, which substituted the piety of useful men for the usefulness of piety." GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

Yes, here in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal. Work it out therefrom, and, working, believe, live, be free.—*Carlyle*, "*Sartor Resartus.*"

* When martyrdoms and imprisonments ceased, disabling laws remained, which impose the Christian oath on all who appealed to the Courts; and those who had the pride of veracity and declined to swear were denied protection for property or credence of their word.

FOLK-LORE RESULTS.

THE Folk-Lore Society is to be congratulated upon its President. In Mr. Edward Clodd it has a gentleman of wide attainments, animated by the true scientific spirit, and ready to utter forthright the conclusions to which his inquiries have led him. I cordially compliment the Society upon its President; but I am not quite so sure if the President is to be as warmly congratulated upon his Society, though it contains many eminent workers in the field of folk-lore.

Some of them, at least, are understood to have objected to the Presidential address being printed in *Folk-Lore*, the Society's journal, on the ground of its supposed irreligious tendency. It does appear, however, in the current number, with the editorial explanation that, "in accordance with the general rule in all scientific societies," the address "is not open to criticism or alteration by the Council or by the Editor. It is the expression of the views of the President, and is listened to by the members with the respect due to his position. It does not necessarily express the opinions of the Council, or of the members at large."

What was there in Mr. Clodd's address to give rise to this very guarded editorial utterance? Just this, and nothing more: he told the folk-lorists plainly that they had not faced the larger significance of folk-lore, and its bearing on the creeds around us. "Comparative anatomy," he said, "has not more completely demonstrated the common descent of man and ape, and the consequent classification of man in the order Primate, than comparative anthropology has demonstrated his advance from the animal stage to civilisation. That work can never be undone. And one momentous effect of it is the disproof of traditional theories about man's paradisaical state and his fall therefrom." The evidence of man's early state is to be seen in the superstitious beliefs still surviving around us. This aspect your dilettante folk-lorist is inclined to shirk. Mr. Clodd says: "We have only cast a sheep's eye at it. Our treatment has been allusive, never quite direct. We meet and discuss groups of interesting facts—facts whose humour tickles us, or whose pathos moves us. And, as Omar Khayyám says, we have 'talked about it and about.' There has been some hesitation to approach the ultimate conclusions to which the facts point; partly from the wholesome influence of the scientific spirit, which bids us make sure that the fact will bear the weight of the inference; partly, too, from the tremendous power of the *taboo*, which would limit the scope of inquiry by artificial threats to trespassers." For my part, I fear the *taboo* is vastly more operative than the caution induced by the scientific spirit. Mr. Clodd continues:—

> "To bring home my meaning, let us look at the general attitude towards a couple of books whose subjects are of momentous import, and which may be bracketed together as complementary to each other. I refer to Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Mr. Hartland's *Legend of Perseus*. I was specially careful to follow the numerous reviews of Mr. Frazer's book, and in none that came under my eye was the far-reaching significance of the materials hinted at. The connection of the Arician custom of killing the priest-god with groups of allied customs was discussed; there was much discursive talk about tree-spirits, separable souls, and taboos, about survivals of tree-worship in 'stinking ydols,' as old Stubbs calls the May-poles in his *Anatomie of Abuses*—in fine, a great deal of dancing round them by the critics. Now the full title of Mr. Frazer's book is, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Comparative Religion*. In the preface he says that its 'central idea is the conception of the slain god.' In the last sentence he reminds us that 'the king of the wood no longer stands sentinel over the Golden Bough. But Nemi's woods are still green, and at evening you may hear the church bells of Albano, and, perhaps, if the air be still, of Rome itself, ringing the Angelus. *Le roi est mort; vive le roi.*'".

Probably the notices of Mr. Frazer's *Golden Bough* in the *Freethinker* have not come under Mr. Clodd's eye. If they had, they would be exempt from his strictures. In an article on "Dead and Resurrected Gods," which I contributed to the *Freethinker* of November 2, 1890, I said, noticing Mr. Frazer's epoch-making volume: "The inference which a Freethinking reader is likely to draw from Mr. Frazer's erudite work is that, like other gods who died and rose from the dead, Christ is but a survival, embodying more primitive ideas and worships, which explain, as no

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Christian is able to explain, how it is that a god should be put to death." Again and again I have called attention to Mr. Frazer's work just on account of its explanation of the beliefs around us, and this is the central purpose of my own *Footsteps of the Past*, of which one clergyman has made the very opposite complaint to that of Mr. Clodd—namely, that I speak out quite direct when I might have contented myself with being merely "allusive"—which often enough means being illusive also.

After showing that Mr. Frazer's work explains both the killing of the God and the taking of the sacrament, Mr. Clodd turns to Mr. Hartland's *Legend of Perseus*, and points out that it, too, illustrates the myths at the root of Christianity. "He has collected a large number of variants of legends of miraculous conceptions and virgin births, the existence of which demands, for purposes of inquiry and comparison, the inclusion of every story of corresponding character." Mr. Clodd goes further, and shows that the grossest conceptions of Paganism had a distinct place in mediæval Christianity, and suggests how largely that was a mere accommodation to a more ancient cult.

The traditional story of Christianity is backed up by authority, wealth, power. It is taught at the public cost to children in schools; it is inculcated by thousands of hireling men of God; and all who have dared to question it have been for as long as possible scouted and suppressed. But it is intellectually undermined. The story of the virgin-born miracle-working man-god belongs to a semi-savage state of society; the facts are becoming known, and they explode the fiction of the Churches.

> No matter though it towers to the sky
> And darkens earth, you cannot make the lie
> Immortal, though stupendously enshrined
> By art in every perfect mould of mind;
> Angelo, Rafael, Milton, Handel, all
> Its pillars, cannot stay it from the fall.
> . . . . . .
> The Pyramid of Imposture reared by Rome,
> All of cement for an eternal home,
> Must crumble back to earth, and every gust
> Shall revel in the desert of its dust;
> And when the prison of the Immortal Mind
> Hath fallen to set free the bound and blind,
> No more shall life be one long dread of death;
> Humanity shall breathe with ampler breath,
> Expand in spirit, and in stature rise
> To match its birthplace of the earth and skies.

It is anthropology, the fruitful study of man, that must displace theology, the vain study of God; and to this result the interesting department of folk-lore is making its contribution.

J. M. WHEELER.

GOD AND HUMAN HAPPINESS.

(Concluded from page 212.)

WE endeavored to show, in our article upon this subject which appeared in last week's *Freethinker*, that the belief in God did not affect the happiness of nations, nor avert their misery. It may be urged that believers in most of the superstitions of the world derive an amount of happiness from their belief. But we allege that minds freed from superstitious figments are the more likely to be influenced by agencies that will produce a higher and more lasting happiness than it is possible to receive from any mere speculative faith. It would not be difficult to show that, when in past times the belief in God was more genuine than it is to-day, its consequence was misery, and not happiness. Take, for instance, persecution for heresy. God-believers in all ages have been the most determined and cruel oppressors of those who differed from them upon religious questions. Words fail to adequately depict the horrors and misery that have been caused through the cruelties that have been inflicted upon the human race by those who believed in God. As Dr. Dick, in his *Philosophy of Religion*, writes: "Even in our own island the flames of religious persecution have sometimes raged with unrelenting fury. During two or three years of the short reign of Queen Mary of England it is computed that 277 persons were committed to the flames, besides those who were punished by fines, confiscations, and imprisonments" (p. 363). The same author adds: "But we need not go back even to the distance of half a century in order to find instances of religious intolerance among Protestant communities and churches; our own times unhappily furnish too many examples of a bigoted, intolerant, and persecuting spirit" (*ibid*, p. 369). Surely in the midst of such conditions as these, caused by the inhumanity of God-believers, happiness can find no place.

Again, for centuries there was a persistent neglect of attention to those natural causes upon compliance with which the health, happiness, and prosperity of nations depend. The treatment which Roger Bacon received from the God-believers of his day wrought untold miseries upon the world. Well might Dr. Andrew D. White, in his *Warfare of Science*, exclaim: "Thousands of precious lives shall be lost in this century, tens of thousands shall suffer discomfort, privation, sickness, poverty, ignorance, for lack of discoveries and methods which, but for this mistaken religious fight against Bacon and his compeers, would now be blessing the earth" (p. 94). The Doctor admits that all the Atheists who ever lived have not done so much harm as those persecutors did in this one instance. Wars and persecutions have ever been, and they are still, two of the most potent causes of human misery; and these are clearly traceable to the influence of religious faiths and theological institutions by which for centuries humanity has been cursed. "During," says Buckle, "almost a hundred and fifty years Europe was afflicted by religious wars, religious massacres, and religious persecutions; not one of which would have arisen if the great truth had been recognised, that the State has no concern with the opinions of men, and no right to interfere, even in the slightest degree, with the form of worship which they may choose to adopt." Unfortunately, God-believers have failed to recognise this "great truth," hence they have marred the happiness of mankind. In modern times a modification of the effects of belief in God has taken place, in consequence of a determined opposition towards the old idea of theology which has been created by the enlightenment of the human mind. Side by side with the belief in God, not only has social happiness been unattainable, but even life itself has been in danger, and liberty, the breath of intellectual life, has been in jeopardy every hour. It is an admitted fact that in England to-day the secular law and indifference to theological faith are the main features in preserving social tranquility and personal security.

Of course we are aware that social and political reformers, those men who have attempted to ameliorate the condition of the people, have frequently been termed "Infidels" or "Atheists." But, as George Combe said in his *Constitution of Man*, the charge of "Infidelity" against the advocates of his views was no longer of any importance, and of no avail against the truth. As a matter of fact, most of the discoverers and teachers of new truths, by which the condition of society has been completely transformed, were denounced as acting in antagonism to the will of God, who, it was alleged, ordered all things for the best. As to the popular view in reference to a belief in God, Combe, whose piety was regarded as being unquestionable, in his *Religion and Science* employs this emphatic language: "Disguise the fact as we will, God's secular Providence is a power that in *this* world shapes our destinies for weal or woe." Even in his day he found that "society, including the Calvinistic world itself, proceeds in its secular enterprises on the basis of natural science." All this will be admitted by those who are called "advanced Christians," who, although they cannot deduce from science that God is directly concerned in promoting human happiness, still profess to believe in a book that says he is. Hence arises the question, assuming the existence of God: Does he, under any circumstances, interfere in human affairs? and, if he does, will not that destroy all certainty in the operations of nature and the laws of human life and well-being? We allege that, if God does interfere in human affairs, no results can be depended upon with any degree of certainty; the law of cause and effect would be of little or no value. Here we come in direct conflict with the fundamental conclusions of natural science—namely, that there is an invariable order of nature. We are not now concerned as to *why* this is so, but only as to the fact that there is such observed uniformity of causes and consequences; and that, if the belief in God's interference were true, the stability of natural law would not exist. Either theology or science must be accepted; and those influenced by known facts, rather than by conjecture and assumption, should have no hesitation as to their choice.

Passing from these deeper aspects of the question, let us

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look at the world in which we live and move every day. What is the lesson here presented? Is it not evident that something besides belief in God is essential to human happiness? Is it not also clear that natural beliefs as regards our duty to our fellow creatures, apart from any reference to God, seriously affect and alter the conditions of social life? Practically it is not God, but man, who is the principal factor in promoting the happiness, and in diminishing the misery, of human existence. We can form some idea of the results of a widespread sympathy and goodwill among men, founded purely upon self-interest and the common good. Were these virtues to exist more than they do, society would be more or less transformed into an improved dwelling-place for mankind, and each member of the community would have reason to regard others as being worthy of association and respect. In modern England there is ample evidence that, by intelligence, unity, and reliance upon secular effort, the sum of human happiness can be increased, and the amount of suffering lessened, without any dependence on, or appeal to, the God whom many reverence. The health of society has been improved, the inevitable misfortunes that overtake men to a certain extent have been provided for, and all this has been done by human means, and not in consequence of a belief in God. Rectitude and self-help are the hinges by which the door is opened to the increased comfort and happiness of our modern life. There is a French proverb to the effect that "Heaven helps those who help themselves"; but, if people have the power to help themselves, they can leave heaven out of their calculations.

However consoling the belief in God may be to the emotional believer, the fact remains that such a belief is not enough to make life worth having. From time immemorial the belief has obtained, and so have pain, suffering, and premature death. They abound at the present time, and no faith in God will alter these natural conditions. Orthodoxy may teach that all the evils of life are unappreciated blessings, and a part of the universal good; but we cannot believe such an absurdity. Rather than be imposed upon by such an explanation of the world's unhappiness, we would prefer to subscribe to the ancient couplet:—

> God has left us, human elves,
> To cut and shuffle for ourselves.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE ANATOMICAL SEAT OF THE SOUL.

YEARS ago, when the writer was a constant student in the dissecting room, he derived nearly as much benefit from his study of the dissectors, as they pored and labored over their work, as he did from his unravelling the various structural parts of the human form before him on the table. Some of the would-be future Galens were noisy and talkative as they more or less thoughtlessly plied their scalpels; others were practical in the extreme, caring only to acquire the knowledge necessary to serve them in the examining room, and for future professional use; some were there to study anatomy for anatomy's sake; and, finally, some wore long and thoughtful faces, as though their researches brought them only unpleasant themes for contemplation, and that they did not relish the consideration of the various problems which confronted them; while others silently pondered as they traced out skilfully muscle, nerve, artery, or vein. Sometimes it would seem that even a cast of superstition could be detected in the features of one or another, and this was frequently prompted by some remark made when all in the room had worked on for a long time in silence. It would crack out in the great, cold room when one least expected it; and that the hands of the clock had got round to the wee hours of morning, and everything in the old place, dimly lit as it was, had a peculiar "smelly," dismal, ghastly air about it, by no means improved matters.

"Say, Hinman, you are a devout Christian, and have been hacking away for a month on that fantastic-looking 'stiff' in front of you; have you found anything in it yet which looks anything like a soul, or any place to stow one away?"

"No, I've not, you prince of grave robbers; but you did not expect me to find it in the fellow's bowels, did you?"

"Oh, no; but I thought that you might be a modern apostle of that benighted crew who believed with Descartes that the seat of the soul is in the pineal gland, or with those blessed with a greater plasticity of mind who locate it, cock sure, in the brain or in the heart."

Then a third would chime in: "Stuff and nonsense; you fellows, what are you talking about? We will have Hinman saying next that he believes in the resurrection, and in those absolutely impossible anatomical and utterly absurd personalities—the six-limbed vertebrates, which for ages the Christian Church has talked about and painted as angels."

"What's the matter with their six limbs, my boy?"

"Oh, nothing, only it is in total violation of everything known and natural in nature's plan. Does it happen to occur to you that of all the millions upon millions of vertebrates which have lived upon this earth, man included, no single one of them ever possessed more than two pairs of limbs?"

"Of course it has; you unmitigated magazine of conceit and facts, don't you suppose that I know that a man's arms correspond to the wings of a bat or a bird, and the rest of it, and that it was the priests who invented the wings for the church angels, so that at the resurrection they would have something to sail aloft with, when the time should come?"

"I'd give something pretty to have the skeleton of one of them. I'd like to see how the humerus of one of those time-honored angel's wings articulated with the ribs and scapula on the chap's back!"

"Yes, it would be an odd-looking joint; wouldn't it?"

Then there would be a silence for ten or fifteen minutes, broken only by the movements of the students, the scratching of the scalpels, the dripping in the sink, and a rat gnawing at discarded bones and "material" in a dark and distant corner of the room.

Presently, however, another tilt would be taken. "Look here, McAllister, I'll bet you the skull in this cadaver of mine here that you cannot tell me now the differences which distinguish angels from souls, and souls from ghosts, and ghosts from angels, or any way with which you may be pleased to compare them."

"Oh, yes, I can; for angels are the mythical people wherewith a superstitious organisation called the Church has stocked a mythical heaven; the soul is something to be saved; and ghosts, well, why ghosts—ghosts, you know, are something which Dr. Coues told us all about in the *Nation* over ten years ago."

"Why, what did he know about them?"

"Know about them? I like that. Coues? Why, Coues knows all about them; he simply knew all. He testifies that of his own personal knowledge he has handled, seen, smelt, heard, and done everything except weigh a ghost upon a pair of hay scales; that a ghost can pass out of a person and pass back again at will; that the person can control it after it has left the body; that he's got, by Jove, in his private collection to-day specimens of the toe nails of ghosts and hair clothing, and—"

"Wah, hold on there now, McAllister, don't, don't, for pity's sake, for that is as bad as the Church's six-limbed angels."

"Well, if you do not believe it, you had better go and look up the copy of the *Nation*, which has it all in, published on Christmas Day, I believe, 1884."

"You mean to say that Coues believes in the spiritualisation of such materials as the clothing which we wear?"

"Of course he does, or else he would never have printed the statement, and then let it stand."

For a little while the conversation again held up, the room was becoming bitterly cold, the eyes of the rat over in the far dark corner glistened like a pair of pale emeralds, and he still nibbled away at something which looked for all the world like an old piece of dried-up brain.

"Hinman, when a man has an arm amputated, or has a lost limb, do you believe that the man's ghost is also without the same limb?"

"Of course I do; for you don't suppose I believe every time a person parts with a chip of himself, which is not again reproduced, that the fragment is likewise endowed with a chip of 'soul stuff,' do you?"

"No, I don't suppose that you do believe that; and, from what you say, you believe that a one-armed man has within him a one-armed ghost, or his soul is one-armed; or,

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as a theologian would say, his angel will, when it arises, also be one-armed?"

"Exactly."

"Then, of course, you believe it for any other unreproducible structure which a man may lose during life?"

"Certainly"

"Well, then, Hinman, you've heard of men losing their scalps and living, haven't you?"

"Of course I have."

"And their ears?"

"Yes."

"And you believe that their ghosts would appear without either scalp or ears?"

"I have no doubt about it."

"And their eyes?"

"Yes."

"Of course, you are aware that it is possible for a man not only to lose his scalp, ears, and eyes, and live; but also his tongue, his cheeks, his teeth, his tonsils; part of his skull and brain; his ear-drums, his lower jaw; his lips, his nose, the roof of his mouth—and still live, mind you?"

"Oh, yes."

"You believe yet that his ghost would present the same losses?"

"I see no way out of it."

"Well, the same man can lose (and still live) his arms, his shoulder-blades, numerous structures in his throat, a number of his ribs, mammary glands, and superficial muscular parts; both of his legs at the hips, and his entire genitalia, a kidney, the gluteal muscles, his collar-bones, part of his liv——"

"Oh, hold on, old fellow. I know that all that is possible, if the operation be done upon a healthy man, with due allowance for recovery each time; but if I let you go on, you'll leave me no place for my ghost to occupy in the chap's body!"

"No, that's so, especially inasmuch as I've already removed considerably over fifty per cent. of your man; and I see no reason why his ghost should not be in my pieces of him, as in that thing which you have left over there. Keep whittling him down, Hinman, and let him come to each time—he'll stand it; then snap him open suddenly, and you will find where his ghost is. Perhaps old Descartes may have been right after all, for you cannot take a man's pineal gland away and have him live. Phew! it's cold in here. I'd hate to have the ghost of that thing which you've got over there, Hinman, follow me round!"

"Well, if the ghost of the thing could only walk, which, of course, I must now admit it cannot, I'd put on a bran new suit of Dr. Coues's spiritualised garments, and send him over to you—it would hardly need much."

"Do you know, McAllister, it is a good thing for people, and sometimes for other animals, that there is no immaterial part to the bits they lose of themselves during life? For instance, it would go hard on that rat over there if the day of resurrection should crack on us just at this very moment—there'd be a commotion in his stomach, sure!"

"What are you bragging about? for you are just as much of a carnivorous animal as that rodent is; and the day of resurrection may catch you at the breakfast-table tomorrow morning with half-a-dozen raw oysters in your stomach!"

"Ha, ha! now I have got you; for whoever heard of the ghost of an oyster, or of the soul of an oyster, much less of an oyster-angel?"

"Well, I'd like to know why not; for I take it that you are an evolutionist, and that, if man has a soul, it is quite out of the question to deny the toadstools one—there is no dividing line up the scale or down. Michelet of France, you know, gave one to the bird—and why not?"

"Oh, no reason, that I can see—that is, just now."

"Funny, isn't it? the world's full of it, they say; for where there is life there, too, is the imperishable evidence of the thing which lives. Crush a sparrow's egg, and you set it loose; stamp on an ant-hill, and the setting free of a perfect host of little ant-ghosts is the result."

The hands of the clock had got round to 3.15 a.m.—surely time for all hands to put away their ghastly playthings for that day, at least.

Hinman was about to ask what would happen were the ghost of McAllister to pick up the ghost of that woman's thigh-bone there, and throw it at the ghost of the rat over yonder in the corner—what would the ghost of the man's brain in his stomach do? But an objection to this was sustained, and the party filed out into the darkness.

—*Boston Investigator.* R. W. SHUFELDT, M.D.

INTOLERANCE REBUKED.

"WHEN I heard that the university had declined to allow Colonel Ingersoll to speak before the members of its law class, I expressed myself to the effect that, if I were made the recipient of an invitation to address the same body, as I heard I was to be, I should decline, on the ground that any institution that was so narrow as to prohibit a member of the Bar of such eloquence and ability as Robert G. Ingersoll from speaking, simply because he held religious views that differed from those of its directors, was not worthy of listening to any self-respecting man."

Dr. Chauncey M. Depew paused to take breath. With a *Recorder* reporter he was discussing the fact that the State University at Lawrence, Kansas, had declined to allow Colonel Ingersoll to speak before its law class because of the views on religion held by the latter.

Dr. Depew, while delivering himself of the above rather long sentence, showed that he was fully in earnest in what he said by emphatic gestures.

"When a man speaks to a body of students on law or any other subject," the doctor continued, "he speaks to them on that subject alone, and, no matter what his views on religion are, they don't make a particle of difference. He is not going to influence his hearers in regard to anything but the subject upon which he is talking.

"It is really beyond me how a man or a body of men could be so narrow as to prevent a lot of students from listening to a man who has an international reputation as a lawyer and orator, for the simple reason that he happens to hold his own views on religion. A man has a perfect right to hold any views he likes on any subject, and, as I say, if those views are not what he is going to speak on, they are not going to conflict with the matter he does discuss. Colonel Ingersoll was not going to talk about religion, but about law, and it was, therefore, the height of absurdity for the men who control the college to decline to allow him to speak. They should have felt highly honored that he was willing to do so, and I am sure that the students would have been greatly benefited by the lecture. They are the losers, not Colonel Ingersoll. As I say, I would not make an address before a college whose board of managers were men of such narrow minds as these men have shown themselves to be in this matter. I was not asked to speak, I repeat; but their invitation would have been but a waste of their time."

"Do you coincide with the Colonel's religious views?"

"Ah, my boy, my own views on religion are too well known to need discussing. You know them, so do a lot of other people. I do not talk about them much, but I have them just the same. But whatever they say of me they can't say I'm narrow-minded, and the Kansas State University will never have the opportunity of listening to me, I assure you."

"*Truthseeker*" (*New York*).

ACID DROPS.

ITALY, of course, is a Christian nation, and, like most other Christian nations, it is engaged in military business where, properly speaking, it has *no* business. Why on earth it should go all the way to Abyssinia to fight the natives is not very intelligible, especially as the Abyssinians are Christians and not "heathen." King Menelik, in fact, has written a letter, which has been printed in our newspapers, expressing his surprise at the wickedness of the Christian nations of Europe. Among other offences, he says that they persecute the Jews, who are fully tolerated in Abyssinia, and are excellent citizens.

Christian nations are fond of fighting, when there is anything to be got by it; but they don't care to use their armies and navies to save the Armenians from massacre and violation. Indeed, the Armenians have lately asked, in their appeal to the English people, "Is English sympathy to take the form of a cross upon our graves?" This is a new "sign of the cross," which we commend to the attention of the Christians who are singing the praises of Mr. Wilson Barrett's melodrama.

Hugh Price Hughes has held a memorial service at St James's Hall over the Armenians who have already been massacred. No doubt this will do the dead a lot of good. It is also refreshing to hear that the Evangelical Alliance is

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arranging for a week of special prayer all over the world for the persecuted Christians of Armenia. If anything will paralyse the hands of the Turks and Kurds, that will. Pah! pah! Christianity, thy name is hypocrisy!

The anniversary of God's death should, indeed, be a solemn occasion. But most people treat it as a holiday, and visit their friends. A large firm of pious drapers in North London made Good Friday the occasion of a spring cleaning. Christianity is "the greatest thing in the world," but few Christians let it interfere with cash.

"A Loyal Churchman" writes to the *Bristol Mercury* that he visited St. Simon's Church with his wife, and because they took their seats together the officiating clergyman refused to proceed with the service until the sexes were completely separated. The "Loyal Churchman," not appreciating this Romanising method, walked out, having first made his protest against the system, to the indignation of the man of God.

"Henry Irving, the actor," says the New York *Truthseeker*, "thinking to show a little piety in honor of the Lentern season, attended a Chicago church the other Sunday; but the pastor, Rev. Mr. Larrabee, let drive so hard at actors and theatres that Irving had to get out before the services were over."

A Spiritist mejum, by request, inquired of the denizens of "summerland" what was their favorite amusement. The answer came: "Reading our own obituary notices.'

Father R. F. Clarke, of the Society of Jesus, writes in the *Month* that the existence of hell is a full proof of God's love, and "those who deny eternity of torture are guilty of robbing hell of its chief terrors, and thus adding to the number of its victims." What horrible wretches they must be who would take away the Jesuit's consolation, the full proof of his Father's ardent love. A friend is fond of saying: "Hell is just fit for those who believe in it." If so, it should be just suited to Father Clarke, who, by the way, is to be head of the New Jesuit Hall at Oxford.

Harry Alfred Long has held his valedictory meeting at Glasgow. He is going to fight the Lord's battles out in Australia, his special object being to put the Bible back into the public schools. Harry Alfred says the Australians wanted him to stay there some years ago, as they don't appear able to grow men of that sort under the southern cross. In fact, as Harry Alfred declares, they would have given him silver for his breakfast and gold for his dinner. He couldn't take on that diet just then, but he is going out to try it now; and it is one that agrees wonderfully well with men of God.

Harry Alfred spoke with pride of his having "debated with Bradlaugh" in Glasgow and Paisley, but he forgot to say when and in what halls these debates were held. Harry Alfred's lack of precision is explained by the fact that he was drawing on his imagination instead of his memory.

Here is another imaginative reminiscence. Harry Alfred stated that ten years ago he went up to the Hall of Science, and this is what happened: "There were 500 infidels and 300 of his own party, and for four days the debate continued, and the majority of the meeting admitted that the Christian had the better of the argument." Now we don't want to call Harry Long a name which would class him among those who are to have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, for it is impossible to take him quite seriously. What we prefer to do is this—we ask Harry Long the exact date of that four days' debate, what was the subject, and who was his opponent? When these questions are answered, it will be time enough to deal with Harry Long's modest story that the infidels declared he had the best of it. Harry Alfred's modesty is an interesting and fertile theme, but let us have the facts first.

"Here is a true story. When Bolton and district was shrouded in darkness on Wednesday forenoon an Irish laborer at a well-known farm was at work in the fields with a companion. He was terribly afraid at the remarkable phenomenon, and, throwing down his tools, exclaimed: 'Come home, Willy, it's the last day.' Rushing to the farm in a terrified state, he lamented that the end of the world had arrived, and exclaimed, 'I've had my last pint!' At a mill not far away there was a rush downstairs, one worker crying out: 'There are three hundred going to heaven at once in the top room!'"—*Bolton Evening News, March 30.*

The Rev. William Jenkins, of Muswell Hill, cannot keep out of the police courts. Week by week he is found exhibiting his Christian temper towards someone or other, and he always fails in his case. His last appearance was as a prosecutor of the Tramway Company for not putting their bye-laws conspicuously in the carriage. He refused to take a ticket, and demanded to see the bye-law. His summons was dismissed with 23s. 6d. costs.

The *Medical Register* says of the Christian oath: "The person who kisses the Bible in court has not the least surety that his lips do not come in direct contact with the pollution left by a predecessor who was suffering from some foul skin disease or taint, not to speak of the germs of eruptive fevers and the like."

In the convent of Dragomirna, Austria, a novice, named Bartholomew Stojan, who had been weak-minded and ill for years, was kept locked up in a cell in a state of filth, and even lacked food and medicine. The district judge instructed to investigate found the miserable creature thin as a skeleton, clothed in the rags of an old surplice, and lying on a putrid mattress. The cell was in an unmentionable condition of filth. Stojan died next day, and the doctors declared that there could be no doubt that neglect had hastened his end, if it had not altogether caused it. The chief of the convent was a man of great ignorance, scarcely able to write his name.

Stojan's sister repeatedly attempted to see him, but she was brutally treated and turned out. The Public Prosecutor said that the treatment received by the deceased showed a lack of all human feeling, and must be severely punished. Counsel for the defence pleaded that the accused was too ignorant to see that Stojan was weak-minded and believed him possessed. The chief of the convent was acquitted of having endangered the life of the victim, and was sentenced to pay a fine of four pounds for neglecting his duty. This mild sentence illustrates how religion covers a multitude of sins.

The Life of Issa, a Buddhist history of Jesus, which a Russian named Notovitch palmed off some time ago upon the Christian world, is now authoritatively declared to be a rank forgery. The Chief Lama of the Thibetan monastery where he found this precious document declares that no such manuscript Life of Issa exists, and that Notovitch was never in his life in the building. This will not surprise Freethinkers, who are well aware that Christianity has traded upon frauds all through the ages; but it ought to be humiliating to the orthodox.

St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, was badly watched by "Providence" on Saturday afternoon in last week. Some woodwork caught fire from the heat of the flue in the vestry. The firemen were soon on the spot, and the flames were quickly extinguished. All's well that ends well. But just imagine the combustion of St. Margaret's!

This is an intellectual age. In that great centre of civilisation, New York, they have been exhibiting, for a consideration, a piece of one of the bones of St. Ann, the "grandmother of the eternal God," as a Catholic hymn calls her. The priests have obtained from their credulous dupes thousands and thousands of dollars for the privilege of seeing this bone and kissing the box that contains the "sacred relic." Ingersoll does not often hit out personally, but he has denounced Archbishop Corrigan and Cardinal Gibbons for having nothing to say against this shameless swindle.

The Armenians have long been praying for themselves with the most dire results, if their own accounts are to be believed. Now the Council of the Evangelical Alliance ask for a week of special prayer on behalf of the suffering Christians of Asia Minor. There is one difference between these evangelicals and their deity. They think only of the Christians, and care nothing for the Turks; while their God seems to regard only the Turks, and to care nothing for the Christians.

Foreign missions don't seem to be as flourishing as they used to be in America. The various Baptist missionary societies find it impracticable to hold their May anniversaries this year at Portland, Oregon, for this reason among others, that the badness of the times renders it "extremely difficult to secure funds to meet the pressing needs of the societies." Some time ago the Presbyterians resolved to raise a million dollars to pay off the debt on their Mission Boards, but they have raised only a half of the amount. A great rally was recently held in support of this object, and President Cleveland was bagged as chairman; nevertheless, the dollars roll in very slowly. The Congregational missionary societies are reduced to unprecedented financial straits. The Methodist societies are faring just as badly. Yet it is just at this moment that the Churches are trying to force God Almighty, Jesus Christ, and the Bible into the Constitution of the United States.

The *Independent*, of New York, a religious journal of a similar standing to our own *Christian World*, says the debts of the American missionary societies altogether amount to $1,500,000 or more. Churches, chapels, and religious socie-

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ties give a fine example to the commercial world in the matter of debt.

We see from *African Tidings* that the missionaries at Zanzibar introduce rent along with religion. The natives do not seem to relish paying for their houses quite so well as the promise that all their sins shall be forgiven; and when, in consequence of non-payment, they found their own doors closed against them, they were very indignant; and, says M. A. Cameron, the missionary reporter, very small was the congregation in church on the following Sunday. The reporter adds: "The few who were there heard and repeated to their neighbors a very forcible and timely sermon on our Savior's payment of the tribute money, with the result that next morning some of the women came and asked for work." The natives are said to be "wonderfully docile," so perhaps they will come to appreciate the beauty of rent as well as of rum and true religion.

Archbishop Benson has been celebrating the Tercentenary of the Whitgift Foundation. The *Liberator* reminds him of some awkward historical facts. It says: "The lawnsleeves of Dr. Benson's predecessor are stained with the blood of some of the noblest men who lived in the Elizabethan age. It was Whitgift who hunted down Barrow and Greenwood; it was he who examined them after the manner of an inquisitor; it was he who prevented their petition from reaching the Queen. We have Barrow's own testimony in prison that Whitgift had destined himself and Greenwood to death; indeed, there is reason to believe that the Queen's clemency would have been extended to the two victims but for Whitgift's implacable hate."

Mr. Lecky says, in his new book on *Democracy and Liberty*, that domestic morals in the past have seldom sunk lower than in some countries and periods when divorce was absolutely impossible, and he thinks that a comparison of the domestic morality of countries at the present day where divorce is denied, with those in which it is admitted, will not show any real superiority in the former.

George Macdonald, who writes "Observations" in the New York *Truthseeker*, opens in the issue for March 28 by stating that "the London *Freethinker* espouses the cause of General Booth, of the Salvation Army." Some humorous sentences follow, which show that the statement is not meant seriously; but, lest the more matter-of-fact readers should be misled, we beg to say that the *Freethinker* has all along been an uncompromising critic of General Booth and the Salvation Army. Mr. Foote's *Salvation Syrup* was (and is, for it is still on sale) a most drastic criticism of Booth's "Social Scheme." But our view of the Salvation Army as a religious and social agency is one thing, and our view of Ballington Booth's revolt against his father is quite another thing. Ballington has a perfect right to set up business on his own account, but he should not pose as a sort of martyr because he received fresh marching orders, in common with all the other "Army" lieutenants in various parts of the world. The fact is, Ballington and his wife got too comfortable in New York, and didn't like to leave it; so they have "chucked" the old man and stuck to the Yankee millionaires.

The Raines Bill came into operation in New York State on Sunday. One part of it deals with licences, and seems sensible enough; the other part, however, shows the tyranny to which Temperance will go when it is under the influence of the Gospel. "On Sunday," as the *Daily News* puts it, "there is to be no drinking in restaurants, in clubs, even in private houses, at any rate on the part of those who are not members of the family. The police are empowered to invade the private residence if they suspect that any visitor is taking wine." If this is Republicanism, we prefer Monarchy. What is the use of exchanging a King for a President, in the name of freedom, if a policeman can batter your front door on a Sunday and demand to know whether the man who is dining with you, and drinking a moderate glass with his food, is your brother or your cousin?

The virtuous busybodies who are responsible for such legislation will only intensify the evil over which they lose their heads. The liquor traffic is prohibited in Maine, and there are about four hundred secret rum-shops in Portland alone.

The Rev. Joseph R. Pullman, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, who spoke of Mdlle. Jane May, the French actress, as "a low Parisian courtesan," is being sued by the lady for heavy damages. Finding he cannot plead justification, as the lady is married and of high character, the man of God is going to let judgment go by default. He thus avows himself a deliberate slanderer, but we suppose he is still good enough for the pulpit.

The *Bombay Guardian* publishes a letter to "General" Booth from the Rev. T. M. Hudson, who was formerly in the Army, but who says he left it because he was so "convinced of the sham character of the work reported to be done in India, and of the utter futility of any effort of mine, or, for the matter of that, of anyone else in India, to alter it, that I came to the conclusion that an organisation which permitted such things, and not only made their correction impossible, but really seemed to encourage them, could not possibly be of God. There is a fatal flaw somewhere."

Mr. Hudson points out that those who wear the Salvation Army jacket are by no means all of the Army, as the jackets were sold at 8 pice, or less than twopence. Red being the color worn by Brahmanical hermits, it was thought, too, that wearing the red jackets would entitle them to free rice. He says further: "It is suggestive of a good deal that such a number of European officers have left the S. A. from Guzerat, especially staff-officers who knew the inwardness of things. It is all very well for anyone to say that the hardness of the fight drove them away; it is not true. It was because they could not be liars and hypocrites, as they would have been had they remained. They despaired, as I did myself, of obtaining any redress or seeing any change. I commenced to write to London when I found out how things were, but, instead of straightforward, honest inquiry and reform taking place, I was ordered in a soft-soapy letter to go to Bombay and edit the *War Cry*. This I did not do, being too sick (in more senses than one)."

The *Times of India* calls the Salvation Army in that country "a great hollow sham." It declares it has undeniable evidence that the Rev. Mr. Hudson's letter reached the "General." Yet he neither acknowledged the document nor asked his representative what answer is to be made to it. This leading paper says: "One native officer in Guzerat, we are informed, has just left the Army because he is tired of looking in his district for over a thousand soldiers who are on the rolls, but not one of whom can he find in the flesh. In some instances—numerous enough, we are assured, to have made the practice an essential part of the system—the subordinate officers have been instructed not on any account to strike names off the roll. The order is to recognise no reduction of strength, and to keep up the numbers on paper at all cost. It almost seems as though, in order to live and work in the Army and enjoy good repute with the powers that be, an officer must be, in Mr. Hudson's words, a liar and a hypocrite."

The only bread the Jews can take at Passover time is the unleavened bread or tasteless Motzas, and this year the wealthy bakers made a "corner" with them, so that they could be procured nowhere under sixpence a pound, a price which made the poor Jews of East London go very short indeed. This weakened the faith of several in the divine institution of Pesach.

Mr. J. W. Hillier, having read our articles on *The Sign of the Cross*, and feeling that Mr. Barrett had approached the subject in a spirit of partisanship, wrote a letter to that gentleman suggesting that he should follow it by another play dealing with later times and the persecutions inflicted by Christians on those who differed from them. Mr. Barrett's reply is as full of "sentiment" as a speech by Joseph Surface, but it is sadly lacking in logic. "No good," he says, "would accrue from such a play as you describe. It must engender bitterness. The cause of humanity could not be served by showing that many who professed Christianity neglected the first principles of its teaching. No mud thrown at St. Paul's Cathedral injures the Christian religion or helps the cause of truth. No false priest destroys the beauty of Christ's teaching." This is all very fine, but remarkably one-sided. To show how Christians were persecuted by Pagans is to help humanity, but to show how Christians persecuted independent thinkers is to engender bitterness! The real meaning of Mr. Barrett's policy, we take it, is simply this—that it pays better to flatter Christians than to tell them the truth. Agreed! Next business!

The *Freeman's Journal* evidently understands freedom as the right of every man to be a good Irishman, if possible, and a good Catholic for certain. It denounces the "blasphemous stuff" which is "spouted" by Hyde Park lecturers, and hopes the Home Secretary will be able to frame a new rule that will stop their mouths, "without interfering with the rights of legitimate public meeting in the park." Legitimate meetings are, of course, Christian meetings, though if they were plainly called so the cat would be out of the bag.

Home Rule is as good for London as for Ireland. Let the Dublin people look after Phœnix Park if they choose. We don't want them to look after Hyde Park. The people of London don't want Dublin assistance or Dublin advice in this matter.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—April 12, South Shields. May 3 and 4, Birmingham; 10 and 17, Plymouth. June 7, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

JAMES and JOHN MCGLASHAN (Glasgow) send £1 for Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, with which they are "greatly pleased."

JAS. THOMPSON (Renfrew) says: "Your lecture scheme is admirable, and well worthy the support of the rank and file of the party."

G. MCCLUSKEY (Devonport) thinks Mr. Foote's lecture scheme "a grand one." Being late with his subscription, this correspondent sends twice what he intended to give, and hopes other laggards will follow his example. Mr. Foote's lecture scheme, we may add, is shortly to be applied to the Plymouth district. Early in May lectures under it will be delivered by Mr. Charles Watts at Tavistock, Plympton, Ivybridge, Liskeard, etc.—places that have never been worked before.

J. FARMER.—One Secular Society withdrew from the N.S.S. in Mr. Bradlaugh's time, and Mr. Foote afterwards induced it to re-enter. One Secular Society has withdrawn, and made itself entirely local, since Mr. Foote became President. The "many Secular Societies who have withdrawn from the N.S.S." is purely imaginary, and ought not to have appeared in print without editorial correction.

E. DREWEN.—Pleased to see your letter in the *Clarion*. It will do good there.

O. P. Q. (Greenock).—Excellent! The insertion of such a letter in your local press shows what advance has been made in general broad-mindedness of late years.

DAVID SMITH.—Your letter must have miscarried. Did you keep the number of the Postal Order?

BAKER (Leighton Buzzard) wants to know whether there are any Freethinkers in that neighborhood. Replies can be addressed to Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

J. SEDDON.—Better let such creatures go their own way, and go yours. You will never get any honesty out of them, and you will never put any into them.

FAIRPLAY.—We agree with what you say, but it would scarcely be prudent to publish your letter.

G. E. SUMNER.—Like yourself, we cannot quite understand the inactivity of the Grimsby Secularists.

BRADLAUGH RADICAL (Northampton).—We don't care two straws about any parliamentary candidate's chances in comparison with the welfare of Freethought. Mr. Bull did write to us some time ago, but nothing can be done unless you can procure us the use of a decent hall for a Freethought meeting. Find such a hall, and Freethought propaganda shall soon be resumed in Northampton.

J. W. HILLIER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." Mr. Foote's pamphlet on *The Sign of the Cross* is bulkier than he expected. It will be ready next week.

W. J. GAINES.—Cobbett's *Legacy to Parsons* is published (we think) at a shilling. No doubt Mr. Forder could obtain you a copy. Burns' *Ecclesiastical Law* would probably not be found in an ordinary Public Library. Of course it could be seen at the British Museum.

CORRESPONDENTS who give no name or address are once more notified that their communications cannot be attended to.

R. J. MURRAY.—Mr. Watts is responsible for what appears over his signature. You had better write to him direct.

H. K. (Greenock).—Thanks. Pleased to have your warm approval, founded on actual experience, of the President's Lecture Scheme.

N. (Sheffield).—Your envelope was unstamped, and as your letter gave no address it has only just reached us after going through the dead letter office.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Open Court—Twentieth Century—The Post—Islamic World—Crescent—Progressive Thinker—Boston Investigator—Freidenker—Secular Thought—Torch of Anarchy—Dunoon Observer—De Dageraad—Zoophilist—Humanity—Hull Daily News—Workers' Friend—Isle of Man Times—New York Public Opinion—Kansas Lucifer—Liberty—Illustrated London News—African Tidings—Bulletin Mensuel—La Libre Pensée—Blue Grass Blade—Secular Thought—Dominion Review—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Times of India—Chatham Observer.

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

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

SPECIAL.

I AM negotiating for the occupancy of a West-end hall for regular Sunday evening lectures, and I expect to make a definite announcement in next week's *Freethinker*. Meanwhile, I have taken St. James's Hall (the Banqueting Room) for two more Sunday evening lectures, on April 19 and 26. The bills are being printed, and any friend who can exhibit one, or circulate handbills, should communicate at once with Miss Vance, at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. St. James's Hall meetings are, of course, very expensive, and I ask the London friends to do their best to fill the room on both occasions. It will be a kind of demonstration before our regular operations in the hall previously referred to. On my part, I will see that the lectures are as good as I can make them.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had to cancel his engagement at New Brompton when he was advised to discontinue platform work for a while. It is right, therefore, that the Chatham Branch should now have the first claim on his services. He lectures in the Branch's own hall at New Brompton this evening (April 12), and all the ventilation possible will probably be required.

Mr. J. M. Wheeler reads a paper before the Toynbee Hall Elizabethan Literary Society on Wednesday, April 15. His subject is "Marlowe and the Tudor Rationalists," and will be largely a sketch of early Freethought in England. Friends are invited.

On Sunday last Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in South Shields. Being Easter Sunday and very fine weather, the audiences were not so large as usual. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday Mr. Watts lectures in Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesboro', and Stanley, under Mr. Foote's scheme.

To-day (Sunday, April 12) Mr. Watts again lectures three times at South Shields.

The Annual Children's Party (London) was held on Wednesday, April 1, in the large hall of the Club and Institute Union. A crowd of merry children had a fine time from half-past five to half-past ten. First came a tea, and when all were well primed with solids and liquids they were provided with an excellent entertainment. There were games and stage performances, including ventriloquism, conjuring, and a scene from "Good for Nothing," in which Miss Kate Watts capitally sustained the part of Nan. Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts were present as spectators, and many parents and friends of the children were in the galleries, where they appeared to be thoroughly enjoying themselves. Miss Vance, who worked very hard, was quite hoarse before the function ended. We cannot enumerate all the ladies and gentlemen who gave their evening to amuse the little ones, but we beg to thank them collectively, and that in the name of the children, whose pleased looks bespoke the thanks they could not frame into a resolution.

Mr. C. Cohen has been in London for a few days. He brought with him the filled-up forms for thirty members of the new Leeds Branch. Mr. Cohen lectures at Manchester for three Sundays, commencing with to-day (April 12), and will be at liberty to lecture in the neighborhood on intervening week nights. Places desiring a visit should communicate with him immediately. Mr. Cohen's account of his missionary work during the past six weeks will appear in our next issue.

Mr. A. B. Moss's superior officers in the service of the London School Board now allow him to affirm in the magistrate's court instead of taking the oath. It has taken several years of hitherto fruitless effort to bring about this happy result. "I tried to affirm," Mr. Moss writes, "as soon as the Act was passed, but was told that the School Board could not employ an affirming witness. Now I am allowed to affirm without a word of objection, as everybody in court, from the magistrate down to the usher, knows my opinions."

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Mr. F. C. Conybeare, M.A., is going to deliver a course of Friday afternoon lectures on "Demonology," at University Hall, Gordon-square, W.C. They begin April 17 with "Demonic Agency in the New Testament and the Early Christian Writers." Tickets can be obtained at the hall.

Mr. S. P. Putnam, President of the American Secular Union, has addressed the Judiciary Committee of the States House of Representatives at Washington against the proposal to put "God" in the Constitution. The religionists want to work the following clause into the old Preamble: "Acknowledging Almighty God as the source of all power and authority in civil government, our Lord Jesus Christ as the ruler of nations, and his revealed will as of supreme authority in civil affairs." Mr. Putnam's address was extremely eloquent. It is printed in full in the New York *Truthseeker*, and we hope to reproduce it in our own columns.

The New York *Truthseeker* for March 21 prints Mr. S. P. Putnam's letter, as President of the American Secular Union, inviting Mr. Foote, as President of the National Secular Society, and Mr. Charles Watts, Vice-President, to visit America and attend the Chicago Congress at the end of October. Mr. Putnam, we see, is going to make "a summer campaign to the Pacific coast," and has engagements out there for more than a hundred lectures.

The Liverpool Branch holds its annual meeting this evening (April 12). We hope all members will make it their special business to attend. The meeting will be held at the Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street.

The Rev. W. H. Bowers, M.A., Vicar of St. Barnabas, Chatham, has been challenged by Mr. Boorman, on behalf of the local Secular Society, to debate "any one of the subjects he is advertised to deliver in the Church of St. Barnabas with an accredited representative of the National Secular Society, or, failing to do so, he is invited to deliver the same lectures in the Mission Hall, or in the Secular Hall when not engaged, the Secular Hall to be let free of charge; discussion to follow each lecture." The reverend Master of Arts is apparently master of the art of discretion.

The *Dundee Observer* of March 28 devotes its leader to a vigorous censure of Provost Cooper, who, in the late discussion as to whether the Secularists should have the use, on the customary terms, of the Burgh Hall, declared that, "if he were acting for himself only, he would sweep the burgh clear of such lecturers." The article concludes as follows: "Because another person refuses to accept our code of social morality or orthodox belief, why should we style him a 'boozer' or an 'infidel'? This is surely calumny and cant. At Constantinople every Christian among us, even the 'saint,' would be called a kaffir or infidel. Why will good Christians here imitate the 'unspeakable' Turk?" Second thoughts are best, and Provost Cooper, we think, on further reflection, will not refuse to others the rights he claims for himself. His bark, no doubt, is worse than his bite.

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain a special article by Mr. Foote on the new Education Bill. We did not care to publish it during the holidays, as the matter is one of very great and grave importance.

SHILLING MONTH.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

G. Smith, 2s. 6d.; F. G.; F. H., 2s.; J. Kalsey; B. T., 3s.; G. McCluskey, 3s.; James and John McGlashan, £1; James Thomson, 2s.; G. E. Sumner, 1s. 6d.; Holloway, 2s.; E. G. H., 2s. 6d.; N. (Sheffield), 5s.

Glasgow (further list):—Mr. Marr, 10s.; J. Lang, 10s.; Friend, 10s.; R. Turnbull, 2s.; J. Thulkeld, McCormick D. Lambie, Baxter; G. Pollock, 2s.; H. Eyre, C. Mackenzie, G. Bell, Arthur, W. M., F. Phillip; G. Faulkner, 3s. 3d.; W. Clarke, 2s. 6d.; A. and G. H. Cowie, 3s.; Phonograph, 3s.; 1s. 6d.; R. Todd; W. F., 2s. 6d.; P. B., 2s. 6d.; J. Mitchell, J. H.; E. Whinston, 6d.; A. Gilvy, Albion; Moffat, 2s.; M., 3d.; J. Hay.

Per Charles Watts:—A Friend in South Shields, 5s.

Per Miss Vance:—E. Self, 2s.; T. Ives; H. Goodman, 2s.; A. E. Wade, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Newbrandt, 2s. 4d.

Greenock:—H. K., 5s.; J. McC., 3s.; A. C. P., 2s; T. K., 2s.; O. K., A. M., Radical, Scientist, A. McA., D. K.

The curiosities of ceremony in the Church are like the painted glass in church windows—designed to keep out light; not to let it in.—*Samuel Butler, "Thoughts on Various Subjects"; 1660.*

RANDOM NOTES FROM SCOTLAND.

THE GIFFORD LECTURES.

THE Edinburgh and Glasgow Gifford Lectures for 1896 have just come to a close. The Edinburgh lecturer, Emeritus Professor Campbell Fraser, whose strongest claim to distinction lies in his sound work as editor of a fine edition of Berkeley, has added nothing to his reputation by his performance as Gifford lecturer. As an idealist, it was inevitable that he should strive to show that the universe is intelligible only in terms of mind; but his exposition and defence of this doctrine was much more remarkable for its qualifications and concessions than for constructive consistency. Take, for example, Professor Fraser's treatment of the problem of evil, and that of the miraculous. In the lecture on the former he admitted that the genesis, nature, and final cause of evil were alike inscrutable, but that, as we lived 'in an infinitesimal corner of the vast fabric of things, and could only see the surface even of our immediate environment, we must be content to believe that physical and moral defects were merely incidents in an orderly evolution towards an ultimate perfection. As for miracles, was not the universe itself a standing miracle? And it is for a tissue of threadbare commonplaces and inanities like this that the trustees pay at the rate of £50 a lecture! Really, it would be dear at the price of an old sermon, which is usually a little below zero. It is rather too late in the day to expect us to accept the evasive and self-destructive Optimism of Leibnitz and his school. It was crude enough in the pre-evolutionary period in which it flourished; it is a grotesque anomaly now. Logically considered, the formula, that "partial evil is but universal good," extinguishes all distinction between right and wrong as completely as the much-reviled Pantheism to which it is ostensibly opposed. However, even if we grant the primary postulate of Optimism, and allow that it is unsafe to judge the whole from the part, then, as we are so crassly ignorant of the "true inwardness" of the universe, so much the more reason is there why we should not dogmatise about it one way or another. When the optimist, who is usually a well-beneficed clergyman or crapulous annuitant, smiles benignantly, and pronounces everything to be very good, over the walnuts and the wine, he ought to be reminded that he is ignoring his own self-denying ordinance, and confounding the whole with a part of the part. For, as we are all equally ignorant of final causes, I have as much right to say everything on the Theistic hypothesis is evil, and that evil is our good. If in the kingdom of the blind the one-eyed man is king, it is equally true that where nobody knows, there the fool is as much of an authority as the wise man. The paralogism about miracles answers itself. If the sum of existence is a universal miracle, then there cannot be any miracle in particular. It is of the very essence of the idea of a miracle that it should be an event out of the ordinary course of nature; but Professor Fraser empties the idea of its historic content, and inflates it with a metaphysical quiddity of his own manufacture, which does but darken counsel.

The Glasgow lecturer, Principal Caird, was unable, through illness, to deliver the last two lectures of the course, although they will probably be included in the volume in which the lectures will shortly be published. For Dr. Caird's sake, I regret the discontinuance of the lectures; but, even if the world never heard more of them, I don't think it would suffer any grievous loss. Mr. Foote has already exposed the gross perversion of the objects of the Gifford Trust, by the alienation of it, in spite of the express instruction of Lord Gifford to the contrary, into a preserve for theological metaphysicians and metaphysical theologians; but in the case of this year's Glasgow Gifford lecture the action of the Senate of Glasgow University actually amounted to an abrogation of the Founder's prescription. For the convenience of Principal Caird, and to improve the notoriously wretched attendance at the University Chapel, it was decided that the lectures should take the place of the sermon at the services there; and, notwithstanding strenuous protest, the Senate persisted in carrying out this arrangement. Principal Caird's prelections were as little in keeping with the spirit of the Gifford bequest as the practice of the Senate was with its letter. The Principal insisted not on discussing the bases of a possible science of God, but on making a desperate

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attempt to square philosophy and Christian dogma, with the necessary result that, apart from the elegance of diction for which he is distinguished, his discourses are sheer verbiage from beginning to end. What else is to be expected when they deal with such mediæval themes as: How Divinity may assume humanity, and yet not cease to be divine, nor begin to be human? If two independent personalities may co-exist in the same soma, without being aware of their separate existence? Whether the divine hypostasis was prepotent over the human, or *vice versâ*? and so on, until in utter bewilderment one is impelled to exclaim with "Truthful James": "Are there visions about? Is the Caucasian a failure? and is civilisation played out?"

I am not one of those who demand the abolition of the Gifford lectureships, and propose that the funds of the Trust should be applied, say, to the furtherance of Technical Education. That, in its way, would be quite as flagrant an abuse of the bequest as that of which we are complaining. Lord Gifford's object was an excellent one. A study of the growth and development of the God idea in the light of the historical and of the anthropological methods cannot but make for intellectual emancipation; and, as a foil to the precision and fruitfulness of those methods, an occasional presentment of the obscurantist view—forgive the paradox—might not be altogether without its uses. Lord Gifford's fatal mistake was in placing the management of the Trust under the exclusive control of those strongholds of Conservatism and pedantry, the Scottish Universities; and until outside influence becomes strong enough to compel these fiduciary bodies to administer the Trust impartially, there is but faint hope of the lectureships becoming truly representative of the widely-diversified processes of modern thought in relation to Theistic speculation.

Exit Harry Alfred Long.

Pray, passenger, do not drop a tear; our only Harry—not Old Harry, but the 'umble missionary who has been factotum in Glasgow for the once famous house of Jehovah, Calvin, & Co. for nearly fifty years—is neither dead nor translated after the manner of Enoch, Elijah, or Bottom the Weaver. He is about to emigrate to Queensland—tell it not in Gath, whisper it not in the streets of Askelon—to reinstate the Bible in the godless secular schools of that God-forsaken colony. Let Wallace Nelson quake in his shoes! and the hosts of the Colonial infidel prepare for fell discomfiture and flight, for Harry is a man of war, like the Lord, and he will smite the foes of his fetish book with the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, or with the still deadlier weapon with which Samson slew his thousand Philistines. For nearly half a century "Harry IX.," as he bombastically styles himself, has waged a war of extermination against Giant Pope and the hydra-headed monster, "Infidelity," and he has his guerdon in the fact that he leaves both lustier and more formidable than ever. Verily the Lord is with Israel, and scattereth his enemies as chaff before the wind. Mr. Long has been delivering valedictory speeches at the rate of about three a week for the last three months; but this procrastination does not mean that Mr. Long finds "parting such sweet sorrow," or that he has been smitten by the sinister example of a certain obsolete English tenor. It is all on account of the "law's delays," for the cross actions for libel between him and the nondescript Powell still hang fire; and, although the farewell soirée held in Mr. Long's honor was postponed for a month, the cases are still incubating, and not even Zadkiel can predict the times of their consummation. Meanwhile Mr. Long tarries sadly and fretfully, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord in the name of his servant Paul: "Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (1 Cor. vi. 7). At the farewell soirée Mr. Long spoke very much in the vein of the vainglorious writer of 2 Corinthians ii., and, of course, he had to show that, like the vagrant "Apostle of the Gentiles," he too had "fought with wild beasts at Ephesus." "He had in Glasgow and Paisley debated with Bradlaugh, one of the strongest opponents of Christianity that England had produced. He looked back to these and other contests with gratitude, as great good came from them. God wrought with a small tool." Far be it from us to gainsay the accuracy of the last clause; but, to say the very least, Mr. Long's claim to have debated with Mr. Bradlaugh is couched in most misleading terms. From the language held nine people out of ten will infer that he met our late leader in set public debate, whereas he never did more than take his turn as an ordinary opponent in the discussion after Mr. Bradlaugh's lectures. We all know that Mr. Long would have given a good deal to engage with Mr. Bradlaugh on equal terms; but, as the latter once remarked, in answer to a "challenge" from Mr. Long, he had something better to do than waste his time with every irresponsible tub-thumper who bawled after him from a street corner. When, therefore, Mr. Long says he debated with Mr. Bradlaugh, either he is ignorant of the plain and customary meaning of the term—which is impossible, for is he not a philologer?—or he is suffering from the species of delusion that led George IV. to believe that he had performed prodigies of valor at the Battle of Waterloo.

Not even his bitterest enemy will accuse Mr. Long of being an exact reasoner or skilled debater. His methods are all of the *ad captandum vulgus* or mountebank order, and he shows to most advantage as an acrobat and jester of the Jack Pudding school. In this line, and especially as a Cheap Jack, distributing Bibles and tracts under cost price, it must be admitted that he is an "amoosin' cuss"; but when he masquerades as a "scholar" and a "thinker," he becomes a usurper and a nuisance. Imagine a "thinker" seeking to prove the historical existence of Jesus and the divine origin of Christianity from the fact that the *Freethinker* is dated according to the Christian era; or who concludes that Christianity wins because there is an enormous circulation of cheap and nasty Bibles; and because, in the vicissitudes of tenancy, Christian missionary societies sometimes oust or succeed Freethought organisations in the occupancy of meeting-places. For depth and originality of scientific knowledge the saintly Kinns is but a Lilliputian to the Brobdingnagian Long, who accepts the Mosaic cosmogony in all its ugly nakedness; laughs at the very idea of evolution, and actually cites as a "proof" of the biological precision of the Bible, in its statement that God made all men of one flesh and blood, the "fact," unknown to any text-book of biology, that whereas it is impossible to distinguish the blood of one variety of the human race from another, it is easy to demonstrate a physico-chemical difference between the blood of man and that of other mammals. And this man has been a member of the School Board for years!

At the farewell meeting a letter from Mr. Rooney, a Roman Catholic, was read, in which he testified that he had never known a more honorable opponent than Mr. Long. I honestly wish I could say as much for the Freethinkers of Glasgow; but I cannot forget, much less forgive, certain passages in our relations with him, and the remembrance of these things disables me from endorsing Mr. Rooney's verdict. Perhaps Mr. Long may have been more chivalrous towards Catholics than he has proved himself to be in our case, although I can recall many instances of his indecent eagerness to believe evil of Papists, on the slenderest evidence, as in the notorious Widdowe's fiasco; but his recklessness of assertion and wantonness of imputation concerning Secularism and Secularists made it impossible for any self-respecting Secularist to esteem him.

Mr. Long expects to restore the Bible to the Queensland schools by the year 1900, when he will return to Glasgow to wipe out any extant remainder of Papists and Pagans. There is surely a trifling error—as with Baxter's prophecies—as to the date. It should be the Greek Kalends, or for ever and the day after. Mrs. Partington stemming the tide of the Atlantic, and the exploit of the Knight of La Mancha tilting at the windmills, weren't "circumstances," as Artemus Ward would say, beside this "deed of high emprise." If the Halls of Valhalla still witnessed the suppers of the gods, and on high Olympus the immortals still made merry over the waywardness and folly of men, what a spectacle for them were this! Even the solitary, morose Jehovah would be moved to grin at it from his perch between the cherubim. Go forth, Harry the Ninth, and learn, if you are capable of learning anything, that the setting up again of the idol upon the altar of the temple, even if you can piece together its scattered fragments, and get the image to stand, will not revive the worship of it. The gods are dead or dying, and through their ruined fanes, once filled with the smoke of altar-fires, and crimsoned with the blood of innocent victims, the blessed sunlight shines and the cleansing winds of Liberty blow.

When I was a boy in the Queensland bush, they told

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me a story of the opening of the up-country railway. The black-fellows thought that the locomotive was the white man's devil, and that its appearance in their territory would bring disaster in its train. Accordingly, it was resolved that it should be driven back by force. On the day of the first run the natives assembled in thousands at one point on the line; and when the engine came in sight they set up an unearthly yell, and made a feint of charging at it; but the engine-driver blew the whistle, which threw most of them into a wild panic and caused an instant stampede, and of the few who stood their ground only an odd one or two survived. The rest were crushed to pulp under the great wheels—not of a juggernaut, nor a devil, but of the most powerful pioneer of modern civilisation. Which things are an allegory. J. P. GILMOUR.

A DISCOURAGED PARSON.

A DRUMMER for the upper route
Had tickets for the sky,
And hence resolved to do some work
Toward fitting men to die.
So, pulling down his pious phiz
To a "Lord, we thank thee" look,
He started out to draw them in
With "mustard," faith, and book.
The looked-for sinner hove in sight,
And great the parson's joy.
The drunken vagrant clutched his arm
With "How's yer health, old boy?'
'O, man of sin," the parson said,
"You're trembling on the brink
Of that dread hell where Satan waits
For all who love strong drink.
Oh, rise and haste to save your soul!
Oh, fly the dreadful fate!
The wrath of heaven pursues you, man!
Call Jesus ere too late!'
"Whose name was that?" the drunkard said;
"Christ Jesus? Well, that's fine!
Why, that's the very chap, they say,
'Turned water into wine.'
Plain water wasn't strong enough
To help digest his cake,
And so he made a little wine
'Just for his stomach's sake.'
I have to laugh 'bout Solomon,
The way that he connives—
'Twas only by his keeping drunk
He lived with all them wives.
Besides, we are commanded
In your 'good book,' I think,
To spend our money freely
For oxen, sheep, and drink.

"Noah and Lot got drunk—what, gone?'
The parson had passed on
To meet an erring Magdalen
With cold, forbidding frown;
And to her piteous plea for alms
He drew his hand aside
And told her of a seething hell
With portals yawning wide.
"Men wrought my fall," the wanton said;
"I could not sin alone;
And even you, O holy man,
I dare to 'throw a stone.'
The Magdalen of Jesus' time
Was his especial pet,
And many more in that good book
Whose names I don't forget."
The parson drew his cloak aside,
Nor longer stayed to hear
The truths his book could not deny,
Which pained his pious ear.

So, farther down a narrow lane,
He sought the Master's cause
Among some lads who played at dice;
And here again made pause
One little fellow played to win,
And cheated on the sly;
But he, when charged with the offence,
Most stoutly did deny.
"O, vipers, did you never read
Of brimstone lake of fire
Prepared for all such wicked boys?
For God doth hate a liar."
"Just tell me, then," the small voice said,
"'F it's such an awful thing,
Why God 'a lying spirit' called
To trick Ahab the king;
And why old Peter told a lie,
Denying Jesus thrice.
I'm sure such things are worse by far
Than fibbing 'bout our dice.
I asked the teacher 'bout it, too;
But, with an awful look,
She said that I was much too young
To read God's holy book.
Now, what's it there for but to read?
And that's what I did tell her.
For 'sassing back' she made me learn
Six pages in the speller."
The parson made him no reply;
Spoke of the shade-trees cool;
Hoped, like good boys, they'd save their dimes
To bring to Sunday-school.

Across the street an angry son
Had struck such cruel blow
Upon his aged father's breast,
As though 'twere deadliest foe.
"Hold on, hold on," the parson cried;
"In this book, my brother,
The Lord commands the sons of earth
To honor father, mother."
"But Jesus don't," the wretch replied;
"I've read the very line
Where Jesus says to hate them both,
Or 'ye are none of mine.'
And as 'twill get me into heaven,
This one command I'll keep;
A blest 'disciple' I will be
And sit at Jesus' feet."

A murderer calm awaits his doom
Chained in his prison cell.
"Ah!" said the parson, "I'll go there
The 'gospel news' to tell."
The parson prayed—the felon smiled:
"Don't waste your holy power,
For I've repented, and was saved
Just at the eleventh hour.
The man I killed went down to hell;
He warn't prepared to die.
But I'll receive a harp and crown,
And dwell with Christ on high."

The parson hurried back to church
The wondrous tale to tell:
"A murderer from the burning snatched,
In paradise to dwell.
And, O my brethren, up in heaven
There is more joy to-day
O'er that one soul than all the rest
That do not go astray.
And, while we humbly bow in prayer,
Let all remember that
'The Lord the cheerful giver loves';
Please, deacon, pass the hat."
The congregation praised the Lord;
Their pastor was perfection;
While he knelt down and slyly cussed
At such a small collection.

—*Snohomish Eye.*

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting held at the Club Union Buildings on March 26; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. Charles Watts, W. Heaford, J. M. Wheeler, A. B. Moss, E. Bater, G. J. Warren, C. Johnson, E. W. Quay, H. J. Stace, P. Sabine, A. F. Taylor, T. Gorniot, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed; cash statement received.

The Glasgow Branch reported the arrangements already made for the annual Conference, to be held at the Grand Hall on Whit Sunday, May 24.

The committee deputed to carry out the Children's Party reported that their arrangements were now complete.

On the motion of Mr. Bater, seconded by Mr. Moss, it was resolved that the Annual Excursion take place in August, and the Secretary was instructed to make inquiries *re* suitable places, in conjunction with Miss Brown (London Secular Federation), and report at the next meeting.

Messrs. J. M. Wheeler and H. J. Stace were elected on the Agenda Committee.

The Lewisham Branch delegate reported that the attendants at outdoor meetings had been threatened with physical violence. The President offered his advice, and promised to attend personally if it became necessary, and also to provide lecturers under his Lecture Scheme.

The meeting adjourned.

EDITH M. VANCE, *Assistant-Secretary.*

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BOOK CHAT.

So-called Sport is No. 20 of the Humanitarian League's publications. The Rev. J. Stratton writes on "Hunting the Carted Stag," Colonel W. Lisle B. Coulson on "Shooting Pigeons from Traps," and Dr. R. J. Jude on "Coursing the Bagged Rabbit." An excellent Introduction is contributed by Mr. H. S. Salt. We commend this pamphlet to the attention of all who hate the most despicable form of cruelty—cruelty to the utterly helpless. After reading it (or other of the League's publications) themselves, let them lend it round to all their friends and acquaintances.

* * *

The Path of Progress, by W. D. Macgregor (John Heywood, London and Manchester), is an able and a very careful criticism of Mr. Blatchford's fascinating *Merrie England*. It seems to us to call for a reply from "Nunquam." At any rate, it should be read and digested by those who like to study both, and indeed *all*, sides of a great question.

* * *

The Literary Guide (Watts & Co.) for April is an excellent pennyworth. The monthly supplement is by Mr. F. J. Gould, who ends with an interrogation—"Was it an Agnostic who wrote the book of Job?" A very interesting answer might be given to this question.

* * *

W. J. Linton's *Memories* (Lawrence and Bullen), though very scrappy and discursive, contain many matters of interest to Freethinkers. Mr. Linton, in his young days, was in the thick of the fight for the liberty of the press, and has in his time come in contact with many leading Freethinkers. Of James Watson he has already written a special memoir. Henry Hetherington is frequently mentioned. Mr. Linton says: "Hetherington was a leader of men, a ready and effective speaker, plain, pathetic, humorous, or sarcastic, as occasion required; a bold thinker and a good organiser, prompt, energetic, earnest, and devoted."

* * *

Of Mr. George Jacob Holyoake Linton speaks in a very disparaging fashion, tempting us to think his own toes have been trodden upon. One of his remarks is so unjust that we must notice it. He says of G. J. H.: "He began his public life by a foolish provocation of prosecution for blasphemy, thereby gaining such credit and notoriety as might be due to the Last Martyr for Atheism." This is a grossly unfair account of the circumstances which led to Mr. Holyoake's imprisonment, and it is the more shameful as Mr. Linton himself wrote in the *Oracle of Reason* anonymous parodies which might with greater justice be styled "a foolish provocation of prosecution for blasphemy." Of Mr. Bradlaugh he speaks more justly: "Certainly it should be said that this indefatigable iconoclast was a kindly-natured man, as one may be even if a born fighter."

* * *

Of Harriet Martineau Linton says: "Plain, judging from her portraits, far from prepossessing in her young days, she had become with age a good-looking, comely, interesting old lady, very deaf, but cheerful and eager for news, which she did not always catch correctly. With all her manly self-dependence and strict, intentional honesty, with all her credit for practical common sense, she was as much a poet at heart as her brother, the Rev. James." Comparing Francis William Newman with his brother, the Cardinal, Mr. Linton describes him as "not a man of the same high genius, but a man of culture and fine thought, with excellent sympathies and intentions, but, as it seemed to me, hesitating in action and always appearing to doubt if his accepted course had been really right in politics. He, I used to think, ought to have stooped under the yoke of the Roman Church and John Henry to have stood upright as a leader of progress, which he might have been."

* * *

Mr. Linton's book is full of memories of celebrated men he has met. Carlyle he disparages, perhaps because he did the like towards Linton. Dickens, too, he did not esteem. He says: "For all his genius as a novelist, I have always thought that his real vocation was as an actor of low comedy, much as the world might have lost by such a change. Warm-hearted and sentimental, but not unselfish, he was not the gentleman. There was no grace of manner, no soul of nobility in him." Linton's heroes were Stanilas Worcell and Joseph Mazzini. Of the last named he says: "His great career, his genius, his deeds, and his worth are written on the scroll of History in characters which even the inventive pen of Detraction cannot now belittle. He stands, as I believe, the greatest man in this nineteenth century; none greater in the years of Time, the Prophet of the Future." Mr. Linton is hearty in his likes and his dislikes. There is much of interest in his *Memories*, but a carefully-kept and arranged autobiography would probably have been of much greater interest and value.

The firm of Nijhoff, of Gravenhage, are bringing out an important book in Dutch, by K. O. Meinsma. It is entitled *Spinoza en Zijn Kring* ("Spinoza and his Circle"). A second title is "Historical Critical Studies in Dutch Freethought." Herr Meinsma has, we understand, made special researches into the events of the life and times of Spinoza, and his work will be an important contribution towards the history of Freethought in Holland.

CORRESPONDENCE.

UNITARIANS AND THE BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am sure you do not intentionally intend to misrepresent Unitarians when, in your issue of March 29 (p. 200), you advise them to throw over the pretence of regarding the Bible as God's word." I have, I think, a very fair acquaintance with Unitarianism and Unitarians, and certainly, so far as my knowledge serves me, they entertain no such doctrine in respect to the Bible as you seem to impute to them; and, while regarding themselves as, and calling themselves, Christians, as they understand the Christian religion as taught by its great Teacher, are yet found among the true friends of Freethought, not only in respect to the Bible, but as touching every other concern and interest of humanity. This, at least, is how I, as a Unitarian, am acquainted with Unitarianism.

A READER OF "THE FREETHINKER."

PROFANE JOKES.

Minister (baptising child)—"In the name of the Father—" Hopeful Mother—"Hold on a minute, parson. Make it in the name of his uncle. He's got $20,000 in the bank."

Missionary—"And what will you do, John, when I am gone?" Chinaman—"Me chin-chin my own joss."

A DOWNFALL.—Wanderer—"Yes'm, a few years ago I was just rollin' in wealth." Kind-hearted Housekeeper—"Poor man; here is a quarter. Drink did it, I suppose?" Wanderer—"No'm; religion!" Kind-hearted Housekeeper—"Religion?" Wanderer—"Yes'm; I was one of the most ablest burglars in the country, but I got religion, and can't work at me trade no more."—*Puck*.

The title of the *Woman's Bible* having been much criticised, Elizabeth Cady Stanton recently wrote to a friend: "The *Woman's Bible* is the most happy title that could have been selected. I am sure that 'Woman's Commentaries on What the Bible Says of Woman' would have been too lumbering. When John Stuart Mill gave his little book the title of *The Subjection of Woman*, everybody carped at it. Mill said he knew he had hit the right title, because everybody was down on it. I am sure our title is the true one for the same reason. The position of woman is the greatest question treated in the Bible, of far more importance than all the rest put together. Her position is the key to the whole Christian system. Those who complain that I am flippant must remember that I hold the Bible, like any other book, as emanating from the brain of man—in plain English, I do not think we need be profound scholars, Biblical critics, or linguists to understand and repudiate the rib story, or Noah and his Ark, or Moses talking with the Lord on Mount Sinai. Why was no woman permitted to so ascend or descend? Why did the women not have their share of the consecrated meat or bread? Why was not a female lamb as good as a male for a burnt-offering? Are such questions proper from Hebrew and Greek scholars only?"

The *Black-Coats*, generally taken, are a sort of ignorant tinkers, who, in matters of their own profession, such as the mending and soldering men's consciences, have made more holes than they found.—*Thomas Hobbes*, "*On Liberty and Necessity*" *(in the Epistle to the Reader)*; *1654*.

Obituary.

DIED at Flushing, Falmouth, on April 4, Samuel Fox. Of delicate constitution, his death was probably accelerated by his imprisonment for hat wearing in church. He was of Quaker descent, and upheld the early teaching of the Quakers as to the superiority of the Spirit to the Word. At the time of his death he was engaged on two works—one on the Hat Crusade, and another and larger one dealing with Custom.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 7.45, a lecture; 9.15, social party.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, Touzeau Parris will lecture.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. James, "Science *versus* Creeds."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. H. Harris, "War and Personal Adventure."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, business meeting.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-Street): 11.15, Professor Adamson, "The Idea of Progress."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Harry Courtney, "The Upshot of Secularism."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, J. Rowney, "The Atonement."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones will lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side); 7, F. Haslam will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, a lecture; 3.30, F. Haslam will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street): 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Recollections of Charles Bradlaugh."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Resurrection."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butcher's Hill): 11.30, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, H. Card will lecture.

BLACKBURN: Fortnightly meeting at 18 Peter-street. Saturday, tea party and dance at the Spinners' Institute.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Wheale, "The Freedom of the Mind"—a Christian's reply to a recent lecture.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, G. W. Foote, "The Curse of Creeds."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Jargon of Theology"; 2.30, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?" 6.30, "The Dream of Immortality."

HECKMONDWIKE (Lumbard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, quarterly meeting.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, King Prempha, "South Africa."

LEEDS (Vulcan Club, Vulcan-street, Benson-street): 7, R. Baines, "Genesis and Science."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Arthur Alexander, "The Conflict between Religion and Science." Annual meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "Individual Liberty *v.* State Interference"; 6.30, "Atheism: Its Meaning, Morality, and Justification."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 8, members' quarterly meeting; 5, tea; 7, T. W. Bundy, "Microbes" (with lantern illustrations).

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, Charles Watts, "The Christian Deity"; 3, "Woman: Past, Present, and Future"; 7, "The Science of Life, from a Secular Standpoint."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "The Education Crisis"; 6.30, "Tales and Wonders of Jesus."

MANCHESTER (Stevenson-square): 3, C. Cohen will lecture (if weather favorable).

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 12, 19, and 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 12, Mile End; 19, Camberwell; 26, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—April 12, Balls Pond; 26, Glasgow. May 3, Failsworth; 10, Balls Pond.

POSITIVISM.

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AND

Mr. G. W. FOOTE, President of the National Secular Society.

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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—No. 16. SUNDAY, APRIL 19, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

INGERSOLL "LIES."

(Continued from page 226.)

THIS "eulogy of whisky," as Ingersoll's teetotal Christian enemies call it, should at any rate be balanced by his denunciation of alcohol in the course of his argument in the Munn trial at Chicago in 1876. This is what he said :—

> "I believe, gentlemen, that alcohol, to a certain degree, demoralises those who make it, those who sell it, and those who drink it. I believe from the time it issues from the coiled and poisonous worm of the distillery until it empties into the hell of crime, death, and dishonor, it demoralises everybody that touches it. I do not believe that anybody can contemplate the subject without becoming prejudiced against this liquid crime. All you have to do, gentlemen, is to think of the wrecks upon either bank of this stream of death—of the suicides, of the insanity, of the poverty, of the ignorance, of the distress, of the little children tugging at the faded dresses of weeping and despairing wives, asking for bread; of the men of genius it has wrecked; of the millions who have struggled with imaginary serpents produced by this devilish thing. And when you think of the gaols, of the almshouses, of the prisons, and of the scaffolds upon either bank—I do not wonder that every thoughtful man is prejudiced against the damned stuff called alcohol."

This is the only "Temperance" speech Ingersoll ever made. It is surely strong enough, in its way; and states one side of the case as the other is stated in the letter to Mr. Brown. The golden mean of wise use, instead of foolish abuse, is the policy of Ingersoll himself, as it is and has been the policy of so many great thinkers and workers.

Matthew Arnold once said that he did not believe teetotalism would ever triumph. What he expected was that Englishmen would drink light wines instead of strong spirits. Ingersoll appears to be of the same opinion. He has likened wine to a cheerful hearth-fire, and spirit to a conflagration.

So much for the "drunkard" Ingersoll. Now let us see about the "coward."

The wretches who cannot answer Ingersoll's arguments ask people to believe that he displayed cowardice in the war between North and South. "He was in but one engagement," they say, "and in that was chased into a hogyard and actually taken prisoner by a sixteen-year-old Confederate boy."

The followers of the Prince of Peace evidently pride themselves on their fighting qualities, and seem disposed to deny all military prowess to Freethinkers. It is perfectly true that Christians are the greatest brawlers on this planet; but, on the other hand, it is curious that they should fancy a Freethinker is likely to be a coward. Julius Cæsar was an Atheist; Lord Peterborough, one of our best generals in the eighteenth century, was a notorious Freethinker; Frederic the Great laughed at Christianity, and Napoleon was a thorough-going sceptic.

The best answer to this malignant nonsense about Ingersoll's "cowardice" is the statement of a recent fact. During the war Ingersoll was Colonel of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry. This body held a re-union at Elmwood in September, 1895. The surviving comrades of six regiments were present. Colonel Ingersoll was the invited guest and orator of the occasion. He was accompanied from Peoria to Elmwood by a delegation of more than five hundred prominent citizens. As he passed to the stand his old regiment lined both sides of the way, and gave him a grand greeting. Tears were in the eyes of many of them as they shouted "Glad to see you, Bob." The appearance of the Colonel to deliver his oration, after the parade of the veterans, evoked immense enthusiasm. According to the Peoria *Transcript* report, it was "the signal for a mighty shout, which was heartily joined in by everyone present. It was fully ten minutes before the cheering subsided, and when Colonel Ingersoll commenced to speak the cheering was renewed, and he was forced to wait several minutes more."

Now, will any man in his senses believe that veteran soldiers, all those years after the war, would greet their Colonel in this fashion if he had run away in battle, and been chased and captured by a boy of sixteen? Surely the soldiers know the military character of their commander a great deal better than ministers of religion do, or than all the tribe of Christian Evidence libellers.

This cowardly "cowardice" lie about Ingersoll is of old standing, and although it has been indignantly branded as a lie by his army comrades it still goes round the globe wherever the English language is spoken; for contradicting and exposing a lie does not kill it, if it happens to serve the cause of religion. Mr. John W. Kempsey, who was Lieutenant of Company B. in the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry, writing to the Peoria *Transcript* in September, 1889, said: "It makes my blood boil, as it no doubt does that of every survivor of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry, to read the unscrupulous and groundless charges against the bravery of Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll." Lieutenant Kempsey then gave an account of the engagement in which Ingersoll was taken prisoner. With some "six or seven hundred men and two pieces of artillery" the Colonel was ordered to oppose a raid by General Forrest (Confederate) in the direction of Lexington. Forrest's whole division, not less than ten thousand cavalry, bore down on Ingersoll's handful. The Colonel, with a portion of his force, broke through the solid mass of the enemy, and came out in the rear of their line, where the little band was finally surrounded and captured. "Call Colonel Ingersoll an infidel," said Lieutenant Kimsey, "say he was reckless, say he was blasphemous under provocation; but do not say in the presence of a member of the Eleventh Illinois Cavalry that he was a coward, or that he shirked a post of duty because of its dangers."

A later letter by Lieutenant Kimsey, addressed to Mr. D. N. Harwood, who had made inquiries as to Ingersoll's service in the Union army, was printed in the Peoria *Transcript* of April 11, 1891. Ingersoll's regiment, under his command, took part during two days in the memorable battle of Shiloh, several of its members being killed or wounded. Afterwards it fought for two days at Corinth, and "proved its loyal bravery, like the regiments that fought by its side, by its list of wounded and dead."

In the Fargo *Argus* of December 21, 1895, the editor, referring to the Rev. J. D. Houston's libellous sermon at Aberdeen, wrote as follows: "The writer knew Colonel Ingersoll personally, and the charges against him by the Aberdeen preacher are too silly to talk about. On the battle-field of Shiloh his personal courage was tested and found not wanting. This also the writer witnessed."

Mr. Macdonald gives an amusing extract from the New York *Sun*, which reported an interview with a veteran who served under Ingersoll. "A braver man," this veteran said, "I never saw in five years of service." He corroborated

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Lieutenant Kimsey's account of Ingersoll's small force being overwhelmed by General Forrest's ten thousand cavalry, and then added: "But the Colonel kept on fighting. A number of his men saw that he was in imminent peril, and that if he didn't surrender he would be killed, and they yelled at him at the top of their voices to give up. He heeded, but I could see that he did so with regret and disgust. Here is where the humor began. When the Colonel stopped fighting he threw up his hands and screamed out: 'Stop firing! I'll acknowledge your d——d old Confederacy.'"

This veteran added that Ingersoll was taken to a store for safe keeping, and the "people flocked around him, listened to his stories, and declared that they were having more fun than they ever had in their lives." One night a lot of the rebels gathered round him; they overflowed the place, and the Colonel went outside, where he was asked to make a speech. He got on a box and addressed the crowd, which he soon had under the spell of his eloquence. When he reached the subject of slavery, and pictured its horrors, he "brought out streams of tears and bursts of applause from the very men who but a few hours before shot at and captured him." The oration was cut short by General Forrest, who rushed in excitedly, though not angry, and exclaimed: "Here, Ingersoll, stop that speech, and I'll exchange you for a government mule."

The North had just then suspended exchanges, however, and Ingersoll was sent to command a parole camp at St. Louis. Eventually, with the consent of his men, the Colonel, being sick of rusting as a paroled prisoner, resigned, and went back home into civil life.

This is the true story of Ingersoll's service in the Union army. He did his duty and fought like a man. His old comrades honor him, and the pious liars had better not talk about his "cowardice" in *their* presence.

Another lie about Ingersoll is that he used at one time to speak on behalf of slavery. When the Colonel was twenty-six years of age, and running for Congress in the Fourth District of Illinois, he denounced slavery vigorously. This was in 1860. When the war broke out soon afterwards, says Mr. J. K. Magie, for several years a reading clerk in the Illinois legislature, Ingersoll became "more serious and in earnest." "He was in great demand," says Mr. Magie, "as a speaker during the latter part of the war, and no man in Illinois did more for the cause of the Union than did Mr. Ingersoll."

What these liars about Ingersoll should do is to find a pro-slavery speech of his, or produce someone who heard it, specifying both time and place. Until they do this, the readers of Ingersoll in all parts of the world will deride the idea that he ever spoke in favor of "the sum of all villanies."

G. W. FOOTE.

(*To be continued.*)

THE GOSPELS AS HISTORY.*

AN anonymous work, which in its thoroughness is comparable to *Supernatural Religion*, has lately been published by Messrs. Williams and Norgate. The author has set himself to examine, in a calm and temperate spirit, if the Christian Gospels are entitled to credence as trustworthy records of historical events. He is forced, as I have been, to the conclusion that they not only have no claim to be infallible, but that also they cannot be considered historic. But he still appears to consider himself a member of the Church of England, which he claims is not founded on books or on miracles, but on "a living faith or trust in the indwelling and the abiding work of the Divine Spirit." Such phrases as these tempt me to regard the author as probably a beneficed clergyman, who is content to take the emoluments of a Church while undermining its very fabric, and rejecting all that the Christians of old regarded as essential Christianity.†

A book of 533 pages is hardly to be condensed within the limits of a single article, and I shall on future occasions call further attention to the work. I must, however, at once touch upon a few of its salient points. The author shows that, as the Acts of the Apostles professes to relate the early stages of the Christian Church, the testing of that book is a matter of supreme importance. A comparison with Paul's epistle to the Galatians shows that the story of Paul is quite irreconcilable with that of the Acts, and indicates that the latter is garbled for a purpose. Paul knew nothing of the alleged Jerusalem Council. The author says:—

> "The result is not merely that the writer of Acts is discredited as a historian. The picture which he has drawn of the internal harmony of the Church vanishes into air. The fabric which he has taken pains to build up falls to the ground; and we see clearly that, if it had not been for Paul, the Society of Judaic Christians at Jerusalem would have remained a mere Jewish sect, or more probably would have come to a speedy end."

It is easy to discern that the effect of discrediting the historical character of the Acts is to cast a strong suspicion on the Gospel story which it is supposed to affirm. The Christ of Paul is an entirely different character from that of the Gospels, and it is a part of the author's work to show that the supposed Pauline corroboration of the Gospels rests on mistakes and interpolations.

In treating of the Gospels the author first disposes of the alleged external evidence in the early Fathers. Here he largely follows in the wake of the author of *Supernatural Religion*. He shows that "Christian writers to the sixth or seventh decade of the second century were either ignorant of the existence of our canonical Gospels, or deliberately preferred other gospels to them." That is, there is no evidence for these documents for a century and a half after the alleged occurrence of the events with which they deal. An inquiry into the age and authenticity of the fourth Gospel proves that it is even in a worse case than the first three. No mention of it is made in the early Christian literature down to the second half of the second century; and still less have we any evidence which lends any countenance to the notion of this semi-philosophical production coming from the apostolic fisherman, John; while it is certain that the author of the harsh Hebraisms and broken grammar of the Apocalypse cannot have written the cultivated Hellenistic Greek in the fourth Gospel, the author of which was absurdly ignorant of all things Jewish. How dubious and untrustworthy is the whole of the evidence cited in favor of the traditional view is noted with care at every stage of the examination.

Of the era in which Christianity arose the author says:—

> "It was, in truth, an age of the most degraded and deadening superstition—an age in which an order of the universe was a conception unknown to all except two or three minds at the most, and to them presented most dimly and imperfectly—an age in which men were ignorant, intolerant, and bigoted as they were superstitious, and therefore as prejudiced and cruel as they were intolerant."

In another place he says with truth:—

> "In place of Paley's perfectly trustworthy and infallible witnesses, we have a number of uneducated or half-educated peasants, whose roughness and rudeness, materialism and intolerance, are on a par with their ignorance. In fact, there never was an age in which the most upright of men then living could be less depended on for the accuracy of their reports, or the correctness of their impressions, than was the age which we speak of as the apostolic, or any country more steeped in superstitious credulity than that in which the apostles or evangelists lived. Among the Jews of that day, generally, wonders, in Dean Milman's words, 'wakened no emotion, or were speedily superseded by some new demand on the ever-ready belief.'"

He shows that the first three Gospels are founded on common documents, and that internal evidence proves that no one of the three writes from personal knowledge. "The three Synoptic Gospels are manifestly not three independent narratives, but merely different versions flowing out of a common tradition; and what can such versions be worth?" The picture given in them is entirely different from that in the document ascribed to John, and the discrepancies are so great that it is impossible for anyone who has seen their contradictions to avoid the conclusion that they discredit the whole of the narratives, and leave us without any certainty of what the doings or even the teachings of Jesus actually were.

* *The Four Gospels as Historical Records.* (Williams and Norgate.)

† I can make a shrewd guess at the name of the author, but it would be unfair to put it in print.

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The major portion of the work is taken up with an examination of the narratives of the Gospels. The sections chiefly dealt with are the Nativity, the main incidents of the Ministry, such as the first visit to the Temple, the relation of Jesus with John the Baptist, the temptation, the duration of the ministry, the calling of the disciples, the discourses and narratives in the Synoptics compared with those in John, an examination of all the stories of miracles, and finally of the incidents of the Passion and Resurrection. All these are minutely examined, with the result of showing that contradictions and incredibilities abound in the Gospels, and we are left without anything whatever of the nature of trustworthy historical evidence. The writer says :—

> "How these narratives, unhistorical as they have been shown to be, came into existence, or assumed their present form, it is not our business to explain ; and once again, at the end of my task, as at the beginning and throughout it, I must emphatically disclaim the obligation. Whether a reasonable hypothesis may be advanced to explain their growth, or whether it may not, the narratives are not narratives of historical fact."

That this is the just and, indeed, only tenable conclusion I think few who will take the trouble to read the work and examine the question closely will be able to dispute.

How will the clericals deal with such a book as *The Four Gospels as Historical Records?* Doubtless they will ignore it as far as possible, and go on preaching their old legends as if they had never been assailed. If the work is forced into notice, they will attempt to pooh-pooh it, or to cavil at a few of its statements. But serious students who take up the work will find that its main positions are unanswerable. The four Gospels are without any contemporary corroboration, and so inherently self-contradictory and incredible as to be worthless as historical records. If ever the sky-pilots are driven to acknowledge this, they will also doubtless still attempt to hold on to their emoluments by preaching an ideal Christ and a Church which is to be believed on some other ground than its owning a written revelation. When, however, the Church is forced to give up its records, I fancy its ministers will find the ground cut under their feet. The tenacity with which they cling to any accommodations which promise a longer lease of life forcibly suggests that craft was as much concerned in the origin as it has been in the maintenance of their system.

J. M. WHEELER.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST STAGE OF FREETHOUGHT: ITS NATURE AND LIMITATION.

"He who cannot reason is defenceless; he who fears to reason has a coward mind; he who will not reason is willing to be deceived, and will deceive all who listen to him."—*Maxim of Freethought.*

FREETHOUGHT is founded upon reason. It is the exercise of reason, without which Freethought is free foolishness. Freethought being the precursor of Secularist thought, it is necessary to describe its principles and their limitation. Freethought means independent self-thinking. Some say all thought is free—since a man can think what he pleases, and no one can prevent him. Unfortunately, thinking can be, and is, prevented by subtle spiritual intimidation in earlier, and even in later, life. When a police-agent found young Mazzini in the fields of Genoa, apparently meditating, his father's attention was called to the youth. His father was told that the Austrian Government did not allow persons to think. The Inquisition intimidated nations from thinking. The priests, by preventing instruction and prohibiting books, limited thinking. Archbishop Whately shows that no one can reason without words, and since speech can be, and is, disallowed and made penal, the highway of thought can be closed. No one can think to any purpose without inquiry concerning his subject, and inquiry can be made impossible. It is of little use that anyone thinks who cannot verify his ideas by comparison with those of his compeers. To prevent this is to discourage thought. In fact, thousands are prevented thinking by denying them the facilities of thinking.

Freethought means fearless thought. It is not deterred by legal penalties nor by spiritual consequences. Dissent from the Bible does not alarm the true investigator, who takes truth for authority, not authority for truth. The thinker who is really free is independent; he is under no dread; he yields to no menace; he is not dismayed by law or custom, or pulpits, or society, whose opinions appal so many. He who has the manly passion of Freethought has no fear of anything save the fear of error.

Fearlessness is the essential condition of effective thought. If Satan sits at the top of the Bible with perdition open underneath it, into which its readers will be pushed who may doubt what they find in its pages, the right of private judgment is a snare. A man is a fool who inquires at this risk. He had better accept at once the superstition of the first priest he meets. It is not conceivable how a Christian can be a *Free*-thinker. He who is afraid to know both sides of a question cannot think upon it. Christians do not, as a rule, want to know what can be said against their views, and they keep out of libraries all books which would inform others. Thus the Christian cannot think freely, and is against others doing it. Doubt comes of thinking; the Christian regards doubt as sin. How can he be a Freethinker who thinks thinking a sin? Freethought implies three things as conditions of truth :—

1. Free inquiry, which is the pathway to truth.
2. Free publicity of the ideas acquired, in order to learn whether they are useful—which is the encouragement of truth.
3. The free discussion of convictions, without which it is not possible to know whether they are true or false—which is the verification of truth.

A man is not a man unless he is a thinker; he is a fool, having no ideas of his own. If he happens to live among men who do think, he browses, like an animal, on their ideas. He is a sort of kept man, being supported by the thoughts of others. He is what in England is called a pauper, who subsists upon "outdoor relief" allowed him by men of intellect.

Without the right of publicity, individual thought, however praiseworthy and however perfect, would be barren to the community. Algernon Sidney said: "The best legacy I can leave my children is free speech and the example of using it." The clergy of every denomination are unfriendly to its use. The soldiers of the Cross do not fight adversaries in the open. Mr. Gladstone, alone among eminent men of piety, has insisted upon the duty of the Church to prove its claims in discussion. In his introduction to his address at the Liverpool College (1872-3) he said: "I wish to place on record my conviction that belief cannot now be defended by reticence, any more than by railing or by any privileges or assumption." Since the day of Milton there has been no greater authority on the religious wisdom of debate.

Thought, even theological, is often useless, ill-informed, foolish, mischievous, or even wicked; and he alone who submits it to free criticism gives guarantees that he means well and is self-convinced. By criticism alone comes exposure, correction, or confirmation. The right of criticism is the sole protection of the community against error of custom, ignorance, prejudice, and incompetence. It is not until a proposition has been generally accepted, after open and fair discussion, that it can be considered as established, and can safely be made a ground of action or belief.*

These are the implementary rights of thought. They are what grammar is to the writer, which teaches him how to express himself, but not what to say. These rights are as the rules of navigation to the mariner. They teach him how to steer a ship, but do not instruct him where to steer to. The full exercise of these rights of mental freedom is what training in the principles of jurisprudence is to the pleader; but it does not provide him with a brief. It is conceivable that a man may come to be a master of independent thinking and never put his powers to use; just as a man may know every rule of grammar and yet never write a book. In the same way, a man may pass an examination in the art of navigation and never take command of a vessel; or may qualify as a barrister, be called to the Bar, and never plead in any court. We know from experience that many persons join in the combat for the

* See *Formation of Opinions*, by Samuel Bailey.

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right of intellectual freedom for its own sake, without intending or caring to use the right when won. Some are generous enough to claim and contend for these rights from the belief that they may be useful to others. This is the first stage of Freethought, and many never pass beyond it.

Independent thinking is concerned primarily with removing obstacles to its own action, and in contests for liberty of speech by tongue and pen. The free mind fights mainly for its own freedom. It may begin in curiosity and may end in intellectual pride, unless conscience takes care of it. Its nature is iconoclastic, and it may exist without ideas of reconstruction. Though a man goes no further, he is a better man than he who never went as far. He has acquired a new power, and is sure of his own mind; just as one who has learned to fence, or to shoot, has a confidence in encountering an adversary which is seldom felt by one who never had a sword in hand or practised at a target. The sea is an element of recreation to one who has learned to swim; it is an element of death to one ignorant of the art. Besides, the thinker has attained a courage and confidence unknown to the man of orthodox mind. Since God (we are assured) is the God of Truth, the honest searcher after truth has God on his side, and has no dread of the King of Perdition—the terror of all Christian people—since the business of Satan is with those who are content with false ideas, not with those who seek the true. If it be a duty to seek the truth and to live the truth, honest discussion, which discerns it, identifies it, clears it, and establishes it, is a form of worship of real honor to God and of true service to man. If the clergyman's speech on behalf of God is rendered exact by criticism, the criticism is a tribute, and no mean tribute, to heaven. Thus the free exercise of the rights of thought involves no risk hereafter. Moreover, so far as a man thinks, he gains. Thought implies enterprise and exertion of mind, and the result is wealth of understanding, to be acquired in no other way. This intellectual property, like other property, has its rights and duties. The thinker's right is to be left in undisturbed possession of what he has earned, and his duty is to share his discoveries of truth with mankind, to whom he owes his opportunities of acquiring it.

Free expression involves consideration for others on principle. Democracy without personal deference becomes a nuisance; so free speech without courtesy is repulsive, as free publicity would be if not mainly limited to reasoned truth. Otherwise, every blatant impulse would have the same right of utterance as verified ideas. Even truth can only claim priority of utterance when its utility is manifest; as the number and length of hairs on a man's head is less important to know than the number and quality of the ideas in his brain.

True, Freethought requires special qualities to insure itself acceptance. It must be owned that the thinker is a disturber. He is a truth-hunter, and there is no telling what he will find. Truth is an exile who has been kept out of her kingdom, and Error is a usurper in possession of it; and the moment Truth comes into her right, Error has to give up its occupancy of her territory; and as everybody, consciously or unconsciously, harbors some of the emissaries of the usurper, they do not like owning the fact, and they dispute the warrant of Truth to search their premises, though to be relieved of such deceitful and costly inmates would be an advantage.

An inalienable attribute of Freethought, which no theology possesses, is absolute toleration of all ideas put forward in the interest of public truth and submitted to public discussion. The true Freethinker is in favor of the free action of all opinion which injures no one else, and of putting the best construction he can on the acts of others, not only because he has thereby less to tolerate, but from perceiving that he who lacks tolerance towards the ideas of others has no claim to the tolerance of his own. The defender of toleration must himself be tolerant. Condemning the coercion of ideas, he is pledged to combat error only by reason; vindictiveness towards the erring is not only inconsistency, it is persecution. Thus Freethought is not only self-defence against error, but, by the toleration it imposes, is itself security for respectfulness in controversy.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

There is no right so sacred as the right to one's own thought upon the highest themes.—*John W. Chadwick.*

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

THE sermons preached on Good Friday last, as reported in the various newspapers, afforded strange and peculiar reading to the non-theological mind. The one theme dwelt upon in all the pulpits was the death of Christ with its "complete and sublime scheme of redemption for fallen man." It was urged that Eve and Adam fell from a state of purity and perfection by an act of transgression in the Garden of Eden, and thereby involved the whole of the human family in sin and depravity. To remove the consequences of this alleged act of transgression, it was contended that the death of Christ was necessary in order to atone to God, against whom a sin had been committed. It was further urged that, through our "first parents" partaking of the forbidden fruit, God became estranged from his children, and that the sacrifice of his Son was required to reconcile the Father to his children. As it is put in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, "Christ was crucified to reconcile his Father to us. To be a sacrifice for sins of men" (Article 2). It is also stated in the Confession of Faith that Christ's death "purchased reconciliation" (chap. viii.). The Biblical authority, as accepted by orthodox believers, for this view of the death of Christ is as follows: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world" (John i. 29); "he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2); "the Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx.); "through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans v.); "this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28); "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Hebrews ix. 28); and "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv.). Upon these and a few other texts in the New Testament orthodox Christians base their theory of the Atonement.

It may be interesting to note the conflicting character of the theories which professed Christians have held concerning the Atonement, which is supposed to have been made through the death of Christ. The Augustinian school taught that mankind were doomed to hell through the fall of Adam, and that Christ's death cancelled the sin committed, and thus saved them from being utterly lost. The Calvinists believe that God foresaw that Adam would fall, and that posterity would thereby be damned; and therefore he selected a few, who are termed the "elect," to be saved, while the many are deprived of this special provision for their salvation. It seems to us that if God possessed the foreknowledge here ascribed to him, and if he were all-powerful, it would have been more to his credit if he had included the entire human family among his "elect." The evangelical Christians suppose that the vicarious sufferings of Christ secured conditional pardon, the condition being the belief that Christ died as a substitute for sinners—that is, that an avowed innocent person was made to suffer for those alleged to be guilty. The Universalists consider that no one is damned beyond his personal sin in this world. If an individual be ever so bad in the present life, all evil will depart at death, and he will be ushered into heaven pure and spotless. The Unitarians, rejecting all the above theories, contend that the object of Christ's life, rather than of his death, was to reconcile man to God, not God to man. Relying upon such statements in the Bible as "Every man shall die for his own sin," "To punish the just is not good," they consider the popular view of the Atonement fallacious. Such are a few of the conflicting notions held by the Christian sects as to the nature of the "simple plan of salvation."

Some of the early Christian Fathers taught that the death of Christ was a satisfaction to the Devil. The Rev. Scott Porter, in his *History of the Doctrine of the Atonement*, says: "The doctrine of satisfaction, when it was plainly broached, which was not till about two hundred years after the death of Christ, did not represent his blood as satisfying the claims of divine justice, but *as a payment made to the Devil!*" This was the doctrine advocated by the celebrated Origen, who wrote: "It was the Devil who held us in bondage: for to him we had been given over for our sins. Wherefore, he demanded the blood of Christ as the price of our redemption" (p. 19). St. Ambrose states: "We were in pledge to *a bad creditor* for sin; but Christ came and offered his blood for us." Optatus says: "The

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souls of men were in the possession of the Devil till they were ransomed by the blood of Christ." According to St. Augustine, "the blood of Christ is given as a price that we might be delivered from the Devil's bonds." He regards the death of Christ, not as a payment of a debt due to God, but as *an act of justice to the Devil* in discharge of his fair and lawful claims" *(ibid)*.

Other eminent Christian divines taught that it was not merely the man Jesus who died, but God himself. Osiander, a friend and fellow-laborer of Luther, maintained that *Christ died and satisfied divine justice*, not as man, *but as God*. Hooper, a venerable name in the Christian Church, states that he cares "for no knowledge in the world but this, that man hath sinned, and *God hath suffered*" (*Porter's Lectures on the Atonement*, p. 68). The same belief is expressed by Dr. Watts, who in his hymns exclaims :—

> Well might the sun in darkness hide,
> And shut his glories in,
> When God, the mighty Maker, died
> For man, the creature's, sin.
>
> Behold a God descends and dies
> To save my soul from gaping hell.

Wesley also exclaims :—

> Sinners, turn ! why will he die ?
> God your Savior asks you why ;
> God, who did your souls retrieve,
> *Died himself* that ye might live.

Is it not evident, from the diversity of opinions which is here shown to have existed (and much of that diversity still obtains) in the Christian world as to the character and meaning of the death of Christ, how perplexing any scheme must be that is based upon it ?

The fact is, apart from all sectarian and forced interpretations, it appears to us that the Bible plan of redemption through the death of Christ is simply this : About six thousand years ago an all-wise, all-powerful, and beneficent God made man and woman, and placed them in a position surrounded by temptations it was impossible for them to withstand. For instance, he implanted within them desires which, as God, he must have known would produce their downfall. He then caused a tree to bear fruit that was adapted to harmonise with the very desires which he had previously imparted to his children. God, all-good, then created a serpent of the worst possible kind, in order that it might be successful in tempting Eve to partake of the fruit. God commanded Adam and Eve not to eat of this fruit, under the penalty of death, knowing at the same time that they would eat of it, and that they would not die. The serpent is allowed to succeed in his plan of temptation, and then God curses the ground for yielding the tree which he himself had caused to grow ; further, the Almighty Being dooms both man and woman to lives of pain and sorrow, and assures them that their posterity shall feel the terrible effects of their having done what it was impossible, under the circumstances, for them to avoid. Although at first God pronounced his creative work to be "very good," it proved to be quite the opposite. So bad did the human family become that God determined to bring a flood upon the earth and wash every member, one household excepted, out of existence. This "water-cure" was not, however, sufficient to correct the "divine" errors, for the people grew worse than ever. God now decided upon another plan—namely, to send his son—who was as old as himself, and, therefore, not his son—to die, but who was invested with immortality and could not die, to atone for sins that had never been committed by people who were not then born, and who could not, therefore, have been guilty of any sin. As a conclusion to the whole scheme, this all-merciful God prepared a hell, containing material fire of brimstone, to burn the immaterial souls of all persons who should fail to believe the truth, justice, and necessity of this jumble of cruelty and absurdity.

We now propose to show that this "sublime scheme of redemption" is not only illogical, but that it was unnecessary, supremely unjust, inconsistent, and has been an utter failure in achieving its avowed object.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be continued.)

He is nearer to truth who believes nothing than he who believes what is wrong.—*Sir W. Lawrence, "Lectures on Physiology."*

GOD'S GOODNESS.

WE were told that there is a purpose in suffering. Easy words to utter ! but they carry no balm of consolation to my mind. I have witnessed suffering : I have felt a little, and witnessed much. This suffering is a grim fact. You say there is a purpose in it. Tell us what you mean by a purpose. A purpose must have some sort of explanation. Do not call it a purpose unless you can give us some indication of what the purpose is. The general theory is that suffering is for the education, and chiefly the moral education, of the race. Ah, but it gets distributed in the wrong way. And there comes a time when suffering, instead of helping you, thrusts you down, degrades you, brings you to impotence, abjectness, and despair. If the suffering is for education in ethics, how is it that the very poorest, who, by the hard labor of their lives, are under less temptation than the idle or luxurious, get by far the most of it, while the idle and luxurious frequently go scot free ? I see no purpose in this at all. Why, we actually band ourselves together to abolish or diminish the very suffering which you say is so beautifully designed. God has a purpose in inflicting it, and we put the sufferers into a place we call a hospital, and we say to the men of science "fight it." We appoint nurses, and we say to them "fight it." We ask the public at large to find the money to assist in doing away with it. God is sending the suffering for moral purposes, and we are striving to abolish it, and so to prevent the ethical education which you say God intends by his inflictions.

God, we are told, has a right to take the life he sends. For the sake of argument I will not impugn that. There is no time to discuss it. But, assuming that God has the right to take life, let us see how it works out. Under the law we have a right to take life. A criminal is tried and sentenced to execution. But society insists that, if he is to be killed, he shall be killed in the most painless manner possible. We insist that the hanging shall be done with the utmost dispatch. In America they are trying whether electricity is not even less painful than hanging. In short, although we must (as we say) kill (though I doubt if anybody has that right), still, if we must kill, we are refined enough to say we must kill swiftly and painlessly. But that is not God's method ; what we see in nature is not *swift* killing ; it is *slow* killing. When man is killed by "the act of God," it is often done very slowly ; not in a moment as by the hangman's noose or by electrocution. A lingering disease comes on and kills him week by week, month by month, and year by year. It is an agonising form of cruelty. If God has the right to take life, I deny that he has the right to take it in that way. If life must be taken, it should be taken swiftly and painlessly. All this cruelty in nature, all this killing of human beings by slow disease and long agony, gives the lie to the statement that your God is a being of infinite kindness and love.

G. W. FOOTE.

(In the Foote-Lee debate on "Theism or Atheism : Which is the More Reasonable ?")

GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

THE Jews are God's chosen race. They are sanctified and circumcised, bearing in their bodies the signs of the divine favor. God always had peculiar methods of dealing with his favorites. He blessed Abraham, and with him his posterity. Yet in three generations they were in bondage in Egypt for 430 years—a period of which their historians scrupulously tell us nothing. Their exodus was performed amid many discomforts, and they spent forty years in a little wilderness which they ought to have traversed in as many days, being dependent on miracles for their sustenance, and having fiery serpents to plague them. They were oppressed under their kings, and for the best part of their time have been slaves under Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Syrians, and Romans. Their struggles for independence were quenched in blood. Their Zion was taken from them, and they have been wanderers upon the earth, despised, hated, persecuted, and plundered by the nations among whom they have sought refuge. Archdeacon Jortin says that "the account of the Jews who have been plundered, sent naked into banishment, starved, tortured, left to perish in prisons, hanged and burnt by Christians, would fill many volumes." If God thus serves his chosen people, what better than hell can be the expectation of the non-elect ?

CELSUS.

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ACID DROPS.

THERE is no end to the fraudulent effrontery of the Roman Catholic Church. It is up to any dodge to raise money, or to increase its hold over the superstitious multitude—which is much the same thing in the end. The latest dodge is the "discovery" by Father Esbasch, superior of the French Seminary in Rome, of the ruins of the house inhabited by the Virgin Mary (mother of seven or eight children) after the ascension of Jesus Christ. It is not at Jerusalem, but about three miles from Ephesus, where Mary is said to have died, or whence she is even said to have been translated to heaven. Of course it is very difficult, if not impossible, to prove that Mary did *not* live there; so the ruins will probably be worked for all they are worth.

The Pope and the cardinals are reported to be very much interested in this "discovery." Of course they are. Every new place of pilgrimage keeps up Catholic enthusiasm and brings grist to the Church mills.

Last Monday evening a man was loitering about Nursery-row, Walworth. He knocked at the door of a house and asked the boy who opened it whether his mother and father were in. The boy sharply asked what he wanted to know for. The man said he wanted to "preach the Gospel" to them. When the police arrested him they found on him seven spoons, two purses, a bundle of wire, and a jemmy. This is not the first time the gospel has been found in bad company.

The Rev. Frank M. Goodchild writes in the *Arena* on "The Social Evil in Philadelphia." He says: "The most singular anomalies are sometimes discovered. In one case the madame of an establishment taught a Sunday-school class while at the same time she carried on her nefarious trade. The madames are often pious; markedly so. In one of the best houses of the city, beside the piano and organ there is a music-box in the parlor. It plays nothing but hymns—'Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed,' 'Rock of Ages,' 'Jesus Lover of My Soul,' 'Coronation,' 'Ring the Bells of Heaven,' and so on. If you inquire, you will find that this pious music-box plays only on Sunday evenings. In another house the madame places religious books on the tables on Sundays, as she says she likes her girls to have good Sabbath reading."

The London correspondent of the New York *Sun*, writing on the Sunday question, says: "But for the Sunday saloons the Thames would be clogged with corpses every Monday morning, and the madhouses of England could not contain the poor creatures who would fall victims to the Sunday mania. It is not hypocrisy, therefore, or a failure to appreciate the virtues of temperance, which permits the British people to throng the public bars on Sunday. It is a simple matter of self-preservation for the benefit of the body politic."

The Archbishop of Canterbury is fond of riding, and he generally, before starting, takes a "little drop of Scotch." At Addington Palace are ranges of hot-houses where many orchids are reared, afterwards, we understand, sold at auction rooms in Cheapside and Covent Garden. We are told the workers in the nursery receive, on the average, a wage of 15s. weekly. Is it the fact that the Archbishop closes the park at Addington against the public? Further, are some of the finest trees being cut down and being sold? We await the Archbishop's reply.—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

At several of the Ritualistic churches they have what they call the "Children's Eucharist." Not that the children take the Eucharist. Oh dear, no! They attend the communion service while the priest takes the eucharist. This is a sly, tricky way of introducing the Catholic mass, which, according to Mr. Augustine Birrell, is the main distinction between Catholics and Protestants. Our Romanising Ritualists are fast obliterating all distinctions.

The long-suffering Anglican laity are showing some signs of resistance to priestly intolerance, which, in many parishes, is intolerable. At the meeting of the House of Laymen for the Province of York Mr. T. C. Horsfall moved a resolution affirming the desirability of creating in every parish a Church Council, the object of which shall be to curtail "the autocracy of the clergy."

"A Catholic Convert from Ritualism" writes to the *Cambridge Chronicle*, endorsing the statement of the Rev. T. H. Sparshott that "Ritualism is the highway to Rome," as, he says, "within the last few months I and six of my friends have been brought through the imitation of Catholicism to its reality. Two of the number were Anglican clergymen of the most advanced type."

At the burial of a child who had been killed by being run over at Amington, near Tamworth, the scholars of the Methodist Sunday-school followed. On arriving at the church gate the officiating clergyman refused them admittance, and ordered a policeman to keep the children out. Of such are the kingdom of heaven.

A very grave question has arisen at Blackburn. At the Easter Vestry meeting there on Tuesday a churchwarden gravely announced the resignation of the organist, who had resigned to take a place where he could play more elaborate tunes. This, in the churchwarden's view, was for the organist to lose the value of his soul. Their next organist, proceeded the churchwarden, must be "an out-and-out Christian." This, however, was a proposal which did not find universal acceptance. Another churchwarden thought that organists were, as a rule, not Christians, and he thought "a well-educated musical man was not the man for a Christian place of worship." Whether this means that the character of the music would have such an effect on the well-educated organist as to put his Christianity in peril, or that it is impossible, at one and the same time, to be a good organist and a good Christian, we do not know. If the latter theory is correct, we shall have to reconstruct our theories of heaven, if it is to be quite free from the musically well-educated.—*Westminster Gazette.*

St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Paddington, had a windfall on Easter Eve. £2,000 was placed in the offertory by an anonymous donor to pay off the church debt. The next day a *Te Deum* of thanksgiving was sung for the munificent gift. Perhaps the party who gave that £2,000 reflects that he is not anonymous to God, and counts on a certain reward hereafter. Freethinkers, of course, are not amenable to such motives; if they give to Freethought, they must give quite disinterestedly. However, if there should be a Freethinker able and willing to imitate that anonymous Christian's example, he will earn the gratitude of the National Secular Society, with or without a reserved seat in heaven.

Our heathen Brother Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, is not much attracted by Spiritism. He says: "I would much rather be dead, and stay dead—very dead, than to be in some kind of a place where my ghost would be liable to be called up to talk to a 'mejum' in bad grammar, so that he or she could get fifty cents a head from a lot of nincompoops. I would rather be like Billy Pringle's pig.

> When he lived he lived in clover;
> When he died he died all over."

Brother Moore is deficient in reverence for humbug. He says he objects to people "being told that their loved parents and children and friends are burning in everlasting hell because they do not believe that God was born with a Jew nose on him 1,896 years ago, out of a woman whose own husband did not believe in her chastity."

According to Dr. J. E. Brecht, superintendent of the Florida Indians, the Seminoles have a peculiar religion. They say that the white man's God is the same as their God. The father they call "Fanshockohomachey," and the son "Chockatomassee." They believe that there is a future state, but call death "the big sleep." They think that Christ's coming took place in Georgia, and that a great assemblage came to a mountain to hear him. The mountain split in twain, and one people slided northward and the other southward. They do not pray, but, as they express it, "think with God." The Indians are a truthful people. They claim that before the white men came they did not know how to lie; but, since they taught them how, they once in a while resort to deception, though liars among them are held in utter contempt. Dr. Brecht believes that they are the soundest, cleanest people, morally, mentally, and physically, on the face of the earth to-day.

The Catholics are making strenuous endeavors to recover lost ground in Italy. They are founding fresh newspapers, and the priests everywhere offer themselves as authorised teachers in the schools. The mass of the people are only half educated, and their position in this respect will not be improved if the priests can help it.

It is an old story that when Christianity and civilisation are introduced to savages they die out. The Andaman Islands afford no exception. The death-rate there is now higher than the birth-rate. The inhabitants have acquired a Christian taste for whisky. Homes having been established for their benefit by missionary influence, those accommodated at these institutions are fat and lazy, spending days together in singing, dancing, and feasting.

Miss Mary Kingsley, a niece of the late Canon Kingsley, the famous author, having returned safely from exciting adventures in West Africa, has been interviewed by a representative of the *Westminster Gazette*. She has a very low opinion of the natives whom the missionaries convert to

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Christianity. This is what she says: "I have had good opportunity of judging. The result of the missionary influence is often to deprive the native of practical deterrents furnished by his fetish-worship, putting in their place the doctrine of repentance, which he interprets conveniently to himself. Before his so-called conversion he believed that if he did certain things he would inevitably 'swell up and burst,' so he usually refrained. The converted native accepts the doctrine of salvation by repentance, but puts off the painful process as long as possible. I've several times been in tight places with these converts. They simply lay on their stomachs howling for forgiveness, leaving me and their heathen brethren to stride over their prostrate bodies and devise means for saving the lives of the party."

Miss Kingsley was asked to what she attributed the failure of Evangelical effort, and this is her reply: "Well, the English Protestant Churches will accept no sort of compromise. They insist upon clothes, teetotalism, and monogamy, and a great deal of nonsense is talked on these subjects. Now, Mohammedanism is gaining ground fast, and produces good results. The Roman Catholic methods, too, are more rational and successful. They accept conditions, and proceed more gradually. The spirit of too much of the Christian teaching is well expressed in a hymn I happened to see last night. The refrain is this:—

> No, nothing to do till you're saved from your sins;
> *Then* the power of doing good only begins.

The negro is inclined to buy his salvation as cheaply as possible."

With respect to the alleged drunkenness of the natives Miss Kingsley says: "I fear the missionaries misrepresent the facts in order to account for their failures." Once, when staying with some missionaries, she heard a tremendous row going on in the village, and the missionaries attributed it all to drink; but, on going to see for herself, she found the people enjoying themselves in an innocent way, and there was no drunkenness at all.

The *Methodist Times* has discovered the true basis of morality. Referring to the Church party and the friends in general of the new Education Bill, it says that "they actually wish to destroy all those schools in which the cardinal verities of the Christian faith—the revelation of God in Christ, His Divinity, His Sacrifice, the Cross, His Resurrection, His Ascension, and His gift of the Holy Spirit—are taught reverently as great historic truths, and as the foundation of morality and true religion."

Now, "true religion" may or may not rest on these Christian doctrines and statements, but to say that "morality" rests on them is professional humbug. Morality existed before Christianity; it cannot, therefore, be the effect of Christianity, nor can Christianity be in any sense its foundation. For our part, we venture to think that if all the men of God were called "home," and religious squabbles banished from the world, there would be far more morality in human life than there is at present.

Up to the present time the only woman who has ever dared to set foot in the cloistered precincts of the Grand Trappe Monastery, at Soligni, in France, was Queen Marie Amelia. After her visit, so the story runs, the monks repaved the cloisters through which she had passed, considering that their abode had been desecrated by the feet of even a royal lady. But now a new church is about to be consecrated there, and for the nine days between August 30 and September 8 persons of both sexes are to be permitted to visit the sacred enclosures of the monks.

The Scotch Archbishop Foreman, in the sixteenth century, was so poor a Latin scholar that, when he was obliged to visit Rome, he found great difficulty in conforming to some of the customs of the Pope's table, to which he was invited. Etiquette required that the Scotch bishop should take part in uttering a Latin benediction over the repast, and the illiterate guest had carefully committed to memory what he believed to be the orthodox form of words. He began with his "Benedicite," expecting the cardinals to respond with "Dominus"; but they replying "Deus" (Italian fashion) so confused the good bishop that he forgot his carefully-conned phrases, and, "in good broad Scotch," said: "To the Devil I give you all, false cardinals," to which devout aspiration Pope and cardinals, who understood only their own language, piously replied: "Amen."

"The Companions of St. John," according to the *Times*, is a secret society founded at Cambridge by the Rev. Ernest John Heriz-Smith. Its object is the spread of High Church doctrines. Every candidate for admission has his hands tied and his eyes bandaged—which is the usual condition of persons under the power of religion; he has then to kneel at a table, and takes an oath to obey the head of the society. The society itself has a head, but the head of the society cannot have much head himself.

One of the most worshipped of saints in Mexico is a comparatively new one—St. Expedito. It is doubtful if the saint any more represents a real person than did the goddess Fever. The office of the saint is to expedite things, and he is invoked in desperate cases. So popular had his worship become, threatening to displace that of more generally recognised saints, that the Archbishop of Guadalajara has prohibited placing his image in churches.

The bones of eleven thousand virgins, all living at the same time, are said to be preserved in Cologne Cathedral. Jones says: "I shall not travel to see them. I can see all the virgins' bones I wish to see at full dress parties."

The Rev. T. B. Hargrove, pastor of the Methodist Church at Coldwater, Missouri, dropped dead in his pulpit while exhorting his congregation to believe.

Mrs. Minnie L. Cummings tells a sad tale, in the first number of the *Protector*, of a woman who, falling into the hands of a set of pietists, became crazed on the subject of religion. Continually prayed for, her one question to any who spoke to her was this: "Do you think I will go to hell?" Her husband in vain tried to remove her from their influence. When a child was born she would not suckle it, lest it should inherit her sins, and, as a consequence, the poor babe died; and she, regarding its death as a punishment for her sins, became completely insane.

"H. A. B." writes to the *Times* that at Brighton "a clergyman refused to accept a girl as candidate for confirmation because she refused to resort to the confessional."

Religion always combines easily with hypocrisy. Japan will commemorate its victory over China by erecting at Kioto a gigantic statue of Buddha, 120 feet high, out of cannon captured in the war. It will cost one million yen. Buddha is even more emphatically the God of peace and goodwill than Jesus Christ.

Andrew D. White, ex-United States minister to Russia and at present a member of the Venezuelan commission, said recently: "Americans who are interested in foreign missions should bear in mind one thing—that, if the Czar takes possession of Armenia, all American and other foreign missionary work in that country must cease; for, while Russia claims to be especially tolerant towards all religions, she allows no proselyting between them, nor does she allow clergy of outside nations to come into the country without special permit. So far is this doctrine carried out that I recall one case when an American missionary to Persia was not allowed to pass through southern Russia in order to reach the district to which he was sent."

The wife of the Rev. Dr. Gunning, of Brooklyn, has procured a separation from him on the ground of cruel and inhuman treatment.

The clericals preach, "Owe no man anything," and nearly all the churches and chapels are in debt. According to the *Independent*, it is a bad case with the American Missionary Society. The Methodist Missionary Society is $239,000 in arrears; the Presbyterian Home Mission Board is burdened by a sum almost as great; the American Baptist Missionary Union owes $190,000; the Presbyterian Foreign Board, $175,000; the American Board, $115,000; the Baptist Home Missionary Society, $102,000; the Methodist Episcopal Church, south, $109,000.

The funds for missionary purposes are likely to continue falling off as people become acquainted with the facts as to the futility of missions. If the almost universal testimony of intelligent, veracious travellers in so-called heathen lands is to be taken for anything, the whole missionary system in China, Japan, Turkey, and farther India is a weak and unprofitable farce. It gives, it is true, place, support, and something of a position to a considerable number of men and women, who are, to a greater or less extent, zealots in the cause; but that it has displaced the religion of Confucius, of Buddha, or of Mohammed to any appreciable extent by the religion of Christ there is little reason to believe.

The latest Paris sensation has been the appearance of the angel Gabriel in the Rue Paradis. At least, a young lady resides there, Mdlle. Couesdon, who pretends to be in constant communication with Gabe. So many people go to see her that the landlord tried to summarily eject the family, but the tribunal was not sure that the annoyance caused by the "Angel Gabriel" came within the meaning of the lease. There was nothing contrary to good manners or respectability in an angelic visitation.

Zola went to see Mdlle. Couesdon. She fell into a trance

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at his desire, and the "Angel Gabriel" spoke through her mouth; but he did not seem to know in the least that he had for an interlocutor the author of *Lourdes*. He seemed to think M. Zola a good Catholic—which he is not—congratulated him on going regularly to Mass, and enjoined him to give more time to pious thoughts, prayers, and readings. Most of what he said would apply just as well to anyone else as to M. Zola. That novelist thinks that Mdlle. Couesdon has been influenced by all the talk there was about Joan of Arc a few years ago, and now apparently fancies she has a mission like Joan. The girl is nice looking. Her age is twenty-three. "Gabriel" is rather an ominous name for an angel who visits a young lady.

Dr. Conan Doyle is writing some very interesting letters from Egypt in the *Westminster Gazette*, from one of which we extract the following passage on Mohammedans and Mohammedanism: "Be the cause what it may, there is no religion which fills its devotees so completely with the conviction of truth as does the creed of Mohammed. They are eager to give their lives for it in war, and, what is more difficult, they are scrupulous in times of peace to fulfil its exacting and most inconvenient ritual. A creed which can induce its devotees to absolutely fast from food and drink from sunrise to sunset for a month on end in every year must be a very real one to those who profess it. As to the vices of Mohammedanism, it is interesting to consider how far lust and cruelty are matters of climate rather than of creed. A religion which produces cities which contain neither drunkards nor harlots is certainly worthy of graver consideration than is usually given to it."

The *Methodist Times* (Price Hughes's paper) doesn't like the Sunday opening of our national museums and galleries. Of course not. Nobody expected it would. But why does it write nonsense about the "handful of people who visit them"? Did it suppose that all London would go on the same Sunday? Nearly 7,000 people visited South Kensington last Sunday—only 300 less than on the first (Easter) Sunday. Certainly it doesn't seem right that Methodist ministers should be able to deprive these people of their pleasure, and the nation has now recognised this. That is why the good, tolerant Methodist ministers are weeping and gnashing their teeth.

Mr. Reader Harris, an Exeter Hall evangelist, says that "after a century of missionary activity there are 198,000,000 more unconverted heathen than there were in 1800." This is a fine result for a religion claiming God for its author and the sole monopoly of divine truth.

During a gale last Monday a quantity of scaffolding erected round the steeple of the parish church at Lydney, Gloucestershire, was blown on the roof of the church, doing very great damage.

The Easter vestry meeting at Hoo-street, Werburgh, Kent, was characterised by prolonged squabbles with the vicar, the Rev. P. G. Benson, against whom a petition had been presented to the Bishop. The vicar said the Bishop had sent him a private letter which amounted to this: "Dear Mr. Benson, you are quite right—only don't tell anybody I told you so." The people's warden, Mr. Stunt, resigned, and several of the vestry indicated that they should not continue to pay church rates.

Archdeacon Wilson, the vicar of Rochdale, illustrates the new attitude of the broader-minded clergy in face of Freethought criticism. Speaking of the resurrection in an address to men, he is reported as saying: "Honesty compelled him to admit that to one who, without any predisposition to faith in Christ, and with a strong sense of the improbability of a resurrection, examined this as a purely historical question, the evidence was insufficient. He was bound by intellectual honesty to admit that the fact was unproven on purely historical and critical grounds." He went on to say that the evidence was strong. But what does the Archdeacon mean by strong evidence? and what use is it if it is insufficient for those without a predisposition to faith?

Another latitudinarian and lay divine is the Rev. R. F. Horton, who has been speaking against the supposed inerrancy of Scripture. He is reported as saying: "If in reading the Bible you came across sentiments of fierce retaliation or deeds of savage bloodthirstiness, against which a man of ordinary morality might naturally revolt, it was your duty to justify these sentiments because they were the Word of God, and to find excuses for the deeds because they were recorded without censure in the Word of God. You were not allowed to argue that because the sentiment was not godly it could not come from God, or because the deed was un-Christian it could not be approved by God. That was treated as presumption, as judging God, as setting up the intellect against its Maker." Mr. Horton ridiculed this state of mind. But will he tell us what is the use of a revelation which errs so notably in regard to the very character of God, and will he further inform us how he distinguishes between what he believes to be revelation and what he believes to be error?

Herbert C. Buck, president of the Society of Christian Endeavor, at Fort Wayne, has been captured by the police. The telegram says: "Only last night Buck was an enthusiastic speaker at the church prayer-meeting, and it is supposed was deliberately planning the burglary while his Christian associates were offering prayer.....He was an exemplary Christian, and took an active part in church socials and charity work."

All the World, the monthly organ of the Salvation Army, in its April issue gives a curious tale about Bradlaugh. Adjutant Ozanne states that at Dukinfield "Bradlaugh was accompanied by a number of rough men whose duty it was to sing 'Rule Britannia' whenever there was any opposition from the bystanders." Adjutant Ozanne's hero, Seth, however, contrived to get in the words, "You can sing 'Britannia' till Christmas, but you shan't speak against my Savior." The idea of Mr. Bradlaugh having a chorus to drown opposition is rather rich. The writer evidently thinks that he needed to take a leaf out of the tactics of the Salvation Army.

Tit-Bits reassures a correspondent whose faith in the Jonah story has been shaken. There are whales, it says, that *can* swallow a man; but it does not give any authority for the statement. When it is given, the correspondent should ask *Tit-Bits* whether it is scientifically possible for a man (supposing him swallowed) to subsist for three days and nights in a whale's intestines.

If Christians were wise, they would not try to explain their miracles. A miracle explained ceases to be a miracle.

An astrologer predicted the death of Queen Victoria in December last. As the event did not materialise, he now tells the world the course of Fate was changed by prayer. Prayer has wondrous powers if charlatans can be believed.

In the *Guardian* (April 8) Canon Driver writes on the nebulous old Melchisedek, who, according to the veracious epistle to the Hebrews, was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." The Rev. A. H. Sayce identifies this mythical gentleman with Ebed Tob, king of Jerusalem. But, says Canon Driver, all his inferences "rest upon a most insecure and precarious foundation"; and, adds the Canon, "he has failed to show that the monuments corroborate the narrative of Genesis xiv. in any single particular which had been questioned by the critics."

A good old story on the confessional may be new to some of our readers. In a clerical gathering a priest remarked that it was curious that the very first person he confessed was a murderer. Shortly after a venerable ecclesiastical dignitary entered. "I am so pleased to meet Father Blank," said he; "do you know I was the very first person who confessed to him after he was ordained?"

In a visitation recently held by the Bishop of Lucknow he called attention to the growing irreligiousness of the upper classes among the Europeans in his diocese. Men of moral and philanthropic excellence, he said, were neglecting public worship. In India Europeans learn the worth of other religions than Christianity, and usually lose the prejudice that it alone has the monopoly of worth. Those most brought into contact with the natives frequently become Freethinkers.

The Missionary's Awful Fate.

He sailed away to the Fiji Isles,
  But he was not slain on the shore,
Nor fattened ahead for a cannibal spread
  As others had been before;
But he met with a far more terrible fate
  Than those who had lost their lives,
For the chieftain grim took a fancy to him,
  And gave him a hundred wives.

Tyrants, knowing full well that their power arises from ignorance, are most careful in maintaining it, for to overthrow all their card-castles but a breath of reason is necessary. They protect superstition, because superstition stultifies men, and takes away their courage and energy. So long as his head is filled with tales of angels, ghosts, and images of the Devil and hell, he will have no thought of the real hell—the hell of slavery. Hence, the greatest crime, in the eyes of despots, is to preach truth and to talk reason. —*Hébert.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 19, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly, W., at 7.30, "Tolstoi and Jesus Christ."

April 26, St. James's Hall, Piccadilly.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—May 3 and 4, Birmingham; 10 and 17, Plymouth. June 7, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

A. G Levett.—Thanks. Always glad to receive good jokes.

N.S.S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: H. Pottinger, 2s. 6d.

S. R. Thompson.—Hope you will be able to revive the Rochdale Branch. In any case, you deserve credit for your zeal.

Shilling Month (for Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme).—J. Barry, 5s. Per R. Forder: P. Gibson, 1s.; J. Hicks, 1s.; J. Harvey, 1s.; Jack and Jim, 2s.; C. Deane, 1s.; Mrs. Deane, 1s.; T. Dundar Harris, 2s.; per Mr. Thompson, 2s.; J. F. Finn, 10s.; W. Tipper, 2s.; J. Langford, 5s.; A. Brown and Two Friends, 2s. 6d.; J. Carter, 1s. Collected at Mr. Watts's lecture at Stanley, 20s.; J. Wildman, 1s.; W. Lancaster, 1s.; V. Page, 1s.

J. G. Briggs.—Whatever date Mr. Wilson Barrett put on his playbills of *The Sign of the Cross* in the provinces, the date on the playbill we obtained at the Lyric Theatre, London, is A.D. 64. The fifteenth verse of Acts xxviii. has not been overlooked. It is referred to in our pamphlet, the publication of which is postponed till next Wednesday.

J. Nicholl.—Glad to hear you like our "Book Chat." The magazine, *Progress*, edited by Mr. Foote some years ago, could only be obtained now in the second-hand market. Perhaps you might hear of a copy for sale by applying to Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

J. G. Dobson (Stockton-on-Tees) writes: "We have had two more good lectures from Mr. Watts under your grand scheme, and both were very successful, the collections nearly covering the local expenses. There was a lot of opposition, and Mr. Watts's masterly replies have been the topic of conversation ever since."

Daniel Baker, our veteran Birmingham friend, sends £2, being his subscription for March and April to the President's lecture scheme. Mr. Baker is subscribing £1 per month during 1896.

E. H.—(1) Instinct and reason are too large a subject to be dealt with in this column. It is absurd, however, to say that the lower animals do not reason. (2) The object of *Bible Romances* was not to answer Christian objections, but to present the absurd and impossible (and therefore romantic) side of the Bible narratives.

G. Cruddas.—See "Sugar Plums." We are not aware that Mr. Bradlaugh ever refused to debate with Dr. A. J. Harrison. To our knowledge, he debated with that gentleman twice. We do not think they ever met in public discussion after Mr. Foote's debate with Dr. Harrison in 1877.

V. Page.—Mr. Foote reckons himself all right now, though he means for some time yet to be extra careful of his health.

P. Shadwell (Hull).—You are too far behind the fair. The Ballard incident is now stale.

A. H. Hawke.—We don't believe Guizot ever said anything of the kind, but, of course, we cannot prove a negative.

Pyrites.—Mr. B. Dobell, bookseller, Charing Cross-road, London, W. Shall appear.

A. B. Moss.—We cannot understand why that correspondent troubles you with such communications, especially as he is a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, and is therefore in a position to know that the fact he wishes you to explain is no fact at all. He sent us a long letter of rumors and complaints a few weeks ago, and when we asked him pointedly *who* had poured all that stuff into his ear, he thought it best to let the subject drop.

Papers Received.—Rochester and Chatham Journal—Chat—Nya Sanningar—Rochdale Observer—Crescent—Baltimore Herald—Echo—Sun—Twentieth Century—Progressive Thinker—Clarion—Presbyterian—Lancashire Daily Post—Two Worlds—Liberty—Liberator—Secular Thought—Metaphysical Magazine—Truth-seeker.

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

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

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

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

London friends will note that Mr. Foote is delivering two more lectures at St. James's Hall. His subject this evening (April 19) is "Tolstoi and Jesus Christ." The great Russian writer is made much of in Christian Socialist circles, and his teachings find great favor with the *Daily Chronicle*. This new form of Christism needs criticism from the Freethought standpoint, and the lecture should be interesting to Freethinkers and Christians alike. Next Sunday's (April 26) lecture will be on "The Irreligion of Shakespeare," with copious references to, and extracts from, the principal plays.

Less than a shilling is not allowed to be charged for tickets at St. James's Hall. The seats are priced at one shilling and two shillings, but a ticket for both lectures can be purchased for 1s. 6d. or 3s. Those who have not procured tickets before the meeting will be told where to obtain one at the Regent-street entrance.

Piccadilly-circus is easily accessible from all parts of London, and the metropolitan Freethinkers should make an effort to crowd the Banqueting Hall on both occasions. Outside advertisement of these meetings is secured through the leading newspapers. Of course the expenses are very heavy, and cannot be covered without a good sale of tickets.

Mr. Charles Watts takes the chair at Mr. Foote's lecture at St. James's Hall this evening (April 19).

Mr. Foote has engaged a West-end hall for regular Sunday evening lectures for six months, and of course the meetings will be continued there or elsewhere after the expiration of that period. Arrangements are being made for taking money at the doors, Mr. Foote giving the proprietor a legal indemnity against any action that may be taken in consequence. Fuller details will be given in due course. The meetings will commence at the end of May.

Mr. Foote lectured in the Secular Hall, New Brompton, on Sunday evening, and is none the worse for the effort. The hall was filled with a most enthusiastic audience, and the lecture appeared to be very highly relished. Opposition was invited, but none was offered. The Christian Evidence people got up a rival meeting, which probably drew off the more zealous Christians who might otherwise have tackled "the infidel." It should be added that the collection taken up was the largest on record at New Brompton, and was very gratifying to the committee, who had of course incurred extra expenses on this occasion.

Mr. Boorman, at whose house Mr. Foote took tea, naturally told the President as much as possible about the condition of the Branch. Matters are going on very satisfactorily. The Sunday-school flourishes, Sunday evening meetings are excellent, and the debt upon the hall is being gradually cleared off. Of course, the officers and committee have to work hard, but they are well repaid by the success of the movement, which is recognised as a force to be counted with in the locality.

The experience of the Chatham Branch confirms the view that Freethought has everything to gain by public debates, and explains the reluctance of the Christian Evidence Society to promote such encounters. A year ago Mr. Foote debated with the Rev. A. J. Waldron at New Brompton on the question of the Resurrection. It is not reported that any Freethinker has turned Christian in consequence of that debate, but it has been the means of bringing over several Christians to Freethought—not as mere sympathisers with Freethought, but as members of the Chatham Branch of the National Secular Society.

Last week Mr. Charles Watts had three capital audiences at Stockton, Middlesbro', and Stanley, where he lectured under Mr. Foote's scheme. On Sunday he concluded his course of six lectures at South Shields. In our next issue Mr. Watts will give an account of his visit to the north.

Mr. George Cruddas, writing from Stanley, where Mr. Watts recently addressed a meeting of five hundred people under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, says that the friends there regard the scheme as "the best idea ever propounded for propagating and organising Freethought." Mr. Watts was "in splendid form," and was listened to "with rapt attention." The Stanley friends are anxious to hear Mr. Foote when he visits the Tyneside again, and they shall certainly have an opportunity.

Mr. A. B. Moss delivered two open-air lectures to large audiences on Sunday. The afternoon lecture was given in Victoria Park. Some boisterous Christians were present

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but were kept in check by an inspector and two constables. Mr. Moss got through his lecture all right, in spite of interruptions. When the time came for opposition, Providence sent down the rain and stopped the defence of the Bible.

Mr. Heaford has returned from Scotland, where he has been addressing meetings (among others) under the President's Lecture Scheme. Mr. Gilmour will give an account of this tour. Meanwhile we may state that Mr. Heaford's meetings were all orderly and mostly very well attended, and the attitude of the audiences was invariably one of sympathy.

Mr. S. R. Thompson is trying to revive Freethought propaganda in Rochdale. He delivers two open-air lectures to-day (April 19) in the Town Hall Square, at 11 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon. At 4.30 there will be a meeting in No. 2 Board Room, Co-operative Buildings, Toad-lane, for the purpose of re-forming the N.S.S. Branch. We hope this meeting will be well attended. Perhaps a visit from Mr. Cohen could be arranged while he is in the district.

$100 was offered to Dr. Rusk, of the Church Militant, Chicago, for a box to hear Ingersoll lecture there on April 12. Ingersoll wrote to Rusk: "Now, my dear friend, be sure and do nothing that will give you trouble. If I speak, I must give my honest thought; but this will be done with perfect kindness. I have no objection to you asking an admission fee. That is for you to decide, but I want nothing for myself." We should think other ministers might be glad to have "our Bob" on these terms.

This Dr. Rusk seems a very decent fellow. He has recently been lecturing on the Mormons, among whom he has lived. He said: "Theirs is the only religion which compels every man to own his own home. Their religion teaches that no man has a right to own one more acre of land than he can use—a great lesson of unselfishness. They found a desert and made it a paradise.'

We are pleased to notice from *Nya Sanningar* that a strong committee has been formed for the erection of a monument in memory of Victor E. Lennstrand, the Swedish martyr for Freethought.

Scotland no longer stands where it did with regard to the Sabbath. Glasgow has long had Sunday tramways, and the Town Council has now authorised the opening of the public baths for four hours on Sunday mornings all the year round. At Haddington the Bowling Club is to be open on Sunday afternoons, and the Dundee United Presbyterian Presbytery are deploring the non-observance of the Sabbath, and declaring that Saturday football playing leads to Sunday travelling and non-attendance at church.

Bethnal Green Museum and South Kensington Museums, including the Art Galleries, Science, and Indian Museums, are now open on Sundays from two till dusk. It is to be hoped the public will take full advantage of this, or otherwise the Sabbatarian party will urge that Sunday opening is undesired.

De Dageraad (April) has a notable article on "God-Worship and Devil-Worship," by G. van Beerse, who illustrates, by the case of exorcism by Father Aurelianus at Wemding in 1891, the fact that the active agency of the Devil is still a cardinal belief in the Catholic Church.

Mr. Herman Cohen, writing in the *Fortnightly* on "The Modern Jew and the New Judaism," urges that Judaism to-day is a species of materialism. "But this is not the antithesis of idealism; it is rather a form of it." He says: "We believe that the old classical Biblical faiths have been dead for centuries, and the people now worship, but do not pray."

Nelson Secularists should support Mr. James Greaves as a School Board candidate. He is the only one in favor of Secular Education. Mr. Greaves is a Freethinker.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake has entered upon his eightieth year. He was seventy-nine on Monday. Mr. Holyoake enjoys fairly good health, and his pen is as active as ever. When we first knew him he was thought to be almost dying, and he has been more or less a dying man ever since; but somehow or other he goes to funeral after funeral of his robuster friends, and flourishes himself while the grass is growing rankly over their graves. Several years ago Mr. Holyoake's friends bought him an annuity, which at least frees him from financial worry, and he says it would be shabby if he did not gratify them by living as long as possible.

Owing to press of other matter, our special article on the new Education Bill stands over till next week. It will occupy several columns of the *Freethinker*.

PROVIDENCE.

TIGHTLY to a post they bound him,
Out upon the furrowed sand;
Doomed to death by those around him,
Waiting on the moaning strand.

Now the tide has reached his middle;
Soon he'll be o'erwhelmed and dead:
All because the cosmic riddle
Puzzles every thinking head.

He had guessed an answer to it,
Though the priest for all men thinks;
So the Church, as soon's she knew it,
Clutched him, like the fabled sphinx.

Will the moon and gravitation
All his tearful pray'rs deride?
Or will Heav'n vouchsafe salvation,
Holding back the rising tide?

Will the sun's and moon's attractions,
For a time, be neutralised,
Through some heav'nly counteractions,
By the Lord of Heav'n devised?

Hark! a shout in volume growing!
God of Boothites! what a din!
See! the tide has ceased its flowing,
Scarcely reaching to his chin!

God, said some, has heard his pleading;
Heav'n its mighty pow'r displays;
Lo! the tide is now receding;
God has checked it; sound his praise!

"Fools! your triumph is a cheap one!"
Roared a priest with spiteful eyes;
"We forgot, the tide's a neap one;
Heads must dip if tides won't rise!"

"Seize him! if beneaped, and bend him
Down beneath the water's swell;
Now, let's see! I thought we'd end him!
God be praised! he's now in hell!"

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Bunco-steerers.

The New York *Tribune* says: "John L. Sullivan said the other day in San Francisco: 'I travelled with Sankey, the evangelist, recently, and I had a bit of argument with him on the subject of pugilism *versus* the pulpit. He said a good many things that I couldn't contradict, and I guess I got back at him. I said to him: "Now, Mr. Sankey, we all know you're sincere, but don't you think that even in your game there are a lot of bunco-steerers?" Well, sir, he laughed and took it good-naturedly, but I noticed he did not come back at me with a general denial.'" The term "bunco-steerers," as applied to the ministry, is not a bad fit. A bunco-steerer, as we understand it, is one who takes the stranger in and introduces him to some game of chance or some proposition offering, apparently, large returns from a small investment, but in the end the stranger finds himself fleeced. No houses and lots promised by this class of sharpers were ever more mythical than the heavenly mansions promised by the clergy to those who take stock in religion and the Church.—*Truthseeker*.

CHILDREN'S PARTY.—Mr. Casey, 2s.; Mrs. Casey, 2s.; per Mr. Leate, 11s.; Battersea Branch, 1s.; T. D. Harris, 6d.; F. Wilson, 1s.; per Mr. Neate, 3s.; collected at Mr. Watts's Lecture, £1 12s. 8d.; per H. Courtney, 7s. 7½d.; per W. Loafer, 5s. 6d. The Committee desire to thank Messrs. Streiner, Church, Hurren, Quinton, and an unknown friend for toys, confectionery, etc., for the party.—ROBERT FORDER, *Treasurer*.

DIED on Good Friday, Joseph Hampson, aged five years, son of Frank Hampson, of Lower Grimshaw Farm, Eccles Hill, Darwen. He was interred in the Blackburn Cemetery on April 7, the Secular Burial Service being used.—M. KNOWLES.

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MISSIONARY JOTTINGS.

My last report in the *Freethinker* of February 29—in which I omitted to mention two very good meetings held at West Auckland—described my wanderings up to March 8. From March 8 until the 17 I was engaged in delivering a course of lectures in the neighborhood of Glasgow, an account of which has already appeared in these columns from the pen of Mr. Gilmour. All that I have to add to that report is to express my thanks for the gallant manner in which the members of the Glasgow Branch supported my efforts. On the occasion of each lecture I was accompanied by a number of the Glasgow friends, who were fully prepared for whatever emergencies might arise; and, although some of the clergy of Dunoon were kind enough to offer up prayers on my behalf, it was largely owing to the presence of these stalwarts that the rowdy element was kept under control. Altogether I have to thank the friends in the west of Scotland for their help during one of the hardest week's work I have done for some time. It is a long while since I had such continuous fighting, and I enjoyed myself thoroughly. The three lectures given in Dunoon—one by Mr. Foote, and two by myself—seemed to have turned the town upside down. Never, I fancy, since the Reformation had there been such excitement concerning the truth of the Christian creed. People were discussing the lectures in all directions; the clergy dealt with them in their sermons—a much safer way than dealing with them on the platform; and a discussion is still being carried on through the medium of the newspapers. What the result of this questioning will be it scarcely needs a prophet to foretell. Men die of many diseases; religions die of one—being found out; and nothing brings about this more certainly than discussion.

On March 19, 22, and 23 I lectured at Edinburgh to audiences that were a marked improvement upon those of my previous visit. The Edinburgh Secularists have not escaped the prevailing desire to extend the area of our propaganda, and accordingly a lecture was announced for Musselburgh on March 20. It was the first Freethought address ever given in the town, and, owing to some mistake in connection with advertisements, the lecture was not so well attended as it might have been. Those who were there, however, appeared to be fully satisfied; a hope was expressed that more meetings would be arranged in the near future, and several offered to co-operate for that purpose. Meetings would have been arranged for Portobello, Leith, and other places, but halls were not obtainable.

From Edinburgh I took a long stride to Leeds, lecturing there on March 25, 26, 27, and 29, and again on April 1. The three first meetings were held in the large St. James's Hall, and were attended with the most gratifying results. The same hall was not, however, available for Sunday lectures, and the one we did get was altogether too small for the audience that assembled. It was a warm day, and the place was simply packed. Nevertheless, the audience stood it like bricks, and by the time the lectures were concluded some of them must have felt as though they were pretty well baked ones. The opposition at these meetings ran through the usual stages. I had three opponents the first evening, one the second, a question the third, and then—silence. On March 30 and 31 I lectured to good audiences at Blackburn. The success of the meetings here seems to have at length induced a clergyman to come forward and speak in defence of his creed. A reverend gentleman, whose name I have forgotten, spoke in opposition at both meetings, and during the course of his remarks made the somewhat startling statement that "Mill regarded the argument from design in nature as unassailable"; but, as Herbert Spencer was also paraded as a supporter of Theism, and Lord Kelvin as an authority upon Biology, that need cause little surprise. The meetings at Blackburn continue to show a steady improvement, and those who a few months since were strongly opposed to Secularism now give it a patient, attentive hearing; while the membership shows a regular, if not a rapid, increase.

On April 1 I returned to Leeds, and after the lecture a business meeting was held to put the new Branch into working order. As a result of the meeting, I was enabled to bring away with me thirty membership forms fully paid and signed, and the secretary has a list of about an equal number who have given their names, but have not yet paid their subscriptions. This, I take it, is not a bad record as the result of two visits and the delivery of seven lectures. So far as I can judge, the new members have plenty of go in them, and are determined to push the cause for all it is worth in Leeds. I shall be very much surprised if the Leeds Branch does not more than justify its existence within the next twelve months.

On April 2 I reached London once more, having been absent a little over ten weeks and delivered seventy lectures, besides other work. The constant strain was not without its effects, and I was beginning to feel very tired towards the end of my trip. A few days' rest will, I have no doubt, put me in fighting trim once more.

One very pleasing feature of my tour has been the steady increase in the size of the audiences. With hardly an exception, wherever I have been giving a series of lectures there has been a perceptible increase in the number of attendants at each meeting—a phenomenon pleasing both to lecturer and audience. At most of the meetings new members have been enrolled, and literature put into circulation—two things eminently satisfactory to all who are interested in the spread of Freethought ideas. I must not omit to thank all those friends who have lent me their assistance in the various towns I have visited. Their earnestness and devotion to the cause does, perhaps, more to encourage one than anything else. I have experienced naught but kindness all the way round, and I take this opportunity of thanking them for their many acts of goodwill towards myself, and for their labors on behalf of the cause we are alike interested in.

Altogether, the new Lecture Scheme has succeeded much better than I anticipated. It has been the means of opening up many new Branches, and of putting fresh enthusiasm into old ones. Thousands have listened to Freethought speeches who but for it would never have done so; and when we bear in mind at what little financial cost this has been achieved, the result is gratifying in the extreme.

C. Cohen.

MR. SAYCE'S LAST WORK.*

The present work is not written in quite such a slipshod style as the other recent productions of this gentleman, but it contains the usual lack of footnotes, so that one is hampered in arriving at the authorities for the author's statements. Mr. Sayce feels it necessary to explain why he should add to the mass of Egyptological literature, and says it is intended to put in the hands of tourists information which is not readily accessible, or else forms part of larger and more cumbrous works. A captious critic, however, in one of the religious newspapers, has expressed his opinion that a tourist would be better off without this book of 342 pages, which is likely to be much too cumbrous in the traveller's wallet. And those who have access to trustworthy works on Egyptology are likely to look with considerable distrust upon the majority of the author's assertions. Like all the obscurantist writers of the present hour, Mr. Sayce has a great deal to say about the Hyksos, for the simple reason that next to nothing is known about them. He is far from being "up to date," for he is content to repeat the exploded notions about the so-called "Hyksos sculptures" of San, when even Mr. Flinders Petrie, in his recent *History of Egypt*, admits that these sculptures really date from the twelfth Egyptian dynasty.

We are glad to observe that Mr. Sayce has derived some profit from Chilperic Edwards' *Witness of Assyria*, and he now admits that the story of Joseph claims too much in saying that the seven years of famine were felt in Canaan at the same time as in Egypt. "A famine in Egypt and a famine in Canaan were not due to the same cause, and the failure of the waters of the Nile would have no effect upon the crops of Palestine." That is just the point. The famine is only introduced for the purpose of bringing Jacob into Egypt, and the machinery reduces itself to an absurdity when we consider the natural phenomena of Egypt.

Mr. Sayce admits that the present uncertainties of Egyptian chronology are due to the attempts of the Christian epitomisers of Manetho to force his figures into accord with the numerical statements of the Septuagint.

* *The Egypt of the Hebrews and Herodotus*, by the Rev. A. H. Sayce (1895).

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He also alludes to "the rich and highly-educated Greeks, like the poet Nonnus, who was tortured to death by St. Shnûdi; and the gifted Hypatia, whose flesh was torn from her bones with oyster-shells by the monks of St. Cyril"—facts which should be borne in mind by those who imagine that Christianity is a friend of education.

"Herodotus" occupies about a third of the book, and we are told that his "travels" are now followed for the first time in the light of recent discoveries. After a perusal of this part of the work, however, the cautious student will certainly substitute "imagination" for "discoveries"; for most of the statements merely rest upon the unsupported assumptions of Mr. Sayce, whose imaginative faculties are well known.

We are prepared to hear that the major part of the writings of Herodotus were really extracts from earlier authors. "He only acted like other Greek writers of his time, and if his plagiarisms exceeded theirs, it was only because he had read more and made a more diligent use of his note-book." That being the case, it is surely unnecessary to suppose that Herodotus travelled at all. There is nothing that he could not have compiled in his own study from the works of his predecessors. Furthermore, on Mr. Sayce's own showing, Egypt was a very unsafe place for Greek travellers in the time of Herodotus. The country was torn by the Perso-Egyptian wars and revolts, and it was precisely in the Delta, where he supposes the Greek to have travelled, that the chief seat of disturbance was to be found.

In conclusion, we would say that, as regards the Hebrews, Mr. Sayce tells us nothing upon which the slightest reliance can be placed; and as regards the Greek writer, Herodotus, his statements must be received with the utmost caution.

E. P.

THE PARSON'S SOCIALISM.

An announcement had been made that a certain clergyman would preach a sermon on "The Socialism of Christ." The preacher was eminent for his work in political reform, and people would be interested in anything he would have to say. So my editor sent me to interview him, and to get an epitome of his address.

I found him in his study writing busily. When I turned to close the door by which I had entered, I saw that it had sagged from its hinges, and struck the sill, when half way shut, so that considerable force was necessary to close it, and then a horrible squeak was produced.

I was courteously received, and readily secured what I was sent for. The doctor prefaced his remarks by saying: "I have found as the results of my studies of the social and economic conditions of the times," etc.

"Yes," said he, when I had completed my notes, "I feel it quite as much my duty to teach sociology as sanctity. I assure you I read political economy as much as I do exegesis."

Just then he rang a bell, and, handing a coin to the man who answered the call, said: "William, get me a quarter's worth of cigars at the drug store, and be quick, please." William returned in a few minutes with two cigars, and announced that there was "a man sir, below, as would like to see you, sir. He looks like a charity case, sir." The Doctor answered, between puffs at lighting a perfecto: "Bring him up. I have to see these people, you know, though I can't do anything for them." A minute later a tall, gaunt man, unmistakably marked by consumption, stood before us, and told us his story of misery.

He was a carpenter, had fallen ill a year before, had spent his savings for physicians, been taken to a public hospital, and discharged while still weak, to make room for others. He was unable to find work of any kind, at any price, and had been without food for two days. He did not want charity, but work; "anything to earn twenty-five cents with which to get a meal." "For," said he, "if I don't get some keep somewhere, I shall go crazy and kill myself." The Christian Socialist replied in the approved fashion, using the phrases "Dispensation of Providence," "Temporal afflictions," "Whom God loveth He chasteneth." All between puffs of tobacco smoke. He ended by saying: "I am sorry to see you in such an unfortunate state, and hope you will find work and have success. Don't get despondent and think of killing yourself, as many unfortunates do; that is an awful crime against God. Bear his trials with patience, and in His own good time he will relieve you."

The carpenter said nothing, but left the room with his face fixed in an expression that spoke volumes.

"Poor fellow," sighed the parson, as he lighted another cigar, "there are so many frauds asking for alms that it is not safe to give anything to a stranger. Charity pauperises them rapidly. It is the fault of the poor themselves that they are poor. They have no proper conception of the science of economics." Then he went on to tell me of his program for liberating humanity from its economic chains.

I soon took my leave, and, as I pulled the sagging door-shut, I thought that the carpenter could have mended it, and the parson given him for it the quarter that he spent for the cigars. The parson would then have had a proper door, and the carpenter a dinner, and revived hopes. But, by such a transaction, there would have been no encouragement of the cigar industry, and cumbering of fertile ground with poisonous plants; and the air of the study would not have been made foul by nicotine.

The parson had studied the science of sociology and had written a sermon on "The Socialism of Christ," and he sent the carpenter away.

I have not studied social science in a university, and have written no sermons or essays on Socialism. But I have seen many things in the lives of the people I meet every day that make me think that, somehow, the "proper conception of the science of economics," that the parson said the poor lacked, would have been boosted forward almost as much by that quarter getting into the pocket of the carpenter for mending the door as it would by the sermon. And I can't get over thinking that the door would have been stopped from squeaking, and the workman from fainting.

G. W. Davidson.

—*Twentieth Century.*

The Church and Slavery.

Our esteemed contributor, Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, sends us a long, interesting letter from a Mr. J. C. Mack, an American who was born and brought up among New England puritans. Mr. Mack mentions the fact that when Lloyd Garrison sought to lecture against slavery at Boston, Mass., he could obtain no hall or church from the religious people there, but was offered one by the infidels. Mr. Mack says: "This fact I have never heard denied in Massachusetts; it was a fact too well known to deny. I have heard religious pietists regret that this was the actual truth. I have known them to try to explain, excuse, and condone it; but never knew them to deny it. No; they could offer excuses and apologies, but none of them had the effrontery to deny it." Mr. Mack attests that the like treatment was accorded to Frederick Douglass long after. In his own district Hiram Blanchard, a Freethinker, entertained Douglass when the innkeeper "would not have a nigger in his house"; and Blanchard took for Douglass a public hall when the Churches would not have him. Mr. Mack says that from 1850 to 1859 Douglass would have been insulted in almost every town in New England if he gave a public lecture, and in most of the middle and western States his life would have been in great danger. Douglass lectured three times in Mr. Mack's district, but no preacher went on the platform. He says: "In my boyish remembrance it seemed to me that all the pious people defended slavery. Clergymen were mostly against the anti-slavery movement. Theodore Parker, of Boston, was one exception; but he was called 'The Infidel Preacher.' The Roman Catholics were invariably Democrats and in favor of slavery. The Irish to a man hated the negro."

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SOME LITTLE-KNOWN FREE THINKERS.

Dr. Messenger Monsey.

Messenger Monsey was an infidel doctor of the old school. Born over two hundred years ago, in 1693, he lived to be ninety-five, and is chiefly known by his eccentric will. He came of good family. His father, the Rev. Robert Monsey, was a Norfolk rector, who forfeited his living by throwing in his lot with the Nonjurors. After spending five years at St. Mary's Hall, Cambridge, Messenger studied physic for some time under Sir Benjamin Wrench, at Norwich. Starting on his own account, he practised for a while at Bury St. Edmunds. Here he had the fortune to attend Lord Godolphin, son of Queen's Anne's treasurer; came to London, and became a popular court physician. Sir Robert Walpole always extolled the merits of his "Norfolk Doctor," but never advanced his interests. Instead of covering the great minister with adulation, Monsey treated him like an ordinary individual, telling him when his jokes were poor, and not hesitating to worst him in argument. "How happens it," asked Sir Robert over his wine, "that nobody will beat me at billiards, or contradict me, but Dr. Monsey?" "Other people," put in the doctor, "get places; I get a dinner and praise." The Freethinking Lord Chesterfield was one of Monsey's patrons, and zealous in trumpeting his praises.

Mr. J. Cordy Jeaffreson, in his *Book About Doctors*, says of Monsey: "Lively, sagacious, well read, and brutally sarcastic, he had for a while a society reputation for wit scarcely inferior to Swift's; and he lived among men well able to judge of wit. Garrick and he were for many years intimate friends, until, in a contest of jokes, each of the two brilliant men lost his temper, and they parted like Roland and Sir Leoline—never to meet again. Garrick probably would have kept his temper under any other form of ridicule, but he never ceased to resent Monsey's reflection on his avarice to the Bishop of Sodor and Man. 'Garrick is going to quit the stage,' observed the Bishop. 'That he'll never do,' answered Monsey, making use of a Norfolk proverb, 'so long as he knows a guinea is cross on one side and pile on the other.'"

Monsey greatly admired Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and waited on the historian to thank him for the pleasure and instruction received. Gibbon's altercation with Davis was spoken of. "Mr. Davis," said Gibbon, "accuses me of not having a sufficient number of books: if he will call any day *when I am not at home*, the servant shall show him my library."

Among the anecdotes told of Monsey is that, once riding in Hyde Park with a Mr. Robinson, that gentleman, after deploring the corrupt morals of the age, said: "But, doctor, I talk with one who believes there is no God." "And I," retorted Monsey, "with one who believes there are *three*." Mr. Robinson was so horrified that he clapped spurs to his horse, galloped off, and never spoke to the doctor again. Monsey was particularly partial to the works of Bernhard Mandeville, the Anglo-Dutch doctor and author of *Free Thoughts on Religion, the Church, and National Happiness*, and of the yet more notorious *Fable of the Bees*. "Thou, Nature, art my goddess," Monsey used to say, should be the motto of every doctor. Monsey became physician to Chelsea College, and died in his rooms there on December 26, 1788. His will created much comment, he being one of the first to direct that his body should not be insulted by any religious service or funeral ceremony, but should undergo dissection by a competent anatomist, "after which the remainder of the carcase may be put into a hole, or crammed into a box with holes, and thrown into the Thames." In accordance with this direction, Mr. Forster, surgeon, dissected the body, and delivered a lecture on it to the medical students in the theatre of Guy's Hospital. This discourse is given at length in the fifty-eighth volume of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In his will Monsey inveighed against priests, bishops, deans, and chapters, and left an annuity to two clergymen who resigned their preferment on account of want of theology. The bulk of his fortune he left to his only daughter and her *female* descendants. Lord Chancellor Cranworth was his great-grandson. Monsey's epitaph, written by himself, was even more curious than his will. It ran as follows:—

> Here lie my old bones; my vexation now ends;
> I have lived much too long for myself and my friends.
> As to churches and churchyards, which parsons call holy,
> 'Tis a rank piece of priestcraft, and founded on folly.
> What the next world may be never troubled my pate;
> If not better than this, I beseech thee, O Fate,
> When the bodies of millions rise up in a riot,
> To let the old carcase of Monsey lie quiet.
>
> J. M. W.

"One soweth and another reapeth" is a verity that applies to evil as well as good.—*George Eliot.*

The only medicine for suffering, crime, and all the other woes of mankind is wisdom.—*T. H. Huxley.*

BOOK CHAT.

George Schumm contributes to *Book Reviews* an excellent notice of the works of that strange genius, Frederick Nietzsche, the most important of which are being translated into English. If any books deserve the epithet of spiritual dynamite, they are those of this gifted madman.

* * *

The History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom, by Professor Andrew D. White, many chapters of which appeared in the *Popular Science Monthly*, is now being issued in book form by D. Appleton & Co. The work is a powerful indictment of theology, and deserves place in every Freethought library.

* * *

Evolution has directed attention to the importance of child study, which has been taken up by Perez, Preyer, and Sully in a scientific spirit. Another important work dealing very fully with the child in primitive culture is issued by Dr. A. F. Chamberlain. It is entitled *The Child and Childhood in Folk Thought.*

* * *

The fine sonnet, "A Flight from Heaven," by Eugene Lee Hamilton, has been so admired that we give another from *Sonnets of the Wingless Hours.* The poet has been confined to a wheeled bed for many years, and the sonnet is strictly personal:—

> Make me in marble after I am dead,
> Stretched out recumbent just as I have lain,
> That those who care may see me once again
> Such as they knew me on my hard, wheeled bed.
>
> Save that the motionless and marble head
> Will never ache with hope for ever vain;
> And down the marble limbs the waves of pain
> Will never race, but all be peace instead.
>
> And this be writ: The same blind silent weight
> That moves the planets kept him on his back,
> And forced him in his misery to create.
>
> He lay for years upon a daily rack;
> He grudged to none their freer, happier fate;
> He hoped no heaven, nor deemed the world all black.

* * *

The *Truthseeker* (April 4) calls Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past* "one of the most valuable of recent works," and says: "Many devotees will doubtless be surprised and grieved to learn that their pious forms and observances to-day are as rudimentary as the now disused muscles which moved the ears and tails of their ape-like ancestors."

PROFANE JOKES.

"Did you go to church yesterday?" "No; I slept at home for a change."

Sky-pilot—"My boy, do you know it's wicked to fish on the Sabbath?" "Isn't fishin'; I'm teaching this 'ere wurm ter swim."

Mrs. Yeast—"I understand our minister is going to preach a sermon to bicycle riders next Sunday." Mr. Yeast—"I suppose he'll call it the Sermon on the Mount."

At a Cross Road's Store out West. Peters—"I see them Spaniards has been throwin' stones at our consul at Barcelony, and rippin' up the old flag." Wattles—"Is that so? Who did ye say done it?" Peters—"Th' Spaniards over to Spain." Wattles—"'Taint them Armenians agin?" Peters—"No; it's the Spaniards." Wattles—"I'm glad o' that. I was afraid at fust that it was goin' to give th' parson 'nother chance to pester us fer subscriptions."

Mrs. Wickwire—"Dear me! Those awful Abyssinians are not heathen, after all. It turns out that they are Christians." Mr. Wickwire—"Well, you ought to have known that from the fight they put up."

Christianity and Civilisation.

The great factors in the evolution of civilisation have undoubtedly been the love of money, political freedom, and knowledge. Trade and commerce led to improved means of communication between communities and distant nations. Hence our railways, steamships, telegraphs, and all those scientific discoveries which add to the sum of human happiness by the diffusion of the comforts and conveniences of life. Universal brotherhood has been practically enforced by these means. Christianity has looked on and profited, although but a short time back she would have burned or denounced as sorcerers or magicians the great benefactors of mankind.—*Hon. Boyle Travers Finniss.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Banqueting Hall, Piccadilly, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Tolstoi and Jesus Christ."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 7.45, R. Shaw opens discussion against Socialism; 9.15, social gathering.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, Dr. E. B. Aveling, "Mr. Bradlaugh's Objections to Socialism." Wednesday, at 8.45, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture XIII., The Virgin (continued)." Thursday, Shakespeare's birthday party—speeches, concert, and dancing.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "Foods, and How they Affect Us."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, J. W. Martin, "Silas Marner."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "The Teaching of Spinoza."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Councillor Ward, "The Ethics of Socialism."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-Street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Rival Gods."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, A. Guest, "The Bible and Woman."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Dead Gods."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. James will lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. B. Moss, "The Conversion of the Devil."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3.30, A. B. Moss, "Recollections of Charles Bradlaugh."

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street): 11.30, Harry Courtney, "The Upshot of Secularism."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Life After Death."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Dream of Immortality."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, W. Heaford will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butcher's Hill): 11.30, a lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, a meeting.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, Mr. Hawker, "Æsop's Fables: their Moral Teachings."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—S. Downie, "What Must we Do to be Saved?" 6.30, Neuron, "Notions about Deity, etc.," with reference to the Gifford Lectures.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Captain Monro, "The Dying Creed."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Read, "What Must I Do to be Saved?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "Spinoza"; 6.30, "What is there Left of Christianity?"

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, H. Scorah, dramatic and other recitals. Wednesday, at 8, members' dance.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, S. M. Peacock, "The New Education Bill."

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 11, a lecture.

MANCHESTER (Stevenson-square): 3, C. Cohen will lecture.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 11, S. B. Thompson, "The Gods"; 3, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?" 4.30, meeting at No. 2 Board Room to elect officers.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 19 and 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 19, Camberwell; 26, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—April 26, Glasgow. May 3, Failsworth; 10, Balls Pond.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Conversational meetings, open to all, at Mr. Coates's, 13 Derby-street, every Sunday, at 7.

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The Freethinker

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

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THE EDUCATION BILL.

FREETHINKERS gifted with a share of the comic spirit may derive much merriment from the new Education Bill. It may be called the Dishing of the Nonconformists. During the reign of Mr. Gladstone these gentlemen ruled the roost. When the Grand Old Man retired from public life and appointed Lord Rosebery as his successor in the premiership, these gentlemen grew restive, and declared that the Nonconformist Conscience could not tolerate a prime minister who kept racehorses. It never occurred to these gentlemen that the Liberal prime minister, the Liberal party, and the Nonconformist Conscience might all go to pot together. Nevertheless it happened. The Tory party came into power with a lumping majority, pledged to support the Landlords, the Publicans, and the Parsons. The publicans are waiting for *their* support, but the landlords are remembered in the new Budget, and the parsons in the new Education Bill. There is to be a vast fresh endowment of the so-called Voluntary Schools, which are mainly under the control of the Church of England. And all the Nonconformists can do is to bite their thumbs, or weep and wail and gnash their teeth. Oh what a fall was there! Those who "ran" Gladstone, and killed Parnell, and sternly ordered Rosebery to teach in a Sunday-school, and talked as though they were soon going to settle the hash of the Church of England, have to stand, or sit, or lie down, and see themselves made light of, while the hated parsons put their thumbs to their noses and (what is worse!) walk off with bags of cash under their arms. Yes, the Nonconformists are dished, and the Freethinkers, whom they have always treated with such insolence, are free to enjoy the delicious spectacle.

Freethinkers, I say, can *enjoy* this spectacle; for the discomfiture of these Nonconformists is not their fortune in a battle for principle. They have no sort of principle in this Education struggle. What they *call* their principle is merely their interest. They protest against a State Church, and they want to disestablish it. And on what ground? It must be either religious or secular. If they say that State patronage is an insult to the Church of Christ, they are talking theology, or, in plainer language, "shop." Such a matter is to be decided by every Church for itself, and the Church of England may take all the patronage it can get without asking leave of any other Church. If they say that the State should not patronise any form of religion, because religion is a private affair between man and God, we can follow them; but in that case we call upon them to be logical and thorough, and not to tolerate State patronage of religion in one direction while protesting against it in another. Surely it is no worse to establish religion in Churches than to establish it in Schools. In one sense it is *less* wrong; for adults can go to church or stay outside as they please, but children are compelled to go to school; besides, an adult can "wink the other eye" at a silly sermon, and think for himself while the parson imagines he is filling him with sound doctrine; but children are absolutely at the mercy of their teachers, and cannot help taking the twist which is imparted to them.

This was felt by the sturdier Nonconformists who opposed the religious part of Mr. Forster's Education Act in 1870. But times have changed, and Nonconformists have thrown principle to the winds. They see that religious education is *in* the public schools, and they are resolved to make the best of it in the interest of their various denominations. To this end they wallow in illogicality. Their spokesmen are really pitiable at the present juncture. Take, for instance, the Rev. Dr. Guinness Rogers, who contributed a special article on "Nonconformists and the Compromise" to last week's *Methodist Times*. Mr. Rogers is a man of sobriety, as Nonconformists go, and he was opposed to the introduction of religion in public schools in 1870. But he has "altered his attitude" on account of what he calls "experience" and "the teaching of events." He is not one of "the few survivors of the dead past"—to use the beautiful language of the *Methodist Times* editorial—"who favor a purely secular system." He admits still that these are "logically right," but logic doesn't pay and compromise does. And in this frame of mind Mr. Rogers condescends to write as follows:—

> "I may be asked, and properly asked, how, as a convinced opponent of State Churches, I can approve of a system which practically creates one. I answer by denying that it does anything of the kind, and I feel constrained to add that if it should appear to any that in consenting to religious teaching in the school I, in some way or other, compromise my loyalty to the principles of religious equality, it is because they have but imperfectly measured the principles themselves. Of course there may be a religious teaching which wars against the cardinal ideas of true equality, and such we are constrained to oppose at all costs. Where conscience is coerced, we have no option but to resist *à outrance*. Nor are we judges of the consciences of other men whose views as to the full force of a particular idea differ from our own. I express simply my own conviction that, whatever be our judgment as to the wisdom or value of the religious teaching in the Board school, there is nothing in the action of the State which authorises it at all analogous to the establishment of a National Church."

I should very much like the opportunity of discussing this paragraph with Mr. Rogers before a public audience. If it is not an infraction of religious equality to teach religion in a State school, how can it be an infraction of religious equality to teach religion in a State church? I fancy I see what Mr. Rogers really means by "religious equality." I think he means "equality of religious privilege." And it is precisely because he and other Nonconformists mean this and nothing more that they are now at the mercy of the Church party. Men of all shades of opinion, outside the Church of England, would have been with them if they had stood on the old lines of absolute separation between Religion and the State; but in saying that the State shall help Religion *up to a point*, they have sacrificed all principle, and left *the point* to be decided by a struggle between Church and Nonconformity; and in that struggle they have been worsted.

I will go farther, and say there is something positively sickening in the duplicity of these Nonconformists, and more especially in relation to the Conscience Clause. Week after week, for many years, journals like the *Methodist Times* have shrieked against the Conscience Clause and denounced it as the vilest fraud. They never weary of declaring that, in districts where Nonconformist children must be sent to Church schools, there being no other provision for their education, the Conscience Clause is no protection, but a mere mockery of religious liberty. Yet when the Church parsons and the Nonconformist ministers keep school together, as they do through ninety-nine out of every hundred School Boards, they both tell the Freethinker that the Conscience Clause is an ample

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protection *for him*. Nonconformists even assert that the grievance of Freethinkers is imaginary, and point out with great glee that extremely few children—a mere handful—are withdrawn from religious instruction. The fallacy, and indeed the folly, of all this is shown in Mr. Moncure D. Conway's recent letter to the *Times* :—

> "The existing conscience clause is nearly a dead letter, because to withdraw one's child from school during the time of religious instruction is to single such child out for remark, for wonder, suspicion, gossip; to deprive it of fair comradeship, and, perhaps, inspire the little victim with repugnance to the parent's peculiar faith. I am convinced that a considerable number of Rationalists and Unitarians do not avail themselves of the conscience clause for fear of such unpleasant results, while taking care to unteach at home what is taught their children in school as religion, but which they may regard as irreligion."

Personally, however, I believe the fear of Rationalist parents, while perfectly natural, is nevertheless excessive. They do not know each other; they are not aware of the number who are sick of Board-school theology; and they have no means of co-operation. They are also apt, in their consideration for their children, to be over tender. A little hardening, a little experience of rough water, is not so bad for children as we are prone to imagine. I have three children at a Board school, and they are all withdrawn from religious instruction. They do not suffer much in consequence. Yet I am ready to make an allowance for other parents who are not circumstanced so advantageously. The head master of the school my children go to is a gentleman, and I (their father) am not obscure and helpless. I do not, therefore, blame other Rationalist parents who hesitate to martyrise their children; on the contrary, I sympathise with them, and I want them to see that their worst enemies in this matter are the Nonconformists. The Church party is logical; it is an open enemy of religious equality. But the Nonconformist party is illogical, and a false friend of religious equality. It has sold its principles for a paltry mess of Board-school pottage.

And now for the new Education Bill itself. My first intention was to discuss it in detail, and at considerable length. But the necessity for this has been obviated by the articles, and letters, and reports of speeches, that have appeared in all the newspapers. It will now be sufficient to say that the Bill has three important features; the first affecting Voluntary Schools, the second affecting Educational Machinery, and the third affecting Religious Education. These three features I propose to consider separately, though not without bearing in mind the fact that they are all connected in the general design of the Government, which is to cripple the School Board system and promote the Voluntary system—and this, of course, means a fresh endowment of the Church of England.

Voluntary Schools are so named facetiously. The only voluntary thing about them is the voluntary stupidity of the people who are bamboozled by specious nomenclature. By far the larger part of the expenses of such schools is defrayed by public money. In 1869 the grant to such schools was 9s. 7d. per head, the fees were 8s. 4d., and the voluntary subscriptions were 7s. 3¼d. In 1894 the grant was £1 8s. 3¼d., the fees were 2s. 0¾d., and the subscriptions were 6s. 6¼d. The grant is now to be considerably raised, and the fees will disappear altogether, while the subscriptions will dwindle to a microscopic quantity.

The main advantage of this increased grant to the Voluntary schools will of course accrue to the Church of England. Having started with an immense endowment of from seven to ten millions a year, the Church found it comparatively easy to build schools by subscription. Accordingly, out of a total (in 1894-95) of 19,709 public elementary schools in England and Wales, no less than 11,906 belong to the Church of England. Wesleyans have 509, Roman Catholics 977, and others 1,236. The scholars in Church schools are 2,278,921, in Wesleyan schools 168,463, in Roman Catholic schools 276,079, and in other schools 302,136. The Board schools number 5,081, with 2,174,142 scholars.

The Roman Catholics will profit in their degree by the increased grant to the voluntary schools. Their leaders have impudently demanded that the whole expense of education in their schools should be borne by the State; and, although they do not quite get this under the new Bill, they get it very nearly. The Wesleyans will profit in their degree also, but the number of their schools is so trifling compared with those of the Church of England that we can understand their hostility. A man who mortally hates another will forego sixpence if the arrangement is to benefit his enemy to the extent of a sovereign.

Catholics will not object to the new Bill. They see that the maintenance of their schools, at anybody's expense, is a vital matter at present; and they live in hopes of some day coming into possession of all the Church property. So the battle against the Bill, as far as the religious parties are concerned, will be mainly left to the Wesleyans.

The Church of England income from grants (1894-5) is £2,613,956, the Wesleyan income £191,648, and the Catholic income £309,902. Nearly half a million more will go to the Voluntary schools at once, and four-fifths of this amount will accrue to the Church of England.

This is a very fine sop to the Church party. "Go on working for us," says Lord Salisbury, "and you shall dip your hands deeper and deeper into the nation's pocket. We know your price, and we are prepared to pay it. Of course the terms are cash."

No wonder the Bishop of London is thoroughly well satisfied with this Bill. The Church of England has from seven to ten millions (no one knows exactly how much) a year—revenues chiefly from national property—for preaching its doctrines to adults in churches; and it will now have another three millions a year, direct from the State, ostensibly to give all the children it gathers into its schools a good education, but really to teach them its doctrines. The education *has* to be given, and it *has* to be of a certain quality; but the voluntary part of the business, the part upon which the Church has set its affections, the part for which it undertakes all the rest, which it would gladly drop if it could—this part is the inoculation of nearly three million children with Church dogmas, so that they may grow up safeguarded against the small-pox of heresy, and finally become guardians of the Church's interests against all its enemies. In short, the three millions spent on the schools is an insurance against the loss of the seven-to-ten millions spent on the churches. It is a heavy premium, but the Church does not pay it. The nation pays, so all is right.

This is extremely good business—for the Church; and I can understand the bitter wrath of Nonconformists, for they are rival tradesmen. They have only themselves to thank, however; they have made their bed, and they must lie upon it. Freethinkers, of course, have their own special point of view; and I propose to regard the matter from it in my next article.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

Our book of Genesis is not in the Bible lying before me. The book of Genesis in which we believe, and by which we are guided—and not only we, but all educated Christians, however orthodox they may call themselves—was written by Copernicus, by Galileo, by Newton, by Laplace, by Lyell, by Spencer, by Darwin. Even those who still profess to believe in the old Genesis are doing their best to read in it what the men just named have taught. We do not now regulate our lives by the precepts of the Pentateuch. We follow the teachings of the scientific men of the present age, who have studied the laws of the universe, and have learned wisdom from them. It is the books of these men which constitute the real Book of the Law which guides the modern world, whatever men say or profess about it. Our divine histories which move and influence the world are not the books of the Judges, Samuel, and Kings. They are the histories of Greece and Rome, of the Middle Ages and modern times, described by Froude and Carlyle, Prescott and Lecky, Ranke and Macaulay. Our heroes are no longer Samuel, Jephthah, Gideon, and David, but they are the more modern champions for truth, liberty, and progress. It is a long list, beginning with William of Orange and ending with Abraham Lincoln; and these are the men who are the examples and the inspiration of the world of to-day.—*D. P. Faure.*

Oh threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise,
One thing at least is certain—*this* life flies;
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies;
The flower that once has blown for ever dies.

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us passed the door of darkness through,
No one returns to tell us of the road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

—*Omar Khayyam.*

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NEW TESTAMENT DEVILS.

I ATTENDED, on Friday afternoon, the first lecture of a course on "Demonology," delivered by Mr. F. C. Conybeare, M.A., at University Hall, Gordon-square. In this opening lecture Mr. Conybeare dealt exclusively with the New Testament teaching concerning devils. Mr. Conybeare, though still a young man, is a thorough scholar, and his discourse, if it contained nothing new, was accurate and impartial. What was novel was that he took up such a subject—now usually avoided by the men of God—and treated it as a scholar should. At the outset he remarked that "Jesus, his disciples, and all the New Testament writers had a profound belief in the Devil and evil spirits." He gave many instances of this throughout his discourse. Satan was believed to be a fallen angel. Jesus said, addressing the seventy: "I beheld Satan fall as lightning." So the author of the Second Epistle of Peter said: "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment"; and similarly Jude said the angels, which kept not their first estate, were reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. In accordance with the belief that the devils knew what was in store for them, they cried out to Jesus: "Art thou come to torment us before our time?"

John and Paul insisted on the entire subordination of this world to Satan. He was "the god of this world." All the kingdoms and glory of the earth were in his gift. The devils and Satan possess great powers of moving about. He was "prince of the power of the air." Luke said a spirit had not flesh and bones, and demons were believed to be akin to moving vapor. So the Holy Spirit was conferred by breathing, and Mr. Conybeare remarked that the Holy Spirit gave rise to the same excited manifestations as an evil one. Just as the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples at Pentecost, so an evil spirit leapt on the sons of Sceva (Acts xix.). The spirit of the Lord flew away with Philip, landing him at Azotus. So in the gospel according to the Hebrews the Spirit caught Jesus up and put him on Mount Thabor, while in the synoptics Satan set him on a pinnacle of the temple.

The devils had vocal organs, for we read in Mark that Jesus said, "Hold thy peace and come out of him," and that "Jesus suffered not the devils to speak." In the age of Clement of Alexandria we read of a language of demons, and, at a certain church, service was held in Greek for Greeks, in Armenian for Armenians, and in the language of demons for those possessed with devils. It was to be gathered from Paul that those who were possessed of the Holy Spirit only expressed themselves incoherently, much like the Irvingites who claimed to possess the gift of tongues.

Satan, it was supposed, had power of sickness and of death. His agents went about, often in groups of seven. Some were unclean devils, as the Gadarean legion, dwelling among the tombs. Some were devils of blindness and dumbness; some fever demons, as in the case of Simon's wife's mother. To be sick was to have a devil. The exorcists took the place of physicians. Madness and epilepsy were ascribed to demons. With Paul, the gods of the heathen were devils, and the sacrifices to those gods were sacrificed to devils. The first rule of the early Church was against eating things offered to idols, because it was believed that blood was the food of the demons, who would enter into those who partook thereof.

Mr. Conybeare was very frank as to the actual belief of Jesus in devils. The first three evangelists aver that he did encourage and sanction the belief. If he knew better, what became of his candor? Mr. Conybeare, however, very judiciously left his audience to draw their own inferences from the facts. He merely pointed out that there were three positions which might be held with regard to the subject: First, that demonic agency was a mistake, arising from times of savage ignorance; second, that it was a fact existing in the times of Jesus Christ, but ceasing after his coming; third, that it was a fact both then and now. He indicated that the remaining lectures of his course, dealing with the demonology of Greeks, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians, might serve to show which view is correct.

Having looked up the subject for myself,* I need not wait before making one or two comments. To the student alike of history and psychology it is evident that what was of old ascribed to the agency of demons is now referred to natural causes. If Jesus could, and did, err on so momentous a matter as the nature of sin and disease, upon what point can be claimed for him authority over our reason and conscience? If he was wrong with regard to demonic agency, upon what ground can a supernatural character be ascribed to his teachings?

People now-a-days have given up hell and the Devil, while clinging to their corollaries, heaven and God. Mr. Gladstone sees and says that this is virtually giving up religion. "I should not be here," I heard an enthusiastic Salvationist yell the other day, "if I did not believe in hell-fire." This expressed a truth. Christianity would never have made its conquest over men's minds had it not depicted the most awful terrors, from which it promises redemption. When the devils go the angels will soon have to follow suit, and the devils are departing rapidly. No Roentgen rays suffice to disclose their existence.

There was a goodly number of ministers of religion present at Mr. Conybeare's address. I trust it may have contributed to make them ashamed of preaching their savage doctrine of devils to women and children.

J. M. WHEELER.

* See *Footsteps of the Past* and *Satan, Witchcraft, and the Bible.*

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECOND STAGE—ENTERPRISE.

"Better wild ideas than no ideas at all."—PROFESSOR NICHOL, *at Horsham.*

THE emancipation of the understanding from intimidation and penal restraint soon incited thinkers of enterprise to put their new powers to use. Theology being especially a forbidden subject and the greatest repressive force, inquiry into its pretensions first attracted critical attention. In every century forlorn hopes of truth had set out to storm one or other of the ramparts of theology. Forces had been marshalled by great leaders, and battle often given in the open field; and unforeseen victories are recorded in the annals of the wars of infantine Rationalism against the full-grown powers of superstition and darkness. In every age valiant thinkers, scholars, philosophers, and critics—even priests, in defiance of power, ecclesiastical and civil—have, at their own peril, explored the regions of forbidden truth. In Great Britain it was the courage of insurgent thinkers among the working classes—whom no imprisonment could intimidate—who caused the right of free speech and free publicity to be finally conceded. Thus, rulers came round to the conclusion of Caballero, that "tolerance is as necessary in ideas as in social relations."

As soon as opinion was known to be emancipated, men began to think who never thought before. The thinker no longer had to obtain a "ticket of leave" from the Churches before he could inquire; he was free to investigate where he would and what he would. Just power is, as a rule, never imparted nor acquired in vain, and honest men felt they owed it to those who had won freedom for them that they should extend it. Thus it came to pass that independence was an inspiration to action in men of intrepid minds. Professor Tyndall, in the last words he wrote for publication, said: "I choose the nobler part of Emerson when, after various disenchantments, he exclaims, 'I *covet* truth!'" On printing these words, the *Westminster Gazette* adds: "The gladness of true heroism visits the heart of him who is really competent to say this."

The energies of intellectual intrepidity had doubtless been devoted to science and social progress; but, as philosophers have found down to Huxley's day, all exploration was impossible in that direction. Murchison, Brewster, Buckland, and other pioneers of science were intimidated. Lyell held back his book on the antiquity of man twenty years. Tyndall, Huxley, and Spencer were waiting to be heard. As Huxley has justly said: "There was No Thoroughfare into the Kingdom of Nature.—By order, MOSES." Hence to examine theology, to discover whether its authority was absolute, became a necessity. It was soon seen that there was ground for scepticism. The

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priests resented criticism by representing the sceptics of their pretensions as being sceptical of everything, whereas they were only sceptics of clerical infallibility. They, indeed, did aver that branches of human knowledge, received as well established, were really open to question, in order to show that, if men could not be confident of things of which they had experience, how could the Churches be confident of things of which no man had experience, and which contradicted experience? So far from disbelieving everything, scepticism went everywhere in search of truth and certainty. Since the Church could not be absolutely certain of the truth of its tenets, its duty was to be tolerant. But, being intolerant, it became, as Julian Hibbert put it, "well-understood self-defence" to assail it. The Church fought for power, the thinker fought for truth.

Freethought among the people may be likened to a good ship, manned by adventurous mariners who, cruising about in the ocean of theology, came upon sirens, as other mariners had done before—dangerous to be followed by navigators bound to ports of progress. Many were thereby decoyed to their own destruction. The sirens of the Churches sang alluring songs, whose refrains were :—

1. The Bible the Guide of God.
2. The origin of the universe disclosed.
3. The care of Providence assured.
4. Deliverance from peril by prayer dependable.
5. Original sin effaceable by grace.
6. Perdition avoidable by faith in crucifixion.
7. Future life revealed.

These propositions were subjects of resonant hymns, sermons, and tracts, and were not, and are not, disowned, but still defended in discussion by orthodox and clerical advocates. Save salvation by the blood of Christ (a painful idea to entertain), the other ideas might well fascinate the uninquiring. They had enchanted many believers, but the explorers of whom we speak had acquired the questioning spirit, and had learned prudently to look at both sides of familiar subjects, and soon discovered that the fair-seeming propositions which had formerly imposed on their imagination were unsound, unsightly, and unsafe. The Syracusans of old kept a school in which slaves were taught the ways of bondage. Christianity has kept such a school, in which the subjection of the understanding was inculcated; and the pupils, now free to investigate, resolved to see whether such things were true. Then began the reign of refutation of theological error—by some from indignation, at having been imposed upon; by others from zeal that misconception should end; by more from enthusiasm for facts; by the bolder sort from resentment at the intimidation and cruelty with which inquiry had been suppressed so long; and by not a few from the love of disputation, which has for some the delight men have for chess, cricket, or other pursuit which has conflict and conquest in it.

Self-determined thought is a condition of the progress of nations. Where would science be but for open thought, the nursing mother of enterprise, of discovery of invention, of new conditions of human betterment? A modern Hindu writer* tells us that the Hindu is sorely handicapped by customs, which are prescribed by his religious books. Hedged in by minute rules and restrictions, the various classes forming the Hindu community have had but little room for expansion and progress. The result has been stagnation. Caste has prevented the Hindus from sinking, but it has also prevented them from rising.

The old miracle bubbles which the Jews blew into the air of wonder 2,000 years ago delight Churches still in their childhood. The sea of theology would have been stagnant centuries ago had not insurgent thinkers, at the peril of their lives, created commotion in it. Morals would have been poisoned on the shores of theology had not Freethought purified the waters by putting the salt of reason into that sea, freshening it year by year.

Chapter V.

CONQUESTS OF INVESTIGATION.

"The secret of genius is to suffer no fiction to live."—Goethe.

Theologians had so choked the human mind with a dense undergrowth of dogmas that it was like cutting through an African forest, such as Stanley encountered, to find the path of truth. On that path, when found, many things, unforeseen before, became plain. The siren songs of orthodoxy were discovered to have strange discords of sense in them.

1. The Guide of God seemed to be very human—not authentic, not consistent; containing things not readable nor explainable in the family—fictions such as the Incarnation, reluctantly believable as the device of a moral Deity. Men of genius and of noble ethical sympathy do, however, deem that defensible. In any human book the paternal exaction of such suffering as fell to Christ would be regarded with alarm and repugnance. Wonder was felt that Scripture, purporting to contain the will of Deity, should not be expressed so unmistakably that ignorance could not misunderstand it, nor perversity misconstrue it. The Gods know how to write.

2. The origin of all things has excited and disappointed the curiosity of the greatest exploring minds of every age. That the secret of the universe is undisclosed is manifest from the different and differing conjectures concerning it. The origin of the universe remains unknowable. What awe fills, or rather takes possession of, the mind which comprehends this! Theism takes wonder out of the universe.

3. Pleasant and free from anxiety life would be, were it true that Providence is a present help in the day of need. Alas! to the poor it is evident that Providence does not interfere, either to befriend the good in their distress, or to arrest the bad in the act of crime.

4. The power of prayer has been the hope of the helpless and the oppressed in every age. Every man wishes it was true that aid could be had that way. Then every just man could protect himself at will against his adversaries. But experience shows that all entreaty is futile to induce Providence to change its universal habit of non-intervention. Prayer beguiles the poor, but provides no dinner. Mr. Spurgeon said at the Tabernacle that prayer filled his meal barrel when empty. I asked that he should publish the recipe in the interest of the hungry. But he made no reply.

5. There is reason to think that original sin is not anything more than original ignorance. The belief in natural depravity discourages all efforts of progress. The primal imperfection of human nature is only effaceable by knowledge and persistent endeavor. Even in things lawful to do, excess is sin, judged by human standards. There may be error without depravity.

6. Eternal perdition for conscientious belief, whether erroneous or not, is humanly incredible. The devisers of this doctrine must have been unaware that belief is an affair of ignorance, prejudice, custom, education, or evidence. The liability of the human race to eternal punishment is the foundation on which all Christianity (except Unitarianism) rests. This awful belief, if acted upon, with the sincerity that Christianity declares it should be, would terminate all enjoyment, and all enterprise would cease in the world. None would ever marry. No persons with any humanity in their hearts would take upon themselves the awful responsibility of increasing the number of the damned. The registrar of births would be the most fiendish clerk conceivable. He would be practically the Secretary of Hell.

The theory that all the world was lost through a curious and enterprising lady eating an apricot or an apple, and that, 3,000 or more years after, mankind had to be redeemed by the murder of an innocent Jew, is of a nature to make men afraid to believe in a Deity accused of contriving so dreadful a scheme. This reasoning may seem to many an argument against the existence of God, whereas it is merely against the attributes of Deity as ascribed to him by Christianity. If God be not moral, in the human sense of the term, he may as well be not moral at all. It is only he whose principles of justice men can understand that men can trust.

Professor Huxley, conspicuous for his clearness of view and dispassionateness of judgment, was of this opinion, and said: "The suggestion arises, if God is the cause of all things, he is responsible for evil as well as for good; and it appears utterly irreconcilable with our notions of justice that he should punish another for that which he has, in fact, done himself." The poet concurs with the philosopher when he exclaims :—

> The loving worm, within its clod,
> Were diviner than a loveless God
> Amid his worlds.*

* Pramatha Nath Bose.

* Browning.

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Christianity, indeed, speaks of the *love* of God in sending his son to die for the security of others. But not less is the heart of the intelligent and humane believer torn with fear as he thinks what must be the character of that God who could only be thus appeased. The example of self-sacrifice is noble; but is it noble in anyone who deliberately creates the necessity for it? The better side of Christianity seems overshadowed by its worse.

7. Future life is uncertain, being unprovable and seemingly improbable, judging from the dependence of life on material conditions. Christians themselves do not seem confident of another existence. If they were *sure* of it, who of them would linger here when those they love and honor have gone before? Ere we reach the middle of our days the joy of every heart lies in some tomb. If the Christian actually believed that the future was real, would he hang black plumes over the hearse and speak of death as darkness? No! the cemeteries would be hung with joyful lights; the grave would be the gate of Paradise. Everyone would find justifiable excuse for leaving this for the happier world. All tenets which are contradicted by reason had better not be.

Many preachers now disown, in controversy, these doctrines; but, until they carry the professions of the platform into the statute-book, the rubric, and the pulpit, such doctrines remain operative, and the Churches remain answerable for them. Nonconformists do not protest against a State Church on account of its doctrines, which include all those enumerated. When the doctrines which conflict with reason and humanity are disowned by authority, ecclesiastical and legal, in all denominations, the duty of controverting them as impediments to progress will cease.

It may be said, in reply to what is here set forth as tenets of Christian Scripture, that the writer follows the letter and not the spirit of the word. Yes, that is what he does. He is well aware of the new practice of seeking refuge in the "spirit," of "expanding" the letter and taking a "new range of view." He, however, holds that to drop the "letter" is to drop the doctrine. To "expand" the letter is to change it. New "range of view" is the term under which desertion of the text is disguised. But new "range" means new thought, which, in this insidious way, is put forward to supersede the old. The frank thing is to say so, and admit that the "letter" is obsolete, is gone, is disproved, and that new views which are truer constitute the new letter of progress. The best thing to do with the "dead hand" is to bury it. To try to "expand" dissolution is but galvanising the corpse and tying the dead to the living. GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

(Continued from page 245.)

THE Christian pretension that the death of Christ provided a complete atonement for the alleged transgression in the Garden of Eden is not supported by the details of the scheme as contained in the Bible, or by the exposition of it as given by eminent theological writers. The orthodox position is that the Godhead is composed of three persons of one substance, power, and duration. If this be so, and if an atonement was really necessary, it should have been threefold, inasmuch as the Son and the Holy Ghost, being a part of the Trinity, required to be satisfied equally with the Father; but we do not read of any sacrifice having been made to them. Besides, if the three persons were one in substance, etc., it is difficult to see how one part could be wrathful and another part merciful at the same time. The New Testament speaks of God's wrath, and such Christian writers as the pious Flavel, Wesley, and Dr. Watts state that it was from this wrath that the death of Christ was intended to save the human race. Flavel, who was an exponent of the evangelical school, writes: "To wrath—to the wrath of an infinite God, without mixture—to the very torments of hell, was Christ delivered; and that by the hand of his own Father. God stood upon full satisfaction, and would not remit one sin without it" (Works, folio edition, p. 10). Dr. Watts speaks of Jesus's blood turning God's "wrath to grace," and Wesley writes: "Jesus speaks and pleads his blood. He *disarms* the *wrath* of God."

It is folly to claim, as Christians do, that this priestly-invented scheme of the Atonement manifests a spirit of divine forgiveness. Instead of being a forgiving plan, it is one of exaction and vengeance. According to the story, God demands and receives payment before he grants pardon; Christ exacts belief in himself as the condition of salvation; and he who sins against the Holy Ghost is never to be forgiven. Stockel admits that, "in a strict and proper sense, God does not forgive sin, for Christ hath given him full satisfaction. How, then, can it be justly said that God pardoneth sins and transgressions? Surely that debt can never be *forgiven* that is *paid*" (cited by Dr. Bruce, *Sermons*, 2nd edition, p. 354). From a rational point of view the matter resolves itself into this: Christ either paid the "debt" or he did not. If he *did* pay it, that should settle the account, and we ought not to be bothered with it any further; whereas, if he did not pay the "debt," the whole scheme is a sham and a delusion.

The absurdity of the orthodox view of the death of Christ is further manifested in the supposition that it was a part of the indivisible Godhead that died. This is theological conjecture run mad; for, if it were Christ alone who died and remained lifeless in the grave for three days and three nights, he was not equal in eternity with his father; while, on the other hand, if the whole of the deity expired, then we have the curious spectacle of a dying and a dead God, and the world for a time existing without any "divine" aid in its government. To say that it was only the manhood of Christ which suffered and died is but raising another difficulty in allying humanity with what is termed divinity; thus adding a fourth part to the Trinity, and thereby destroying the perfection of the whole, for where the human element is there can be no perfection. Moreover, according to the orthodox theory, a mere human death was not enough to redeem humanity from the effects of the sin committed against an infinite God. Of course, we do not admit that any such sin ever occurred, for the simple reason that, if a person is compelled to perform an act, it is no sin upon his part. And, as we showed in our article last week, Adam and Eve acted as they did under compulsion. As to enmity existing between God and man as the result of partaking of the fruit, the question arises: Where did the enmity come from? Did God implant it in the minds of his children? If so, he was responsible for the consequences which followed. If, however, man acquired it independently of God, then he was not the creator of all things, as the Bible states he was—even of evil. We are aware it is said that God gave man a free will, but this is only another theological error. There can be no freedom where circumstances impel in one direction, as, according to the account, they did in the Garden of Eden. Besides, we read that the plan was arranged "before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians i. 4; 1 Peter i. 19, 20).

Not only is the theory that the world was redeemed through the death of Christ utterly absurd, but it came too late. If the atonement were at all necessary, it should have been made immediately after Adam's alleged transgression, so as to have prevented a single generation from going to the grave with the curse of original sin unremoved. But, according to the Bible story, God allowed four thousand years to elapse, and millions of his children to die, ere the Atonement was made. This, to say the least, was not either just or merciful upon the part of "the Great Father of all." If it be true that no one can be saved except through belief in Christ, then it may be fairly asked, What became of the numberless human beings who died prior to his birth? And, further, what will be the fate of those who are now living who have not heard, and probably never will hear, of the mission of Jesus of Nazareth? To say that the former were saved by anticipation, and that the latter will be excused on account of their lack of knowledge, is only to represent the scheme as being still more absurd, and altogether useless. If a portion of mankind could be saved without the Crucifixion, what necessity was there for Christ to have suffered at all? His sorrow, agony, and bloody sweat might all have been avoided, and many saints might have been spared the tortures of the stake and the rack. Surely, if for thousands of years people could go to heaven without the supposed advantages of the death of Christ, it was superfluous to introduce the "sign of the Cross" to secure an object which had already been achieved.

Besides, if the ignorance of the existence of this "atoning scheme" will exempt a person from "punishment hereafter," is it not cruel and futile to send missionaries to the

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heathens with the "glad tidings"? Let them not know of it, and there would be no danger of their being punished for rejecting it; but let them be informed of the scheme, and their happiness in another world becomes very doubtful. Considering the diversity of the perceptive powers, even among "heathens," we cannot reasonably suppose that all to whom the scheme is expounded will be able to receive it as true. Thus the salvation, which was secure in a blissful state of ignorance, is placed in jeopardy by missionary efforts. The truth is, that if the death of Christ were really necessary to redeem a "fallen race," it was unjust upon the part of God to permit so many centuries to pass before the people had the alleged benefit of his atoning blood. If, on the other hand, the death of Christ was not required to restore a "lost race," then it was a reckless and an unnatural act for a father to give his son to a wild mob, to be executed amidst the exultations of a disappointed and fanatical people.

Moreover, if it were desirable upon the part of God to send his son to save the world from eternal perdition, why was it that, when he did arrive, so many nations were kept in ignorance of his mission? Even the Jews, God's chosen people, had no knowledge that an incarnate deity was to expire on the Cross. If the regeneration of the world had been the object of Christ, would it not have been better, instead of ascending to heaven, for him to have remained on earth, teaching practical truths, and showing by his own personal example how the world could be rescued from that moral and intellectual darkness and despair to which it had been reduced by the influence of a degrading theology?

CHARLES WATTS.

(*To be concluded.*)

CONFERENCE EXCURSION.

IN order to give their English visitors an opportunity of judging, from personal observation, of the beauty and grandeur of Scottish Highland scenery, and to ensure a day's intimate social intercourse between them and their Scottish brethren, the Glasgow Branch has made all the necessary arrangements for a Cheap Circular Tour on Whit-Monday. The route will be from Glasgow, by train, to Loch Lomond; thence by steamer to Tarbert; then by road (walk or drive) to Arrochar, at the head of Loch Long, where a hot luncheon will be ready; and subsequently by steamer down Loch Long to Craigendoran, and home to Glasgow by rail, in good time for the late trains for the South. Tickets for the round 3s. 11d., or including hot luncheon at Arrochar Hotel 5s. 11d. Intending excursionists are requested to communicate early with Mr. D. Black, 332, Duke-street, Glasgow, to whom remittances by Postal Order, etc., ought to be made payable.

Among the more interesting and striking topographical features of the trip are a panoramic view of the valley and estuary of the Clyde; Dumbarton Rock, with its mediæval fortress, the Vale of Leven, and *en passant;* Bonhill, the birthplace of Tobias Smollett, the novelist and historian; Loch Lomond, a dream of loveliness, flanked by the "lofty Ben Lomond"; a storied region—the MacGregor country, described in Scott's *Rob Roy*, and upon the border of the Trossachs, the classic realm of the *Lady of the Lake;* Arrochar, which commands magnificent views of the picturesque Argyllshire hills; Loch Long, a narrow inlet of the sea, overshadowed by gaunt and gloomy heights, upon whose rugged sides the scars left by the primeval fires are as fresh as if they had been made but yesterday. Here and there, in sheltered caves and grassy hollows, quaint, old-world fishing villages; one of them—Portincaple—endeared to Secularists because Mr. Bradlaugh used to stay there, under the humble roof of honest, kindly Findlay McNab, who, too, has gone the way of all flesh. On that rock, near the Carrick shore, Mr. Bradlaugh would sit the live-long day, in shine or shower, fishing with the same grim steadfastness that marked his life-work in the great world beyond; and only when it was too dark to ply his line longer was his voice heard, trumpet-like, awaking the echoes among the hills, as it summoned the boat to take him ashore. Helensburgh, a flashy, modern watering-place, grandiosely called the Brighton of Scotland. Lastly, back over Lower Clydesdale, and into the Black country round Glasgow, from which we so gladly escaped in the morning, but fortified for the renewed struggle in the grimy city with a rich spoil of golden memories of lake, and moor, and fell, supposing always that our treacherous climate gives us one dry, clear, and genial day.

It is only when a man knows little that he knows anything at all. With knowledge grows doubt.—*Goethe.*

A BALLAD OF SINS.

A THING hastily spake I:
"My love is white and red;
Christ wills that my love for my love should die,
To live for Him instead.

"But I would rather have a kiss
Once of her little red mouth
Than have all of His heavenly bliss,
As faint as a wind of the south."

A little seraph flew up to heaven
And bore my sinful thought;
"Yet," said I, "it will be forgiven,
For unto God it is naught."

A little red imp bore it down,
And it made mirth in hell;
I said: "And what an' if God do frown,
I live and love her well."

One said: "That man shall be accursed
Who His godhead shall doubt";
I said: Let dim hell do its worst,
His word is dry as drought.

A little white angel took my sin
Up unto God in the air;
I said: 'Twill make the Lord God grin,
It is beneath His care.

A blast came out of the mouth of hell,
And scorched me as a brand;
And there was there a black devell,
Laughed till he scarce could stand.

Then all on a heavy time I spake,
Would that my years were run;
No good can I do for love's sweet sake,
Nor any good have done.

Then there uprose a little green elf,
And this word spake he:—
"Because that thou hast doubted thyself,
God's curse shall cling to thee."

PYRITES.

A CHRISTIAN MODE OF WARFARE.

THE civilising influence of Christians is felt all over the world, and honest savages will soon have occasion to depart *en masse* for the happy hunting grounds in Hades, since the impostors who force their obnoxious nostrums upon them in the name of Jesus Christ are determined to leave them no grounds for hunting, except where the savages are the game and the pioneers of Christianity the mighty hunters—*a la* Nimrod. The latest mode of exterminating the aborigines—*all children of one great God*—is cruel, cowardly, and ingenious. Major-General W. C. F. Molyneaux, in his interesting book on *Campaigning in South Africa and Egypt*, gives the following horrible account of a massacre of valiant Zulus, which makes one regret that there is no God to avenge the cruel wrongs inflicted upon virtuous savages by Christian robbers and murderers. The English commander gave the order of attack—two turns of the handle of the Gatlin gun (invented by a Christian)—"and there was a clear lane cut right through the body of Zulus. The effect of the fire of a machine gun is awful if it is served by a cool hand.* The gun has no nerves, and, provided the man is steady and the cartridges do not jamb, nothing can live in front of it!"

Here is a Christian Major-General, who pens this terrible account without a word of condemnation or regret. How true the saying, that a soldier is a hired assassin. There is but one redeeming feature in this awful business—namely, that Christians employ these infernal-machine guns to exterminate each other! I pity Jesus Christ, and laugh at his so-called gospel of love, which, if he was omniscient, he must have known that a nation of commercialists like the English would never put into practice, although they try to force it upon aliens whom they intend to despoil. "Resist not evil!" "*Vogue la galère!*"

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

The Russian Government has presented a lot of rifles to Montenegro. These were formally distributed to the Montenegrin troops on Monday. The ceremony was preceded by "Divine service." What a sublime commentary on the old text about "peace on earth." The angels who sang that little song were evidently "too previous." They didn't understand Christianity.

* Led by a colder heart.

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ACID DROPS.

CLANDON, one of the seats of Lord Onslow, has for some time been "haunted"—at least, the inmates believed so; but his lordship has entered into possession himself, and is "determined not to allow any repetition of such nonsense." All the adult members of his family sleep with loaded revolvers by their bedsides, and will not hesitate to shoot any "ghost" who puts in an appearance. We guess the ghosts will wait for more favorable conditions.

There is a good phrase in Mr. Harold Frederic's new novel, *Illumination*. The Rev. Theron Ware is told by Brother Pierce, one of his congregation, that they don't want book-learning and dictionary words; and that his sermons, like his wife's bonnet, are too flowery. "What we want to hear," says Brother Pierce, "is the plain, old-fashioned word of God, without any palaver of 'hems and ha's.....What we want here, sir, is straight-out, flat-footed hell—the burnin' lake of fire and brimstone."

"Straight-out, flat-footed hell" is really excellent. And it is just this which Methodists are missing. "We cannot shut our eyes," says the *Methodist Recorder*, "to the fact that neither in the pulpit nor in the pew is there the same belief in hell which was one of the most awful and tremendous incentives to earnestness that Methodism had in the days long gone by." This is assigned as a reason for the decline of Methodism in certain districts."

It appears from the returns of Wesleyan church membership that there is an absolute falling off of members in twenty-four districts, and among these are several of the most important in the Connection. London Methodism only just maintains its ground, and this, relative to the population, denotes a crab-like progress. In Yorkshire five districts out of six show a decrease of between seven and eight hundred members. Methodism has of late been making much progress in Wales, while going back in England. But the completed returns show a net decrease of 2,275. In East Anglia, where large sums have been expended by the Home Mission Committee in the attempt to revive decayed Methodism, there is a decrease of 232.

£15,000 is required to render the crooked spire of Chesterfield safe. It is a question if the result would be worth the money.

Mr. Flinders Petrie, the well-known Egyptologist, has unearthed an inscription of Meneptah I., describing his Syrian wars, and how he nearly exterminated the people of Is-ra-il there. The cream of the joke is that this Meneptah has been written up as the "Pharaoh of the Exodus" by Dr. Sayce and the other "Bible and the Monuments" romancists; whereas it is now proved that the Israelites were in Palestine in his reign, and so neither he nor his father, Rameses II., could have had anything to do with either the Egyptian bondage or the Exodus. Consequently, all the much-trumpeted "finds" of the last few years in Egypt are proved to have no connection with Jewish history. The apologists will now have to explain why Hebrew history is silent about this war with Meneptah, and gives no hint of the undoubted fact that Palestine was ruled by the Egyptians for many years after.

In the case of the Athlone murder all the prisoners seem to have been afflicted with religious mania. They appear to have believed that James Cunningham, the murdered man, had the Devil in him. It would be hard to say how many atrocities this Bible-supported belief has given rise to.

Some prophetic lectures at Holloway Hall are headed "Second Coming of Our Lord and Approaching End of the Christian Dispensation." The first item has been so long delayed that we cannot take much stock therein; but it seems to us the "signs of the times" warrant some expectation of the second part of the program.

The religious papers used to be fond of recording "judgments." But the stories of the sudden deaths of unbelievers do not go down as they did when there was no contra account. The *Truthseeker* says: "No such case has been reported since the Connecticut judge, who issued a body-writ for the arrest of a minister, died of heart disease. That was in December, 1895, since when the *Truthseeker* has published the cases of at least twenty preachers and devotees struck down at prayer or worship, or while attending to duties connected with the church."

The list, it continues, is augmented every week: "(1) At Guthrie, Oklahoma, March 21, two men, James Ford and Harry Somers, were killed by lightning while painting the spire of a Baptist church. (2) At Leavenworth, Kan., March 24, Joseph Perkins, formerly a local preacher, died with the word 'Amen' upon his lips while praying beside the coffin of a dead friend. (3) At New York, March 31, James Kydd, aged 50, an elder in the Fourth Presbyterian church, fell dead at the door of the sanctuary. He had just spent an hour in the church making preparations for the Easter celebration."

Moses Harman, the editor of *Lucifer*, of Topeka, Kansas, was released from his year's imprisonment at Leavenworth on April 4. He was one of the Comstock gang's victims.

Chu Fong, a Chinese theatrical manager of New York, has been fined $500 for giving an exhibition on Sunday night. He maintains that his performance was of the nature of a sacred concert.

Rev. W. J. Dawson is interviewed in the *Sunday Magazine* for April. The interviewer notes his "fine specimens of furniture," the "beautifully carved oak," and the "choice oak panelling." In the course of the interview Mr. Dawson said: "I am relatively a poor man"; but the *New Age* regards this as "bitterly humorous," seeing that Mr. Dawson's income is "a good deal over £1,500 a year."

Ballington Booth knows the weak points of the Americans, and, in rounding on the old man, accuses him of objecting to the stars and stripes, and says that he intended to cut the United States in three portions, joining each to a section of Canada. If Ballington cannot run an army of his own, he is at least doing his best to ruin that of his father.

Bishop French, of Lahore, says it is a sad trial that "the Salvation Army lies in wait to draw away and alienate from us some of the best and holiest of our converts. Some of the most faithful and wholly consecrated among them they have lately inveigled and carried off to England for what they call their 'International Congress.' The bragging, vaunting spirit of the body is becoming so offensive and shocking to those in whom is anything of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, and the sectarian spirit is taking such almost demoniacal possession of them, that one must fear a terrible collapse some day of the whole system, which would, one fears, bring sad reproach and disgrace to the Christian name."

The *Times of India*, noticing the case of Himmat Singh, says: "The offence of this dismissed Salvationist officer was that he reported of a particular Gujerat district, in which three thousand soldiers were said to be on the rolls, that he could not find a single one." The answer to this was that so many converts had been "claimed in prayer." On the principle, "Ask and thou shalt receive," the S.A. might as well pray for all the world's inhabitants at once, and then claim them.

A burglar entered the Baptist church in Macomb, Illinois, and captured a quantity of tracts, such as picture the duration of eternity, the miseries of the damned, the necessity of a new birth, the joys of the redeemed, with an abundance of other reminders of the fallen condition o humanity. If captured and convicted of carrying away such demoralising literature, the culprit should be doomed to solitary confinement, with the reading, and, if possible, the memorising, of these tracts. Heroic punishment is demanded in such cases.—*Progressive Thinker.*

A new sect has sprung up at Oklahoma, calling itsel "The Perfected Body of Christ." Like so many other sects it claims to restore the purity of primitive Christianity. A prominent practice is that all the members gather round the altar and embrace and kiss each other. This feature of the proceedings is calculated to make them popular with young people. Indeed, the report says: "Vast crowds rush forward every night, kneel at the altar, get religion, and then are permitted to join in the more pleasurable devotions." From this account it would appear the honors heretofore monopolised by the preachers of other sects is to be shared in by all the brothers in this more generous church.

The *Review of the Churches* contains a curious symposium on the question, "Is a Commission on Foreign Mission Desirable?" No one ventures to say that the heathen themselves ought to be placed among the commissioners.

Mr. Gladstone celebrated the Rev. Mr. Baxter's attemp to demolish Wellhausen. Mr. Benn, of the *Academy*, thinks Baxter only worth the lines addressed to a zealous clergy man who felt impelled to answer Renan:—

> What! answer Renan! This you cannot do,
> You only answer when you're spoken to;
> And Renan speaks to scholars, not to you.

The Rev. Mr. Knight, of Whitburn, thinks the cry for attractive church services simply means that there should be as little religion in them as possible. How would it do for parsons to preach an occasional sermon on the mysteries of

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the offside rule, on the efficacy of May-fly on trout burns in April, on the lowering of the concert pitch, and on the fairness or unfairness of the stymic rule in golf? That would fetch some of the lapsed masses.—*Glasgow Weekly Herald.*

The *Atmik* is an "Anglo-Indian Missionary Monthly," which advocates "an Eastern Christianity." It opposes intoxicants, meat-eating, and the opium traffic, and recognises "that there are rays of Divine Truth in every religion." The number for April contains a letter by Mr. Joseph Collinson on the Vivisection question, and the editor, Mr. P. N. Chakraburtty, says: "Some *Secularist Humanitarians* have to teach *Christians* to be kind and just to animals, because Christians, being otherwise engaged, have not had time to realise that other animals are our fellow creatures, and that *birds* were not created by God our Father to adorn ladies' bonnets, even in churches and chapels."

The meeting of the Church Missionary Society was a great fiasco, and the *Daily News* suggests that its friends have not yet recovered from the shock of the £20,000 deficit.

Our Church pretends to be the guardian of marriage, but according to the law of Moses, as laid down in Deuteronomy xxiv. 1, all that was necessary for a man to get a divorce, if his wife found "no favor in his eyes," was to "write her a bill of divorcement, and give it to her hand and send her out of his house." Myer Goldstein, of Greenfield-street, Whitechapel, faithfully complied with the stipulations of the divine law, and was surprised to find that by the law of England he is still called upon to provide for the wife to whom he gave a bill of divorcement permitting her to go and marry anyone else she liked.

Bishop Temple has vetoed the discussion of the re-marriage of divorced persons at the London Diocesan Conference. He knows that he himself would be called over the coals by the High Churchmen there for obeying the State rather than the Church. Moreover, to discuss the opposition of the two bodies might be inconvenient. The Bishop knows better than to quarrel with his source of revenue.

There were some lively scenes at the vestry meeting of the Kilrush Protestant Church, Ireland, where one of the Town Councillors moved a vote of censure on the Venerable Archdeacon Wolseley for refusing to attend, or to send his curate to, the funeral of a parishioner. The resolution was seconded, but the Archdeacon, who was in the chair, refused to put it, on the ground that it was a vote of censure on the bishop, who had endorsed his action. Scenes of disorder ensued, and the customary vote of thanks was not accorded to the chairman.

The Rev. A. E. Breet, of the Jubilee (Bible Christian) Church, East-road, Hoxton, who recently was successfully sued on an affiliation summons, has determined to go abroad for some time. He still most emphatically denies the paternity of the child, and says that he hopes one of these days he will be able to find the real father, and thereby clear his name.

Boot's *Review of Charities and Missions* points out that in the century of its existence the London Missionary Society has spent between six and seven millions of money. It says: "What has been the result? There are about 95,000 persons gathered from all these heathen peoples into the fellowship of the Church of Christ; nearly half a million more are regarded as Christians by their heathen neighbors because, as the children of converts or as adults, they are under Christian instruction; and about 125,000 children, of whom in the Eastern Mission four-fifths are the children of the heathen, are being educated in the mission schools. At such a rate of progress—200,000, say, in 100 years—how many centuries will it be before the 287,000,000 of India, the 300,000,000 of China, and the teeming populations of other countries are brought to a correct apprehension of the Trinity?"

Boot's *Review* also says: "We have before commented on the fact that the accounts were audited merely by three of the honorary directors. For the year under review a fourth auditor is imported into the business, a Mr. Eliot P. S. Reed—whoever that gentleman may be. In the 'plan and constitution' of the Society thirteen rules are furnished, not one of which contains directions as to the auditing of the accounts, and we maintain that, considering the magnitude of financial transactions, an eminent firm of chartered accountants should coadjutate with the auditing directors."

A telegram from New York says: "Attempts are being made to evade the obnoxious Raines Liquor Law in this State. Saloon keepers are applying for hotel licences, allowing them to sell drink on Sundays. Many of these licences have been granted." Thus Puritan legislation always becomes a persecution of the poor. The wealthy and influential are able to smile at it.

Streams of pilgrims are again flowing into Lourdes. As they have to suffer much discomfort in the trains and from want of proper accommodation, and as they are brought into contact with those suffering all disorders, it is very questionable if Lourdes is not causing far more disease than it cures.

Father Black again calls attention in the *Church Times* to the unchurchly conduct of the Bishop of London. He advised the Rev. Mr. Webb-Peploe to lend his church recently for the marriage of an American clergyman, whose wife is divorced for incompatibility of temper, and the "marriage" was performed by the clergy of St. Paul's, Onslow-square. For this heinous conduct Father Black, who is an Anglican "Father," threatened the law on him, and pointed out that he, discharging his trust as bishop, prefers his private interpretation of a text of Scripture to the doctrine he is pledged to uphold.

Referring to the paucity of Confirmations, and these mostly of girls, the *Church Times* says: "The fact is that we are not making the headway in communicant life that is commonly supposed; and, unless some great change in our methods takes place very soon, we shall have to face decrease, and perhaps a very serious one."

Arthur F. Underwood, the superintendent of the Methodist singing class at Southend, has been sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, with hard labor, for an indecent assault in the chapel upon a girl of thirteen. Underwood was a married man of pious reputation.

The *All Saint's Weekly Gazette*, of South Shields, laments that the School Board, at the opening of the new Stanhope-road Board schools, did not have a single prayer. The Rev. J. Robson apparently thinks things are bound to go wrong where his own services are not brought into requisition.

The New York *Truthseeker* reports a singular case of lynching in the interests of religion. Dr. J. M. Hancock removed from Bonham to Ladonia, in Texas, where he was waited upon by a number of "ladies," who invited him to attend church regularly. He replied that he would consult his own feelings about it, and then they tried to get him to agree to attend prayer meeting for ten consecutive nights; but he would not promise, and later in the week they gave him a peremptory order to leave town. So he packed his grip and went to the depot to take the train. While in the waiting-room fifteen women marched in, armed with cowhides, and proceeded to apply the lashes to him with all their power. His face, hands, and neck were terribly lacerated, and blood poured from the gashes in streams. After whipping him the women went to their homes, and a great crowd gathered around, intense excitement prevailing. Dr. Hancock insisted on leaving, but his friends would not let him go, declaring that they would kill the first man or woman who attempted to lay violent hands on him again.

Dr. Hancock did not leave; on the contrary, twenty-one of "the leading ladies of Ladonia" have been arrested. Perhaps they will learn that their labors for Christ are too intensely pious for a civilised country.

The Anti-Gamblers' League held a meeting at Armagh, at which one of the speakers, a clergyman, declared that bookmakers could neither be pure nor Christian men. Up started a "bookie" and said that he could face God with confidence after making a good book. Another "bookie" endorsed this statement with much emphasis, and the League's resolution was defeated by a considerable majority. This is evidently a case for providential interference. God Almighty ought to settle this problem for the Churches: Can a "bookie" go to heaven? Of course it is possible that some "bookies" don't want to go there.

The Christian Temperance people forget the texts in favor of wine, and the anti-gambling Christians forget that the tribes raffled for their share of Palestine, and lots were even drawn as to who would be the twelfth apostle in place of Judas. Indeed, one of the Proverbs declared that "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

Mr. W. Q. Judge, the gentleman who forged the Mahatma letters which sweetly deceived the innocent Mrs. Besant, seems to have had a sneaking love for Theosophy after all. He has left a third of his residuary estate to the Aryan Theosophical Society. Had it not been for the rumpus in England, forced on by that wicked *Westminster Gazette*, Mrs. Besant's party here might have had that little windfall. Sad reflection! Enough for weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 26, St. James's Hall (Banqueting Hall), Piccadilly, W., at 7.30, "The Irreligion of Shakespeare."

May 10, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 3, 4, and 5, Birmingham; 10, Plymouth; 11, Devonport; 12, Liskeard; 13, Tavistock; 15, Plymton; 17, Plymouth; 24, Glasgow—the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. June 7, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

H. B.—Thanks for choice extracts, which we shall use as occasion serves.

MR. EDWARD CLODD (President of the Folk-Lore Society) writes: "Had your review of Frazer come under my notice, it should have had honorable mention in my address."

JOHN RICHARDS.—Accept our hearty congratulations.

H. J. BARTER.—See paragraph. We hope the local Freethinkers will all rally round the Branch.

THE PRESIDENT'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Acknowledgment of the following (per C. Cohen) has been accidentally delayed:—G. Rawson, 1s.; R. P., 1s.; F. H., 2s.; J. Craven, 1s.; Mrs. Craven, 1s.; S. H., 1s.; Mrs. Ainsworth, 2s. 6d. Per D. Black (Glasgow): Mr. McLeish, 2s. 6d.; R. Scott, 4s.; J. Ronald, 2s.; C. Moore, 1s.; J. Duncan, 1s. Per J. P. Gilmour (Glasgow): Mr. Frame, 10s. Per R. Forder: W. Cross, £1; C. E. Hall, 2s. 6d.; W. H. Spivey, 1s.; T. Stead, 1s.; T. Whitely, 1s.; J. Hughes, 10s.

MANXMAN.—There are some Freethinkers even in the Isle of Man, though we do not know of any at Ramsey. The Secular Burial Service you refer to is not issued by the Society. It was written by the late Austin Holyoake, and was read at his funeral. Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, can supply you with a copy, price twopence.

J. G. BRIGGS.—It is hardly worth reopening, though what you say is quite unanswerable.

D. KAY.—William Reddy, who ran amuck at Waterford, may or may not have been an Atheist. We have absolutely no information on the subject. The jury have found that he was insane. His father died a few years ago in an asylum. Of course an Atheist may fall a victim to brain disease as well as a Christian. The fact has no importance from a controversial point of view.

A. W. GRAHAM.—It is not a debate with Ingersoll. Father Lambert simply picks out passages from Ingersoll's lectures and subjoins his answers. Ingersoll has nothing to do with it.

J. SEDDON (Manchester).—No previous announcements of the debate have been received, and your present one comes late.

A. E. ASPINALL.—(1) We are waiting for information, and cannot answer your question until we obtain it. (2) We know the Volney passage you refer to, but it is not decisive. Darwin left the word "Creator" in his writings after he had become an Agnostic.

G. BEDBOROUGH.—Cuttings always welcome.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Progressive Thinker—De Dageraad—Monist—Metaphysical Magazine—Secular Thought—Worker's Friend—Dominion Review—Chatham Observer—South Shields Gazette—Home News—Times of India—Truthseeker—Open Court—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Liberty—Lucifer—Isle of Man Times—Twentieth Century—New York Public Opinion—Chatham News—Der Arme Teufel—Boston Investigator—Post.

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

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

At San Miguel, in Peru, the mayor seized, and caused to be burned in the public square of the city, all the Bibles and stock of the local agent of the American Bible Society. Mr. Foulke, the treasurer of the Society, says: "They have destroyed the Bibles before, they destroy them now, and will probably destroy them again. But, just the same, we shall continue to send our Bibles there." There seems to be fanaticism on both sides. But "it is all good for the printing trade," as a printer of our acquaintance says when he takes religious tracts to light his pipe.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OWING to the sudden sultry weather, and perhaps more to the brief time for advertising, Mr. Foote's audience at St. James's Hall on Sunday evening was not quite so large as on previous occasions. Mr. Charles Watts presided. The lecture on "Tolstoi and Jesus Christ" was listened to with profound attention and very warmly applauded. There was no discussion, though it was invited. Mr. Foote lectures at St. James's Hall again this evening (April 26), his subject being one that should interest all Freethinkers and lovers of the highest English literature—"The Irreligion of Shakespeare." No doubt the increased advertising will bring a larger meeting. Mr. Watts will preside again.

Friends will note that the entrance to the Banqueting Hall, where Mr. Foote lectures, is in Regent-street. Those who come unprovided with tickets will be able to obtain them before entering.

Mr. Foote's new pamphlet—*The Sign of the Cross*, a Candid Criticism of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play—is now on sale. Of course it includes very much more than the articles that appeared in the *Freethinker*. The whole subject of the Neronic persecution is fully discussed, and this part of the pamphlet should be valuable to all Freethought propagandists, particularly on account of the light thrown upon the famous passage in Tacitus. The pamphlet extends to forty-eight large pages. It is beautifully printed, and the price is sixpence. Press copies are being sent to all the leading newspapers, as well as to the literary and theatrical journals.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference takes place at Glasgow on Whit-Sunday. It is ten years since the Conference was held in Scotland, and it will be a slight upon the Scottish Freethinkers if the English Freethinkers are at all slack in sending representatives. A very fine hall has been secured for the public meeting in the evening. In another column our readers will find particulars, from the pen of Mr. Gilmour, of the proposed Whit-Monday excursion, in which it is hoped that a large number of the delegates and visitors will join. Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts will probably join the excursion, should it be definitely arranged.

The President has a most important scheme to lay before the Conference. Its object is to circumvent the Blasphemy Laws which cripple Freethought financially. It has been worked out under first-class legal advice, and will be fully explained at the Conference.

Mr. John Richards, of Ryhope, near Sunderland, has gallantly stood by the Freethought movement there in times of darkness and difficulty. We are therefore delighted to hear that the new Parish Council of the district, at their first meeting, have elected Mr. Richards as their chairman for twelve months.

Mr. Ralph Chapman, the secretary of the N.S.S. at South Shields, ran as an Independent Labor candidate for the Parish Council, and came out at the top of the poll, being now chairman of that body. Almost everyone in the district knows his views.

No. 2 of the *Dominion Review*, of Toronto, opens with a capital article on "The Fifth Gospel"—meaning the Gospel of Evolution, by Dr. Woods Hutchinson, of Iowa University. Allen Pringle writes on "Hygienic Living," and H. Washington on "Protection and Crime." Among reprinted matter is Professor Boyesen's article on "Woman's Position in Pagan Times," and Mr. Wheeler's paper on "Moon-Lore," taken from our columns.

The *Vegetarian Messenger* for this month has an article by Mr. Joseph Collinson on the work of the Humanitarian League.

The *Chatham and Rochester News* devotes three quarters of a column to a report of Mr. Foote's recent lecture on "The Curse of Creeds." The same paper also inserts a long and telling letter from Mr. Boorman in reply to the Rev. W. H. Bowers.

The *Scotsman*, which in the days of "Sandy" Russel did good work towards the liberalising of the then gloomy Scottish Sawbath, had a good article last Thursday on the cry now being raised by the Sabbath Alliance of "The Lord's Day in Danger." It tells these good people: "Outside of this country—and it has to be borne in mind that there are Christian and decent and right-judging people outside of this country—there will be difficulty in so much as comprehending what the outcry is about." This, however, is not so hard to perceive. "The Sabbath in danger" really means "Our monopoly of the Sabbath in danger."

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The gems of the newly-opened National Portrait Gallery are the pictures of Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Rossetti, and Carlyle, by G. F. Watts, R.A. But there are many fine pictures there. Among notable heads are those of Jeremy Bentham (room xxix.), and of Thomas Hobbes at the age of eighty-one (room v.)—the very ideal of an aged philosopher. Room xxi. is of special interest to Freethinkers. On the same wall are portraits of Paine, by Millière, after Romney, of Robert Owen, Joseph Priestley, Wilkes, Washington, "Orator" Hunt, and Thomas Taylor, the Platonist, a remarkable man, whose portrait is but little known.

The Plymouth Branch holds a special meeting this evening (April 26), at 7, at the Democratic Club, Whimple-street, for the purpose of making final arrangements for Mr. Charles Watts's approaching visit. Mr. Watts is to lecture at Plymouth for the Branch, and in surrounding places under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme. We hope all the local Freethinkers will attend this meeting and strengthen the hands of the Committee for a good spell of successful work.

Mr. Cohen holds a public debate in the Manchester Secular Hall this Thursday and Friday evening (April 23 and 24), with the Rev. H. W. Dick, curate of St. James's, Moss Side. The subject is Secularism, which Mr. Cohen will affirm is an adequate guide for mankind; Mr. Dick affirming that it is untrue in its view of the universe, man, and morals. Chair to be taken each evening at 8.

We are printing an English edition of Colonel Ingersoll's new lecture, *The Foundations of Faith*. It is causing a good deal of sensation in the United States. Our edition will be ready next week.

Owing to the pressure upon our space this week, we are obliged to postpone the continuation of our article on 'Ingersoll 'Lies.'"

FOR ME; OR, SELFISH SALVATION.

(Dedicated to Christians in general, and Boothites in particular.)

Up above—although you can't descry it—
There's a heav'n suspended in the air;
If you want a seat, belief will buy it,
I have bought a front one, and I know 'tis waiting there—
For me, for me, 'tis waiting there for me;
A penny I've not sacrificed—
I bought it with the blood of Christ!
Ha ha! He he! in heav'n I soon shall be,
An easy chair, is waiting there,
For me, me, me, me, me!

All my life—and now my hair is hoary—
I have been a good-for-nothing wretch,
But I'm "saved," and soon shall go to glory;
Jesus Christ a golden harp and crown has gone to fetch—
For me, for me, he's fetching them for me,
They both are gratis and unpriced—
They're paid for with the blood of Christ!
Ha ha! He he! I'm jolly as can be;
From sin I'm freed, for Christ was "treed,"
For me, me, me, me, me!

Ev'ry kind of crime I have committed;
I'm too bad to live upon this earth.
But I've washed in blood, and so I'm fitted
For the heavenly regions, and I know there is a berth—
For me, for me, there is a berth for me;
For, though of rogues I've been the chief,
In Jesus Christ I have belief.
Ha, ha! He, he! belief in Jesus C.
Turns black souls white, and makes it right
For me, me, me, me, me!

What care I how many lives I've blighted,
Through my deeds so devilish and fell;
Soon with Christ I'm going to be united;
As for other people, why they all can go to hell—
For me, for me, can go to hell for me;
So long as I am with the blest,
I trouble not about the rest.
Ha, ha! He, he! I do not care a D.,
I know there is a heav'n of bliss
For me, me, me, me, me!

Ess Jay Bee.

Christian Evidence!

Wood Green Boy—"I know the Bible's true, 'cause we've got a piece of shittim wood at our school wot Noah's ark was made on." West Green Boy—"Gar'n, that's nuffin. Our schoolmaster's got the Cane wot killed Abel." West Green Boy—"Ah, I thought I could *Pale-is* evidence.'

LECTURING NOTES.

Those readers of this journal who have watched the progress and expansion of Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme must be quite satisfied with the useful results which have already been attained through its aid. It is the greatest propagandist effort that has been made since the formation of the National Secular Society. It is an up-to-date movement; it provides that the public shall have an opportunity of hearing Freethought views expounded "without money and without price," except what is voluntarily given at the collections. That the scheme has "caught on" there cannot be the slightest doubt, for from all the Branches of the N.S.S. there comes but one unanimous chorus of approval. It is extremely gratifying to see such a large number of strangers—most of them professed Christians—who attend the lectures given under this scheme; and the marked and respectful attention they pay to what is said by the speakers is striking evidence of the increased interest that is being taken in Secular advocacy.

The truth of these remarks was forcibly illustrated during my recent tour in the North. In addition to six lectures which I delivered on two Sundays in South Shields, under the auspices of the local Branch of the N.S.S., I lectured in Stockton, Middlesboro', and Stanley, in the county of Durham, through the aid of the new scheme. All the meetings were well attended by most appreciative audiences. At Stockton the hall was crowded, and a very animated discussion followed the lecture, which was much enjoyed and enthusiastically applauded. The debate did not conclude until after ten o'clock. To me this part of the proceedings was quite a treat, for discussion now is the exception, whereas formerly it was the rule. Nothing is more advantageous to our cause than fair and gentlemanly controversy. It gives the Secular lecturer an opportunity to correct errors that have been formed in the theological mind, either through a lack of knowledge as to what our principles are, or else in consequence of prejudice engendered by pulpit utterances. For this advantage we are indebted to the free admission to the lectures, which is one of the principal features of the new scheme.

At Middlesboro' the local friends of the movement attended, and many familiar faces were present from the surrounding districts. Steps are being taken to form two new Branches in that locality. Here also I had a pleasant and protracted debate, which appeared to be highly relished by both the Christian and Freethought portions of the audience.

At Stanley I broke new ground, and spoke to over five hundred men and women, many of whom had travelled several miles to attend the lecture. An ex-minister asked numerous questions, for the purpose, he said, "of obtaining information." After which, he made a long and good-natured speech; but, unfortunately, it was not relevant to the lecture. I received many pressing invitations to give a course of Sunday lectures in the district, and numerous inquiries were made as to when Mr. Foote would visit the locality. Stanley and its surrounding places are excellent fields for our propaganda. The working men there are well-informed, discreet, and energetic. They appear to know what to do, and how to do it, and their efforts are supported by their wives and daughters, which is of immense service in Secular work. I had promises, from several both old and new friends, that a Branch of the N.S.S. should be formed there immediately.

My next fields of operations, under Mr. Foote's scheme, will be in the districts of Birmingham and Plymouth, where I expect large gatherings. In the West of England arrangements have been made for me not only to lecture in Plymouth and Devonport, but also to break new ground in Liskeard, Tavistock, and Plymton. I earnestly invite all the Freethought friends in these various districts to render all possible support to the members of the Plymouth Branch of the N.S.S., who are devoting much time and labor in the endeavor to make this week of propagandist work a thorough success. Every Secularist in the different localities should regard it as a duty to render what aid he or she can on this occasion. Let us, to begin with, have a good muster on Sunday morning, May 10, at the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth.

Thus I am engaged up to Whit Sunday, when the Conference is to be held in Glasgow. This promises to be the most important annual gathering that we have held for

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many years. I hope, therefore, to meet on that occasion a large number of true friends of the "good old cause." Fortunately, the local arrangements for the Conference are in good hands. I know from long experience that the Glasgow friends are composed of the right metal. Whatever they undertake to do they do well; and, personally, I am delighted that Glasgow has been selected for the coming Conference.

With few exceptions, Mr. Foote's scheme has hitherto been applied only to week-night lectures; but it will be a grand thing to extend its usefulness to our Sunday meetings. If this could be done, we should be better able to compete with the Churches. Our audiences would be increased tenfold. I think our President would be favorable to such an extension if the pecuniary means could be provided. I should be pleased to see the Lecture Fund sufficiently supported to allow the experiment of free Sunday lectures to be tried throughout the country. In my opinion, the success of such an "advancement in the right direction" would be certain. I happen to know that many friends, both in London and in the provinces, share my view upon this subject. Wealth cannot be better used than in spreading a knowledge of those Secular truths that will destroy superstition and hasten the dawn of that period when reason shall exercise its legitimate influence, and mental freedom will be permitted to confer its real blessings upon the human race.

CHARLES WATTS.

MR. W. HEAFORD'S LECTURING TOUR IN SCOTLAND.

MR. HEAFORD is one of the privileged few who take pleasure, and find recuperative virtue, in continuous hard work. Accordingly, instead of dissipating his annual vacation, as many of us do in the most approved, lackadaisical, sweet-doing-nothing style, he spends it lecturing in the provinces three times each Sunday, and nightly through the week, if possible; while Mr. Heaford's predilection for the country North of the Tweed, as the circuit-ground for his missionary labors and recreative wanderings, redounds greatly to his credit as a man of taste and judgment—at least, from a Scotsman's point of view.

On Easter Sunday Mr. Heaford opened his round of engagements at Edinburgh, where he lectured twice to excellent audiences, and enjoyed a reunion with Messrs. Dewar, Brown, and other local veterans. Monday had been originally destined for Dunoon, but as the Glasgow Spring Holiday fell on that date, and Dunoon, in common with all the Clyde watering-places, was inundated with excursionists, a meeting was out of the question. Of course, we were sorry not to have an opportunity of revisiting a town in which Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme has borne such solid, practical results; but, after all, there is little fear that the sensation created by the visits of Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen will subside without leaving a permanent impression. As readers of the *Freethinker* are aware, a correspondence on Secularism is still going on merrily in the local newspapers, and this represents only a fraction of the total output of the controversy which is resounding all over the district, so that echoes of it may even have reached the "noble" author of *The Reign of Law*, in his ugly castle at Inverary. Besides, we have an outpost of clear-headed and self-reliant patrols at Dunoon who may be trusted to jealously guard the interests of the Cause in their neighborhood until we can send another detachment of pioneers from headquarters to extend our line still farther into the enemy's territory.

At Paisley, on April 7, Mr. Heaford lectured to a fair audience on "A Better Creed than Christianity." No one put in an appearance for Christianity, but some Socialists raised objections to the lecturer's presentment of Secularism which exhibited an unaccountable ignorance of the nature and scope of our movement, or a lamentable incapacity to understand them. Mr. Heaford had claimed that Secularism stands for Liberty and Progress, that many of the greatest men of science, social reformers, and humanitarians were on our side, and also that education made for the secularisation of human character and activity. In disproof of these contentions an astute (?) objector asked if it were not a *fact*—cheap and artless question-begging vocable—that Mr. Bradlaugh voted for coercion, that Professor Tyndall was a rabid Unionist, and that education often landed the greatest men in the nether pit of religious reaction, as in the case of Newman, Manning, and Gladstone; while a second ingenuous querist wanted to know whether Secularism was anything more than a Bible-banging, parson-slanging apparatus, and, if not, what it had done for humanity? I need not reproduce Mr. Heaford's answers; they were direct and forcible, and his vindication of Mr. Bradlaugh's memory from an aspersion at once cruel and absurd was both drastic and decisive. Some Socialists who profess to be Freethinkers assume a strangely inconsistent, and hardly honorable, attitude towards Secularism. It may be true, as they aver, that the so-called economic factor exercises a preponderatingly inhibitory influence upon liberty of thought and action, although an analysis of this *causa causans* shows that it is a complex of determinants, of which religion is a great part; but I reserve what I have to say on this point for a separate article. The Paisley Branch is making steady progress, and it has creditably distinguished itself during the past season by its hospitable treatment of the Lecture Scheme, and the zeal and loyalty with which it has sought to carry that plan into operation.

Wednesday found us at Motherwell, which has always been bountiful in the matter of audiences, and did not fail us on this occasion. There was a fine inspiriting meeting, but only a fiddle-faddling discussion. One mystery-man, consumed with a thirst for useless knowledge, requested Mr. Heaford to oblige him with an exact account of the origin of the universe, of intelligence, of the belief in the supernatural, and like "unconsidered trifles"; and when the lecturer admitted that he had really no positive information to give in reference to some of these topics his interlocutor nodded sagely, and, ejaculating exultantly, "Ah, ha! I thought so; I knew you couldn't answer me," he leaned back upon his seat with a widespread smile of seraphic self-complacency upon his harvest-moon face. A second interrogator, an addle-headed Irishman, was so incoherent as to be barely intelligible; while a third, who was rather more collected and reasonable, couldn't understand how Christianity was palmed off on the world at the beginning of its era, if it were an imposture. The Motherwell friends, who include in their number some exceedingly earnest and capable young men, are doing their best to organise a Branch, and hope to accomplish their object forthwith.

The Hamilton district has been lying fallow for some years, and, as a natural result, there has been a decline of interest in our movement. This, no doubt, accounted to some extent for the comparatively small meeting there, since there was no lack of adequate preparation on the part of the Hamilton friends. Mr. Heaford's lecture, "Is the Bible Reliable?" was evidently much relished, and elicited a few unimportant questions from a Bible Christian, who calmly asserted that the Hexateuch was written 6000 B.C. We were glad to meet some of the Secularists of the district who formerly carried on the work of the Hamilton Branch, and we hope to see it reopened at the beginning of our next season's propaganda.

A visit to Kilmarnock brought the week-night meetings to a close. Unfortunately, the prospects of a large meeting, which our hard-working local correspondent forecast as very good, were ruined by a terrific downpour of sleet and rain at the critical moment when the meeting was going in. However, there was still a moderate gathering, and the lecture, which was very cordially received, provoked considerable discussion. One somewhat whimsical opponent thought it very strange that men died, although they desired to live forever, and was puzzled by the fact that disease should cause death at all. Having propounded the physiological law of death as a condition for the perpetuation of life, Mr. Heaford added that while, as far as we can see, death must always be the effect of some form of disease, there were yet many preventable diseases, which sanitary science could stamp out or mitigate, and so lengthen the average lifetime. He thought that this was a reform much needed in Kilmarnock, where they had a shamefully bad record for virulent epidemics and a high death-rate. Strong as was the odor of sanctity in their midst, it was not a powerful enough deodorant of the other and more carnal stenches, which spoke of defective drainage and a supine Corporation. From accounts received by Mr. Heaford from some of the Kilmarnock friends it seems that the place is demoralised

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by theological terrorism. If a man is suspected of heresy, he is almost certain to lose his work, and if he is a shopkeeper his customers will boycott him. It is actually alleged that a minister in the town, who must be a lineal descendant of the Russell or Moodie pilloried by Burns, not long ago solemnly warned the unmarried women in the community not to accept any non-church-goer as a sweetheart, and that this advice has been so largely acted upon that no godless absentee from "divine worship" need go a-courting with any hope of success. Mr. Heaford's statements are confirmed by a passage in a letter from my Kilmarnock correspondent, who says: "In Kilmarnock we have one of the greatest strongholds of orthodoxy and priest-ridden bigotry to be found in Britain. This being a small place, each one is known to everybody else; and to be seen at a Secularist meeting would be a risk the average man would not care to incur." My friend continues that more might be done by outdoor meetings, and suggests that when Mr. Heaford returns he might address an open-air meeting at Kilmarnock Cross with advantage. It is also pointed out that Newmilns, and other towns in Ayrshire, contain a greater percentage of Freethinkers than Kilmarnock, and so might be operated upon to some purpose. It is clear that in this district we have a wide field in which to assail a most oppressive form of clericalism, and to concentrate and utilise Freethought forces at present diffused and relatively unproductive.

On Saturday Mr. Heaford and the present writer passed a delightful day climbing the breezy Arran hills, dominated by snow-clad Goatfell; and on Sunday, April 12, Mr. Heaford concluded his holiday by delivering three lectures in Glasgow.

I have already, in my reports of Mr. Watts's and Mr. Cohen's lecturing tours in the West of Scotland, expressed my deep sense of the supreme importance and serviceableness of Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme. At the risk of being thought tedious, I desire here to renew my testimony to that effect; and I speak not for myself alone, but also for the members of the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S. We have carefully tested the capabilities of the scheme by giving it sustained practical application and noting the results, and our deliberate judgment is that it is admirably adapted for the objects which it contemplates—namely, the extension of Secularism into parts of the country not hitherto reached by any of the ordinary methods of propaganda, and the revival and invigoration of Branches which, from various causes, have sunk into a state of comparative lassitude and inaction. Never in the history of Secularism in the west of Scotland has more substantial progress been achieved in the propagation of Secularism than in the last five months, and unquestionably we owe this to the facilities afforded by the scheme, which we have welcomed ungrudgingly as a thoroughly feasible plan, and, as such, a blessed relief from documentary theories or amiable suggestions which never emerge from the pen-and-ink stage. The Glasgow Branch can speak with the authority that springs from, and has its sanction in, experience; and, after giving to the Lecture Scheme both of their substance and their service, they are so fully satisfied with the issues of the experiment that they cordially recommend the scheme to the goodwill and the suffrages of their *confrères* throughout Great Britain.

J. P. GILMOUR.

Those Cats.

It was near midnight of the fifth day out, and all was peaceful on board the Ark. Wearied by his labors in feeding the animals and navigating the vessel, Noah was wrapped in a profound sleep.

Suddenly there was a commotion among the animals. One of the tigers had succeeded in thrusting his paw through the galvanised iron-wire partition that separated him from the hyena, and had dug his claws into that interesting creature's hide.

There arose a fierce outcry, in which all the beasts of prey in that part of the ark joined; and the noise aroused Noah into partial consciousness.

"Japhet," he said, stirring uneasily, "get something to throw; the neighbors' cats are in the back yard again!"

Dr. Johnson, in his *Life of Milton*, defines poetry as "the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason."

MOTHER THOUGHTS.

FAMILIAR acts are beautiful through love.—*Shelley.*

The living are more and more governed by the dead.—*A. Comte.*

Every heart contains perfection's germ.—*Shelley.*

Great thoughts come from the heart.—*Vauvenargues.*

No creed can contain the whole of truth.

Joy is the great lifter of man, the great unfolder.—*Matthew Arnold.*

Knowledge, like food, requires digestion.

God, immortality, duty—how inconceivable the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third.—*George Eliot.*

The greatest piece of good fortune is that which corrects our deficiencies and redeems our mistakes.—*Goethe.*

The fashion of this world passeth away; and I would fain occupy myself only with the abiding.—*Goethe.*

Whoso is content with pure experience and acts upon it has enough of truth.—*Goethe.*

The eye only sees what it brings the power of seeing.—*Carlyle.*

Naught is taught well except what is known familiarly and taught often.—*Matthew Arnold.*

The love of liberty and the love of equality is simply the instinct in man for expansion.—*Matthew Arnold.*

Inequality materialises our upper class, vulgarises our middle class, and brutalises our lower.—*Matthew Arnold.*

Justice insists on obligation, law on decorum. Justice weighs and decides, law superintends and orders. Justice refers to the individual, law to society.—*Goethe.*

Ingratitude is always a kind of weakness. I have never known men of ability to be ungrateful.—*Goethe.*

There are two powers that make for peace: what is right and what is fitting.—*Goethe.*

Calumny can make a cloud seem a mountain; can even make a cloud become a mountain.—*Sir Arthur Helps.*

Truth is within ourselves. It takes
No rise from outward things;
There is an inmost centre in us all
Where truth abides in fulness.—*Browning.*

This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.
—*Shakespeare.*

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.—*Keats.*

Confucius said: "If a State is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are subjects of shame; if a State is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honors are the subjects of shame."

The child gets his first conception of truth when he gets his first conception of falsehood.

Every man has enough power left to carry out that of which he is convinced.—*Goethe.*

Love is a true renovator.—*Goethe.*

The finest hair throws a shadow.—*Erasmus.*

If God made us in his own image, we have amply returned the compliment.—*Fontenelle.*

Beauty can never really understand itself.—*Goethe.*

The errors of a man are what make him really lovable.—*Goethe.*

Thoughts come back, beliefs persist; facts pass by never to return.—*Goethe.*

There is no use in reproving vulgarity, for it never changes.—*Goethe.*

If a clever man commits a folly, it is not a small one.—*Goethe.*

The whole art of life consists in giving up existence in order to exist.—*Goethe.*

Scepticism is a duty, and blind faith an unpardonable sin.—*Huxley.*

Heredity and environment are the two main factors of sin or wrong-doing.

The discovery of what is true, and the practice of that which is good, are the two most important objects of philosophy.—*Voltaire.*

It is not enough to know, we must also apply; it is not enough to will, we must also do.—*Goethe.*

When you lose interest in anything, you also lose the memory of it.—*Goethe.*

Forethought is simple; afterthought is manifold.—*Goethe*

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BOOK CHAT.

Two volumes, edited from the notes and lectures of the late Professor Croom Robertson, are to be published in Mr. Murray's University Extension Series. One will be entitled *Elements of Philosophy*, the other *Elements of Psychology*; and both are edited by Mrs. Foley Rhys Davids.

* * *

Dr. Benjamin Jowett's biography is to be written by Mr. Evelyn Abbott and Professor Lewis Campbell, both old Balliol friends. The work will be published by Murray in two volumes.

* * *

A Plea for the New Woman, by May Collins (New York: *Truthseeker* Co., 28 Lafayette-place), is a lecture by a new and most promising accession to the American Freethought platform. Miss Collins is evidently well read, and has thought for herself. She sees clearly that Christianity in the past has stood in the way of the emancipation of her sex. She claims that that question shall be considered, not from the standpoint of either sex, but of that of the welfare of the race; and urges that, with equality of rights and opportunities, there will be no fear that one sex will usurp the sphere of the other, or that the feminine element will rebel against itself. Maternity and nature will assert their claims.

* * *

Miss Collins looks forward to Freethought, and not to Christianity, to raise the status of woman. She says: "In the progress of civilisation and modern enlightenment, the teachings of Paul, unable to bear up under the pressure of religious scepticism, are gradually melting from before our eyes, and the Christian woman is beginning to burst through her prison bars, and to treat Paul's ordinance regarding her sex as 'the baseless fabric of a vision'—'only such stuff as dreams are made of.'"

* * *

We rejoice to think that Frances Wright, Mrs. Stanton, and Mrs. Rose have such successors in America as Miss H. Gardener and Miss May L. Collins. The last-named is, we believe, but nineteen years of age. With the enthusiasm of youth, she looks forward to greater results from legal enactments than experience warrants. But her aims are noble, and the task she has taken up of seeking to enlighten her sisters has our warmest commendation. She has read good authors, like Buckle, Mill, and Lecky. She knows enough to be aware that, like the rest of us, she still has much to learn, and we look forward to her future with great hope that she will not be spoilt by flattery.

* * * .

Songs for the Sons of God is the rather magniloquent title of a little pamphlet of verse by Griffith Dell (Manchester: Labor Press Society, 57 Tib-street). The "Sons of God" are, it appears, "those that are endeavoring to establish Democracy upon the earth"—to whom the songs are dedicated. They appear to have no connection with "the daughters of men," as the poet begins:—

> I am tired of the mellow music that steals from the silver strings
> Of the lute of some plaintive lover who dreams of his love and sings.

He then bursts into "A Song on the Way":—

> Onward march and raise the chorus,
> Sons of God;
> Waves the flame-red banner o'er us,
> Clear the light is shining for us,
> Sons of God.

The *Songs* have some force and music, and remind us strongly of the influence of Mr. Swinburne.

* * *

The April *Monist*, like so many other publications, treats of the Roentgen rays, the sensational popular interest in which is giving way to a spirit of scientific investigation. Both Professor Mach (of Vienna) and Professor Schubert (of Hamburg) write thereon; and actinograms are given—one of a lady's hand, showing the position of a needle broken off in the thumb; and another of a plaice with shells in its intestines. Professor Joseph Le Conte contributes a notable article, entitled "From Animal to Man." Admitting the close resemblance and the immense difference; admitting also the genetic connection—the one having come out of the other by a process of evolution—he seeks to find the dividing line where humanity emerges from animality, and fixes this in self-consciousness. There are other philosophical articles, on "The Dualistic Conception of Nature," "Nature and the Individual Mind," "The Nature of Pleasure and Pain," etc.

* * *

The late Anna Bonus Kingsford, according to her colleague, Mr. Edward Maitland, had gone through a most varied career. Previously to her last incarnation she had appeared on this earth in the characters of Mary Magdalene, the Empress Faustine, Joan of Arc, and also Anne Boleyn, shortly before her friend, the Countess of Caithness, enacted the *rôle* of Mary Stuart. A lady who had occupied so many distinguished positions should have accumulated a varied experience. But in all her incarnations it was her habit to die young, which may account for the lack of worldly wisdom in her latest appearance.

* * *

The *Tablet*, noticing Mr. Maitland's Life of Mrs. Kingsford, says: "This poor, silly woman, during her last illness, recognised the illusions of her sorry life and called for a priest. She made her confession to Mgr. Moore, and received the last blessing of the Church before she died." We understand that Mr. Maitland puts a somewhat different construction on the last actions of his friend and colleague.

* * *

Professor Max Müller announces in the *Athenæum* that he has been working at a very big book on "Comparative Mythology," which he hopes will be out before the year is over. He still holds that most myths are solar. We trust he will have the courage to devote a section to the mythology which has found its way into Christianity.

PROFANE JOKES.

Gotham Girl—"How do you New Englanders get over the fact that your ancestors believed in witches?". Boston Girl—"We call it hypnotism."

Papa—"Did you ask God to give you your daily bread this morning?" Bobby—"No, papa; I looked in the pantry last night, and saw that there was enough to last for three days."

Applicant—"I have here, sir, a letter of recommendation from my minister; I think you will find it highly satisfactory." Employer—"Yes; it's good so far as it goes; but, as I shall not need your services on Sundays, I should prefer to have a few testimonials from people who know you the other six days of the week."

An itinerant evangelist always carried about with him his own pickles, a very pungent West Indian brand. One day a commercial asked if he might try them; and, upon doing so, remarked: "I knew you sky-pilots traded in hell, but, by Jabers, I did not know you carried samples."

"Our mother Church," said the preacher, "is like a giant, with one foot firmly planted on the earth, the other pointing to heaven."

"A sailor going to sea, his wife desires the prayers of the congregation for his safety." Such was the message as given to the parson. It was read out in church like this: "A sailor going to see his wife, desires the prayers of the congregation for his safety."

A certain reverend sky-pilot preaching a very dull sermon to a congregation not used to him, many of them slunk out of the church, one after another, before the sermon was nearly ended. "Truly," said a gentleman present, "this learned doctor has made a very *moving* discourse!"

Father O'Rourke—"Michael, my son, I hope you vote as I do." Mike Finnegan—"An' how does your riverence vote?" Father O'Rourke—"Oh, I vote as I pray." Mike Finnegan—"Och, it's for money, thin. Yis, your riverence; Oi am wid yez."

Heedless and Toothless.

"Reeling again, Janet!"

"Well, ye see, minister, ane canna be aye spinnin'."

"An' do you know where you are going?"

"Brawly; I aye gang where I get it best and cheapest."

"I fear, Janet, if you don't mend your ways you will go where there is nothing but wailing and gnashing of teeth."

"Let them gnash awa' that hae them, for feint a stump hae I had for the last twenty year."

It Was Not the Cherub.

It is suggested that the creatures butchered by the Lord God, to supply skins to clothe Adam and Eve, were probably the cherubs who were placed at the eastern gate of the Garden of Eden to protect the tree of life. This cannot be correct, for in Psalm xviii. 10 the reader is told of God: "He rode upon a cherub and did fly." This was a later affair. The probabilities are the flood threw the cherub out of a job, then he engaged in the carrying trade, and in due time had the distinguished passenger mentioned by David, all of which indicated he was still in possession of a whole hide.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

ST. JAMES'S HALL (Banqueting Hall, Piccadilly, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Irreligion of Shakespeare."

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 7.45, social evening. Thursday, at 8, urgent meeting of members.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, Robert Forder, "Bradlaugh as I Knew Him."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 6, tea; 7, conversazione.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Voltaire, the French Freethinker."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute—final arrangements for open-air propaganda.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, H. Spence, "Why I am a Member of this Society."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-Street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Rival Gods."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Harry Courtney will lecture.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Christian Religion."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, a lecture.

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, Lucretius Keen, "Christianity or Secularism: Which has Done More for Mankind?"

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, Lucretius Keen, "Christianity or Secularism: Which has Done More for Mankind?" 3.30, a lecture.

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street): 11.30, a lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, E. Pack, "The Resurrection."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Charles Bradlaugh."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 3.15, Stanley Jones will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butcher's Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, E. J. Sale, "The Crucifixion."

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, quarterly meeting of teachers, scholars, and friends.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, Touzeau Parris; also at 2.30 and 6.30.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, musical evening.

LEEDS (Vulcan Club, Vulcan-street, Benson-street): 7, social evening.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Ross, "Curiosities, Ancient and Modern."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, C. Cohen, "Woman, Past, Present, and Future"; 6.30, "Evolution *v.* Special Creation." Thursday and Friday (April 23 and 24), debate on Secularism between the Rev. W. H. Dick and Mr. C. Cohen.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 3, monthly meeting of members.

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, special members' meeting to arrange for Mr. Watts's tour.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, lantern lecture, "Ireland and its Scenery."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, adjourned discussion, "The New Education Bill."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 11, a lecture.

DERBY (Market-place): J. E. Briggs, "Who or What was Jesus Christ?"

MANCHESTER (Stevenson-square): 3, C. Cohen, "Miracles."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 3, lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 26, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—April 26, Glasgow. May 3, Failsworth; 10, Balls Pond.

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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—No. 18. SUNDAY, MAY 3, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE EDUCATION BILL.

(Concluded from page 258.)

FROM the Freethought point of view, there is a good deal to be said for and against the proposal in this Education Bill to put a large part, and in time perhaps the whole, of the elementary education machinery under the County Councils. The Nonconformist objection to it is well expressed by Sir Henry Fowler, who says it will poison municipal life by introducing theological bitterness into municipal elections. But this is an objection which is not likely to excite the sympathy of Freethinkers. "Theological bitterness" among Christians is a domestic matter. The more they quarrel and scratch and bite each other the more the thoughtful public are likely to grow disgusted with religion altogether. On the other hand, the education of children is of vast importance, and it would, on the whole, be probably best to have it controlled by a specially elected body of men and women, chosen for their fitness in this respect by the parents themselves, who may otherwise take less interest in the subject.

The greatest danger of this proposal arises in connection with the clauses authorising the Voluntary schools in any district to club together, so as to be recognised by the County Councils as an Association. Such an Association may receive money for all the schools thus associated, and distribute it at pleasure. By this means the wealthier schools might aid the poorer ones; and, as all the schools of any religious denomination may associate in this way, it is obvious that the arrangement will practically mean the establishment of powerful Church of England corporations. This will be a danger to Freethought as well as to Nonconformity, and in my judgment the clause should be opposed by our party. No doubt the point will be fully discussed at the National Secular Society's approaching Annual Conference, and whatever decision is arrived at ought to be loyally supported by English Secularists. (The Act does not apply to Scotland or Ireland.)

Let us now turn to the twenty-seventh section of the Bill, which deals specially with the subject of religious instruction.

Lord Salisbury has said that the religion taught at present, at least in Board schools, is Nonconformist religion; and in one sense he is right. Nonconformists have dogmas just as well as Churchmen, but if dogmas are taught they will probably take a Church color. For this reason, and for this reason only, the Nonconformists oppose the introduction of dogmas altogether. Their plan is to let the children receive the undenominational minimum of Christian teaching. This is a safe starting point. It is the creation, so to speak, of the raw material of Christianity; and in course of time Dissenting ministers may get hold of it and mould it to the pattern of their denominations, in free and open competition with the clergy of the Church of England.

The Church party see this clearly enough, and do not care to be bound by the Nonconformist conscience. They perceive an opportunity of manufacturing something more than the mere raw material of Christianity. It seems better to them to turn out the finished article, properly marked with the Church brand; and who can blame them for seizing their advantage?

But to do this openly is rather dangerous, as there is a multitude of people who are neither Nonconformists nor Churchmen, and who may resent the domination of one religious party in the public schools. Accordingly the Church party has resorted to strategy, and turned the flank of the Nonconformist enemy by the following proposal:—

> "(1) One of the regulations in accordance with which a public elementary school is required to be conducted shall be that, if the parents of a reasonable number of the scholars attending the school require that separate religious instruction be given to their children, the managers shall, so far as practicable, whether the religious instruction in the school is regulated by any trust deed, scheme, or other instrument or not, permit reasonable arrangements to be made for allowing such religious instruction to be given, and shall not be precluded from doing so by the provisions of any such deed, scheme, or instrument.
>
> "(2) Any question which may arise under this section as to what is reasonable or practicable shall be determined by the Education Department, whose decision shall be final."

Now, in one sense, this is a step in the direction of religious equality—not exactly of religious freedom, which is inconsistent with any sort of State interference. The Government says to the people: "Look here. We intend to let the management of any school decide what religious education shall be given in it by their servants. And that is surely fair. But if your children go to that school, and you don't like the religious education given there, you shall still be protected by the old Conscience Clause, and we offer you also a further privilege. You may have your children taught the religion you do like. If a number of you—a reasonable number—send in a man to teach it, your children shall be put under his instruction for a certain time, and in a schoolroom set apart for the purpose. And so long as *your* children get the religious teaching *you* desire them to have, what does it matter to you how other people's children are taught? That is *their* affair, and let them look after it themselves."

Of course a "reasonable number" is a very elastic expression, like the famous phrase "as big as a piece of chalk." And the Education Department may conclude that *unreasonable people* can never make a *reasonable number*. Nevertheless, the matter is susceptible of some sort of determination, and the publicity of the press and platform would tend to keep the Education Department within the bounds of decorum, or at least prevent it from doing anything really outrageous.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway, in his letter to the *Times*, from which I have already quoted, takes a rosy view of this twenty-seventh section, and thinks it will bring relief to Rationalists:—

"Of course, unorthodox Protestants are aware, from

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long experience, that they belong to those 'leasts' concerning which *lex non curat*, and are accustomed to the position of the unheeded patient in Hogarth's picture over whom the two doctors are quarrelling about their respective drugs. It so happens, however, that other and larger associations, such as Jews and Catholics, have also need of a relief not afforded by the present conscience clause, and the first important gesture towards such relief is that in the new Education Bill. Whatever its other faults, under the proposed measure the withdrawal of a child from so-called religious instruction would no longer bring on it any stigma of singularity among its fellows or any vulgar epithet, such as 'infidel,' 'papist,' Jew. If it did not appear for religious instruction in one room, it would be inferred that he was in some other equally respectable class, which, under the large concession made to varieties of belief, would generally be the case."

There is something in Mr. Conway's argument, but perhaps less than he imagines. When children are inquisitive—and the curiosity of most of them is pretty largely developed—it is hardly possible to conceal the fact that one of their number is receiving no religious instruction whatever. They may get accustomed to fish, flesh, fowl, and red herring; but the child who eats *nothing* will soon be spotted. But the odium would probably diminish in proportion to the variety of religious teaching in the school. When twenty denominations are all admitted under the same roof as equally respectable, and equally entitled to State consideration, the principle of toleration is given an opportunity; and some of its sweetness may drop upon the children whose parents belong to no denomination at all, not even the twenty-first.

This twenty-seventh section, however unintentionally, strikes hard at the principle of *infallibility*. Whatever infallibility remains is transferred from Churches to individual parents. *They* are to decide what is true or false—at least, for their own children. The State takes a neutral position. "Most people," it seems to say, "believe in God, and Heaven and Hell, and want their children taught their own belief. Very well, then, let them all go to Heaven or Hell in their own way. We don't care which it is. All we undertake is to pay for the signposts. They can stick them where they like."

How the new plan of religious education will work out in practice is not easy to prophesy; but this much is clear—it will benefit the Church of England and the Roman Catholics, and probably injure the Nonconformists. That, however, is no special concern of Freethinkers. The real danger of the Bill, to our party, lies in the possible setting up of Denominational Corporations governing schools supported almost, if not entirely, by public money, and in the possible extinction of School Boards in the interest of such Corporations. This is the really retrogade part of the Bill, and against this (in my judgment) the efforts of Freethinkers should be directed. G. W. FOOTE.

FREETHOUGHT IN NORTHAMPTON.

MR. BRADLAUGH wisely refrained from delivering Freethought lectures at Northampton while he represented it in the House of Commons. But there is absolutely no reason why Freethought propaganda should not be carried on there now. It is idle to urge that the interests of this or that Parliamentary candidate may be injured. Such an objection, if admitted all round, would abolish Freethought propaganda all over the country. Freethought is a good thing or a bad thing. If it is a bad thing, it is not wanted anywhere; if it is a good thing, it is wanted everywhere. And everywhere includes Northampton.

A few friends there, including Messrs. Taylor and Bull, tell me that they have at length found a suitable hall, and at my request they have secured it for Sunday (May 3). The time is very short, and in the hurry my Northampton friends have forgotten to tell me the name of the hall or where it is situated. But the advertisements will inform the local public, and I hope to have good meetings in the afternoon and evening.

I shall endeavor to start a Branch of the National Secular Society after my lectures, and see whether arrangements cannot be made for further meetings at Northampton. G. W. FOOTE.

INGERSOLL IN A PULPIT.

THREE thousand persons, including all the leading citizens of Chicago, attended at the Columbia Theatre on Sunday, April 12, to witness what the *Chicago Times-Herald* calls an event of historic note—a lecture by Colonel R. G. Ingersoll under the auspices of a Christian Church.

Dr. Rusk, who induced "our Bob" to do this, is himself a somewhat notable man. Formerly the pastor of the Fullerton Avenue Presbyterian Church in Chicago, he seceded from that body and formed an independent organisation of his own called the Church Militant, with the avowed object of giving Christianity a secular character, and making it influence the affairs of this life. He took the major portion of his congregation with him, but had to give up the Church and hold his services in the Women's Christian Temperance Union Temple. It was to this building he invited Colonel Ingersoll, whom he has known for many years. The W. C. T. U. declining to allow an Agnostic to speak within their walls, Dr. Rusk was all the more determined to conduct his services as he pleased, and he has secured the Sunday tenancy of the Columbia Theatre from the date which Colonel Ingersoll offered him.

Although admission was strictly confined to ticket-holders, the street in front of the theatre was blocked with people long before the opening of the doors, and even after the interior had been packed to suffocation over a thousand men and women besieged the entrance. On the stage were four hundred or more representative citizens, including nearly every member of the Appellate and Superior courts, and several county officials, delegations from every medical and law college and institution of learning in the city and suburbs, and a number of retired divines.

Every sect and denomination, without an exception, had its representative. When Colonel Ingersoll made his appearance, arm-in-arm with Dr. Rusk, there was *loud* applause, mingled with murmurs from some who seemed to regard such a demonstration as foreign to a religious service. In the prayer that followed the musical exercises Dr. Rusk asked for a special blessing on their guest of the day, who was endeavoring to show the world how this life might be made one of usefulness and joy, and invoked a dispensation for his wife and children; while in his introductory remarks Dr. Rusk characterised Colonel Ingersoll as "the man who is endeavoring to do this world good, and to make it better."

The *Church Times-Herald* puts a big heading on its front page: "Ingersoll Speaks from a Text to Church Militant Members." We find in small type that the text, which Colonel Ingersoll ascribed to "the greatest of human beings," was, "There is no darkness but ignorance," which is to be found in the English gospel according to Shakespeare. The *C. T.-H.* expresses astonishment that "the man named Ingersoll" said nothing to wound or offend the congregation, whose pastor had invited him to speak. Many, however, must have felt that he was subtly undermining the old faith. The Christian dogmas, if true, are all-important. If they are considered not important, it is because they are felt to be not true. To leave them out, though common in sermons of to-day, is virtually to admit that they are no longer tenable. Ingersoll took for his subject the practical elevation of humanity, and had no need to refer to the specific dogmas which he virtually dismissed and superseded. He began, after asking the audience not to hold Dr. Rusk responsible for his heresies and his philosophy, by saying: "Every human being is a necessary product of conditions, and everyone is born with defects for which he cannot be held responsible. Nature seems to care nothing for the individual, nothing for the species. Life pursuing life, and in its turn pursued by death, presses to the snow line of the possible, and every form of life, of instinct, thought, and action, is fixed and determined by conditions, by countless antecedent and co-existing facts. The present is the child, and the necessary child, of all the past, and the mother of all the future."

Ignorance being darkness, what we need is intellectual light. The most important things to teach as the basis of progress are: that the universe is natural; that men must be the providence of man; that by the development of the brain we can take advantage of the forces of nature. Man should cease to expect any aid from any supernatural source. By this time he should be satisfied that worship has not

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created wealth, and that prosperity is not the child of prayer. He should know that the supernatural has not succored the oppressed, clothed the naked, fed the hungry, shielded the innocent, stayed the pestilence, or freed the slave. Being satisfied that the supernatural does not exist, man should turn his entire attention to the affairs of this world, to the facts in nature.

First he should avoid waste, and the Colonel alluded especially to the waste of war :—

> "For eighteen hundred years peace has been preached, and yet the civilised nations are the most warlike in the world. There are in Europe to-day between eleven and twelve millions of soldiers ready to take the field, and the frontiers of every civilised nation are protected by breastwork and fort. The sea is covered with steel-clad ships filled with missiles of death. The civilised world has impoverished itself, and the debt of Christendom, mostly for war, is now nearly $30,000,000,000.
>
> "If we wish to do away with war, we must provide for the settlement of national differences by an international court. This court should be in perpetual session, its members should be selected by the various governments to be affected by its decisions, and, at the command and disposal of this court, the rest of Christendom being disarmed, there should be a military force sufficient to carry its judgments into effect. There should be no other excuse, no other business for an army or a navy in the civilised world."

The Colonel did not forget the waste of thought, devotion, and actual money on the service of the supernatural. He said :—

> "For many centuries the wealth of the world was used to propitiate the unseen powers. In our own country the property dedicated to this purpose is worth at least $1,000,000,000. The interest on this sum is $50,000,000 a year, and the cost of employing persons whose business it is to seek the aid of the supernatural and to maintain the property is certainly as much more. So that the cost in our country is about $2,000,000 a week, and, counting ten hours as a working day, this amounts to about $500 a minute.
>
> "Now, it seems to me that it would be far better for the people of a town having a population of 4,000 or 5,000 to have one church, and the edifice should be of use not only on Sunday, but on every day of the week. In this building should be the library of the town. It should be the club-house of the people, where they could find the principal newspapers and periodicals of the world. Its auditorium should be like a theatre. Plays should be presented by home talent, an orchestra formed, music cultivated. The people should meet there at any time they desire. The women should carry their knitting and sewing, and connected with it should be rooms for the playing of games, billiards, cards, and chess. Everything should be made as agreeable as possible."

In concluding his discourse he said that every child should be taught that useful work is worship, and that intelligent labor is the highest form of prayer.

> "Let each human being, within the limits of the possible, be self-supporting ; let everyone take intelligent thought for the morrow, and, if a human being supports himself and acquires a surplus, let him use a part of that surplus for the unfortunate, and let each one to the extent of his ability help his fellow men.
>
> "This, in my judgment, is real religion. The old creeds are too narrow ; they are not for the world in which we live. The old dogmas lack breadth and tenderness ; they are too cruel, too merciless, too savage. We are growing grander and nobler. The firmament inlaid with suns is the real cathedral. The interpreters of nature are the true and only priests. There is no darkness but ignorance. Let us flood the world with intellectual light."

I expect that this important lecture, in which the Colonel entered fully into his views upon marriage and the labor questions, will soon be accessible to our readers ; so I will make no further extracts. Those given will suffice to show how baseless are the absurd reports that Ingersoll is modifying his views, because he has consented to preach before a congregation calling itself Christian.* Ingersoll in a pulpit has illustrated the new and only possible use of a ministry in these days—to enlighten minds and stir hearts to better service for the welfare of their fellows. He is a forerunner of the new teachers, not of old dogmas, but of new facts ; not iteraters of old precepts, but developers of men's judgments and sentiments in relation to questions of conduct arising from the increasing complexity of social life.

Ingersoll in the pulpit has "set a pace" which the men of God will, *nolens volens*, have to follow. Dr. H. W. Thomas, of the People's Church, Chicago, admitted as much in saying that the Churches would have to find room for such men as Ingersoll—a man, he said, who believes in reason, in truth, in justice, in respectability, in the love of man. He is the friend of liberty, of the rights of man, woman, and child ; he loves his country, teaches a noble patriotism and a high morality. Quite a number of discourses on the occasion are reported in the *Chicago Times-Herald*. One Dr. Hills claimed the Bible as "the fountain of Christian Agnosticism." Another man of God, the Rev. J. Q. A. Henry, lectured on "Why I am not an Agnostic," and took for his texts "To the Unknown God" and "Having no hope, and without God in the world." The most notable reply, however, seems to have been that of Dr. John P. D. John, ex-President of De Pauw University, who took for his subject "Did Man Make God, or Did God Make Man?" This, at any rate, put the question in a square and straightforward fashion. Ingersoll's visit to Dr. Rusk's congregation promises to stir almost as much discussion, and will, perhaps, bear as much fruit, as the Parliament of Religions. J. M. WHEELER.

* It may be noted also that in the same evening the Colonel gave a lecture on his own account to an overflowing audience at McVicker's Theatre on "Why I am an Agnostic."

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER VI.

STATIONARINESS OF CRITICISM.

"Zeal without knowledge is like expedition to a man in the dark."—JOHN NEWTON.

CRITICISM in theology, as in literature, is with many an intoxication. Zest in showing what is wrong is apt to blunt the taste for what is right, which it is the true end of criticism to discover. Lord Byron said critics disliked Pope because he afforded them so few chances of objection. They found fault with him because he had no faults. The criticism of theology begets complacency in many. There is a natural satisfaction in being free from the superstition of the vulgar—in the Church as well as out of it. No wonder many find abiding pleasure in the intellectual refutation of the errors of supernaturalism, and in putting its priests to confusion. Absorbed in the antagonism of theology, many lose sight of ultimate utility, and regard error, not as a misfortune to be alleviated, so much as a fault to be exposed. Like the theologian whose color they take, they do not much consider whether their method causes men to dislike the truth, through its manner of being offered to them. Their ambition is to make those in error look foolish. Freethinkers of zeal are apt to become intense, and, like Jules Ferry, a late French premier, care less for power than for conflict ; and the lover of conflict is not easily induced to regard the disproof of theology as a means to an end* higher than itself. It is difficult to impart to uncalculating zealots a sense of proportion. They dash along the war-path by their own momentum. Railway engineers find that it takes twice as much power to stop an express as it does to start it.

When I first knew Freethought societies they were engaged in Church-fighting, which is still popular among them. This has led the public to confuse anti-theology with Secularism, an entirely different thing. Insurgent thought exclusively directed breeds, as is said elsewhere, a distinct class of men—among scholars as well as among the uninformed—who have a passion for disputation, which, like other passions, "grows by what it feeds upon." Yet a limited number of such paladins of investigation are not without uses in the economy of civilisation. They resemble the mighty hunters of old—they extirpate beasts of prey which roam the theological forests, and thus they render life more safe to dwellers in cities open to the voracious incursions of supernaturalism.

Without the class of combatants described, in whom discussion is irrepressible, and whose courage neither odium

* Buckle truly says : "Liberty is not a means ; it is an end in itself." But the uses of Liberty are means to ends—else why do we want liberty ?

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nor danger abates, many castles of superstition would never be stormed. But mere intellectualism generates a different and less useful species of thinkers, who neither hunt in the jungles of theology, nor storm strongholds. We all know hundreds in every great town who, having freed themselves, or been freed by others, from ecclesiastical error, yet remain supine, content with their own superiority (which they owe to pioneers who went before them, more generous than they); they speak no word and lend no aid towards conferring the same advantages upon such as are still enslaved. They affect to despise the ignorance they ought to be foremost to dissipate. They exclaim, in the words of Goethe's Coptic song:—

> Fools from their folly 'tis hopeless to stay;
> Mules will be mules by the law of their mulishness:
> Then be advised, and leave fools to their foolishness;
> What from an ass can be got but a bray?

These Coptic philosophers overlook that they would have been "asses" also, had those who vindicated freedom before their day, and raised it to a power, been as indifferent and as contemptuous as believers in the fool theory are. Coptic thinkers forget that every man is a fool in respect of any question on which he gives an opinion without having thought independently upon it. With patience you can make a thinker out of a fool, and the first step from the fool stage is accomplished by a little thinking. It is well to remember the exclamation of Thackeray: "If thou hadst never been a fool, be sure thou wilt never be a wise man."

It is, however, but justice to some who join the stationaries, to own that they have fared badly on the war-path against error, and are entitled to the sympathy we extend to the battered soldier who falls out of the ranks on the march. Grote indicates what the severity of the service is in the following passage from his *Analysis of Natural Religion*: "Of all human antipathies, that which the believer in a God bears to the unbeliever is the fullest, the most unqualified, and the most universal. The mere circumstance of dissent involves a tacit imputation of error and incapacity on the part of the priest, who discerns that his persuasive power is not rated so highly by others as it is by himself. This invariably begets dislike towards his antagonist."

Nevertheless, it is a reproach to those whom militant thought has made free, if they remain unmindful of the fate of their inferiors. Yet Christian Churches, with all the self-complacent superiority to which many of them are prone, are not free from the sins of indifference and superfineness. This was conspicuously shown by Southey, who, in a letter to Sir Henry Taylor, said:—

> "Have you seen the strange book which Anastasius Hope left for publication, and which his representatives, in spite of all dissuasion, have published? His notion of immortality and heaven is, that at the consummation of all things he, and you and I, and John Murray, and Nebuchadnezzar, and Lambert the fat man, and the Living Skeleton and Queen Elizabeth, and the Hottentot Venus, and Thurtell, and Probert, and the Twelve Apostles, and the noble army of martyrs, and Ghenghis Khan and all his armies, and Noah with all his ancestors and all his posterity—yea, all men and all women and all children that have ever been or ever shall be, saints and sinners alike—are all to be put together, and made into one great celestial eternal human being.....I do not like the scheme. I don't like the notion of being mixed up with Hume, and Hunt, and Whittle Harvey, and Philpotts, and Lord Althorpe and the Huns, and the Hottentots, and the Jews, and the Philistines, and the Scotch and the Irish. God forbid! I hope to be I myself; in an English heaven, with you yourself—you and some others, without whom heaven would be no heaven to me."

Most of these persons would have the same dislike to be mixed up with Mr. Southey. Lord Byron would not have been enthusiastic for his company. The Comtists have done something to preach a doctrine of humanity, and to put an end to this pitiful contempt of a few men for their fellows—fellows who in many respects are often superior to those who despise them.

All superiority is apt to be contemptuous of inferiors, unless conscience and generosity take care of it and incite it to instruct inferior natures. The prayer of Browning is one of noble discernment:—

> Make no more giants, God,
> But elevate the race at once.

Even Freethought, so far as it confines itself to itself, becomes stationary, and, like the squirrel in its cage—

> Whether it turns by wood or wire,
> Never gets one hair-breadth higher.

If any doubt whether stationariness of thought is possible, let them think of Protestantism, which climbed on to the ledge of Private Judgment three centuries ago, and has remained there. Instead of mounting higher and overrunning all the plateaus of error above them, it has done its best to prevent any who would do it from ascending. There is, however, a new order of insurgent thought, of the excelsior cast, which seeks to climb the heights. Distinguished writers against theology in the past have regarded destructive criticism as preparing the way to higher conceptions of life and duty. If so little has been done in this direction among working-class thinkers, it is because destructiveness is more easy. It needs only indignation to perfect it, and indignation requires no effort. The faculty of constructiveness is more arduous in exercise, and is later in germination. More men are able to take a state than to make a state. Hence Secularism, though inevitable as the next stage of militant progress, more slowly wins adherents and appreciation.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

(Concluded from page 262.)

THE orthodox idea of the object of Christ's death involves the committal of a gross act of injustice upon the part of God in making the declared innocent suffer for the avowed guilty. Justice has been defined to "consist in rendering to everyone according to his moral deserts; good if he be good, and evil if evil—for the purpose of promoting goodness and discouraging guilt." If this be a recognised standard of right in human affairs, surely it should not be ignored in dealing with "divine" actions. Suppose, therefore, that Christ was "without sin," as stated in the New Testament (Hebrews iv. 15), was it not unjust to punish him for the wrong-doing of others? Let us take the case of an earthly father, who had, say, seven children, six of whom were thoroughly bad, and the seventh as good as human nature could possibly be. Now, would it be considered just upon the part of that father to punish the one good child for the misdeeds of the six bad ones? Such conduct would ensure for its perpetrator a general and an emphatic condemnation. If a judge were knowingly to sentence to death an innocent man as a substitute for a criminal, the act would provoke universal detestation, and the judge's judicial position would in all probability be forfeited. No Christian would think it just to imprison and torture priests to-day simply because their predecessors, under the influence of fanaticism, defiled portions of the earth with human slaughter. Is it consistent for Christians to ascribe an act to their God which good men would refuse to perform? We think not.

Besides, the alleged redeeming feature in the death of Christ manifests cruelty to the human race in asserting that, although its members had no control over the acts of Eve and Adam, still, in consequence of what they did, we are all "born in sin and shapened in iniquity." Upon what principle of justice can such merciless treatment be defended? According to this orthodox notion, the moment we enter life, in our infantile helplessness and childish innocence, we are thought to be deserving of the wrath of God. Even if it were true that sin was committed in the Garden of Eden, will that justify wrong being done to us? Are we on that account to be rendered liable to be doomed to eternal torment? If so, a God who could either arrange or permit such cruel injustice will never be recognised by Secularists as a kind and loving father. We know that the Bible, on more than one occasion, represents its God as punishing the innocent for the guilty. For instance, we read that he is "a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children" (Exodus xx. 5); that he cut off seventy thousand men in Israel by a pestilence, on account of the sin of David in numbering the people (2 Samuel xxiv. 15); and that he deprived an innocent child of life to show his displeasure of a crime committed by this "man

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after God's own heart" (2 Samuel xii. 14). It is such actions as these, which, contrary to all true standards of right, are performed by the Christian Deity, that impel us to prefer Atheism to the belief in a being who could inflict such wrongs upon the human family.

Attempts have been made to palliate these "divine acts" by asserting that in the course of nature the innocent have to suffer for the guilty, as in the case of drunkards and debauchees, who transmit disease and debility to their offspring. But two wrongs cannot make one right; besides, if God was the author of Nature, could he not have so arranged her operations that this evil of transmission would have been avoided? The two cases, however, are not analogous, inasmuch as the children referred to do not suffer *for*, but *through*, the vices of their parents; and, moreover, in such suffering there is no punishment intended; it is a consequence, not a penalty. The children of criminal parents are not blamed, but are rather pitied, for being innocent victims of the guilt of others. This was not the case, according to orthodox teaching, with Christ, who was punished for the sins of others.

The theory that the death of Christ was an atonement to God for actual sins committed is so glaringly inconsistent that it is really marvellous how it can be regarded as true by sensible men and women. It is stated that the death of Christ was ordained before the foundation of the world, and, at the same time, we are informed that man was created perfect and immortal. If it were ordained that Christ should die for the redemption of the world, the transgressions of Eve and Adam were only a part of God's plan, and certainly did not deserve any curse, but rather merited a blessing. As we have already pointed out, there was no free-will in the case, for it was originally arranged that but one course had to be followed—namely, the one that led to the sacrifice of Christ. If Adam and Eve had adopted any other course, God's plans would have been thwarted, for we read in the fourth Gospel that Christ knew from the beginning that he would be betrayed; and this betrayal was the first act in the tragedy of the cross. Now, if the death of Christ were preordained, so also was the "Fall of Man," for the one depends upon the other, as the Bible says: "For as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Assuming this to be true, man could not have been created perfect; the very fact of his "falling," or giving way to temptation, was a proof of his imperfection. The truth is, the Bible story of the fall of man is a phase of an ancient myth; and, as Dr. Kalisch observes, it is "no exclusive feature of the Hebrews." Professor Jowett considered the account, as given in the Bible, "a grand Hebrew poem." Similar stories were current among the Greeks, the Egyptians, and the Persians. The Hindoos had a "tree of life," which was said to be guarded by spirits, and contained a juice that was thought to impart to those who partook of it immortality. It is time that the belief in this fiction of the Fall as being a reality should cease. The lesson of history and experience is that the career of man has been one of ascent, not descent; of progression, not retrogression.

Further inconsistencies in this scheme of redemption through the death of Christ are the allegation that he came to save the whole world, and his reported conduct while on earth. If universal salvation were the object of his mission, it proved a decided failure. But Christ did not attempt to achieve such a result, for he stated himself that he came to the Jews, and to the Jews alone; and even among them his labors were not crowned with success. Following Christ to the close of his career, we behold the culmination of inconsistency in the manner in which he acted in the garden of Gethsemane. Here was a man who had preached upon the utility of a faith which, it was said, not only afforded consolation through life, but was capable of robbing death of its terrors; yet when the hour of death approached, when the period had arrived for him to prove to the world the efficacy of this faith, he was tortured with doubt and racked with fear. In that scene, which was not only to rivet the attention of an amazed multitude, but was also to consecrate a life of divinity—a scene which was not only to be the great climax to the scheme of redemption, but was to afford an example that should remain as a lasting monument of greatness to a wondering people; at this moment, when it was expected that the hopes of his followers were about to be sealed, when he should have maintained his position with unsurpassed bravery, he was weak and vacillating, and in bitter despair he prayed that the cup might pass from him. Where can we recognise consistency and heroism in the death of Christ? Is it in the conduct of one who came to die for man, yet who, when about to fulfil his destiny, implored to be allowed to escape the death? Is it in teaching that Christ came as a voluntary sacrifice, yet had to be betrayed by man? Is it in a Father of reputed love and kindness inflicting unnecessary torture upon his sensitive son? Is it in the statement that Christ, by asking, could obtain an answer to any request made to his father; yet his fervent supplications were unheeded, and his dying prayers were unanswered? Finally, is it in the act of a God who, having allowed his son to be placed upon a felon's cross, permits him to yield up a sorrowful life, after uttering unavailing reproaches in those memorable words: "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

In conclusion, let us remember that from the Christian's standpoint the object of the death of Christ has not been attained. That object was to make a complete satisfaction for all sin, and to remove such sin from the world. But these objects have not been attained, for mankind has still to secure its own exemption from the supposed effects of sin; and, further, sin still surrounds us. If Christ, by his death, paid the debt that is said to have been incurred through sin entering into the world, why should man be required to make a second payment? As to the boasted victories of the cross, where are they? We have still misery, pain, folly, ignorance, crime, and injustice in the world. The erection of the cross has not frightened the miscreant nor appalled the tyrant. The voice from the height of Calvary has not destroyed error nor cemented truth; neither has the death of Christ produced that condition of society in which it is impossible for man to be depraved and poor. If, as we are told, the Savior has come, it may be fairly asked, "Whence comes salvation?"

CHARLES WATTS.

SOCIALISM AND SECULARISM.

IN conformity with the rule followed by our editor not to raise political issues, as such, in these columns, save when they have a bearing on the fortunes of Freethought, I write in what follows, not as a politician, but as a Freethinker. It has always seemed to me that Secularism stands for political emancipation in the abstract, just as surely as it logically implies, not only the rejection of so-called Revelation, but also Atheism in principle. It ought not to be necessary to argue that this does not mean that Secularism is bound to identify itself with any particular body of social reformers, or any specific form of Atheism. Secularism is more than a makeshift for the times; it is really the spirit of reason and of humanity; not merely the after-birth of civilisation, but its vital source and principle. Historically, we find that the master-spirits of Freethought have invariably proved themselves to be the best friends of liberty, and this holds good of the greatest contemporary Rationalists, as it does of Freethinkers in general; but so long as the idea of the real nature of progress continues to be so obscure, and so much uncertainty prevails as to the most eligible means of promoting it, we shall see staunch Freethinkers apparently paltering with their principles, and playing into the hands of the party of political reaction, and sincerely believing all the while that they are serving Freethought and forwarding social development. And really there are some very hard cases of conscience for the Secularist, in whose mind the new-born grace of magnanimity is sorely beset by a robust remnant of the old, ingrained Christian vindictiveness. The French Freethinker, while affirming equal liberty for all, often draws the line at the Jesuits, on the ground that, as they deny, in theory, the common rights of citizenship, and, *à fortiori*, the claim of heresy even to sufferance, it is quite just to hoist the disciple of Loyola with his own petard. Similarly, the north-country Irish Freethinker is usually a Unionist, not because he objects to Home Rule in the abstract, but out of a not entirely unreasonable fear that the first effect of giving Ireland a measure of autonomy would be a temporary accession of Rome Rule. We have also heard Secularists urge that, as an extension of the franchise to women would inevitably aggrandise clericalism, it should be postponed until women are more independent

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of ecclesiastical influence. I need not stop to expose the fallacy that vitiates all reasoning of this kind, which, in the hands of Catholics, has been made an excuse for outlawing Protestants, and *vice versâ*. The question for the consistent Freethinker must always be, "Is this just, or is it not?" And, having answered the question, he will know exactly what to do.

It has been a favorite maxim with us that not to have the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and that wits sharpened by the dissection of the body of Christian dogma are the strongest and keenest instruments for laying bare the bases and ramifications of political and social tumors. History abounds in illustrations of the truth of this maxim. The Renaissance, that many-sided movement which suffered arrest of development at the very points where its expansion would have most helped civilisation, only retained the measure of Freethought that produced the side issue of the Reformation. Nevertheless, maimed as it was by Protestant limitations, the seminal principle of the right of private judgment did its work, and prepared the way for the slow but inevitable disintegration, not only of Christian dogma, but also of the political despotisms that superseded the feudal system. In France last century the scepticism diffused by the writings of Rabelais and Montaigne was vivified and organised by the glowing humanity and the lambent wit of Voltaire, and the perfervid sentiment of Rousseau; and, having discredited "the Infamous," it boldly assailed the authority of an effete and corrupt Government. Thus we may fairly claim that the man who has acquired the habit of close and fearless thinking touching things "spiritual," and who has detached himself from the racial and sectarian antipathies which religious belief either begets or embitters, is more likely to reason justly on political questions than the average pietist. One would naturally expect that, of all men in the world, Socialists would most readily concur in this view, since most of them profess to be Freethinkers, and many of them have actually been Secularists; but, oddly enough, if we may judge by the deliverances of some leading Socialists, who are aped in this respect by the rank and file, Secularism is little better than an anachronism. Theology is dead, and the Secularist does but waste his energy in watching and doing battle with an imaginary foe. Indeed, Freethought was always wide of the mark in attributing such paramount importance to the anti-social influence of religion. The real hindrance to the attainment of the democratic ideal of human freedom and happiness is, and always has been, the unscientific and immoral economic condition of society. Religious beliefs and customs count for very little compared with the imperious, physical needs of man; and, as the satisfaction of these is necessarily his first concern, all his thought and action as an individual in society must turn upon the issue of the struggle for bare animal existence. If man is born into a community where access to the means of livelihood is made conditional upon the acceptance of a given creed or convention, he must needs conform or perish; and, in such a case, it is a mockery to say he is free. And yet this is the fate of every human being ushered into the world. And if we do enjoy any degree of freedom whatever, it is the direct result of the acquirement of some measure of economic independence. If Secularism tends to ensure economic liberty, it has some humanitarian value; but if it is mainly an attack upon religion, and its history goes to prove the alternative inference, then it is practically worthless from a Meliorist point of view.

I do not dispute the dominating influence of the so-called economic factor, but I submit that it is not a simple but a compound cause, and that the belief in the supernatural has always formed a decisive part of it. In the rudimentary stages of human society, as these are still represented among the aborigines of the present day, nearly all the energies of man are absorbed in the quest for food. But even the miserable Digger Indian or Fuegian has some thoughts above his stomach and the reproductive function. In his dream life, the concomitant of his enforced fastings or occasional surfeits, we can trace the rude beginnings of the hallucination as to the supernatural, and already in fetishism and the taboo we see how religious belief can modify social life and deflect it from the path of progress. In the great primary civilisations, with their cheap and abundant food-supply and consequent populousness, we find, as a result of the necessary organisation of the overgrown tribe, or group of tribes, the groundwork of a leisured and ruling class who begin to exploit the proletariat. From this point onwards we are no longer contemplating a society in which simple economic causes determine all its other movements. What we have to reckon with is a complex of forces, partly the resultant of the controlling need for sustenance, and partly of the play of human passion inflamed by the lust of power, or the frenzy of religious fanaticism. Take some concrete examples. The rise and diffusion of the civilisation of the Arabs was one of the most remarkable phenomena in human history. According to the Marxist theory of Economic Determinism, we ought to be able to explain it as a case of scarcity of food-supply among the Arab tribes, which formed Mohammed's first converts. But, as a matter of fact, such a failure was only too familiar an experience to the nomadic Bedouin, and he knew how to meet it by migrating swiftly to fresh pastures. It is quite probable that Mohammed, in order to win them to his purpose, may have spurred his followers on to their holy wars of conquest and proselytisation by the promise of booty from treasure cities, and of settlement in fair and fertile lands; but these motives were all subordinated to the appeal to the religious instincts of savage and barbarous races, and, if there were any economic consideration in the matter, it lay in the bribe that those who died fighting for Allah and his Prophet should enjoy immortality in a paradise of guzzling, swilling, and unbounded sensuality. As for the magnificent civilisations of Bagdad and of Spain under the Saracens, it is clear that they prospered precisely to the extent to which they left behind the crudities and asperities of the primitive Islamitic tradition. Where they allowed themselves to be trammelled by it, as in their art, it entailed arrest of development, just in the same way as Christianity conventionalised mediæval painting, sculpture, and music. The overthrow of the Moorish civilisation and the expulsion of the Moors from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella, with all its disastrous consequences to the industry and capital of that good Catholic country, is a typical example, not of the pressure of adverse economic conditions, but rather of the wantonly disruptive action of an insensate bigotry.

J. P. GILMOUR.

(*To be concluded.*)

ACID DROPS.

GLASGOW bodies don't go to kirk with the old-fashioned regularity. Out of 835,000 inhabitants, 500,000 have no church connection. This awful fact was admitted and deplored at the recent annual meeting of the Glasgow Home Mission Union. An effort is to be made to recapture these "lapsed masses," who are all going to hell without knowing it. Perhaps a big expenditure of cash will convert one per cent. of the 500,000 in half a century, by which time there will be ever so many more departed from the sheep to the goats. You can't catch up with them when they once begin to emigrate.

Mr. George Riddock, formerly clerk to the Deacons' Court of Ellon Free Church, having accused the Rev. A. Reid of falsifying a minute of the meeting, was three times summoned to attend the Presbytery, but he never made an appearance, and is now excommunicated. Mr. Riddock is solemnly banished from Ellon Free Church, but as all the rest of the world is open to him, he has still plenty of room to imitate Satan in the book of Job.

The Rev. A. Robinson, the Kilmun heretic, has appealed in vain to the Dunoon Presbytery. In the ordinary course of things he should be immediately suspended, but he has given notice of appeal to the General Assembly. It is reported that he has withdrawn the book which occasioned all this rumpus. We hope it is not true, however; for it is always unpleasant to witness cowardice, even in Churches.

Mr. Isaac Foot, a Plymouth undertaker, connected with the Nottle-street Mission Hall, received an invitation (which was issued wholesale to clergymen and ministers) to attend the performance of *The Sign of the Cross* at the Theatre Royal. He replied to Miss Greet's invitation: "I am not a reverend, but I am a Christian, and for that reason I cannot accept your invitation. I am sorry I cannot thank you for the invitation, because, had I been weak enough, I may have been caught. Having really been to the Cross, I can, like Paul, 'glory in it,' and therefore do not need the sign, as I have the substance." Mr. Barrett's play has been hailed as a great religious agency, but the fact that it is a play is quite sufficient for this self-satisfied Christian.

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Anent *The Sign of the Cross*, "Dagonet" says, in the *Referee*: "Clergymen are at present as common in the stalls of the Lyric as the dudes in the stalls of the Gaiety, and the Rev. William Greet gazes with rapture nightly on a vast white-chokered audience. The free list is entirely suspended. Holy orders are the only ones admitted."

In Jammu the blue bull, or nilgai, is *taboo*, doubtless representing a totem ancestor. To kill a nilgai in Jammu is a serious crime, visited with severe punishment. As a consequence, the animals have increased to such an extent as to jostle their human neighbors out of the country. But the matter is religious, and the people of Jammu will suffer from their sacred god until some Freethinker arises to take the blue bull by the horns and let him know he must go elsewhere.

That dear old Victoria Institute is the Mrs. Partington among the learned societies. It is always furbishing up some antediluvian relics to confirm the truth of the Bible. Its latest feat was to bring Dr. Cleland from Glasgow to disprove the theory of natural selection by the comparison of the human backbone with that of the gorilla. Dr. Cleland pointed triumphantly to the greater prolongation of the *os coccygis* in chimpanzees, to the immense delight of the few old women of both sexes, as well as the clerical members of the Victoria Institute. Dr. Cleland teaches anatomy to the Scotch students, and, we suppose, tells them that Adam had an extra rib before the creation of Eve. He will stand a chance of being remembered when Darwin is forgotten.

Trilbymania has been used at Suffern, New York, for the purpose of raising the Methodist pastor's salary. It was arranged that the young women in the connection were to be placed behind a curtain, and were to thrust their shapely right feet out from under the curtain, which would be raised just a trifle, and the young men were to bid for them. The ones who made the highest offer were to have the honor of escorting the fair possessor of the feet to supper. It was not quite *a la* Mary Magdalene, but it rejoiced the hearts of the young men and the old minister.

Claude Falls Wright, an American Theosophist, who is expected to step into the sandals of the late W. Q. Judge, declares that the Mahatmas or Christs are forty-eight in number. He believes that Madame Blavatsky and the late William Q. were of that number. But Mrs. Annie Besant has lost her chance of joining the spiritual messengers by her practice of black magic.

The *Vaccination Inquirer*, a journal opposed to compulsory vaccination, sees, "with the utmost disgust," that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has published a pamphlet on Vaccination. It says: "We are lost in wonder as to where the propagation of reckless inaccuracy comes into the program of Christian propaganda." Surely the *V. I.* cannot have had much experience of that propaganda. But it is learning; it points out that the pamphlet in question cites "the published opinion of Mr. Peter Taylor, the great anti-vaccinator," that the danger of vaccino-syphilis was "infinitesimal." This is founded on the fact that Mr. Taylor signed the report of the 1871 Committee, in which this statement appeared. But it was after this he became an anti-vaccinator, and declared: "I am performing an almost sacred duty in doing all that in me lies to atone for the mistake I made in signing the Report of the Select Committee in 1871." So, as the *V. I.* says, the citation of Mr. Taylor in the Christian Knowledge pamphlet is like an appeal to the opinion of Paul that Christ was an impostor.

The Rev. Charles Paterson, curate of Harpenden, has been ordered to pay 5s. per week towards the support of a child of Lizzie Reeves, a servant in his employ. He has a wife and seven grown-up daughters.

The Rev. Donald Mackay, an ex-Roman Catholic priest, has been sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labor for obtaining charitable contributions under false pretences. Like some other reverends, Mr. Mackay ran a society of his own. It was called the Fraternal Society of Converts. During the next three months this society will present the unusual spectacle of a teetota body.

Mdlle. Couédon, the Paris prophetess who claims to be inspired by the angel Gabriel, has prognosticated that England will be dismembered because of her universal usurpations, while a savior-king is to be raised up for France. First, however, Paris will be devastated, the Hôtel de Ville burnt to the ground, the Bourse closed, whole quarters reduced to cinders, and a fearful plague will rage among its inhabitants. The calamity howlers, from Jeremiah downwards, always seem to run on well-worn lines.

Marie Corelli, the lady novelist, having made a successful book out of the adventures of Jesus Christ, and another out of the adventures of the Devil, has now burst upon the world with another piece of sensation called *The Mighty Atom*. The dedication of this new work is—"To those self-styled Progressists who, by Precept and Example, assist the Infamous Cause of Education without Religion." The piety of some of these lady novelists is astonishing—only a little less so than their ignorance.

President H. A. Buttz, D.D., LL.D., of Drew Theological Seminary, says in the *Methodist Review*: "The divinity of our Savior and his absolute knowledge of all questions of fact is an axiom as fundamental to Christian truth as the axioms of mathematics are to mathematical science. There is no point on which negative criticism, in the view of Christians, has found more embarrassment than in its effect on our faith in the infallibility of Jesus Christ as a teacher. Thus far no satisfactory harmony has been established between the results of radical advanced criticism and Christ's endorsement of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch."

Dr. Buttz may be reminded that this is not the solitary error of Jesus. He endorsed the prophecies of Daniel, the story of Jonah being three days in a whale's belly, the tale of Lot's wife, and ascribed the 110th Psalm wrongly to David. Worse than this, he inculcated belief in demoniacal possession, and taught that the end of the world would come in the lifetime of the fanatics around him—errors which have led to an incalculable amount of human misery.

The National Reform Association of America is employing the same tactics to get God into the Constitution that the bigots here tried to keep Charles Bradlaugh out of Parliament. They have been sending in petitions largely signed by Sunday-school children. By such means they seek to alter the very basis of the Republic as laid by men like Franklin, Paine, Washington, and Jefferson, who held none of the distinctive tenets of the Christian creed. This attempt to alter the Constitution of the Republic 120 years after its formation is of sinister import. Even the Unitarians, as represented by the Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, see this, and are with Mr. Putnam opposing the amendment.

This God-in-the-Constitution amendment, if carried, would practically make a religious test for members of Congress, and for all civil or military officers who are required to take an oath to support the Constitution. The test would bar not only Atheists and Agnostics, but Jews and Unitarians, all who do not subscribe to the divine authority of both the Old and the New Testament, and all who do not recognise the divinity of Christ—that is, unless they should take the oath to support the Constitution, as the abolitionists used to do, "with a mental reservation."

The American Freethinkers know full well that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and Mr. Putnam has been active at Washington in marshalling the opposition to the innovation. The New York Sunday law, and this recent attempt to Christianise the legislature, are warnings that religion may convert even the boasted land of freedom into a stronghold of bigotry.

The Rev. E. Mansel Townsend, curate of St. Mary's, Reading, writes to the *Reading Observer*: "I feel sure there must be very many in this town, besides the writer of this letter, who have felt pained almost beyond expression on seeing with their own eyes the grievous and inexpressibly disloyal attack upon the supreme authority and incomparable preciousness of God's sacred word, which has been allowed to appear under the auspices of certain clergy of the Church of England in the pages of a localised parochia magazine." The curate is superlatively pained to find the clergy assisting "the infidel," but he takes comfort that his dean gave "such a magnificent testimony to the unanimously accepted authority of all the books of the Bible by the Christian Church at large, on the authority of no mere man, but of Christ himself, who repeatedly endorsed the Old Testament before and after his death and resurrection." The dean, in turn, may take comfort from the eulogy of the curate.

The *Independent*, the leading non-sectarian Christian weekly of New York, says: "Not only in this country, but in Canada, the various missionary funds show a falling off." This applies both to the home and to the foreign missions.

The Salvation Army in America now has another rival besides Ballington Booth's "God's American Volunteers." The new organisation is said to be "semi-military," and is called "The American League of the Grand Army of the Cross." The members will not be required to subscribe to any creed, but must believe the Bible, from the creation in six days to the lake of fire and brimstone in the Apocalypse.

Billy Booth offers Bally Booth that he will kill a fatted calf for him (there are a large stock of fat calves at headquarters) if only he will return to his beloved parent.

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Billy seems to be a little previous. The time to offer the veal is not when the prodigal son is wallowing in riotous living among American millionaires. Wait until he feeds on the husks, then he may be in a repentant frame of mind, and inclined to return home to the fatted calf.

Bally is mad with Commander Glen, who has returned to the Army. Just before he resigned from the Army he went to a friend of Mrs. Bally Booth and cried, and told how badly the Salvationists had treated the commanders, and how he never could forgive it; but, as he had a little family to support, he couldn't help himself. Then that lady said, Of course, if he felt that way he couldn't stay in the Army, and she gave him her cheque for $400, saying it would keep him for four months. Glen was getting a salary of $25 a week from the Salvation Army. He was in their pay while he was abusing them, and now he is the first to go back and kiss their toes.

It appears that Father Billy said to son Bally, when in the States: "I'm not going to let you suck all the juice out of this plum." "This," says the *Daily News* New York correspondent, "confirms the very general view that the trouble has really grown out of the large sums of money raised by the Army in America, and is far more mercenary than spiritual. Indeed, the Americans view the quarrel with weariness, strongly tinctured with the suspicion that there is a good deal of humbug on both sides. There is little doubt that the ultimate result will be the gradual disappearance of the Salvation Army in this country, both in the original and Mr. Ballington Booth's Volunteer form. The whole movement has become an object of ridicule, and nothing which excites the American sense of the ridiculous can survive long."

The May edition of *Boot's Review of Charities and Missions* (published at 24 Old Bailey) says of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews: "The abstracts of accounts show that, of the £35,648 expended for general purposes, £17,294 was in respect of foreign missions, of which Jerusalem absorbs some £6,500. The remainder went in miscellaneous home expenditure. We look in vain, however, for any statistics showing the number of converted Jews at home or abroad—Spitalfields, Palestine-place, Jerusalem, or anywhere else. We think, considering the eighty-seven years of the society's activity, and the huge sum spent on the work, the time has now arrived when the society should call a mass meeting of the converts (not inquirers), say in the Great Assembly Hall, Mile-end, that the subscribers may see what they are getting for their money." This last suggestion is a very cruel one, as everyone knows that a converted Jew usually travels from place to place and gets re-converted wherever he goes. It may be doubted if all the converts in England would make up a mass meeting.

Dr. Lyman Abbott, the well-known successor to Henry Ward Beecher at Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, has been repudiating the Old Testament miracles. He is reported in the *New York Herald* (April 13) as saying: "The stars in their courses did not fight for or against Sisera; Jonah was not swallowed by a whale, or any other big fish; there was no interference with the orderly processes of planets or satellites when Joshua was helped in Ajalon; and the division of the Red Sea, which allowed the Israelites to cross in safety and overwhelmed the host of Pharaoh, was as much a miracle as the fog that gave Washington an opportunity to rescue the American forces after the disastrous battle of Long Island."

Dr. Abbott can be critical in regard to the Old Testament stories, for they belong to the old dispensation; but he is silent as to the quite as stupid stories of the New, barring his finding a parallel to the story of the Resurrection in a recent case of suspended animation in New Jersey. Dr. Abbott is like a number of other sky-pilots. He does not want to be encumbered with any more of the old rubbish than carries his stipend with it.

High Churchism reigns in Matlock. Frederick Downs, the manager of the Pavilion Gardens, has been fined £3 and costs for permitting a pantomime to be performed there during Lent. The licence was also forfeited. It is to be hoped that Mr. Downs will appeal, for it is monstrous that such performances should be lawful in one part of the country, and not in another.

Anent the rows in Hyde Park the *Joker* perpetrates the following:—

> Onward, Christian soldiers; hit him in the eye:
> He's a disbeliever, so we'll make him fly.
> Smash him all to atoms, jump upon his chest;
> 'Tis the holy Sabbath—day of peace and rest.

A question of religion *versus* fishing ended somewhat disastrously for the principals in the affair. At Noree a small boy preferred going fishing on Sunday morning instead of to mass, and Father McGuinness took upon himself, on the following Sunday, when the delinquent *did* come to mass, to thrash him severely with a stirrup leather. At the police-court the cleric was mulcted in a fine and costs totalling six pounds, the magistrate declining to allow him to arrogate the power of punishing people for not going to church.

According to the *Jewish Messenger*, King Menelek, of Abyssinia, does not want any missionaries in his country. He contrasts the condition of the two hundred thousand Jews in his own realm with their treatment in other Christian states. Abyssinia claims to have been Christian since the days of Constantine.

A portable crematory for military purposes has been invented by a Polish engineer. It has the appearance of the army baking oven, but is much higher and heavier, and is drawn by eight horses. It is intended for the disposal of the bodies of soldiers killed in battle, so as to avoid the danger of epidemics from the burial of great numbers of men. Each German army corps, it is said, will be equipped with one.

According to a writer in *Pearson's Weekly*, the prejudice against horseflesh is "solely due to the influence of the Church. The clergy did everything possible to prevent the newly-converted Saxons from returning to their heathenish practices, and prohibited the use of horseflesh to stop the sacrifices to Odin and Thor."

According to the *Yachting World*, yacht racing on Sunday may soon be tried. It says: "If the owners of British boats now in the Mediterranean consent to race their craft on the day of the week when the most enjoyment can be given to the most people, why should they not also give the British working classes an opportunity of seeing the cracks race in home waters on the same day of the week? Just imagine the opening of the Thames season taking place on a Sunday! What a brilliant scene it would be, and what enjoyment it would give to thousands who have never seen, and probably under present conditions will never have an opportunity of witnessing, a first-class yacht race?"

A man named Perkins was baptised in the county gaol bath-tub in Atlanta, Ga., the other day. He had committed a murderous assault, and his victim came near dying unprepared. Baptism is supposed to wash out the iniquity of the sinner, while the conversion by which it is preceded secures the forgiveness of God. But the question is whether God, in so pardoning a man accused of crime, is not guilty of contempt of court.

The Rev. Rufus S. Green, editor of the *Assembly Herald*, of New York City, the organ of the general assembly of the Presbyterian church of the United States, has startled the Presbyterian world by going into the stock business, and by inviting and urging his pious brethren and sisters to join him by taking stock in the Investment Association of New York, of which he has just become the president, promising them large profits on their investments. This may not exactly square with the injunction of Jesus Christ to "Lay not up treasures on earth"; but the Rev. Rufus S. Green doubtless holds with John P. Robinson that "they didn't know everything down in Judee."

Religion is a lovely thing, but it does not do to take too much of it. At East Waterford, Pa., on a recent Sunday evening, Charles B. Ramsey, "while he was in a frenzy induced by religious fervor," and believing that as "one of the chosen of God" he was called upon to make a "human sacrifice," killed his wife, Effie, aged thirty-five years, by beating her, and then shooting her, and then pouring boiling water on her, and dragging her around by the hair; after which he drank her blood.

The New York *Tribune*, noticing Ingersoll's lectures at Washington, recalls his criticism on a musical composition during a recent visit to Washington. The music was by a Washington author—a woman, who wrote a song of the pathetic order, which she dedicated to the lately deceased wife of a prominent official, and then submitted it to Colonel Ingersoll, asking him whether he thought it would prove a success. "Success," replied the Agnostic, "why not? Songs with coffin attachments always find a ready market."

Heredity is the scientific doctrine that "like begets like"—in other words, that what we are, that in a measure will our children be.

> So many gods, so many creeds,
> So many paths that wind and wind,
> While just the art of being kind
> Is all the sad world needs.—*Ella Wheeler Wilcock*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

May 3, Northampton; 10, Manchester; 17, Liverpool.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 3, 4, and 5, Birmingham; 10, Plymouth; 11, Devonport; 12, Liskeard; 13, Tavistock; 15, Plymton; 17, Plymouth; 24, Glasgow—the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. June 7, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

JOHN TANNER.—Pleased to receive your card and verses. Hope to see you at Liverpool shortly.

A LIVERPOOL FRIEND congratulates us on the artistic get-up of Mr. Foote's *Sign of the Cross*. Extra money has been spent upon it in order to make its way easier in outside directions.

W. DYSON.—We believe Mrs. Besant is in London at present. Theology is excluded from the public schools in the colony of Victoria. Keep pegging away.

F. J. BOORMAN.—Sorry to hear the Chatham Branch has decided not to send a delegate to Glasgow "on account of the distance." We have hoped that the English Branches would make a special effort out of regard to their Scottish brethren.

A PAISLEY correspondent sends us a long letter about the old Branch and the new one, but omits to give his name and precise address—quite inadvertently, we imagine. We beg to assure him that the formation of the new Branch is not a measure of disrespect to the old one, which had merely a nominal existence for a long time. The great thing is to carry on the movement.

ANGUS.—*The Bible of Reason* is not now in print, and would be very difficult to obtain second-hand.

G. WELLER.—Mr. Foote is anxious to get Freethought propaganda resumed at Portsmouth, where it never ought to have been dropped. Cannot a few of the old members combine for this object, and arrange for some public meetings under the Lecture Scheme?

CORRESPONDENTS who think of sending us that artist's bill for repairing the properties of an old church are informed that we printed it many years ago in the *Freethinker*, and that we have received copies nearly every month ever since. We don't want any more.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Nottingham (per Charles Watts), £1 4s.

W. CALDER.—Much pleased to hear from the Aberdeen friends again, and wish we could see them oftener. Mr. Foote is in good health at present, and deep in work.

PYRITES.—Shall appear.

P. DICKINSON.—White's *Warfare of Science* is published by Appleton & Co. We have not the price at hand.

J. DUNSMURE.—A good idea, but not so well worked out.

A. B. MOSS.—Pleased to hear you had two such fine out-door audiences last Sunday.

E. SMEDLEY.—Persecution is not unscriptural. It has always been justified from Scripture. Salvation by faith is essential to Christianity as a distinct system, and if it be abandoned Christianity will perish. We have before asked: If an Atheist can go to heaven, why should anyone take the trouble to be a Christian?

THE PRESIDENT'S LECTURE SCHEME.—T. E. M., 1s.; G. Weller, 5s. Aberdeen: J. M. McFarlane, 3d.; A. Martin, 3d.; F. M. Griej, 1s.; F. G. Griej, 1s.; D. K., 6d.; C. W. Daniel, 1s.; W. Howie, 6d.; W. Thompson, 2s.; A. M., 6d.; Mr. Taylor, 1s.; Mrs. H., 6d.; Mr. Ross, 1s.; S. Cruickshank, 6d.; E. Calder, 1s.; W. Calder, 2s. Per R. Forder: Peter Weston, 5s.; J. C. M., 10s. Per Miss Vance: C. Smith, 1s.; Mrs. McMillian, 2s. 6d.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Consett News—Isle of Man Times—Echo—Aberdeen Journal—Reading Observer—Western Independent—Torquay Times—Glasgow Herald—Echo—Liberator—Secular Thought—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker—Liberty—Boston Investigator—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Hucknall Morning Star—Academy—Blue Grass Blade—Freethought Ideal—Nya Sanningar—Referee.

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was an improved audience at St. James's Hall on Sunday evening, and Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Irreligion of Shakespeare" was listened to for an hour and a half with the profoundest attention, and at the close most enthusiastically applauded. Mr. Charles Watts made (of course) an admirable chairman, and his announcement of the lecturer's *Sign of the Cross* sent off every copy on the bookstall.

Mr. Foote has taken the Athenæum, in Tottenham Court-road, for Sunday evening lectures for six months. This is the largest hall available regularly in the West-end on anything like reasonable terms. Mr. Foote has given the proprietor a guarantee against any prosecution on account of a charge for admission, and money will be taken at the doors. The occupancy will begin on May 31, the Sunday after the Glasgow Conference. Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts will both be present on that evening.

On Thursday, May 21, a Dramatic Performance will take place at this same Athenæum, in aid of the Lecture Fund, in which Mr. Charles Watts will take part, as well as Miss Vance, Miss Brown, and other ladies. Mr. Foote will give a dramatic reading. The tickets are sixpence and one shilling, and can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Freethinkers all over the country are once more reminded that the National Secular Society's Conference will be held at Glasgow on Whit-Sunday. Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the Tyneside ought to send a large number of delegates, and the South of England and the Midlands ought to be fairly represented. Of course, the Scottish Branches, especially the new ones formed through Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, will send many of their members to Glasgow on this occasion. The Conference *Agenda* will be printed in the *Freethinker* for May 12.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures to-day, Sunday, May 3, morning and evening, in the Alexandra Hall, Hope-street, Birmingham. He also lectures in the same town on Monday evening in the Bristol-street Board school, and on Tuesday evening in the Albert-road, Aston, Board school, under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme.

Mr. A. B. Moss, at a recent meeting of the Camberwell Vestry, speaking on the application by Canon McGrath for a new cassock and surplice for the Catholic clergy performing the burial service at the cemetery, urged that better provision should be made for Secular funerals, and said there ought to be a special house in the cemetery for funeral parties that had nothing to do with any religious denomination. The National Secular Society, the Ethical Societies and other such bodies, should be considered as well as Protestants and Catholics. Men of all beliefs had to die, and at the graveside all were equal. Mr. Moss's speech was well applauded, but Mr. Legg could not help being facetious, and remarked that he thought "the members of those societies preferred to be cremated." Mr. Towler wished to know if they "would not be better cremated before they died." This provoked laughter, which does not cut deeply. Not so long ago the Christians used to cremate Freethinkers in the way suggested by Mr. Towler.

Mr. C. Cohen will devote the principal part of his time during the summer to open-air work in London. By arrangement with Mr. Foote, under the Lecture Scheme, Mr. Cohen will receive a living wage for his work, and the collections taken at his lectures must be forwarded to Mr. Foote (per Miss Vance). As the Branches are charged nothing for Mr. Cohen's services, it can hardly be said that the conditions are very onerous.

Mr. Cohen inaugurates the summer work of the Finsbury Branch on Clerkenwell Green. He lectures there this morning (May 3rd) on "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?" We hope the local Freethinkers will rally round the platform and do their best to bring a large number of Christians.

Mr. Cohen's lecture at Blackburn on "Christianity and Medical Science" is admirably reported in a local paper. We cannot give the name of it, as it is not written on the cutting. The Blackburn Branch is making good progress. Its social gathering on April 18 in the Spinners' Institute was largely attended. The secretary of this Branch is a lady—Mrs. Knowles.

Last Sunday, April 24, Mr. Touzeau Parris lectured three times in Glasgow, after an absence of nearly three years. All the meetings, especially the evening one, were well attended, and Mr. Parris received a cordial welcome from many old friends and new acquaintances, who were alike charmed and instructed by his fresh and scholarly treatment of the subjects of his addresses. An announcement from

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the chair that in future Mr. Parris would endeavor to return more frequently was greeted with great enthusiasm.

Mr. Parris lectures to-day at the Failsworth Secular Schools, both in the afternoon and evening. Hymns and choruses will be sung by the choir, assisted by the Failsworth String Band. There will be a collection in aid of the School Funds. Tea will be provided for friends from a distance, who, it is hoped, will attend in large numbers.

The Finsbury Park Branch commences its sixth season of open-air lectures in Finsbury Park this Sunday, when there will be lectures at 11.15 and 3.15 by Mr. Calvert and Mr. Rowney respectively. The monthly general meeting takes place the same evening at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute, at nine o'clock.

Mr. Symes has been twelve years in Australia. They have been years of incessant work and many worries. He says, in his *Liberator*: "What then? His work has told; the Bible is discredited, God dethroned and rendered ridiculous, priests and parsons turned inside out, public officials gone down 90 per cent. in value, the tribe of journalists rendered objects of distrust, and popular demagogues things to suspect rather than follow. You cannot restore those idols; people see through them, walk round them, and sneer or laugh, as their mood may dictate."

We have just heard from our far-off colleague, Mr. W. W. Collins, who is at Christchurch, New Zealand, where he serves the public in general as a member of parliament, and Freethought in particular by regular Sunday lectures. "You will be glad to know," Mr. Collins writes, "that we are still pegging away in this part of the world. Although my parliamentary duties have added considerably to an anything but idle life, I still lecture every Sunday; indeed, I have done this without a single break ever since I left you nearly eleven years ago. The clerics here are trying to break into our Education System by introducing a Scripture Text Book into the State schools. Last season I had the pleasure of moving the rejection of the Bill, and I am ready whenever it is again introduced."

"I often wish I could be with you," Mr. Collins says, "if only for a week or two." We assure him that we share the wish. It would be a very great pleasure to shake hands once more with our old friend, and to congratulate him in person on the brave fight he has made for the good old cause.

The *Crescent* (April 22) reports a lecture on Thomas Paine, the Thinker, by Sheikh Abdullah Quilliam, who gives a fair account of Paine's career, and says of his Deistic position, as expressed in his *Age of Reason*: "Had Paine made such a declaration in any country where the banner of Islam floated, there is not a Muslim who would not have clasped him by the hand and wished him a fraternal *Salaam alickoum*."

The *Echo* says, with much truth: "As a moral teacher and preacher, the journalist has supplanted the parson—or, more correctly speaking, he performs a duty which the parson, confining himself to what he has been pleased to call religion, has scarcely thought of attempting. Loud in religious formularies, he has been a dumb dog as regards public morals. He behaves rather differently now, but that is because the progressive world sweeps him along."

The *Free Review* for May opens with a paper on Friedrich Nietzsche, by Ernest Newman. "Chilperic" follows, dealing with Archdeacon Farrar's admissions with regard to the book ascribed to Daniel, under the title of "An Orthodox Surrender." He says: "After centuries of reckless special pleading, and vehement denunciations of all criticism, orthodoxy has been compelled to surrender its position; and the book of Daniel, instead of being held the palladium of the Church, stands branded as a convicted fraud. The arguments which were dismissed a generation ago as having no basis except 'infidel' depravity are now put forward by the foremost Christian writers as the latest results of modern scholarship."

It is announced that the arrangements are almost completed for the opening of the British Museum on Sunday. When the date is fixed Mr. Wheeler, and probably "Chilperic" also, will be happy to escort readers of the *Freethinker* who care to arrange for a Sabbath afternoon among the national treasures.

Mr. Richard Davy, writing in the *Catholic Union Gazette*, says: "I am well aware that there are many English Freemasons who can scarcely credit that the Masonic body on the Continent is seriously engaged in a warfare against Christianity. They forget that their own body has severed its connection with the French lodges. The French Masonic body no longer masks its intentions. It openly declares that it has only one object—the destruction of the Catholic Church." This is a Catholic way of putting it; but the fact is certain. The Masonic organisation seeks to spread light and universal brotherhood, and it finds the Catholic Church its greatest hindrance.

The good old *Boston Investigator* has entered on its sixty-sixth yearly volume. It has seen two generations of men depart, but the Freethought flag is still in the hands of a Mendum, the son of J. P. Mendum, who upheld Abner Kneeland when he first started the paper. May it continue to enlighten the generations yet to come!

The Christian Evidence Society (according to the *Daily News*) is asking for more money in order to counteract the increased activity of the National Secular Society. This is an undesigned compliment to the President's Lecture Scheme.

Professor Bain, of Aberdeen, speaking on the occasion of the retirement of Dr. W. A. Hunter from the representation of that city, highly eulogised the intellectual and literary ability of Dr. Hunter. He expressed the opinion that "since John Stuart Mill's day no such acute mind as Dr. Hunter's had entered the House of Commons."

The *Freidenker*, of Milwaukee (April 5), noticing the invitation of the American Secular Union to Mr. Foote to visit the other side of the Atlantic, pays its tribute of esteem to Mr. Foote for the way in which he conducts the Freethought propaganda, and, after many compliments, assures him he will be heartily welcomed by the German American Freethinkers in the Republic.

The Annual Children's Party was a great success, in spite of many disadvantageous circumstances. Unfortunately, however, the Committee report a balance on the wrong side. The expenses were about £20, and the subscriptions about £15. Is there no Freethinker who can afford to wipe out that deficit?

The *Consett Chronicle* for April 17 gives a long report of Mr. Charles Watts's recent lecture in Stanley on "Does Death End All?" The editor devotes two leading articles to the lecture, to which Mr. Watts will reply in our next issue.

Colonel Ingersoll's *Foundations of Faith* is now on sale at our publishing office, price threepence. It is a neatly-printed pamphlet, stitched in a wrapper.

Lying For God's Glory.

I have been repeatedly told by the most zealous, aged, and experienced Christians, who were my personal friends, that if they were to find out that the Christian religion is false they would never tell anybody so, because, they say, even if it is false it does great good. I suppose there is hardly any matured person who reads this who has not, some time, heard some Christian say that, who was, in other respects, a truthful and good citizen. But the very best of Christians, like their great leader, St. Paul, believe that it is morally and religiously right to lie for their religion; and they will do it. And they will lie, and connive at lies, to defend things that tend to establish a belief in the supernatural, simply because they think those things are training the minds of the people in the direction of belief in religion.—*C. Moore.*

To the Front.

Men of thought, with iron nerve
  Fronting error take your stand;
Never from your purpose swerve
  Till it cease throughout the land.
Long and dread the strife may be—
Ye yet shall have the mastery.

—*W. S. Landor.*

There are many millions of people who believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God—millions who think that this book is staff and guide, counsellor and consoler; that it fills the present with peace and the future with hope—millions who believe that it is the fountain of law, justice, and mercy, and that to its wise and benign teachings the world is indebted for its liberty, wealth, and civilisation—millions who imagine that this book is a revelation from the wisdom and love of God to the brain and heart of man—millions who regard this book as the torch that conquers the darkness of death, and pours its radiance on another world—a world without a tear. They forget its ignorance and savagery, its hatred of liberty, its religious persecution; they remember heaven, but they forget the dungeon of eternal pain.—*Ingersoll.*

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DIVINE DIVERSION.

When God—or Christ, as Christians say—
Perceived himself on Christmas Day
To be a chubby clod of clay,
He must have thought it funny.

When Jahveh's colleague—poor old Joe—
Dreamt Poll and God had formed a Co.
To meet a long-felt want, we know
He *should* have thought it funny.

But no, he never seemed to doubt
The truth of what he dreamt about—
That Poll with God was "walking out";
He didn't think it funny.

When Jahveh focussed all his stare,
And looked on earth from ev'rywhere,
And saw himself in Mary's care,
He must have thought it funny.

To see his Lordship munching bread,
With shavings on his tousled head,
Or being washed and put to bed,
He must have thought it funny.

To see the little lad, J. C.,
Perched cock-a-hoop on Joseph's knee,
And say, "He's I, and I am he,"
He must have thought it funny.

When God performed his famous trick
On God as Christ, through God as Nick,
And set him on a spike to stick,
He must have thought it funny.

When Christ changed water into port,
And knew that we'd the fact retort
On "'tot'lers" of the goody sort,
He must have thought it funny.

When gentle Jesus jostled Jews
Because the Joss-house they did use
For buying cash and selling "doos,"
He must have thought it funny.

When Christ in fish for cash did look,
And thought how saints their coin would hook
By "fishy" means, by "hook or crook,"
He must have thought it funny.

When Jesus walked upon the sea,
It seemed to him so odd that he
Entirely lost his *gravitee*—
It certainly was funny.

When God, as Christ, was crucified,
With mirth he must have fairly cried;
Of laughing, "two to one," he died—
The notion was so funny.

When God played "dying" on the tree,
And asked his mumming self why he
Had left himself, we're bound to see
He *must* have thought it funny.

When God perceived himself as dead—
Himself of life the Fountain-head,
The First and Last, the A and Z,
He must have thought it funny.

As God declared three days he'd be
Within the grave, and yet that he
Did not keep *grave* so long, we see
He *must* have thought it funny.

When God, as flesh, soared through the air,
Through either air or ether rare,
And vaporised to ev'rywhere,
He must have thought it funny.

No doubt, the son of Joseph's lass—
Like any other carnous mass—
When "high" enough went back to gas;
But, still, it's rather funny.

When Jahveh, Jesus, Nick, and Ghost
Declared to all, "Believe or roast!"
The simple, compound, carnal Ghost
Had surely thought it funny.

This, these, discrete, four, concrete, one
Are, is, an endless source of fun
To all with brains beneath the sun
Who know when things are funny.

And now, to Jahveh, Son, and Co.,
And their creators years ago,
Our thanks for mirthful hours we owe;
They are so very funny!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

THOMAS PAINE AGAIN.

STUDENTS in Paine may be interested in some further additions to Paineiana gleaned from another volume of the Historical Manuscripts Commission—viz., the 14th Report, Appendix, Part IV., manuscript of Lord Kenyon; published 1894. These papers cover a very long period, ranging from July 15, 1524, to December 5, 1837. The first is the testimony sworn "upon a boke" before the Prior and Convent, by William Nicholson and others, to a miracle worked upon them by which they escaped drowning. It is almost funny enough to publish in these pages; but for the moment we are concerned only with Paine. Seeing the part played by Lord Kenyon in the legal iniquities of the close of the eighteenth century, it was with very great hopes of finding some good material that we turned to the Kenyon volume, only to be disappointed; for, for some special reason surely, there are only two references to Paine, and not any to the trials. The first is from Peter Whitehall Davies to Lord Kenyon:—

> "1792; December 19; Broughton.—I take the liberty to trouble your Lordship with another letter, in which I have enclosed an *assignat*, made payable at Bersham Furnace, endorsed 'Gilbert Gilpin.' I am informed he is the first clerk of Mr. Wilkinson, whose sister married Dr. Priestley. With what view Mr. Wilkinson circulates *assignats* is best known to himself. It appears to me that good consequences cannot arise from their being made currant [*sic*], and that very pernicious effects may. Mr. Wilkinson, at his foundry at Bersham (where, I am informed, he has now a very large number of cannon), and in his coal and lead mines, employs a considerable number of men. They are regularly paid every Saturday with *assignats*. The Presbyterian tradesmen receive them in payment for goods, by which intercourse they have frequent opportunities to corrupt the principles of that description of men, by infusing into their minds the pernicious tenets of Paine's *Rights of Man*, upon whose book, I am told, publick lectures are delivered to a considerable number in the neighborhood of Wrexham, by a Methodist. The bad effects of them are too evident in that parish."
>
> "*Note in the handwriting of Chief Justice Kenyon.*—This letter occasioned the Act of Parliament passed in January, 1793, for preventing the negotiation of French paper money in England."

If this endorsement of Kenyon's be true, this letter may be noted as probably the slightest basis for an Act of Parliament on record; certainly the letter is another proof of the state of scare into which Paine's work had thrown some people. The strange intermingling of names and doings makes a very thought-provoking chain.

Dr. Priestley, Thomas Paine, a cannon founder using a paper currency, a Methodist preacher delivering lectures on the Rights of Man, Presbyterian shopkeepers dilating on the advantages of free banking, while changing pounds of butter for rag money, and then a special Act of Parliament to damage the value of French notes, which an infamous English Government was forging by the million, is altogether a theme worth working out some day.

The next reference to Paine is rather more suited to the pages of some Christian evidences organ, as, with a good headline such as "The Christian Princess's Rebuke to a Christless Courtier" or "Christian Charlotte and Damned Drummond," it would be sure to catch on with those good people who take in the parson's fables as to the Queen and Bible.

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Memorandum by Lord Kenyon :—

> "1821 ; February 5.—The Bishop of Salisbury (Dr. Fisher) has just left me ; he mentioned to me the following instances of conversations which took place at the table of the Princess of Wales, the Princess Charlotte sitting between her and Sir William Drummond : 'Sir William Drummond told Princess Charlotte he understood she was reading history, and asked what history it was that most interested her. Without waiting for her reply, he went on, and said that he had latterly been in the habit of reading Oriental history as the most amusing, and added—as to what is called Scripture history, I can assure your Royal Highness there is nothing in it ; it is all an allegory, and nothing more. The next time of his being by Princess Charlotte, he brought forward several of Paine's objections to Christianity, which she met and confuted, and Lady E. Lindsay said she never saw any man in her life so completely thrown upon his back. The third time of their meeting, Sir William Drummond was beginning again in the same style, by saying that the education of the nobility, and of all ranks, even the highest in this country, was on a very bad plan, all in the hands of priests ; and, addressing her Royal Highness, he said : You know that the priests have always been the most corrupt and contemptible of mankind. She replied : Sir William, you are now for the third time so good as to be giving me instruction in the same way ; I do not know what your object can be ; you seem to be an Atheist, or at least a Deist, and I must beg to refrain from holding any more such conversation with you. I will, therefore, take my leave, and have only to thank you for the pains you have been so good as to take to enlighten my darkened understanding—and so withdrew.'"

The anecdote is marked as "communicated to the Bishop of Salisbury by Lady E. Lindsay and Lady de Clifford, and confirmed by the Princess Charlotte, then about fourteen years old. The Bishop informed the Prince, and the intercourse lessened."

There, now, is not that a sweet thing in anecdotes, worthy the inventive powers of Hugh Price Hughes, or any other manufacturer of evidences and Atheistic conversions ? In every detail it is perfect. The careful, insidious suggestion of Paine's objections, and their successful refutation by the good Princess, and the supporting evidence of Sister E. L., "who never saw a man so completely on his back." Oh for the brush of the historical painter ! It seems just a trifle weak that this royal champion of the priests should, after such a victory, so soon funk, as she seems to have done. It is, however, perhaps not much to be wondered at, when one tries to figure the thing out. As in all these things, there are vacancies which one would like to fill up ; but these parson fellows never care to be too exact in chronology or geography. It may be noted that Sir William Drummond was born about 1770. Charlotte Augusta was born 1796 ; at the time of the encounter she was, according to the Bishop, fourteen ; and, therefore, it took place in 1810, when Drummond was forty, and just before he published his examination of the Old Testament, *Œdipus Judaicus* (1811). Evidently he was just the sort of man to be put on his back by the royal child of fourteen. This good young woman died in 1817, after giving birth to a still-born child. One of her biographers winds up his notice by saying: "Numerous anecdotes of Her Royal Highness were related with incredible industry, and swallowed with equal avidity after her demise ; but the memoirs of her that were then published were for the most part made up of pure invention" (Thompson Cooper's *Biographical Dictionary*).

This sounds a bit rough on Dr. Fisher, but really nothing more seems needed to round it off, so we quit the Kenyon report.

THOMAS SHORE.

Mr. E. Pownceby, as honorary secretary, writes on behalf of a Committee formed to raise pecuniary assistance for Mr. W. J. Ramsey and Mr. H. A Kemp, both of whom suffered imprisonment for "blasphemy" in 1883. Mr. Ramsey is "reduced to very straitened circumstances through an unfortunate failure in business," and it is intended to "enable him to make a fresh start." Collecting-sheets can be obtained from Mr. Pownceby, at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 36 Newington Green-road, N., and subscriptions can be sent to Mr. George Ward (treasurer) at the same address. Mr. Pownceby asks whether acknowledgment of donations can be made through the *Freethinker*, to which we reply, "Yes."

THE WORK AHEAD.

SAYS G. W. Foote, President of the National Secular Society of England : "There are but two possible methods of education—secular and sectarian. And as religion is the natural support of sectarian education, so is Freethought the natural support of secular education. The only way to promote secular education is to make Secularists." This is truth proved by all the testimony of experience. No religionist who could see his way clear to introduce anywhere the doctrines of his sect ever doubted the value of sectarian education, or his duty to promote it. With believers in Christianity unsectarian education is a compromise, and is consented to, not because Christians think it is a good thing, but because no sect is strong enough to exclude all the rest. The Catholic may admit that the unsectarian institutions of this country are the best under the circumstances ; but the circumstances to which he refers are that the institutions, if made sectarian, would necessarily be Protestant. And then he denies that the Catholic Church is a sect—it is the Church itself ; the Protestant division, he holds, is a sect, and the various denominations are subsects. But churches, like some other primitive forms, propagate by fission, or separation, and the part which calls itself the parent is such only by accidentally retaining the name. The right of the Church of Rome to the title of "Catholic" is disputed by the Church of England, and Rome must submit to be called a sect.

The compromise of which we have spoken may insure us institutions that are unsectarian up to the point where all Christians agree, but it will not give us Secularism ; for, with education in the hands of local boards, the majority will dictate teaching to the minority ; and the minority, being Christian, will submit, because it thinks "any religion is better than none." This sort of abuse can be abolished only by making Freethinkers of the people. We are glad to be able to object to religious education because it is unconstitutional and illegal ; but, after all, the real objection to it is that it is untrue, and equally harmful wherever found. Our legal charters give us warrant for fighting this falsehood and delusion in public, but reason brings a still stronger indictment against inculcating it in private. Only half, and perhaps the lesser half, is done when government is made entirely secular. There will still remain the duty of secularising the governed, and banishing superstition from the head and heart.

Nothing is more certain than that religion founded on belief in gods and saviors, heavens and hells, is a monstrous deception, and that the preachers of that religion are either deluded or are impostors. The whole thing is a nightmare, from which the people cannot be wakened too soon—a dementia for which reason and truth are the only physicians. The differences between Freethinkers and religionists are not intellectual, but mental ; the latter are not mistaken, but deluded. Their intellects have never been appealed to ; their minds have been warped. They do not of themselves fall into the mistake of accepting religion, but are deceived from the first. It is necessary that the spark of sanity, where it has not been totally extinguished, should be reached and fanned and fed. The fuel provided one hundred years ago in Paine's *Age of Reason* should be supplied to increase the glow, and every Freethinker can at least give the encouragement of his breath. Secular institutions will never be safe in the presence of a fanatical populace.

—*Truthseeker (New York).*

THE HINDU CONVERTED.

"Grog shops exist and flourish in nearly all the large towns of India."—REPORT OF WESLEYAN MISSIONARY CONFERENCE.

BEHOLD, on India's coral strand
The swart Hindu, baptised and bland,
Has changed for fashions fair and new
His reptile gods and crocodilean crew.

Forsaking Ganges' grateful stream,
He seeks of Bass the sparkling gleam ;
He scorns the Cows he loved of old,
And worships Britain's sacred Calf of Gold.

He flouts the faith his father taught,
Leaves Juganaut, and cries, "Jug or naught !"
Scouts Buddha and Brahm with scornful jeer,
And cries, "The Bible's great, but greater's beer !"

O, Brahmin-ridden Bengalee,
The scoffers mark thy bended knee,
As pious Bull now tells the tale—
"He reads our Bible—and he drinks our ale !"

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BOOK CHAT.

It is only of late years that it has been recognised that in the customs, superstitions, and traditions of our "folk," as well as in those of savages, much light is thrown on the past of those more highly developed. The interesting study of folk-lore is now seen to be an important branch of anthropology, and there is a growing public who will welcome such a work as the *Introduction to Folk-Lore*, by Marian Roalfe Cox, which Messrs. Nutt & Co. have published.

* * *

Miss Cox impresses us favorably at the outset. She takes as her motto the famous line of Terence, "*Homo sum nihil humani a me alienum puto.*" Nothing human should be alien to the scientific study of humanity. Her introductory chapter is excellent. The work, indeed, goes beyond its title. Being a good introduction to folk-lore, it is also an introduction to the history of the mental and religious evolution of humanity. Abundant illustrations of folk-lore are given, and proof that "in our lower classes are still to be found sedimentary deposits of the traditions of remotely distant epochs." Many old and obscure customs will be found explained in Miss Cox's volume, which is brightly written and full of information on every page.

* * *

The first chapter is entitled "The Separable Soul," and illustrates the belief in a second self or soul—a belief arising from dreams, and giving rise to hosts of legends as to the state of the dead, possession by spirits, transmigration, etc. Then follows a chapter on animal worship and totemism; then on "Animism, Ghosts, and Gods," including sacrifices. Chapter iv. is on "The Other World," chapter v. on "Magic," and chapter vi. on "Myths, Folk Tales, etc." A good deal of the same ground is gone over as in Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past*. This is not surprising, as both writers follow on the lines of Dr. Tylor and Mr. Herbert Spencer. Mr. Wheeler has, however, taken many illustrations from Mr. J. G. Frazer, while Miss Cox has gone rather to Mr. Andrew Lang, though in the matter of folk tales she may herself be considered an authority.

* * *

An important work on folk-lore has just been issued by Mr. Forder. It is entitled *Segnius Irritant; or, Eight Primitive Folk-Lore Stories*, translated and compared by W. W. Strickland. The word "primitive" may be objected to as not strictly accurate. But the stories, translated from the Czech and Slovenien, are certainly of very archaic character, and, although they have some analogues in Southern and Western Europe, probably represent earlier phases of some better known folk tales. Besides giving the stories themselves as they are still told by the folk, Mr. Strickland comments upon, compares, and explains them. He gives reasons for believing that they originated in the arctic regions, and that they represent in the main the mythology of the seasons, especially the triumph of spring over winter.

* * *

Mr. Clodd has recently pointed out that folk-lorists are apt, out of deference to the Christian *taboo*, to avoid the real issue of their studies. This is not the case with Mr. Strickland. He errs, if at all, on the other side. He does not scruple to find in his old folk tales the origin of "the Bethlehem legend." He says: "Just as the hero of the primitive myth leaves home to wander through darkness and bring back the light, so Jesus, the putative child of the Jewish Tvashtar, runs away from home, and, disputing with the doctors of divinity, proves himself to be more enlightened than any of them; and, not long after this, after a forty days' fast, which is perhaps a faint reminiscence of the forty-two days' Arctic winter night, occurs the struggle for the light in its usual triple form, but vulgarised into a trial of moral strength between a devil and a saint, perhaps having been modified by ancient Buddhist legends. Such is the stuff religions and religious thought are formed of." It should be mentioned that Mr. Strickland gives reason to believe that some items of his stories are prior to Virgil, and pre-Christian.

* * *

Mr. Strickland has some notable remarks on the mental position of our savage ancestors. He says: "At present, enlightened by science, we refer all the vital phenomena of the surface of our globe to the heat of the sun. But the instinct of savage people is just the other way. There is with them a complete inversion of cause and effect. It is not the sun that creates mankind, but mankind that creates the sun. It is not the sun that brings back the spring, but the gathering vital forces of nature that conjure back the sun. And if this habit of mind, still prevalent among religious folk whose superstitions represent the dying cosmical blunders of primitive barbarism, is still powerful enough to cause hundreds of thousands of Christians to believe that by prayer they can conjure the climatic effects dependent upon the movements of cyclones and anti-cyclones, or thereby change the course of epidemics or their own lives and conduct, it is not wonderful if savages within the Arctic circle, with few or no means of accurate observation and scanty stores of accumulated knowledge, mistook cause for effect, and imagined it was the cold which killed the sun, and not the sun which killed the cold."

* * *

Mr. Strickland gives a number of tables illustrating the connection, variants, development, and meaning of the stories, and has several essays thereon, as well as on "Primitive Lapp and Slav-Myths Compared"; while in an appendix he gives a list of the fairy stories in D. G. Bernoni's collections, showing their relation to similar Slavonic ones. *Segnius Irritant* takes up a little-worked field, and is a contribution to folk-lore, and thereby to ancient beliefs and superstitions, that should by no means be overlooked.

* * *

As we have already announced, the Humanitarian League is issuing through Messrs. Bell and Sons (5, York-street, Covent Garden, W.C.) an excellent series of School Readers, especially calculated to foster in the young a love of animals, and teaching the duty of kindness to our fellow creatures; in reference to which an inspector writes to the publishers: "I cannot forbear thanking you for the 'Animal Life Series' which I received yesterday; they seem to me excellent, and to hit the mark very exactly. They are simply and affectingly written, keep an admirable purpose in view, and are at once pleasant and instructive. The type is as good as possible, and the illustrations well done. I shall certainly make them known in the time that remains to me."

* * *

Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner issues the second volume of a new edition of Paine's works (London: A. & H. Bonner). This volume (3s. 6d.) comprises *The Age of Reason*. Mrs. Bonner contributes an Historical Introduction, which is written carefully, though at least two important facts are omitted. It was the prosecution of Eaton for publishing *The Age of Reason* that drew forth Shelley's noble letter to Lord Ellenborough, and the long imprisonment of Carlile that drew forth J. S. Mill's article on the Blasphemy Laws in the *Westminster Review*. Of course there is nothing new to be said at this time of day about *The Age of Reason* itself; we have, therefore, only to add that the book is decently printed and bound, and that attention has been paid to the text.

PROFANE JOKES.

Ex-baby—"Mamma, where did the baby come from?" Mamma—"From heaven, my darling." Ex-baby—"It's a pity the kid didn't know when he was well off."

Tommy—"Ma, I know why babies go to heaven when they die." Mother—"Why, my boy?" Tommy—"They haven't any teeth to gnash."

Watts—"So you don't believe the good die young?" Potts—"That used to worry me a great deal when I was a boy, but I know better now."

Clergyman (examining a Sunday-school class)—"Now, can any one of you tell me what are the sins of omission?" Small Boy—"Please, sir, they're sins you ought to have committed and haven't."

A titled Englishman was a guest at a Washington house, and a dinner party was given in his honor. The host cautioned the colored butler to address the Englishman always as "My Lord." This he remembered to do until he passed the special dish of the occasion—stewed terrapin. The appearance of this dish is not specially inviting, so, when the butler handed it to him, the Englishman declined it, saying, *sotto voce*: "It looks uncommonly nawsty." The butler was so taken aback at the idea of anyone refusing such a delicacy that he forgot himself and said: "But it's terrapin, my God."

"Yes, Abimelech, you are correct; it was Solomon that wrote, 'All the days of my life will I wait till my change cometh,' and you are probably correct in your suggestion that he wrote it immediately after he had bought something at a church fair."

New Spirit—"Who are those three youngsters who turned up their noses so when I was telling them about the hot weather we had last July?" St. Peter—"They were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego."

Jones—"It is a fashionable congregation, isn't it?" Smith—"Very! Their minister may believe what he likes about the Bible, but if he should ever advocate the taxation of church property he'd have to go."

Raising Funds.—"I'll give $10," announced the man in the third pew from the front. The converted counterfeiter rose with emotion. "And I," he exclaimed, "will make it $100."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 8.30, social gathering of members and friends.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, C. Cohen, "Atheism: Its Meaning, Morality, and Justification."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, Rev. S. D. Headlam, M.L.S.B., "The Education Bill."

ISLINGTON BRANCH: 8.30, quarterly meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 36 Newington Green-road.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Voltaire's Work."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, J. W. Martin, B.Sc., "Silas Marner."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "What Think ye of Christ?"

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith will lecture.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, a lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand): 11.15, E. Calvert, "Is the Exercise of Free Speech Conducive to True Progress?" 3.15, James Rowney, "The Atonement."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, S. E. Easton will lecture. Thursday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "Jesus Christ."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12 and 3.30, lectures. Wednesday, at 7.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields): 10.45, Lucretius Keen will lecture.

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, William Heaford, "Immortality."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Resurrection."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Ten Commandments."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Devil's Doom."

REGENT'S PARK: 3, James Rowney will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BARNSLEY (Black-a-moor Head Hotel): 8, members' meeting; paper by a recruit on "The Life of Moses."

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 11, Charles Watts, "Is Man a Religious Being?" 7, "The Science of Life from a Secular Standpoint." Monday, at 8, at the Bristol-street Board School, "The Government Education Bill: A Delusion and a Snare." Tuesday, at 8, at Ashton Board School, "Secularism and Christianity: Which is the Superior?"

BRISTOL BRANCH: 12.45, members and friends meet at the terminus, Victoria-street, for ramble to Stantonbury Hill Camp, *viâ* Keynsham.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, W. B. Thompson, "The New Education Bill: Does it Make for Progress in Popular Education?" Councillor W. J. Levington will also address the meeting.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms): 7, Walter Holmes, "Why I am Not a Liberal."

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 2.30, Touzeau Parris, "Some Bible Symbols, their Origin and Meaning"; 6.30, "The Certainties of Religion Worthless." Choir and string band.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—J. Gilbert, "Is Co-operation Socialism?" 6.30, P. MacGiveen, "The Evils of Socialism."

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Holditch, "Animal Magnetism *versus* Spiritualism."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, J. Roberts, "Spinoza." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Lawrance Small, B.Sc., "For God or Man?"

ROCHDALE (Board Room No. 2, Co-operative Building, Toad-lane): 6, business meeting, and short address by S. R. Thompson.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Excursion of members and friends to Rotherham Museum and Parks; meet at 1.45, near the clock, inside Midland Station.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, business meeting; 7.30, entertainment.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "An Hour with the Bible"; 6.30, "Christian Want of Evidence."

DERBY (Market-place): J. E. Briggs, "Are the Teachings of Jesus Wise?"

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The Freethinker

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

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ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

THE title of this article will be explained as we proceed. At present let it suffice to say that the reader need not expect a sermon on the lady and gentleman who were struck dead for trying to take in the Holy Ghost.

In the *Daily Telegraph* of April 28 there appeared the following paragraph :—

> "Some years ago, especially during the lifetime of the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., the Hall of Science, in Old-street, St. Luke's, was the home of militant Secularism, or, as some people preferred to call it, Atheism. It will soon cease to possess that characteristic, for the Salvation Army have become its proprietors, and intend to use it as a shelter for women."

"It will soon cease to possess that characteristic" is a very belated expression. The ignorant reader would imagine that the poor Secularists were packing up their belongings and preparing to make their exit, while the Salvationists were waiting to enter the premises; whereas the Secularists left the Hall of Science nearly twelve months ago, and were not turned out or supplanted by any religious body whatsoever, but were simply the victims of a villainous Christian law which robs them of the common rights of citizenship; for it is pretty certain that no Hall Company would ever have been formed if it had been possible to devote property in trust for Secular purposes, and in that case the commercial difficulties and dangers of such an enterprise would all have been avoided.

Other journals besides the *Daily Telegraph* have printed paragraphs on this subject. All of these, however, are obviously founded on the paragraph in the May number of the *Deliverer*. Under the heading of "Personal Notes"—which turns out to be a most appropriate title—Mrs. Bramwell Booth contributes a number of paragraphs on "Rescue Work," as the Salvation Army calls its pottering with what is euphemistically described as "the social evil." After gushing piously about her own recent illness, and the death of two children belonging to two different branches of the great Booth dynasty, the lady has something to say about her "Rescue Homes" and the establishment of a new one in an unexpected quarter. We are anxious not to misrepresent the lady, so we reproduce this particular paragraph *in extenso* :—

> "Among the abodes of wickedness in London none was more prominent for many years than what was called the Hall of Science, in St. Luke's. Here the late Charles Bradlaugh, and other kindred haters of the truth, worked to spread infidelity, and I fear I must say also, teaching which involved blasphemy and impurity of a terrible kind. But, like other men, infidels die, and their works fall away, and of late years the Hall of Science has not flourished. The Army has done something to this end, and finally the property was offered to us either on sale or lease, and we are hoping to secure it for a term of years, and propose, if the means are forthcoming, to open it as a Home and Shelter for Women. We shall call it the Hall of Mercy. But I shall want £1,000 to fit it up and make the necessary alterations to receive about 250 women."

Mrs. Bramwell Booth does not say that the big "Shelter" the Salvation Army used to have further down in Old-street had to be closed, probably for financial reasons; nor that the Hall of Science was offered to the Booths by the ground landlord, after the bankruptcy of the leaseholder, who was a private individual, and not the Secular party; nor that the acquisition of the place by the Salvation Army is simply a speculation to raise the wind by pandering to orthodox bigotry. What she does say displays the usual Christian temper. The lady bubbles over with that "charity" which Christians are always boasting, and which has made them detested by non-Christians all over the world. She has the impudence to call Charles Bradlaugh a "hater of the truth," and after this exhibition of intolerance towards a man who made great sacrifices for *his* convictions, although he did not share *hers*, she asks for a thousand pounds (to begin with) to fit up "the Hall of Mercy."

Nor is this the worst of Mrs. Bramwell Booth's offences against common decency. She calls the Hall of Science one of the most prominent "abodes of wickedness in London," and a place where Charles Bradlaugh and his colleagues taught "impurity of a terrible kind." It would be charity to suppose that she does not know what she is talking about, but it is difficult to entertain the excuse of ignorance, for the Christian world is well aware of the fact that the very worst libellers of the Hall of Science were recently prosecuted in a court of justice, and sentenced to pay damages and costs, and that they never so much as attempted to prove a single one of the vile accusations which they and their like had for many years been flinging at the Institution. We feel bound, therefore, to regard Mrs. Bramwell Booth as a deliberate and reckless slanderer; and we trust this revelation of her character, and of Salvation Army tactics, will prevent any more wealthy Agnostics from subscribing to a Social Scheme which is worked in the interest of the narrowest and bitterest sectarianism.

We have done for the moment with Mrs. Bramwell Booth, and we turn our attention to the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes—a gentleman in the same line of business, and possessing the same sweet temper and profound regard for veracity. Mr. Hughes states in the *Methodist Times* that "some months ago" the Hall of Science was offered him "for mission purposes"—apparently by Mr. R. O. Smith's solicitor at the time when he was feigning negotiations with the Freethought party. "The Secularists," says Mr. Hughes, "were unable to bear the expense of Mr. Bradlaugh's headquarters." This is what he learnt on making "inquiries," but it was an absolute untruth. The Hall of Science never belonged to Mr. Bradlaugh or the Secular party, nor did he ever pay a fixed rent for its occupation. Mr. Bradlaugh raised money (about £1,300) towards building the premises, but left the property entirely in the hands of Mr. Smith, who derived the principal part of his income from the profits of a proprietary club. And after Mr. Bradlaugh's death the Hall was lost, not by any inability on the part of the National Secular Society to pay the rent then agreed upon for its use of the premises (for it paid Mr. Smith £250 a year), but by a difficulty in a time of commercial depression of raising £3,000 to purchase the place outright—a difficulty which was at length hopelessly accentuated by the insolvency of the leaseholder.

Mr. Hughes always takes care that the readers of the *Methodist Times* shall not be too well plied with *facts*. During the Atheist Shoemaker controversy, while we published his side of the case as well as our own in the *Freethinker*, he never allowed a syllable of our side to appear in his journal. And the following paragraph will show that he is still true to his old policy :—

> "The utter collapse of the Secular Society at its headquarters is a striking illustration of the fact, which we have always asserted, that the popularity of the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh was due to his humane and

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democratic politics, and not in the least to his Atheism. If he had not been an Atheist, his influence would have been ten times greater. He was a genuine friend and a mighty champion of the poor. He was also the advocate of a number of noble enterprises which ought to have commanded the sympathy of the Christian Church. For these reasons he became a great power in the land, but when he passed away his power died with him, and the hall which was the scene of his operations for a quarter of a century has now fallen into the hands of the Salvation Army."

During the lifetime of Charles Bradlaugh this man never talked about his humane politics and his noble enterprises, and never called him a friend and champion of the poor. He waited till Charles Bradlaugh was dead, and then shed crocodile tears over his grave. Every word he utters in praise of Charles Bradlaugh is but the hypocritical prelude to sinister falsehoods about his party. Mr. Hughes knows very well that there is no "utter collapse of the Secular Society," at its headquarters or elsewhere. He cannot have forgotten how he was pestered all over the country, wherever he went, with copies of our exposure of his Atheist Shoemaker story. He knows that after the "collapse" the Secular Society went to the west-end of London and had lectures close beside the West London Mission at St. James's Hall. It is not impossible that he sees the *Freethinker* pretty regularly. In that case, he would have seen that, on leaving the Hall of Science, the Secular Society held meetings for several months at the much larger Foresters' Hall in the same locality, that the St. James's Hall lectures were not the only ones delivered in the West-end, and that the North London frequenters of the Hall of Science have set up a new Club and Institute for themselves. The President of the National Secular Society has now engaged a West-end Hall for regular Sunday evening lectures, to which other features of propaganda and organisation will doubtless be added. Altogether, the "collapse" is a mere piece of Christian imposture, and Secularists can afford to laugh at it, especially when they remember the success of the Secular forward movement in the provinces under the President's Lecture Scheme.

Mr. Hughes adds that the West London Mission has long occupied Mr. Bradlaugh's "headquarters in West London, Cleveland Hall." But the place was never his headquarters. He had no sort of control over it, or responsibility for it; and it was used by all sorts of persons, for all sorts of purposes, before it was engaged by the Wesleyans. Cleveland Hall was founded by a wealthy Owenite, and was alienated from its founder's "trust" objects through the infamous law which Christians uphold against "unbelievers." And with this "significant" fact we leave Mr. Ananias Hughes and Mrs. Sapphira Booth.

G. W. FOOTE.

VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU.*

MATTHEW ARNOLD, in his essay on *The Function of Criticism*, remarked that "the France of Voltaire and Rousseau told far more powerfully upon the mind of Europe than the France of the Revolution." In her recent book of *Studies in the France of Voltaire and Rousseau*, Mrs. Macdonald has taken as her object to display the thought and work of these philosophers in their relationship to "the modern spirit." She has brought to her task much study, and the insight which comes from sympathy; and her book is not simply supplementary, but in several points corrective, of the views put forward by Morley and others with regard to these great men. At the outset Mrs. Macdonald enters into a polemic with Matthew Arnold, and those others who speak of Voltaire as a mere destructive who failed to understand the religious problem. She says justly: "If the Voltairean movement served only a destructive purpose, and has handed down to us no inheritance of animating ideas, we are bound to the conclusion that the liberation of the human mind from supernatural terrors is *not* a 'spiritual' purpose, and that the establishment of the intellectual and moral rights of man is *not* an animating idea." Further, Mrs. Macdonald contends Voltaire did, by declaring the views of dogma and those of reason to be irreconcilable, far more satisfactorily solve the religious problem than apostles of culture, who are for ever seeking to reconcile contradictions and unite the incompatible. Mrs. Macdonald further shows that the direct method of Voltaire has the justification of success. Against him was the organised and disciplined armies of dogmatism, supported by the King and Court; yet, with the sword of ridicule that kills, he became a terror to the party of terror, and it is with him and his little band of fellow-workers that the victory remains. "And it is they who, in fifty years, put the persecuting spirit to shame, and made the claims of supernatural faith take the second rank under the sovereign rights of humanity and the moral law." To the objection that Voltaire ridiculed not only fanatical cruelty, but the devotional feelings also, our authoress points out: "It was these devotional feelings that, by the zeal they inspired for the preservation of sacred illusions, made men forgetful of the claims of truth and justice, and indifferent to the sacredness of human life."

Mrs. Macdonald's book has the bust of Rousseau on the cover, and is far more largely devoted to the citizen of Geneva than to the patriarch of Ferney. She regards J. J. Rousseau, of whom she is preparing a complete biography, far more favorably, and, I think, on the whole more justly, than does Mr. Morley, who cannot forget that Rousseau was no evolutionist. Of course *The Social Contract* could not be written as it stands by any scientific sociologist of to-day; but, none the less, the fact remains that it, like the other works of Rousseau, called man back to forgotten truths, to nature, and to the facts of the human constitution. Mrs. Macdonald is doing a real service in calling attention to the merits of an author it has been too much the fashion to neglect, or to abuse as a mere sentimentalist. She says with truth that, if Voltaire asserted the claims of the intellect, Rousseau asserted those of the conscience and the heart. Much of his teaching is summed up in his phrase, *Hommes! Soyez humains: c'est votre premier devoir.* (It is the first duty of man to be humane.) This duty was as emphatically taught by Voltaire. Of the two, Mrs. Macdonald evidently most highly appreciates Rousseau. She says: "Voltaire was the soldier of the Modern Spirit; Rousseau was its prophet. Among men of science and of letters he is the religious teacher—the man who has the impassioned earnestness and fervor that belonged to a great moral reformer."

Of course some deductions must be made from a moral reformer, who fell out with nearly everyone with whom he came in contact. Rousseau, as Mrs. Macdonald remarks, never underwent the discipline that trains the average man in habits of self-control. He was a child of nature and circumstance, and it was this which enabled him to impinge so powerfully on the artificial society of France before the Revolution.

To me it seems that over-sensitiveness was bound to lead Rousseau into trouble. Exacting with his friends, he was ready, on the slightest suspicion, to regard them as enemies. Impulsive and tactless, he contrived not only to make enemies, but to quarrel with those who would and should have been his best friends. There was something feminine about Rousseau, and, perhaps, for this reason a woman is best able to estimate him aright. Mrs. Macdonald shows that Rousseau was, if very human, no unnatural monster such as depicted by Lamartine. In a chapter devoted to the subject she casts doubt upon the story that Rousseau's children were sent to l'*Enfants* Trouvés, or that they were ever born. She holds that Rousseau was probably deceived in this matter by Thérèse Levasseur and her mother. Whether we agree with this conclusion or not, it is certain that Mrs. Macdonald has brought to the consideration of the subject much investigation and insight. Personally, I heartily endorse her judgment that it is a critical blunder to concentrate one's attention upon his or any person's defects, so as to lose sight of their actual services. She remarks, with truth, that the benefits Rousseau conferred upon mankind and the triumphs that crowned his genius are the truly memorable features of his career.

Mrs. Macdonald has made extensive researches in the France of the eighteenth century, for writing the history of which the late James Cotter Morison formed considerable preparations. It was the beginning of the Age of Reason. To my mind, of the spiritual fathers of the modern era

* *Studies in the France of Voltaire and Rousseau*, by Frederika Macdonald, author of *The Iliad of the East*, *The Flower and the Spirit*, etc.; with portraits. (London: T. Fisher Unwin; 1895.)

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Diderot was, in some respects, the greatest. More profound and thorough than either Voltaire or Rousseau, he largely buried his talents in the Encyclopædie. But he of late has been adequately recognised, while Rousseau has been comparatively neglected. Mrs. Macdonald's book, which is splendidly printed on thick paper, and hence looks somewhat more bulky than it really is, is eminently readable, and is indeed a study which cannot be overlooked by those concerned in these great men, and in the history of Freethought in Europe. It is a strong and brave work, and I shall look forward with interest to its sequel in *The Life of Rousseau.* J. M. WHEELER.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER VII.

THIRD STAGE—SECULARISM.

"Nothing is destroyed until it has been replaced."—MADAME DE STAEL.

SEEING this wise maxim in a paper by Auguste Comte, I asked my friend, William de Fonvielle (who was in communication with Comte), to learn for me the authorship of the phrase. Comte answered that it was the Emperor's (Napoleon III.). It first appeared, as I afterwards found, in the writings of Madame de Stael, and more fully expressed by her.

Self-regarding criticism, having discovered the insufficiency of theology for the guidance of man, next sought to ascertain what rules human reason may supply for the independent conduct of life, which is the object of Secularism. At first the term was taken to be a mask concealing sinister features—"a new name for an old thing"—or as a substitute term for "Scepticism" or "Atheism." If impressions were always knowledge, men would be wise without inquiry, and explanations would be unnecessary. The term Secularism was chosen to express the extension of Freethought to Ethics. Freethinkers commonly go no further than saying, "We search for Truth."* Secularists say we have found it—at least, so much as replaces the chief errors and uncertainties of theology.

Harriet Martineau, the most intrepid thinker among the women of her day, wrote to Lloyd Garrison a letter (inserted in the *Liberator*, 1853) approving "the term Secularism as including a large number of persons who are not Atheists, and uniting them for action, which has Secularism for its object. By the adoption of the new term a vast amount of prejudice is got rid of." At length it was seen that the "new term" designated a new conception. Secularism is a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on considerations purely human, and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable or unbelievable. Its essential principles are three:—

1. The improvement of this life by material means.
2. That science is the available† Providence of man.
3. That it is good to do good. Whether there be other good or not, the good of the present life is good, and it is good to seek that good.

Individual good attained by methods conducive to the good of others is the highest aim of man, whether regard be had to human welfare in this life or personal fitness for another. Precedence is, therefore, given to the duties of this life.

Being asked to send to the International Congress of Liberal thinkers (1886) an account of the tenets of the English party known as Secularists, I gave the following explanation of them:—

The Secular is that the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life. The ground common to all self-determined thinkers is that of independency of opinion, known as Freethought, which, though but an impulse of intellectual courage in the search for truth, or an impulse of aggression against hurtful or irritating error, or the caprice of a restless mind, is to be encouraged. It is necessary to promote independent thought—whatever its manner of manifestation—since there can be no progress without it. A Secularist is intended to be a reasoner—that is, as Coleridge defined him, one who inquires what a thing is, and not only what it is, but *why* it is what it is. One of the two great forces of opinion created in this age is what is known as Atheism,* which deprives superstition of its standing ground, and compels Theism to reason for its existence. The other force is Materialism, which shows the physical consequences of error, supplying, as it were, beacon lights to morality.

Though respecting the right of the Atheist and Theist to their theories of the origin of nature, the Secularist regards them as belonging to the debateable ground of speculation. Secularism neither asks nor gives any opinion upon them, confining itself to the entirely independent field of study—the order of the universe. Neither asserting nor denying Theism or a future life, having no sufficient reason to give if called upon, the fact remains that material influences exist, vast and available for good, as men have the will and wit to employ them.

Whatever may be the value of metaphysical or theological theories of morals, utility in conduct is a daily test of common sense, and is capable of deciding intelligently more questions of practical duty than any other rule. Considerations which pertain to the general welfare operate without the machinery of theological creeds, and over masses of men in every land, where Christian incentives are alien or unregarded.

CHAPTER VIII.

THREE PRINCIPLES VINDICATED.

"Be wisely worldly; but not worldly wise."—FRANCIS QUARLES.

1. *Of Material Means as Conditions of Welfare in this World.*—Theology works by "spiritual" means. Christians and Secularists both intend raising the character of the people, but their methods are much different. Christians are now beginning to employ material agencies for the elevation of life, which science, and not theology, has brought under their notice. But the Christian does not trust these agencies; the Secularist does, and in his mind the secular is sacred. Spiritual means can never be depended upon for food, raiment, art, or national defence.

The Archbishop of York (Dr. Magee), a clear-headed and candid prelate, surprised his contemporaries (at the Diocesan Conference, Leicester, October 19, 1889) by declaring that "Christianity made no claim to re-arrange the economic relations of man in the State or in society. He hoped he would be understood when he said plainly that it was his firm belief that any Christian State carrying out, in all its relations, the Sermon on the Mount could not exist for a week. It was perfectly clear that a State could not continue to exist upon what were commonly called 'Christian' principles.'"

From the first, Secularism had based its claims to be regarded on the fact that only the rich could afford to be Christians, and the poor must look to other principles for deliverance. Material means are those which are calculable, which are under the control and command of man, and can be tested by human experience. No definition of Secularism shows its distinctiveness which omits to specify *material* means as its method of procedure. But for the theological blasphemy of nature representing it as the unintelligent tool of God, the secular would have ennobled common life long ago. Sir Godfrey Kneller said he "never looked on a bad picture but he carried away in his mind a dirty tint." Secularism would efface the dirty tints of life which Christianity has prayed over, but not removed.

2. *Of the Providence of Science.*—Men are limited in power, and are oft in peril, and those who are taught to trust to supernatural aid are betrayed to their own destruction. We are told we should work as though there were no help in heaven, and pray as though there were no help in ourselves. Since, however, praying saves no ship, arrests no disease, and does not pay the tax-gatherer, it is better to work at once and without the digression of sinking prayer-buckets into empty wells, and spending life in drawing nothing up.

* M. Aurelius Antoninus said: "I seek the truth, by which no man was ever injured." It would be true had he said mankind. Men are continually injured by the truth, or how do martyrs come, or why do we honor them?

† This phrase was a suggestion of my friend, the Rev. Dr. Henry Crosskey, about 1854. I afterwards used the word "available," which does not deny, nor challenge, nor affirm the belief in a theological Providence by others, who, therefore, are not incited to assail the effectual proposition that material resources are an *available* Providence where a spiritual Providence is inactive.

* Huxley's term, Agnosticism, implies a different thing—unknowingness without denial.

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The word illuminating secular life is *self-help*. The Secularist vexes not the ear of heaven by mendicant supplications. His is the only religion that gives heaven no trouble.

3. *Of Goodness as Fitness for this World or Another.*—Goodness is the service of others with a view to their advantage. There is no higher human merit. Human welfare is the sanction of morality. The measure of a good action is its conduciveness to progress. The utilitarian test of generous rightness in motive may be open to objection—there is no test which is not; but the utilitarian rule is one comprehensible by every mind. It is the only rule which makes knowledge necessary, and becomes more luminous as knowledge increases. A fool may be a believer,* but not a utilitarian, who seeks his ground of action in the largest field of relevant facts his mind is able to survey. Utility in morals is measuring the good of one by its agreement with the good of many. Large ideas are when a man measures the good of his parish by the good of the town; the good of the town by the good of the county; the good of the county by the good of the country; the good of the country by the good of the continent; the good of the continent by the cosmopolitanism of the world.

Truth and solicitude for the social welfare of others are the proper concern of a soul worth saving. Only minds with goodness in them have the desert of future existence. Minds without veracity and generosity die. The elements of death are in the selfish already. They could not live in a better world if they were admitted. In a noble passage in his sermon on "Citizenship," the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke said:—

> "There are thousands of my fellow citizens, men and women and children, who are living in conditions in which they have no true means of becoming healthy in body, trained in mind, or comforted by beauty. Life is as hard for them as it is easy for me. I cannot help them by giving them money one by one, but I can help them by making the condition of their life easier by a good government of the city in which they live. And even if the charge on my property for this purpose increases for a time, year by year, till the work is done, that charge I will gladly pay. It shall be my ethics, *my religion*, my patriotism, my citizenship, to do it."†

The great preacher whose words are here cited, like Theodore Parker (the Jupiter of the pulpit in his day, as Wendell Phillips described him to me), is not a Secularist; but he expresses here the religion of the Secularist, if such a person can be supposed to have a religion.

A theological creed which the base may hold—and usually do—has none of the merit of deeds of service to humanity, which only the good intentionally perform. Conscience is the sense of right with regard to others; it is a sense of duty towards others, which tells us that we should do justice to them; and if not able to do it individually, to endeavor to get it done by others. At St. Peter's Gate there can be no passport so safe as this. He was not far wrong who, when asked where heaven lay, answered, "On the other side of a good action."

If, as Dr. James Martineau says, "there is a thought of God in the thing that is true, and a will of God in that which is right," Secularism, caring for truth and duty, cannot be far wrong. Thus it has a reasonable regard for the contingencies of another life, should it supervene. Reasoned opinions rely for justification upon intelligent conviction and a well-informed sincerity. The Secularist is without presumption of an infallible creed, is without the timorous indefiniteness of a creedless believer. He does not disown a creed because theologians have promulgated Jew-bound, unalterable articles of faith. The Secularist has a creed as definite as science and as flexible as progress, increasing as the horizon of truth is enlarged. His creed is a confession of his belief. There is more unity of opinion among self-thinkers than is supposed. They all maintain the necessity of independent opinion, for they all exercise it. They all believe in the moral rightfulness of independent thought, or they are guilty for propagating it. They all agree as to the right of publishing well-considered thought, otherwise thinking would be of little use. They all approve of free criticism, for there could be no reliance on thought which did not use or could nor bear that. All agree as to the equal action of opinion without which opinion would be fruitless and action a monopoly. All agree that truth is the object of Freethought, for many have died to gain it. All agree that scrutiny is the pathway to truth, for they have all passed along it. They all attach importance to the good of this life, teaching this as the first service to humanity. All are of one opinion as to the efficacy of material means in promoting human improvement, for they alone are distinguished by vindicating their use. All hold that morals are effectively commended by reason, for all self-thinkers have taught so. All believe that God, if he exists, is the God of the honest, and that he respects conscience more than creeds, for all Freethinkers have died in this faith. Independent thinkers, from Socrates to Huxley and Herbert Spencer,* have all agreed—

In the necessity of Freethought.
In the rightfulness of it.
In the adequacy of it.
In the considerate publicity of it.
In the fair criticism of it.
In the equal action of conviction.
In the recognition of this life, and
In the material control of it.

The Secularist, like Karpos the gardener, may say of his creed: "Its points are few and simple. They are: to be a good citizen, a good husband, a good father, and a good workman." "I go no further," said Karpos, "but pray God to take it all in good part, and have mercy on my soul."† GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(*To be continued.*)

* The *Guardian* told us about 1887 that the Bishop of Exeter confirmed five idiots.

† Preached in reference to the London County Council elections, March, 1892.

CHRISTIAN CRITICISM.

SECULARISTS are always desirous to have their views criticised by intelligent Christian exponents, for such criticism affords us an excellent opportunity to explain what our opinions are, and, at the same time, to correct any misapprehension that may exist in the theological mind as to our attitude towards the prevailing religious faiths. In order, however, for criticism to be useful, those who criticise should be careful to understand the subjects they deal with. Unfortunately, Christian advocates too frequently misrepresent Secular teachings, imputing to us views we do not entertain, and in many instances stating the very opposite of what our principles really are. Probably these errors, upon the part of Christian critics, arise from the fact that they seldom thoroughly acquaint themselves with the real nature of the teachings they assail. Hence they mislead their hearers, or readers, with conclusions drawn from erroneous conceptions.

A case of this kind happened a few weeks since, in connection with my recent lecture at Stanley, in the county of Durham. The *Consett Chronicle*, of April 17, gives a long and fairly accurate report of my lecture; but the editor, ignoring what I said as reported in his own paper, writes two leading articles, one upon the subject of the lecture, "Does Death End All?" and another upon "Secularism"; and in both of these articles he evinces a sad lack of knowledge upon the teachings he criticises. For instance, he charges Secularists with positively denying a future existence, and he also alleges that I entertain a hope that "there will *not* be a future life." Both statements are the very opposite of the truth. In my lecture I emphatically urged that Secularists do not deny a future life, inasmuch as it would be illogical for them to do so, for the reason that they confess they know nothing of such a life. It does not follow that a person should deny that which he does not believe. The Secular position is, that there is not sufficient evidence to justify the dogmatic assertion, either that there is, or is not, a life beyond the grave. *Knowing* only of one existence, Secularists content themselves therewith, feeling assured that the best credential to secure any possible immortality is the wise and intellectual use of

* See *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers of all Ages and Nations*, by J. M. Wheeler, and *Four Hundred Years of Freethought* (from Columbus to Ingersoll), by Samuel Porter Putnam, containing upwards of 1,000 biographies.

† Dialogue between Karpos the gardener and Bashiew Tucton, by Voltaire.

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the life we now have. They further allege that, to the man who is sincere and true to his conscience through life, "hereafter" has no terrors. The man who has lived well, we allege, has made the best preparation to die well, and he will find that the principles which supported him in health can sustain him in sickness. When the last grand scene arrives, the Secularist, having done his duty, lies down quietly to rest, and sleeps the long sleep from which, so far as he *knows*, there is no waking. Then his work is done, and, if it has been done well, there is nothing to fear either in this or in any other life. Such are the views of Secularists as to death, and, holding such views, they can die without fear, as they have lived without hypocrisy.

I have never expressed a "hope that there will not be a future life." My desire upon that point must depend entirely upon what the supposed future existence really is. The beliefs upon this subject have been so varied and contradictory that they appear to me to be simply the result of imagination. Persons invariably picture their heaven in accordance with the creed or belief in which they have been trained. Thus we find that the Indian thinks that his heaven will be an "everlasting hunting-ground," where he will have unlimited sport in chasing wild animals. The African supposes heaven to be a locality where he can have plenty of food, a comfortable home, and a happy circle of friends. The Asiatic races entertain the idea that heaven is to be remarkable for the presence of charming young ladies, which certainly would be preferable to the Christian's heaven, for that is said to be the abode of "the souls of those who had been slain," and a kind of receptacle for all sorts of bad characters, including criminals and oppressors, men who were considered too immoral to live on earth. If the New Testament be true, the brave, the noble, and the patriotic are ofttimes excluded from the portals of the celestial city. The passports required for admission there are faith and submission. A permanent sojourn in a place which rejects the purest and best of our race cannot be desired by any but moral invalids and intellectual mendicants. Personally, I have no objection to "a life beyond the grave," provided it be one worth having. If it should be an abode of justice, freedom, and happiness; if it be free from pain, sorrow, and cruelty; if we can share the company, and participate in the joys, of the dear ones whom on earth we loved; if we can have the society of the intellectually great and the morally pure; if there will be no sights of agony to blanch the cheek, and no torture to rend the heart, then to me there would be no objection to such a life. But, candidly, I see no grounds for entertaining a hope that such a life is in store for us; therefore, as Mr. Hugh O. Pentecost has so well said, "The Freethinker looks at death just as it is, so far as we know anything about it—the end of life. He does not hope nor expect to live after death. He admits that he may, just as there may be a planet in which water runs up-hill. He therefore maps out his life with absolutely no reference to alleged heavens or hells, or to any kind of spirit world. He goes through this world seeking his own welfare, and knowing, from the open book of history and his own experience, that he can promote his own welfare only by promoting the welfare of every other man, woman, and child in the world."

The editor argues in favor of a future life, from the fact that therein compensation is to be afforded for the evils endured during our present existence. He exclaims: "How many wrongs are there here which are never righted? Is there to be no compensation for the anguish and suffering endured by millions, into whose darkened lives no glint of light ever comes? If this be so, then one is driven to the inevitable conclusion that to all such life is not, and cannot be, worth living." This notion of future compensation is pure assumption, without the slightest evidence of justification. It assumes that in the "next world" we shall have the same passions and the same susceptibilities as we possess here. But this is not orthodox teaching, any more than it accords with the facts pertaining to life and death. Moreover, it may be asked, Why have we wrongs here that cannot be "righted"? A good God ought to have made better arrangements. The fact is, nothing in any other world could possibly compensate for the misery and privations which are endured by thousands of unfortunate creatures in this life. It is an old saying that "prevention is better than cure"; it certainly would be in this case, for to torture people here, in order to give them the pleasure imparted by the cessation of the agony in some other existence, is by no means humane and just.

The editor takes exception to my statement that, because a person has the "longing" for a future life, it does not necessarily follow that he will ever realise such "longing." But I put a further question—namely, Is it possible to "long" for that of which nothing is known? I am asked, "Whence does such an instinct arise?" So far as the instinct is a reality, it can easily be accounted for. Speaking of the origin of the belief in a future life, Professor Graham observes: "A strange and extravagant fancy that arose one day in the breast of one more aspiring than the rest became soon afterwards a wish; the wish became a fixed idea, that drew around itself vain and spurious arguments in its favor; and at length the fancy, the wish, the idea, was erected into an established doctrine of belief. Such, in sum, is the natural history of the famous dogma of a future life. Not by any means, however, was it a primitive and universal belief of all nations. Arising probably at first with the Egyptians, it was only after a long time taken up by the Jews, then or possibly earlier by the Greeks, with whom, however, the life held out, thin and unsubstantial even at best, was far from being desirable. It was only in the Christian and Mohammedan religions that the notion of a future and an eternal life was fully developed, and that the doctrine was erected into a central and an essential article of belief" (*The Creed of Science*, p. 160).

We submit that the instinctive love of life found in man is sufficient to explain the desire for its continuance. And, be it observed, this alleged desire is really not for another life, but for a perpetuation of the one we now have. No doubt there is some connection between desires and their realisation in reference to things that are attainable, for the very desire may be a factor in the sum of the causes that enable us to realise our ideals. But the mere fact of having the desire is no evidence that its realisation will follow. A desire for food and comfort is very general, but many are destitute of both. The longing that all members of the human family should be equally well off is extensive, but such a state of things does not exist. Most of us are always longing for a higher degree of happiness than we ever experience. We must not, in reasoning, take refuge in incongruities. Those who argue that without an endless future this life is not worth living must regard the present existence as being exceedingly defective. Why, then, should its continuation be desired? If it is said that in another world there will be a change for the better, we ask, Where is the proof that any improvement will take place? It is another instance that the wish is father to the thought. Endless existence and interminable motion may be laws of thought which it is impossible to banish from our minds, although we are unable to conceive of an infinite past, which is involved in the statement. But it is otherwise with the *forms* of existence that possess life; these can be conceived of as coming to an end. Intense heat or intense cold may terminate all living things in a brief space of time. The truth is that it is only dreamers who contend that any part of the compound being called man will

> flourish in immortal youth,
> Unhurt amidst the war of elements,
> The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

BRUNSWICK HALL, GLASGOW, MAY 24, 1896.

AGENDA.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report. By PRESIDENT.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.
   Notice of Motion by the Glasgow Branch, Finsbury Branch, and Finsbury Park Branch: "That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President for 1896-7."
6. Election of Vice-Presidents.
   (*a*) The following are nominated by the Executive

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for re-election: Dr. T. R. Allinson, G. Anderson, D. Baker, E. Bater, N. B. Billany, J. E. Brumage, Dr. L. Büchner, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, J. F. Dewar, R. Forder, J. P. Gilmour, S. Hartmann, W. Heaford, P. A. Le Lubez, A. B. Moss, T. Parris, S. M. Peacock, W. Pratt, S. P. Putnam, J. H. Ridgway, V. Roger, J. Samson, Dr. E. Schlaeger, J. Symes, E. Truelove, J. Umpleby, Miss E. M. Vance, C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler.

(*b*) The following are nominated by the Executive for election: John Grange (Bradford), T. Gorniot (North-West London), F. Schaller (West London), H. J. Stace (Westminster), S. R. Thompson (Manchester, late Wood Green), G. J. Warren (East London).

7. Election of Honorary Secretary.
   Motion by Executive: "That Mr. Robert Forder be re-elected Honorary Secretary."
8. Election of Auditors.
9. Letter from Mr. S. Putnam, President of the American Secular Union.
10. Motion by Birmingham Branch *re* Presidency:—
    "That the position of President of the N.S.S. shall not be held by one person more than three years in succession, and that two years at least shall elapse from such term of office before he become again eligible for election."
11. Motion by Birmingham Branch:—
    "That the first Sunday in November in each year be fixed as a special day on which all Branches shall make their annual collection for the Benevolent Fund."
12. Motion by Mr. Charles Watts:—
    "That, in the interest of vigor and continuity of action, it is advisable that, without any interference with the autonomy of the Branches, the Central Executive, which transacts all general business, should consist of a definite number of persons well known to the party at large; that these persons should be the President and Vice-Presidents elected yearly at the annual Conference; and that such Vice-Presidents as, by reason of distance, cannot often attend the Executive meetings should be communicated with in regard to any matters of exceptional importance."
13. Motion by Mr. G. J. Warren (East London):—
    "That the Organisation Committee be not re-appointed."
14. Motion by the South Shields Branch:—
    "That the Conference consider the possibility of arranging for a special lecturer permanently stationed in the North."
15. Statement by Mr. G. W. Foote *re* his Lecture Scheme.
16. Motion by the Islington Branch:—
    "That the President be asked to allow his Lecture Scheme to be continued in future under the control of the National Secular Society."
17. Motion by Mr. G. J. Warren:—
    "That this Conference urges Branches to register the names and addresses of all Secularists residing in their respective districts (who are not members of the Society) for the purposes of organisation and united effort at School Board and other elections."
18. Motion by Mr. G. W. Foote:—
    (*a*) Sketch of a plan for defeating the Blasphemy Laws as affecting the legal status of Secular Societies.
    (*b*) *Resolution:* "That as there seems no immediate probability of any alteration in the law by which Secular Societies are denied the common right to hold property and receive gifts and legacies, and as the National Secular Society continues to suffer very great financial loss in consequence, it is necessary that some indirect means be taken whereby property could, with reasonable security, be devoted to the Society's objects; and to this end the Conference endorses the plan just sketched out, and authorises the President, with what assistance he may require from the Executive, to carry the said plan into realisation with the utmost possible dispatch."
19. Motion by Mr. G. W. Foote:—
    "That the opinion of this Conference be taken with respect to the more important parts of the new Education Bill, and that the Executive be desired to issue a Manifesto immediately on the lines agreed to."

The morning sitting of the Conference will open at 10.30 and close at 12.30. The afternoon sitting at 2.30, closing at 4.30, unless extended by resolution. Only members of the National Secular Society can speak or vote.

A public meeting will be held in the evening, at seven o'clock, in the Grand Hall, Waterloo Rooms, Waterloo-street. Addresses will be delivered by Messrs. G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, C. Cohen, R. Forder, J. P. Gilmour, and other gentlemen.

ACID DROPS.

JOHN BURNS said that Chicago was a pocket edition of Hell. It is natural, therefore, that the Chicago Christians should stand up for the large copy edition. A Presbyterian Church there recently engaged a young minister, the Rev. F. B. Vrooman, whose orthodoxy was somewhat under suspicion. He was summoned before the Presbytery, and asked, "What is the meaning of hell?" His reply was smart: "Sin is hell, and hell is sin." But the definition was not deemed satisfactory, and the young minister is being pursued for "heresy." Hell is safe yet—at any rate in Chicago.

Coroner Wyatt, of Newington, is really too sensitive for the common life of this planet, and will never be happy till he is in heaven. During a recent inquest in his court the mother of a dead child said that she picked it up and exclaimed to her husband, "Oh, my God, Charlie, the baby's dead!" Whereupon the Coroner remarked: "We don't want so much blasphemy, if you please. Let me tell you that, if you make use of such blasphemous expressions outside, it won't do in a coroner's court."

Coroner Wyatt forgets that the poor mother's exclamation is a classical quotation from Scripture. We don't know what Jesus Christ would have ejaculated if he had lost a baby, but when he came to die himself he cried: "My God, my God." According to Coroner Wyatt, this is a blasphemous expression. Jesus Christ would soon be called to order in Coroner Wyatt's court.

When Mlimo, the Matabele god, was said to have prophesied that all the horses in Bulawayo should be killed, and a spy was afterwards caught who had a special mission to hamstring the horses, everybody can see that the god was brought in to give confidence to the Matabele. But no one must suspect that any craft of this kind went on in the days of the Israelites.

The Matabele god further promised to turn the enemy's bullets into water, another piece of craft to give confidence in war, for which the doctrine of immortality was, if not devised, at least much utilised. But here Mlimo's priest overshot himself. The Matabele find bullets do not turn to water, and threaten to punish the god in consequence.

Hall Caine, the novelist, thinks he knows his Bible as few literary men know it; at least he says so in *McClure's Magazine*—an American publication. "There is no book in the world like it," says Mr. Caine, and we agree with him. The Koran, for instance, is a clean book in comparison with the Bible. There is dirt enough in the Bible to call in the sanitary inspector—if it were only found in some other volume. However, that is not what Mr. Caine means. "The finest novels ever written," he says, "fall far short in interest of any one of the stories it tells." This is the most modest utterance we ever saw attributed to Mr. Caine. There is something in the world better than his own novels. But a mere man can hardly be expected to compete with God Almighty.

John Smith applied at the local magistrate's court for warrants against a Salvation Army lieutenant and another person, whom he charged with having beaten and kicked him at the Salvation Army Shelter in Blackfriars-road, and afterwards flinging him out on the pavement, where a police inspector found him lying unconscious. The warrants were granted. At the same court, on the same day, Peter Glyn and Charles Davis, officers at the same Shelter, were charged with kicking Arthur Sheppard and breaking three of his ribs. This, again, was a case of "chucking-out." Both prisoners were remanded on bail. Glyn exclaimed, "Glory be to God, the General must see us out of this." Perhaps the "General" had better see Arthur Sheppard out of the trouble of three broken ribs.

According to an article in *Harper's Weekly*, to get to the New York Chinese Joss House you have to go through a shop and a Chinese restaurant. A large screen in the centre of the floor faces the altar, which is truly gorgeous in its color and glitter, its peacock feathers and candles. There are no congregational services in the temple; each individual pays for his own candle and incense, and conducts his own worship, or pays the small fee to the soothsayer, and has his probable luck in any contemplated undertaking foretold.

The bubonic plague is not extinct in China, and in our colony of Hong Kong 75 deaths were reported in one week. Prayer and Providence do not affect those latitudes.

So excellent are providential arrangements that in one place floods cause loss of life, while in another drought destroys all the crops. This is at present the case in Spain.

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The scenes in the country villages are described as piteous. In some hamlets the supply of drinking water has completely failed, and the people flock to the railway stations, where they await the arrival of the trains and implore the passengers to give them a drop of water.

Rain is wanted badly in England, but the sky-pilots are too "fly" to trouble Providence about the matter. Of course they still teach the efficacy of prayer, but they don't like putting it to the test too frequently. The sky-pilots in Spain, however, where rain is wanted even worse than it is in England, are not so squeamish. Eight hundred priests, with a multitude of members of religious congregations, paraded the streets of Madrid on Monday, carrying lighted tapers, and headed by the body of St. Isidore, the patron saint of the city. It is not yet reported that rain has fallen. It *will* fall some day, and when it *does* fall it will, of course, have been brought down by the old bones of St. Isidore.

Colonel Ethan Allen, the hero of Ticonderoga, was a famous infidel in his day, and he wrote a book entitled *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*. Talmage has just been trotting out an old lie about him to the effect that he told a dying daughter to follow her mother's religion, and not his own views.

Dr. W. A. Croffut, of Washington, wrote to Dr. Talmage, asking his authority, and citing Major-General Hitchcock, a grandson of Ethan Allen, who wrote: "I had often heard my mother speak of the death of that sister, and remembered having heard her say that she attended her in her last moments, and I desired to know whether there was any foundation for the story. My mother told me on two occasions that there was none whatever. I regard the story, therefore, as a pure invention in behalf of certain opinions to which my grandfather was supposed to be unfriendly."

Dr. Croffut added: "If you need a picturesque illustration for a sermon, I will give you one concerning this same man—Ethan Allen; a story which is believed by his relatives to be true. The minister of the church he (sometimes) attended—a Presbyterian—preached one Sunday on 'Predestination,' and, illustrating that sublime dogma, he said: 'How many will be snatched from everlasting fire? Probably not one in a thousand! Probably not one in ten thousand! Possibly not one in a million!' Whereat Ethan Allen smote the desk in front of him with his fist, and loudly exclaimed: 'I wouldn't give a damn for a ticket in that lottery!'"

One would think this was sufficient. But not so for the Rev. T. de Witt, who answered as follows: "Dear Mr. Croffut,—Yours received, and I have only time now to say if the distinguished American did, as you say, so lose his temper in church as to strike the desk in front of him, and use profane language, I have no further faith in him. If your impression of what he did on that occasion is accurate (and I know you believe it to be accurate), he was a vulgar and blasphemous man, and any contradiction that he made of what he said on another occasion would have no weight with me."

The grand jury at Pawnee, Oklahoma, indicted the Rev. C. L. Berry, the leading Presbyterian clergyman of that territory, for receiving money in a bank of which he is the owner when it was in a failing condition; and so great was the indignation of the people against him that he barely escaped lynching by them.

This is what Mara Satsunachyra, a Brahmin member of the School of Philosophy at Madras, says of missions: "Our friends have been picturing to you Christianity standing with the Bible in one hand, and the wizard's wand of civilisation in the other; but there is another side, and that is the goddess of civilisation with a bottle of rum in her hand! O, that the English had never set foot in India! O, that we had never seen a Western face! O, that we had never tasted the bitter sweets of your civilisation, rather than she make us a nation of drunkards and brutes!"

In his speech at the Press Club, Mr. John Morley told how Mr. W. T. Stead's registered telegraph address was "Vatican." Mr. Morley had "ventured to suggest that this was a little too high." The only reason, however, why the editor in question put up with any vicegerency, and did not adopt a yet higher address, was—so the story went—that it was already appropriated, or that the postal authorities declined to accept it.

The Rev. Dr. Norman Walker stated to the English Presbyterian Synod that, although Scotland was becoming deplorably lax in its Sabbath observance, it is still not quite so bad as England, where a vicar recently allowed the hour of divine service to be altered for the convenience of golf-players. This, according to Mr. Walker, was in a village near London.

The Methodists have declined in the number of their memberships, and the Baptists have fallen off in the number of their baptisms. There is no information as to whether the Church, the Salvation Army, or Freethought is profiting by the decline of the dissidence of Dissent.

It seems that no facts revealed by the Methodist census have occasioned deeper mortification than the statistics in connection with the West London Mission. A host of money has been subscribed from all parts to convert the West-enders, but the "forward" movement does not advance. And now it is said the audiences do not represent the West-end at all, but are drawn from all parts, attracted by the orchestra and discourses on the topics of the day.

A fine wolf in sheep's clothing is the Rev. Alfred Baker Winnifurth, curate of Dalwood, Devonshire, the co-respondent in a recent divorce case. This man of God had the impudence to write to the husband with whose wife he had committed adultery, offering "to act as arbitrator or mediator between Rose and you." He went into the witness-box and swore that he had never even kissed the respondent. But the evidence was clear, and, although Mr. Justice Barnes told the jury that the case was very serious for the co-respondent, as he could be turned from his living within twenty-one days of the divorce being made absolute, they found that he had been guilty of adultery, and a *decree nisi*, with costs, was granted.

The Rev. John Knox Brown, of Langbank, near Port Glasgow, died suddenly after purchasing prussic acid, as he alleged, to destroy a dog. On the previous Sunday he did not officiate, and the situation was considered at a special meeting of the Presbytery.

George Macdonald, of the New York *Truthseeker*, says he was "betrayed" by a recommendation in the London *Freethinker* into trying to read a novel by George Meredith. "I never finished it," he says, "as it is not written in the language of sense." When we meet George Macdonald in America we shall have to ask him which novel it was. Meanwhile, we venture to remind him that the involution of the passage quoted from *Sandra Belloni* could easily be matched from Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. We will undertake to show scores of beautiful passages in Meredith, and some from that very same novel, as forthright and limpid as a hillside stream.

George Meredith and Thomas Carlyle are classed together by our Transatlantic friend as "literary mountebanks"—or rather he quotes this description of them, with implied approval, from Edgar Fawcett, who makes up a trinity by including Whitman. But surely, friend George, this is playing right down to the groundlings. Whitman is certainly apt to be amorphous in his poems, but his form is often excellent, although he dispenses with "dulcet rhymes." And in his prose—notably in *Democratic Vistas*, and still more notably in the original Preface to *Leaves of Grass*—there are whole pages maked by beauty and simplicity as well as power.

Journalists are all under a temptation to belittle great original writers. Writing themselves for hasty readers, they too frequently come to regard that style as natural which the reader can follow with his mind as rapidly as his eye glances along the lines. But this style is *not* natural. It leaves no room for originality, or even for idiosyncrasy. A Dutch canal going straight through flat and well-ordered country is, after all, not so natural, and is certainly not so satisfying to eye and imagination, as a river rushing down mountains, coursing through rocky gullies, or flowing calmly in broad-curved channels past forests and pastures and cornfields, everywhere taking some hue and character from its surroundings, and displaying all moods because of the length and variety of its career.

George Meredith's reputation has not been suddenly acquired. He has been writing for forty years, and for thirty of them he was neglected by the "great stupid public," as Thackeray called it. His admirers were a select few, and they gradually made him respected by a wider circle. Now his books are fairly well sold, and, we hope, fairly well read. But the long neglect did certainly develop unduly the more subtle, fantastic, and allusive elements of his literary character. Nor is this unknown to George Meredith himself. He has anticipated his critics on this point. Having played to empty benches so long (to use his own metaphor), he has caught too much the trick of listening to his own voice. But let not the complaint be preferred too vehemently by those who left the benches empty when they might have been sitting there, to their own profit and to his.

The assassination of the Shah of Persia recalls attention

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to the Bab sect, to whom it was said the "removal" was due. The account of this new religion and its analogues to Christianity was given in our columns a year ago.

It appears that the discontent of the Babists in Persia is due to the fact that the Shah would not allow them to establish their religion, which would have come into collision with the existing faith. They have, therefore, been forced to underground methods. One of their number made an attempt on the late Shah's life as far back as 1852.

The present year is the centennial of the so-called "prodigies of the Madonna," which are said to have occurred in various churches throughout Italy in 1796, when under apprehension of Republican invasion. Many pictures of Mary in various churches are said to have winked wunks as a warning of the coming occupation of Rome and the captivity of Pope Pius VI. Twenty-six of these prodigies were judicially examined and solemnly attested shortly after their alleged occurrence—a course that was not taken with regard to the alleged prodigies of the New Testament.

The *Church Times* says Calvin held a view of the Real Presence which amounts to a real absence. He taught that there was no presence of Christ's body and blood but in power and efficacy. This is sometimes described as the bank-note theory. A bank-note may be virtually worth five sovereigns, but it stands not for their presence, but their absence. The *Church Times*, of course, goes in for the absurdity of the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament, for that implies the transmogrifying power of the priest. Besides, a mystery always serves the turn of a mystery-man.

The *Church Times* (May 1) says: "Just in those parts of South Wales where Dissent is strongest, immorality and crime of a peculiarly revolting kind are rampant." It adds: "The worst feature of the case is that in these districts a far larger proportion of the people than in any similar district in England attend a place of worship."

The Catholics are ever on the alert for a chance, and the outbreak of small-pox at Gloucester has been followed by a large sale of camphorated tar made up in the form of a cross. This is supposed to bring increased efficacy by believers of all kinds who have a strong remnant of fetishism in them.

One of the most brilliant of the May Meetings was that of the Lord's Day Observance Society. Three Scotch M.P.'s were present to deplore the Sunday opening of museums. This was not the worst, said Mr. J. A. Campbell, M.P., for in the West-end Clubs musical performances, and even comic sketches, were given on the Sabbath. Mr. W. Johnston, M.P., informed the world that the downfall of the Stuart dynasty was the result of the desecration of the Sabbath.

In the *Nineteenth Century*, for May, Lord Halifax writes on his pet subject, "The Re-union of Christendom." He thinks the Anglican Church is quite prepared to swallow the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Why not? The Immaculate Conception of Jesus implies that of Mary, that of her mother, St. Anne, the grandmother of the Eternal God, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Dr. Bruce gives an illustration of providential design in the tseke fly. This little insect is so constructed that a bite from it is invariably fatal to a horse, ass, or dog, so that the district in Africa where it is found is impassable. When a horse is stung, its blood soon becomes choked with living infusoria, to the extent of many millions to a thimbleful. He hath made all things for the greatest happiness of the greatest number!

The most sickening feature of the Church comments on the Education Bill is the cant about the rights of the parents to have their children taught their religion. One would fancy the parents of England had unanimously been petitioning Parliament to give their children stronger doses of theology, or that it was no part of a parent's business to see to the matter of their children's religion. As a matter of fact, the cry about parents' rights is a false issue to ensure the right of the priest to inculcate his own authority.

A writer in the *British Weekly* gives the following specimen of what the clericals wish taught to the young. At a children's service the curate said: "In a few minutes you will see a little baby brought into church to be baptised. When it comes it is a child of the Devil; you will see me baptise it; and when it goes out it will be a child of God."

Dr. Joseph Parker says in the *Times* (May 4) that the only weapon wherewith to fight the Government Education Bill is anti-State Churchism pure and simple. "Nonconformity in England," he says, "is degraded and paralysed when its central principle is ignored or tampered with." Well, Nonconformity is degraded and paralysed, and there is little hope that it will recover its principles under the leadership of men like Mr. Hugh Price Hughes.

The West London Mission made a great boast of taking Cleveland Hall. It appears, however, from the statement of income and expenditure that there was a deficit of £291 10s. 9½d. for 1895.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, giving her personal experiences in the *Journal of Hygiene*, says: "The only drawback to my complete health and happiness when a child was fear of the Devil, especially at night. He was an ever-present reality, whom I was told I could not see because he always kept himself exactly behind me, and, however quickly I might turn, I never could catch even a glimpse of his shadow. People who teach children such superstitions little dream of the positive injury they are doing to their mental and physical condition."

These fears, Mrs. Stanton remarks, were intensified under the preaching of the revivalist, Finney, and "in a measure marred my happiness and crippled my development, until I arrived at the age of seventeen years. I then read Combe's *Moral Philosophy*, and his *Constitution of Man*, and discussed the broad principles laid down in those volumes with a gentleman of liberal thought, and soon threw off all the old theological superstitions that had so long shadowed my life. I then struck the name of Milton's giant from the list of my acquaintances, and with long walks and rides on horseback I finally recovered the normal physical and moral tone of my being. Health and happiness are impossible where one is hedged about with undue restraints and fears of the undefined and unknown."

The Unitarian *Christian Register* says that the question, "Why did God create the Devil?" was asked by the Indians whom John Eliot tried to convert; and they also asked why, if God was all-powerful, he did not overcome the Devil and abolish hell. John Eliot did not find it easy to answer such a theological conundrum. Such questions, as the darky minister said, would upset any system of theology.

The *Baptist Examiner* finds the question extremely simple. It answers: "God did not make the Devil. It was the Devil who made the Devil, and God had no hand in it." This is unscriptural and blasphemous. The Bible says the Lord made all things for himself, "yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." To say the Devil made himself is to seat him on the throne of omnipotence.

The bicycle is responsible for much enjoyment, otherwise desecration of the Sabbath; and in America it is proposed that each church should provide a room in which the cycles may be housed during service. A bicycle room may form an even more necessary adjunct to a church than a vestry.

Dr. Jessopp, the able essayist and antiquary, has demolished the saintship of St. William of Norwich, a boy said to have been crucified by the Jews in Thorpe Wood on Good Friday. *Daylight* remarks that a few Freethinking spirits have argued that it was simply an ecclesiastical means for plundering the rich Jews, and the Dean of Norwich now seems to admit as much.

Obituary.

On Sunday last we consigned to the grave the remains of one of the sturdiest Freethinkers of the North—Robert Weightman, the most energetic member of the Sunderland Branch. Born near Alnwick in 1857, at ten years of age he left school with a most limited education, and worked in a coal-mine. About 1872 he became an inquirer into the truth or falsity of the popular religion; and when, in 1879, he heard Joseph Symes and Charles Bradlaugh, his Atheism was confirmed. He eventually became secretary and lecturer to the Sunderland Branch, and never wavered for a moment, though he had faced the danger of sudden and immediate death for months. He died, as he had lived, an apostle of Freethought. The bursting of a large blood-vessel carried him off in a few minutes. There was a large gathering of Freethinkers and fellow railway-men at the grave. Austin Holyoake's service was impressively read by Mr. S. M. Peacock, who was accompanied by many Shields friends. A Sunderland member gave a beautful farewell address.—W. R. Stansell.

Died at Devonport on April 25, and buried on May 2, Robert Redding, aged seventy-eight. He was followed to his grave by a goodly number of his brother Oddfellows, one of whom read their Burial Service at his graveside. Some members of the Secular Society, of which he was a member since 1876, also followed. He was buried according to his wish, without a clergyman of any kind. His last words to me were that science was kinder than Christianity.—Thomas Searle.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, May 10, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester :—11, "The New Education Bill"; 3, "Count Tolstoi's Christianity"; 6.30, "The Curse of Creeds."

May 17, Liverpool; 24, Glasgow Conference; 31, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 10, Plymouth; 11, Devonport; 12, Liskeard; 13, Tavistock; 15, Plymton; 17, Plymouth; 24, Glasgow—the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. June 7, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

W. SIMONS.—It is a good idea, and should be welcome to poorer Freethinkers, particularly in North London.

R. E. HOLDING.—Shall be very happy to see you at Glasgow. There are cheap trips from London.

JOSEPH SEDDONS.—The report of a debate held on April 23 and 24 might have reached us before May 4. It is too late for insertion in this week's issue, which we regret, as it will probably be looked for by those who heard Mr. Cohen's speeches.

S. H. C.—The twaddle of an anonymous writer, sent by an anonymous correspondent, is not a subject for serious criticism.

J. DUNSMORE.—Will see what can be done with it.

JOHN HILL (Northampton).—It is absolutely untrue that Mr. Foote offered to go to Northampton to support or oppose any candidate at the last general election. Mr. Ashdowne, the secretary of the Radical Association, was never written to by Mr. Foote on that or any other subject. Mr. Foote was ignorant until now of Mr. Ashdowne's existence on this planet. If Mr. Ashdowne "read" such a "letter from Mr. Foote" to the Executive, he is either a reckless liar or a person very easily imposed upon. Where is the "letter"? Let it be produced.

W. D. ROLLEY.—Thanks. See paragraph.

F. CRESSWELL.—It will do excellently. See "Sugar Plums."

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—W. J. Cone, 1s. Per Miss Vance: H. D. Peters, 1s.; W. Hilton, 1s.

W. GARNETT.—Mr. Foote's *Sign of the Cross* is not a mere reprint of the articles which appeared in the *Freethinker*. A great deal of entirely fresh matter has been added, especially on the historical side, which is after all the most important. The critical part has also been very considerably amplified. There are forty-eight large pages of matter.

W. DYSON.—Pleased to hear you have enrolled some new members in the Barnsley Branch through Mr. Cohen's visit. Hope your two representatives will be able to go to Glasgow. We shall write on Marie Corelli's *Mighty Atom* next week.

SUNDERLAND.—Robert Weightman was one of the sturdiest men and Freethinkers we ever met. He gave all his leisure to public causes. He knew he might die at any moment, through his heart trouble, but he never faltered in his active devotion to truth, liberty, and progress. His loss will be felt by the Sunderland Freethinkers.

T. O. D.—We hope Mr. Churton Collins's lecture on "Was Shakespeare an Agnostic?" will be published. We shall probably recur to the subject.

W. BAILEY.—Order handed to Mr. Forder. Balance shall be devoted as you desire. Thanks.

E. PACK.—The reference is to Mr. Foote's pamphlet entitled *A Virgin Mother*—one of the "Bible Romances." Anyone can read and see whether it is "obscene." Of course it exposes an obscene story and the Christian doctrine built upon it; but it would puzzle any reader to find a questionable word in the whole pamphlet. Mr. Foote puts his name to all his writings, and is ready to defend them if anybody cares to attack them in a court of law. But he is not going to prosecute the wretched creature who dishonors the name of Bradlaugh. A Christian jury would never send a Christian to prison for libelling a Freethinker, and a civil action against a man of no substance is simply a waste of money. When we gave that school a lesson some time ago we tackled the publisher, who had something to lose.

THE continuation of our article on "Ingersoll 'Lies'" is still further postponed in consequence of the press of other matter. Fortunately it is a subject that will keep—at least Ingersoll will.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Cape Argus—Daylight—New York Tribune—Literary Digest—New York Public Opinion—Yorkshire Post—Echo—Blue Grass Blade—Liberator—Truthseeker—Open Court—Littlehampton Advertiser—Literary Guide—De Dageraad—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Stewartry Observer—Torch of Anarchy—Reynolds's Newspaper—Freethought Ideal—Secular Thought.

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

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

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE delivers three lectures to-day (May 10) in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester. The subjects should prove attractive to the local Freethinkers. Before the evening lecture Mr. Foote will give a poetical reading.

Mr. Foote's visit to Northampton on Sunday was scarcely a fair test of what can be done there in the way of Freethought propaganda. The visit was only decided upon on the previous Monday, and owing to a local accident the printing was only finished on the Friday. The announcement was, therefore, too short to reach the general public. However, the two meetings were fairly well attended, and the audiences were most enthusiastic. After the evening lecture a considerable number remained to talk with Mr. Foote about forming a new Branch of the N.S.S. Names were taken down, and Mr. Bull consented to act as secretary, at least for the present. A meeting is to be held this evening (May 10) for the purpose of establishing the new Branch, and making arrangements for further lectures, in which effort the Branch is promised assistance from headquarters.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured twice last Sunday to improved audiences in Birmingham. Friends were present from Wolverhampton, Westbromwich, Walsall, and other surrounding districts. The audiences marked their appreciation of the lectures by enthusiastic applause. Mr. Daniel Baker presided on each occasion, and it was pleasing to see the hearty reception he received on taking the chair in the evening. Mr. Watts has been lecturing in Birmingham during the week under Mr. Foote's scheme. On Monday evening he had a crowded (free) meeting at the Bristol-street Board School, his lecture being on the new Education Bill. At the conclusion a resolution, proposed by Mr. R. H. Bransby and seconded by Mr. R. Taylor, was carried unanimously, declaring the Bill to be an attack upon Board schools, and affirming that the whole trouble arose through the treachery of the Nonconformists to their old principle that the State should have nothing to do with Religion.

To-day, Sunday, May 10, Mr. Watts lectures morning and evening in the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth, when we hope the friends will muster in full force to support the local Branch of the N.S.S. in their energetic propagandist efforts. During the week Mr. Watts lectures in the surrounding districts under Mr. Foote's scheme.

The Agenda of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference appears in another part of this week's *Freethinker*. The most important item, no doubt, is the President's proposal with respect to the Society's disabilities in consequence of the Blasphemy Laws. He will give full details of the scheme he has been for some time working out under legal advice, and if it gains the approval of the Conference, as he anticipates it will, immediate action will be taken to carry it into effect. Mr. Watts's proposal is also important, and should receive very serious consideration, whatever course is decided upon by the voting.

Delegates and other members will find that the railway rates are considerably reduced at Whitsuntide. Tourist tickets are issued cheaply, and there are excursion trains to and from all parts of the country.

Mr. J. P. Gilmour, 439 Victoria-road, Govanhill, Glasgow, will be pleased to secure accommodation for persons who mean to attend the Conference, if they will communicate with him. They should state the class of accommodation they require.

The fifth Annual Meeting of the Humanitarian League was held at 32 Sackville-street on Tuesday, April 21, under the presidency of Mr. Ernest Bell, who gave an interesting address on the aims and work of the Society. The Report for 1895 shows that the year has been one of great activity and progress, a number of public meetings having been held, including the National Humanitarian Conference, and various publications having been issued. The Report points out that, as a result of the League's efforts during the past five years, the humanitarian movement has been greatly advanced. "We may claim some credit," it says, "for the increased public interest in the Criminal Law and Prison System, and other important matters; as also for the more democratic element that has lately been introduced into the crusade against Vivisection. That our purpose has been fulfilled will not be doubted by anyone who has watched the advances made against the barbarities of the private slaughter-house, of stag-hunting, rabbit-coursing, dog-cropping, and what the League has named 'murderous milliuery'—a title that seems likely to be a lasting one. The Sport question, in particular, has been lifted, by the League's action, out of the category of sentimental into that of

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practical problems; and, speaking generally, we think we may congratulate ourselves on having brought social reformers and zoophilists into line."

De Dageraad, for May, opens with "Facts and Conclusions," taken from Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*. W. Vermaat writes on "Agnosticism," and there is a complete translation of Mr. Foote's *Shadow of the Sword*.

The *Manchester Guardian*, in a review of Mr. Foote's pamphlet recently published by the Humanitarian League, says: "It contains much information as to the cost of war, and many considerations in favor of more rational methods of settling the differences of nations, and the rulers of nations, than that of brute force as represented by standing armies." The *Huddersfield Examiner* says: "There is some straight talking in the nineteenth of the Humanitarian League's publications, in which G. W. Foote details the horrors, abominations, and waste of war in his pamphlet—*The Shadow of the Sword*.....It is a powerful protest."

For some time the Islington Branch has held Sunday morning meetings in Prebend-street. It has given the spot a good trial, but, finding the ground unfruitful, it intends to try Highbury Fields (Highbury Corner), where larger and more hopeful audiences are to be obtained. As the Socialists meet there at 12, and there is only room for one meeting, the Freethinkers will have to commence at 10.45. Local residents will please note.

The Finsbury Branch began its open-air summer campaign on Sunday morning, when Mr. C. Cohen lectured to a large audience. The Branch officers were highly delighted with the result of the collection. Lectures will be continued on Clerkenwell-green every Sunday morning until October.

Mr. W. Simons asks us to state that Freethinkers who desire to join the annual excursion this year, but are doubtful about being able to find the whole of the cost in their pockets at the time, can pay for their tickets by instalments at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute on Monday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings. A penny will be charged for the subscription card, but the work of keeping accounts will be done gratuitously. The Committee consists of Messrs. G. Ward, A. Guest, W. Davey (treasurer), and W. Simons (secretary).

The *Islamic World*, for April, reaches us on May 2. The opening article is on "The Political Relations of England and Turkey," which certainly ought to be up to date. A notable, though brief, paper is directed against polygamy by a Moslem, who esteems the Islam of the philosophers, and not that of the fakirs.

The National Gallery is now open to the public on Sunday afternoon, as well as the Bethnal Green and South Kensington Museums. Arrangements are being made for the opening of the British Museum. "Chilperic" informs us that he will be happy to accompany Mr. Wheeler in showing visitors round.

The writers on the *Stewartry Observer* must be on the fair way to the everlasting bonfire, which, as is well known, is reserved for honest and sensible persons. It has some excellent observations on the Sunday opening of museums, quite enough to damn it for ever in the eyes of old-fashioned Sabbatarian Scotsmen. Yet we learn that the *Observer* has a good circulation in Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, and Wigtownshire.

"Peripatetic" writes in the Norwich *Daylight* on "A Vanishing Hell," contrasting the teaching of Father Furniss's *Sight of Hell* with modern dilutions of the old article, and winding up with B.V.'s translation of Béranger's chant, "The Devil is Dead."

The *Nineteenth Century* has two papers in opposition to the New Education Bill. The first is by Mr. T. J. Macnamara, who thinks the only wise policy is to concentrate on such improvements as may really make the measure what it professes to be, and who, of course, claims that there shall be no differentiation between Board and Voluntary schools in the distribution of State aid. The second is by the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, who presents the Nonconformist case, and who holds that the Bill is entirely in the interests of the Anglican and Roman Churches. It is satisfactory to note that Mr. Guinness Rogers is being driven in the Secular direction. At least, he says: "We do not ask admission for Nonconformist teachers into Anglican schools, and we have no desire that our creeds or principles should be taught in them. We are opposed to sectarian teaching everywhere. To offer us the opportunity of teaching our own tenets is to mistake the nature of the objection altogether. I do not believe that the scheme can be made to work; and even if it did, it could not secure for the Dissenting child a fair position in the parson's school." The Nonconformist broadens out when he feels the hand of power over him, and perhaps may do so still more when he begins to feel the pressure.

The *Daily Chronicle* of May 5 has a leader on Paine's *Age of Reason*, in which it says of his biblical criticism that it is "all through sober and sensible." "He arrived at results some of which are now accepted by people inside the Churches, as well as by the great mass of intelligent men everywhere." Verily, a good deal has happened within the century. At the beginning of it Freethinkers went to prison wholesale for selling *The Age of Reason*—now it is discovered that the author was next door to being a Christian.

Professor Huxley is another person who, according to the Bishop of Ripon, was almost a Christian. Speaking at the Philosophical Hall, Leeds, he accorded to Huxley a place among the worthiest and greatest, on the broad ground that, whether he erred in his judgment or not, the spirit of truth was in him, and he used his gifts honestly to promote it. This was very broad on the part of Dr. Carpenter, but, in the effort to secure an alliance with the memory of Huxley, he knocks the bottom out of his own Church. For what is the use of the Christian scheme of salvation if Huxley could be among the worthiest of men without it?

Mr. F. Cresswell is getting up a petition to the Committee of the Public Libraries of Newcastle-on-Tyne, desiring that the *Freethinker* may be allowed to lie upon the table in all the reading-rooms. Signatures can be taken at Mr. Peter Weston's shop, 77 Newgate-street. Mr. Cresswell says he has six petition sheets out, and is doing very well with all of them.

A well-known literary man to whom Mr. Foote sent a copy of his *Sign of the Cross*, a criticism of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play of that name, writes: "I think you show up its historical absurdities excellently. My only feeling is that you do the miserable twaddle too much honor in taking it seriously for a moment. It is like breaking, not a butterfly, but (say) an earwig, on the wheel. However, no doubt it does service to nail its sheer misrepresentations to the counter.....What a satire the whole thing is on clerical culture! Fancy a windy humbug like Wilson Barrett making the whole Anglican hierarchy dance to his wheezy piping!"

Mr. Charles Durrant, an active Freethinker, is a candidate for the Hampstead Vestry, and we hope he will be returned. Freethinkers who are willing to assist his candidature should communicate with Mr. A. Davies, 3 Gondar Mansions, Mill-lane, Hampstead, N.W.

Mr. W. G. Hayward, who ran for the Littlehampton School Board on the secular ticket, was elected second on the poll.

The Glasgow *News* somehow made the discovery—at any rate, it announced—that Secularism was at its last gasp. Not only had the London Hall of Science been lost, but the Glasgow Secularists had also been forced to relinquish their hall! Mr. Gilmour wrote a reply to the *News*, and it was fortunately inserted. After pointing out that Freethought propaganda is still carried on energetically in London, and that Mr. Foote has actually made an attack upon the West-end and delivered several courses of lectures at St. James's Hall, Mr. Gilmour remarks that the Glasgow Secularists have not "relinquished" anything. They were jockeyed out of the Ingram-street hall, but they immediately took another in Brunswick-street—and a change of address is not exactly a funeral.

Mr. Gilmour concludes as follows: "Secularism is stronger than it has ever been before. One proof of this is to be found in the fact that the annual Conference of the National Secular Society is to be held in this city next month. As you remark, we certainly do find the battle with a rich and powerful orthodoxy 'dreich' enough, especially as, under the Blasphemy Laws, our organisation is outlawed, and we are rendered incapable of receiving or of administering bequests of money or property left for the propagation of anti-Christian doctrine; but we are hard to kill, on the principle, perhaps, that threatened men live long; and, after seventy years' unbroken existence as a public body in Glasgow, we most respectfully decline to accept this latest invitation to consider ourselves defunct."

A public debate on Secularism took place on April 23 and 24 between Mr. C. Cohen and the Rev. H. W. Dick. The Secular Hall, Manchester, was crowded on each occasion. Mr. Dick appears to have discussed more personalities than principles, and finally he tried to fasten a lot of Malthusian literature upon the N.S.S., although there is absolutely nothing about that subject in the Society's principles and objects. This ridiculous and rather malignant move was checked by Mr. Cohen, who expected something of the kind,

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and was prepared to meet it. We are informed that Mr. Cohen's final peroration was admirable, and quite "electrified" the audience. The chair on the first night was taken by Mr. Walter Payn (Secularist), and on the second night by Mr. Walter Street (Christian).

Mr. A. B. Moss, who is a member of the Camberwell Vestry, stands for re-election, and will, of course, be supported by all Freethinkers in the division. It is No. 1 Ward, and the election takes place on May 16th.

Mr. Moss's annual holiday commences on July 25, and ends on August 15. He will spend a portion of it at Rhyl, in North Wales. While in the neighborhood he will be glad to visit Liverpool, Manchester, Bolton, and other places, under the President's lecture scheme. Branches should write to Mr. Moss for dates, addressing letters to him at 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.

The addresses of Mr. Touzeau Parris at the Failsworth Secular School were well attended, especially so in the evening, when the school was quite full. The collections in aid of the school funds amounted to a little over £12. The choir in connection with the school, and the Failsworth string band, rendered some exceedingly good music; and, viewed in every light, the day was a complete success.

In response to our last week's appeal, a generous Freethinker has sent Miss Vance a cheque to cover the deficit of £5 on the expenses of the Children's Party. The official receipt ought to pass him into heaven if he ever gets near the gate.

The Dramatic Performance which is to take place at the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, on Thursday evening, May 21, in aid of the Lecture Fund, ought to attract a large gathering of Freethinkers. A full advertisement of this function appears in the present number of the *Freethinker*. Mr. Foote will give a selection from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, and Mr. Watts will take the part of Joseph Surface in a scene from the *School for Scandal*. Miss Vance, Miss Brown, and Miss Katie Watts are also included in the programme. The occasion will be a good one for viewing the hall which Mr. Foote has taken for Sunday evening lectures for six months from May 31.

Marie Corelli's *Mighty Atom* is an anti-infidel novel, and a very foolish one too; but as it is being puffed in the newspapers, and praised by the clergy, we intend to have an article upon it in our next issue. The article will be from the pen of Mr. Foote.

SOCIALISM AND SECULARISM.

(Concluded from p. 278.)

WAR often springs from economic causes, as when the starving inhabitants of an impoverished country invade a richer territory, either to get food, or, if they are strong enough, to occupy it permanently. In other cases, of which the Northern barbarians, who harassed the later Roman Empire, are a good example, men find it easier to live by spoliation than by honest labor, and accordingly make a trade of thieving with violence. But it is generally admitted that wars of spoliation and conquest sink into insignificance compared with the frightful homicidal convulsions for which religion is responsible. Religious hatred transforms otherwise humane men into monsters, and "fences about all crimes with holiness." It is idle to say that the Crusades had primary reference to any question of sustenance. The sole object of all the disastrous military expeditions to the Holy Land was to redeem Christendom from the wholly imaginary disgrace of allowing the "infidel" Moslem to desecrate the "holy places" where Christ had lived and died. Nor can anyone seriously maintain that the harrying of the Netherlands by the butcher Alva; the inveterate religious wars between Catholic and Protestant nations, or the still more ghastly fratricidal struggles between members of the same race, and sometimes of the same family, on account of differences of faith; the importation of slavery into America; the immolation of tens of thousands of persons of both sexes, and little children, during the witchcraft delusion; the envenomed opposition of the Church to science, to free inquiry, and to popular education, were all the outcome of simple, economic factors. Finally, consider the facts connected with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV. When Henri IV. came to the throne, France was prone and bleeding after generations of hideous civil war between Catholic and Huguenot, with its bloody sacrament of Saint Bartholomew. Henri, like the wise and noble prince that he was, cared less for the spiritual than for the temporal interests of his subjects, and by the Edict of Nantes he conferred security of life and property, with the legal right to liberty of worship, upon the Huguenots. As everyone knows, they became the most loyal subjects and the best citizens in the realm, and, by their industry and enterprise, laid the foundations of the manufacturing and commercial system of modern France. All went well until, in his devout old age, Louis XIV. suffered some heavy family bereavements, and several humiliating military reverses. Then, prompted perhaps by Madame de Maintenon, the credulous dotard discovered that he must have offended his celestial suzerain by tolerating those pestilent Huguenots. This surmise soon grew to be a fixed idea with *le Grand Monarque*, and ultimately, despite the entreaties and remonstrances of his wisest and trustiest advisers, Louis signed the fatal fiat of Revocation, which exiled not less than 230,000 of the very flower of his people, and consigned tens of thousands more to be the sport and quarry of a lawless soldiery, to whose nameless brutalities the excesses of the Terror were as humanity itself. France suffered economically for this in a dislocation of industry and shock to the national credit, which endured, with exacerbations at shorter and shorter intervals, until the Revolution had performed its tremendous work of demolition and redress.

Now, I venture to ask: Can anyone honestly insist that the economic factor alone militated for the expatriation of the Huguenots? "That is all very well," protests some representative of the doctrine I am countering, "but there is no possibility of any recurrence of such an act of religious insanity. The world has grown wiser and freer; men no longer hate one another because they do not mumble the same litany, or kneel at the same shrine. Their sense of the claims of human brotherhood is stronger than the misanthropy of their creeds." Happily, there is much force in this representation, but it is only half the truth. It is undeniable that the sectarian spirit fostered by the theological dogma of exclusive salvation is still virulent enough to set nation against nation, party against party, and man against man. The very gutter-bloods pommel one another for Christ's sake. In Uganda the Catholic negro cracks the skull of the Protestant Quashee, and Quashee returns the compliment by lying in wait with a shot-gun that he may most lovingly salute his dear brother in the Lord. And they both think it is ever so much better fun than the ancient inter-tribal style of fighting. Then, when you bagged your nigger, and had bolted all that was digestible of him, there was an end of the business; but now you have the holy gratification of knowing that you have sent him to roast for all eternity in the Devil's oven.

In Anatolia the Moslem slaughters his Christian fellow-subjects and plunders their property all for the glory of Allah, who gloats over the extermination of the accursed Giaour. In civilised Europe we have recently seen the indecent exhibition of exultation on the part of the Ultramontanes over the defeat of the Italians by the Abyssinians, because Italy's extremity may be the Pope's opportunity for regaining that temporal power which his predecessors turned to such sinister purposes that Europe became a vast battle-ground, and the Papal States a byeword for all that was infamous. Half the difficulty with Ireland is religious. The social reformer who seeks to arouse the people to a due sense of their degradation, and of the magnitude of their wrongs, is baffled by the mental inertia and meanness of spirit, begotten of the age-long teaching of the Church, that, as the powers that be are ordained of God, it is the duty of every good Christian to obey them with all docility. Add to this the prescription as to the perpetuity of poverty, the injunction to multiply and replenish the earth, and the pauperising and demoralising effects of Christian almsgiving, and you have a combination admirably designed to make and breed that most pitiable of all objects—the willing slave, who cannot be got to understand what liberty means, and who is often as proud of his badge of servitude as if it were a free man's prize of honor.

The Socialist often wonders why the poor are so slow to respond to his appeals, why they do not more truly distinguish friend from enemy, and why they are so loth to rise against their oppressors; but the anomaly is intelligible enough to the Secularist. It is as impossible to make the average man of any class, but especially of the commonalty, think for

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himself all at once as it would be to force a new-born infant to walk unaided. Indeed, the child is in the better case, for it has at least a developing mechanism for locomotion, and the potential nervous energy to work it; while in the adult the intellectual fibre, so to speak, has either atrophied through disuse or degenerated from abuse, so that, as far as his understanding is concerned, he is little better than an idiot. Physical exhaustion, as a product of the wear and tear of the struggle for existence, may account in part for this intellectual impotency; but there can be no doubt that the primary cause of the mischief lies in the emasculating influence of religion. To make thinkers and insurgents of men we must isolate them in youth from the infection of theological and all other dogmas. We must train them to observe, to reason, and to act; not in order to reach an arbitrarily imposed end, nor to square all their findings with cut-and-dry formulas, but with the one inviolable obligation of proclaiming what they judge to be the truth, and of following it whithersoever it may lead them. Speculative questions touching the wider issues of life and thought will keep until the growing mind is stocked with the certainties of experience, and equipped with the method of right reasoning. Then, uninfluenced by the preconceptions implanted by the schools of theology and orthodox metaphysics, there is little fear that the judgment will readily surrender to the solicitations of unreason. In this deliverance of the young from the ecclesiastical yoke lies our one great hope for the future of the race. Raise a few generations of men and women whose minds are their own, and who know their own minds, and most of the problems that so grievously beset the body politic would soon receive rational settlement. We must bend all our energies to the attainment of this supreme object. Not that we can afford to neglect other subsidiary means of enlarging society from the incubus of superstition and the miseries of civil misrule. Nor is the Secularist usually remiss in this respect. He is invariably a public-spirited citizen, who associates himself with every well-considered scheme for the improvement of the material and moral condition of the commonwealth and of the world; for the rights and interests of humanity have always held the first place in the Freethinker's affections.

In an age when credulity was esteemed a virtue, and cruelty a proof of manliness and piety, even the constitutionally cautious Montaigne had the rare courage to dismiss the witchcraft mania with contempt, and to write of the testimony upon which its victims were condemned: "How much more natural and likely do I find it that two men should lie than that one man, in twelve hours' time, should fly with the wind from east to west." It is to Montaigne likewise that we owe, next to Rabelais, the first emphatic denunciation of the downright savagery of the system of training the young then in vogue, and the atrocious practice of judicial torture.

When no voice was raised in protest or pity over the ashes of the murdered Calas, and the beheaded body of the seventeen-year-old la Barre, both done to death by the priests, or to plead the cause of the innocent Madame Montbailly, and the miserable serfs of the Jura, Voltaire made the civilised world ring with the harrowing story of their wrongs. And though Calas and la Barre were beyond recall, and he could not snatch them from the clutches of "the Infamous," as he did Sirven, Voltaire never rested until he had cleared their memories from the ignominy under cover of which the Church sought to hide its guilt.

Rousseau preached the evangel of social equality, and was the first to articulate the plangent signal of the Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." In the *Rights of Man* Thomas Paine promulgated the charter of modern political reform, which served as the starting point and the standard for the men who won the Reform Bill of 1832, who strove mightily to inaugurate Robert Owen's new moral world, and who, sorely disappointed in that hope, but with unshaken faith in human progressibility, applied themselves to "tug at the laboring oar" for the Chartist cause. It is with Paine's political as with his anti-theological doctrine. He was a hundred years in advance of his time. We are only now slowly maturing some of his most sagacious proposals—for example, the Old Age Pensions scheme, the honor of the origination of which Paine shares with Condorcet, although, if we are to believe some of the Midland newspaper oracles, the only original and patent project of the kind is the invention of a living Brummagem politician. Thanks to Mr. M. D. Conway's monograph, the general public may now learn what has never been a secret to Freethinkers, that Paine was a man of unrivalled political acumen and of universal sympathies. He was, along with the Quakers, among the first to demand the abolition of chattel-slavery, and to maintain the principle so eloquently and convincingly expounded in the Freethinking Mary W. Godwin's book on the Rights of Woman—of the equality of the sexes in respect of political status and educational and industrial opportunity. Having compassed the whole range of human needs and interests, Paine, like Robert Burns, had still an unexhausted tenderness that bestowed itself in a touching appeal for the animals that serve us or minister to our pleasure.

To recite the tale of modern Meliorism, it suffices to tell the bead-roll of the representative Freethinkers of the last three centuries. There is no sphere of present-day life and thought in which, insensibly it may be, but not the less surely, the influence of their teaching and achievement is not felt. At the basis of the very possibility of knowledge and progress lies the right of freedom of discussion. We are still far from an ideal unconstraint in this respect; but such measure of ease as we do enjoy has been won for us by the blood and suffering of a great concourse of martyrs. It was in the cause of free speech that Bruno, Servetus, Vanini, and Dolet perished in the flames; that others, like poor Woolston and that "impassable man," Richard Carlile, languished for weary years, or died in loathsome prisons; while others still were stripped of their worldly possessions, or stood in the pillory, the sport of a bigoted or obscene mob, or wandered and pined in exile, for the truth's sake.

When the Socialist writes or speaks unrestrainedly, as is his habit, does he ever bethink himself of the debt that he owes to the Freethought movement, which has enabled him to exercise this right without let or hindrance, and that it was Charles Bradlaugh who, almost single-handed, fought and defeated two Administrations which sought to revive the old coercive Press Laws of George III., and so shattered the last shackles on liberty of the press in this country? The work of organised Secularism for the last thirty years has consisted largely in the practical vindication of the right of publication and of free speech. Indeed, but for our watchfulness and determination during that time, political and religious liberty would be in a much more backward state than it is. Apply this text all round, and it can easily be shown that there is absolutely no Meliorist movement or measure in which Freethinkers have not been the pioneers or the moving spirits. I am not writing unadvisedly, but in view of evidence collected by careful investigation. Sometimes, after sedulously nursing an unpopular enterprise into strength and prestige, the Secularist has to waive his well-earned right to a place in its councils, if he is not rudely thrust aside expressly because of his heresy by some assertive Christian; and in the end it often happens that the Church steps in and has the effrontery to usurp all the credit for having initiated and carried out the particular reform. The Freethinker can bear this with equanimity if humanity gains by the change, although it does seem a trifle hard that, in the words of the parable, "those should gather who have not strewed." We shall no doubt hear by-and-bye, or posterity will, that the greatest protagonists of Socialism in this century were not Robert Owen on its experimental, and Karl Marx on its historical and theoretical, sides, but the Archbishops of Canterbury. More prodigious monsters of fiction have walked the earth before now, and, in a world still infested by the sea-serpent, who shall say that the breed is extinct? After all, there must be more in heaven and earth than is dreamed of in the philosophy of Economic Determinism.

J. P. GILMOUR.

What is man born for but to be a reformer—a remaker of what man has made, a renouncer of falsehood, a restorer of truth and good, imitating the great nature which embosoms us all, and which sleeps no moment on an old past, but every hour repairs herself, yielding us every morning a new day, and with every pulsation a new life?—*Emerson.*

No false theory about the stars ever endangered the light of any single one of them.—*Minot J. Savage.*

Absolute morality is the regulation of conduct in such a way that pain shall not be inflicted.—*Herbert Spencer.*

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INFIDEL COLLEGES.

A COMMON gag among these Christian liars and ignoramuses and defamers of infidels is to take the cue from St. Paul's Socratic method, and ask: "What colleges and charitable institutions has infidelity ever built?" These clerical chaps have rammed this gag down the throats of infidels until we have all learned to gulp it down as a matter of course, like we used to do when our mothers held our noses and poured vermifuge into our throats, and gave us the alternatives of swallowing it or choking to death.

I had as good a mother as the best of them, and not very long ago one of these durned fool "trumpet mediums," that called himself Dr. Leonard—the fellow that had the wife that gave me that lambasting I've told you about—professed to call up the spirit of my mother, and make her talk to me through a durned old greasy dinner horn; but I knew he had called up the wrong woman, because she did not say to me: "Charles, keep a little ipecac about the house in case of croup among the children, and put a greased flannel on your chest if you take cold."

But about that college business! Almost just the reverse of what the Christians say about that is what is true. There is not a Christian college in the United States, and there are two infidel colleges and almost a third one.

The first infidel college is Girard College in Philadelphia. Stephen Girard gave $6,000,000 to build that college when he was one of the only two or three men in America that were worth a million dollars.

He was not only an infidel, but he was so intense an infidel that he put it into the laws of the college that no preacher was ever to be allowed to go into it.

I ran upon a pole-cat once in the dark. For four or five years after that the coat that I had on lay up in the attic, and I could find it without a light the darkest night that ever came. You didn't have to see it; you could smell it! That pole-cat hadn't been in the Cologne water business.

It's the same way about a preacher. You can smell the preacher on him for years after he has quit it. I went to Girard College once, twelve years after I had quit preaching. I had a regular permit card, and had handed it to the porter at the gate, and was passing in when he took a second look at me and said: "Ain't you a preacher?" I said: "No, I used to be one." "Well," said he, "if you have repented of it, it's all right"; and he motioned to me to go on in.

Lick, who built the big college in California, and put in it one of the biggest, if not the biggest, telescope in the world, at a cost of $500,000, and every cent. of it out of his own money, was an infidel.

The University of Virginia was originated by Thomas Jefferson, another infidel.

If you will think a moment, you will remember that you have never heard of hazing and football-playing and boat-rowing in connection with any of these three institutions.

Now you tell me where there is a Christian college. There is Vanderbilt University, but it is of the Methodists, for the Methodists, and by a Methodist. It is run by Methodists, and the purpose of the institution is to make Methodists. In the same way, the Baptist college at Georgetown, Kentucky, that has in it $17,000 of John Atherton's distillery money, is to make Baptists, and is run by Baptists. The Presbyterian colleges in Kentucky, at Danville, and Richmond are put there to make Presbyterians, and they all hate each other like the Devil hates holy water; and the University of Kentucky, the money for which was raised with the understanding that it was not to have any religious bias, was raised by a Campbellite, and is now altogether in the hands of that sect, and is run in, and for, and by, the interests of that sect.

There is a State college at Lexington, Kentucky, that was built by, and is supported by, the State, and the Jews and we heathen all have to pay for it just the same as anybody else; but it's run by Christians, and an infidel who has the manhood to say he is an infidel cannot get a professorship in it.

At Cincinnati there is a university supported by the State and city. The richest people in the town are Jews, and nearly all the men in the town are named Moses and Aaron, and Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob and Levy, that don't want any Jesus Christ in them, and would not trust him for a three cent shirt collar if he should come down and light on the Probasco fountain square to-day; and yet these lying, rascally preachers and Christian editors have the cheek to look at an institution of that sort, and then ask: "What colleges has infidelity ever built?"

—*The Blue Grass Blade.* EX-REV. C. C. MOORE.

RAMSEY-KEMP TESTIMONIAL FUND.—Dr. Grece, £1 1s.; C., £1 1s.; D. Baker, £1 1s.; N. M. X., 7s. 6d.; J. Greevz Fisher, 10s.; William Bell, 5s.; Mr. Church, 5s.; J. Fulton, 5s.; W. J. Cone, 4s.; E. Calvert, 2s. 6d.; C. D., 2s. 6d.; H. Horrell, 2s. 6d.; A. J. Hooper, 1s.—G. WARD, *Hon. Treas.*

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting, held on Thursday, April 30; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, E. Bater, G. J. Warren, F. Wood, C. Johnson, H. J. Stace, A. F. Taylor, C. Harwood, T. Gorniot, W. Leate, Stanley Jones, and the secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed.

A letter from Mr. S. P. Putnam, as President of the American Secular Union, and addressed to the Conference, was laid before the meeting.

It was resolved that this Society accept an invitation from the London Trades Council to take part in a Conference "with the view of concerted action being taken to secure the educational well-being of the children of the people," and Mr. Foote, with Messrs. Watts and Moss, were elected as delegates.

The secretary reported upon places of interest suitable for the annual excursion, and it was finally resolved, "That the excursion be to Margate in July," the actual date to be fixed after further inquiries.

The motions from Branches for the Conference Agenda were then read, and additions made by the Executive, which will appear in the full Agenda printed in this number of the *Freethinker*.

Permission was granted for the formation of a new Branch at Motherwell—also for another at Rochdale—consequent upon the successful meetings held under the Lecture Scheme.

The President gave a sketch of the working out of the resolution standing in his name on the Agenda for the Conference, and reported that he had taken the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, under his Lecture Scheme, and he was prepared to risk a prosecution by charging for admission.

Arrangements were made for an Agenda Committee meeting, and the meeting adjourned till May 14 to receive the annual report and balance-sheet.

E. M. VANCE, *Asst. Sec.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Clergyman—"I suppose you know, my dear friend, the difference between patience and long suffering?" Young Lady—"Oh, yes. When you are late in the morning, and we have to wait for you, that requires patience. But when you are preaching, and everybody is anxious for you to come to the end, that is long suffering."

Head of Firm—"Have you had any experience in collecting?" Applicant—"I should say I had. I used to be a country minister."

Chicago—"Have you a Society for the Suppression of Vice in your city?" New York—"Yes, we have such an organisation." Chicago—"And is it accomplishing its aim?" New York—"Well, I should say it was. We have more suppressed vice among us now than at any previous time in our history."

A young lawyer of Coleman, so the story goes, found law business not very lucrative; so he got a job as preacher at McBain. He was called upon to deliver a funeral sermon. After the sermon he proceeded to address the mourners thus: "Ladies and gentlemen, the corpse before you now is in heaven, sure as hell!"

ON A PORTRAIT OF SERVETUS.

THOU grim and haggard wanderer, who dost look
With haunting eyes forth from the narrow page,
I know what fires consumed with inward rage
Thy broken frame, what tempests chilled and shook!
Ah, could not thy remorseless foeman brook
Time's sure devourment, but must needs assuage
His anger in thy blood, and blot the age
With that dark crime which virtue's semblance took!
Servetus! that which slew thee lives to-day,
Though in new forms it taints our modern air;
Still in heaven's name the deeds of hell are done;
The fires of hate are lit for them who dare
Follow their lord along the untrodden way.

—*Richard Watson Gilder.*

Arriving at correct judgments on disputed questions much depends on the attitude of mind we preserve while listening to, or taking part in, the controversy; and for the preservation of a right attitude it is needful that we should learn how true, and yet how untrue, are average human beliefs.—*Herbert Spencer.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.45, Touzeau Parris, "Facts about the Bible that Everyone should Know."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Herbert Burrows, "Secularism and Materialism: their Possibilities and Limits."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 108 Mile End-road): 8, W. C. Lyons, "Why and How Christianity is Spread."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, J. F. Green, "The Veins of Wealth."

FINSBURY BRANCH: 7, general meeting at 11 Grafton-place, Euston-square.

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Jean Jacques Rousseau."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road: 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Goethe's *Faust*."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, W. Heaford, "The Social Implications of Secularism."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Holy Ghost."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "Sharps and Flats."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. Calvert, "Is Free Speech Conducive to Truth and Progress?"

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand): 11.15, R. Forder, "Are the Four Gospels History or Myth?" 3.15, W. J. Ramsey, "Are the Four Gospels History or Myth?"

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, C. Cohen will lecture. Thursday, at 8, S. E. Easton, "Some Bible Celebrities."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, C. Cohen will lecture; 3.30, E. Calvert, "A Historical Review of the Old Testament." Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Highbury Corner): 10.45, Stanley Jones will lecture.

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, S. E. Easton, "Some Bible Celebrities."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Dream of Immortality."

LAMBETH (Kennington Park): 3.30, H. Courtney, "The Upshot of Secularism."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, Arthur B. Moss, "Crumbling Creeds of Christendom."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "After Death, What?"

REGENT'S PARK: 3, C. Cohen will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, James Rowney will lecture; 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, a meeting.

BLACKBURN: Fortnightly meeting at 18 Peter-street.

BRISTOL BRANCH: 2.30, members and friends meet at the Fountain, top of Blackboy Hill, Durdham Down, for ramble to Coombe Dingo, Penpolepoint.

DERBY (Pollicott's Dining Rooms): 7, Mr. Whitney, "The Christian Religion."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion—T. Aitken, "Did Moses Write the Pentateuch?" 6.30, debate between J. P. Gilmour and J. Cassels, "Is the Law of Population the Determining Cause of Poverty?"

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Trumpet, "Why do Men Starve?"

LEEDS BRANCH: Excursion to Ilkley; leaves N.E. station at 2.5. Tea arranged for—see *Leeds Daily News*.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Ernest Newman, "The Life of Frederick Douglass." Important meeting of members and friends after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, G. W. Foote, "The New Education Bill"; 3, "Count Tolstoi's Christianity"; 6.30, "The Curse of Creeds."

ROCHDALE (Board Room No. 2, Co-operative Building, Toad-lane): 6, special meeting to discuss Conference agenda and elect delegate.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, select entertainment.

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OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 11, a lecture; 6.30, "The Soul and a Future State."

DERBY (Market-place): J. G. Briggs, "The Teachings of Christ Impracticable, Incredible, Ignoble, etc."

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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—No. 20. SUNDAY, MAY 17, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE MIGHTY ATOM.

WOMEN have done some excellent work in literature, but somehow or other they do not keep pace with their improved opportunities. Charlotte Bronte was a Titaness, and George Eliot's writing was full of intellect and power. But the best women writers of fiction to-day do not come near the level of such mighty predecessors. And as for the "lady novelist," who supplies the circulating libraries with endless small reading, one feels that she is a curious product of this scripturient age. No doubt she fills some useful, or necessary, purpose in the subtle economy of this mysterious universe; but what it is, besides making a little money for herself, and providing a stimulus to the trades of paper-making, printing, and binding, one must wait to know until the "great day" when all secrets will be revealed.

Among the lady novelists there are few, if any, more distinguished than Marie Corelli. Judicious puffs in the press keep us all informed of the vast circulation of her books within a few days of their being placed upon the market. The advertisements in literary and other journals tell us that eminent ministers of religion have strongly recommended her writings from the pulpit. She is considered, in every respect, a "safe" authoress. Sex does not run riot in her pages, there is no intolerable dabbling in breaches of the seventh commandment, and, above all, she is an ostentatious Christian.

Having seen much laudation of Marie Corelli's last novel, bearing the startling title of *The Mighty Atom*, and having noticed that it was considered a strong and beautiful defence of religion against the prevalent spirit of "infidelity," we resolved to see whether it deserved all these praises. After reading it carefully from title-page to imprint, we are bound to say it does *not* deserve them. In our opinion it is a very foolish book, and its pretentiousness only accentuates the writer's ignorance.

Let us begin with the lady's dedication, which is pretty long-winded:—

> "To the Self-styled 'Progressivists,' who by Precept and Example assist the Infamous Cause of Education Without Religion, and who, by promoting the idea, borrowed from French Atheism, of denying to the Children in Board Schools and elsewhere the Knowledge and Love of God as the True Foundation of Noble Living, are Guilty of a Worse Crime than Murder."

It is to be hoped that the "Progressivists" will take warning in time. No blame will attach to Marie Corelli if they pursue their wicked course to its awful end, and find themselves at the finish in the everlasting bonfire. "Woe betide those," she elsewhere exclaims, "who crush the high aspirations of innocent and hopeful youth by the deadening blow of Materialism! Worse than murderers are they, and as a greater crime than murder shall they answer for it." They may be ever so honest and well-meaning, but it is "infamous" to differ from Marie Corelli and the deity she patronises. "Me and my God" will make it hot for those who have the amazing impudence to think for themselves *in opposition* to our teaching.

Atheism for the young, so to speak, is the monster whom this book is written to expose and vanquish. Hear the lady inveighing against a little French book, published many years ago, with a preface by Littré:—

> "In *The Freethinker's Catechism* (*Catechisme du Libre Penseur*), by one Edgar Monteil—a code of ethics which has been circulated assiduously among children's schools in France for the past ten years—the unhappy little beings whose ideas of morality are engrafted upon this atheistical doctrine are taught that 'the passions of man are his surest and most faithful guides,' and that 'God is a spectre invented by priests to frighten timid minds';—this, too, in utter and wicked oblivion of the grand truth proclaimed with such a grand simplicity—'God is Love!' 'As the soul,' writes the self-deluded compiler of *The Freethinker's Catechism*, 'no longer constitutes for us an independent and imperishable individuality, there is no future life.'"

This is a ridiculous misrepresentation of Edgar Monteil's book, which Marie Corelli only knows, perhaps, by references to it in religious journals. And the following is in some respects on the same level of accuracy:—

> "In almost every educational department the principles of the *Libre-Penseur* are sowing the seeds of ruin to the nation, and making of the average human being a creature worse than the lowest and most untamable of ferocious beasts. And these principles, largely adopted by the Freethinking societies in England, are being gradually disseminated among the children of our own secular schools—for the agents or 'missionaries' of Freethought are to the full as active in distributing their tracts and pamphlets as the most fervid Salvationist that ever tossed the *War Cry* in the faces of the public; more stealthy in their movements, they are none the less cunning; and in our once God-fearing country many can now be found who passively accept as truth the deadening and blasphemous lie uttered in the words—'As the soul no longer constitutes an independent and imperishable individuality, there is no future life.'"

Edgar Monteil's book has never been used in the French schools; therefore it could not have sowed "the seeds of ruin" in them. Nor is it true that the French youth are becoming worse than the lowest beasts. This is the kind of nonsense which had its long day in English pulpits, but it is almost played out even there, and is apparently becoming the property of the pious lady novelist, who is silly enough for anything.

Starting from this absurdity, Marie Corelli proceeds to illustrate her "principles" by a story. There is an Atheist father, and an Atheist tutor, and an only son trained up wrongly, who cannot help thinking about religion, and who finally hangs himself to find out the great secret. The reader will be interested to know that this self-slaughterer is only eleven years of age. But then he has been forced in the Atheistic hothouse; he is well versed in all the philosophies, and quotes Marcus Aurelius in conversation.

The Atheist father is (of course) a nasty, bad man. He alienates his wife's affections, so that she runs off with a wicked baronet; and he crushes out the life of his boy with cold, hard treatment, and unlimited cramming, designed to make him an intellectual prodigy. Mr. Valliscourt (notice the fine names these lady novelists affect!) has no taste for anything natural. A beautiful landscape under moonlight is to him "stagey." He regards Love as "a mere figure of speech," and declares that no reasonable father "loves" his children. And when he leaves the room, where his little son lies dead, slain by his own hand, he does so "with a firm, easy step and unruffled demeanor—the materialistic 'Positivist' asserting itself in every line of his stiff figure." "Positivist," by the way, is an ineffably ridiculous touch in this wholly ridiculous picture. No teacher ever equalled Comte in subordinating

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intellect to feeling. Miss Corelli should read (say) Comte's *Catechism*, and realise the depth of her ignorance.

Now for the Atheist tutor. Professor Cadman-Gore is a grovelling Materialist, and his personal appearance and habits of life harmonise with his philosophy. He is tall, gaunt, and bald—though he thinks of marrying a spectacled Girton girl and breeding a litter of Atheists. He has "bony shoulders" and "long ears." He has "leathery hands," and his knuckles "emit a sharp sound like the cracking of bad walnuts." He has "lantern jaws" and "ferret eyes." He is such a coward that he thinks he is dying when he has a mild attack of dyspepsia, and considers himself seriously wounded if he runs a pin into his finger. Of course he hates nature, just like Mr. Valliscourt. The delightful smells of a blowing garden positively "offend" him; he never climbs a hill or enters a boat, and his sole idea of a walk is a silent tramp on a straight, dusty road.

Mr. Valliscourt is a character that could hardly exist outside a Christian novel, and Professor Cadman-Gore is a mere turnip death's-head lit up with a stinking candle. On the other hand, all the Christian people in this book—like the Christians in *The Sign of the Cross*—are well-nigh impeccable models of virtuous humanity. Even the village idiot, with his distorted face and figure, is a good soul at bottom and an excellent Christian—infinitely superior to hard-hearted Atheists, who hate the smell of roses, and detest fine scenery, and play the devil with their wives and children, and look upon the corpses of their nearest as so much dead meat.

It would be an absurd waste of time to discuss the dish made up from such ingredients. We will just treat the reader to a few samples of the cook's knowledge and ability in other directions.

The scene of this novel is all laid in North Devonshire, and some of the characters talk what Marie Corelli supposes to be the local vernacular. Their language would startle a real Devonian. They use such words and phrases as "towzley," "childer," "nowt," and "muck o' lies"—which are all north-country expressions. Marie Corelli has not even mastered the commonest Devonshire idiom. "Come" is a test word everywhere, and here it is spelt "coom." But a Devonian does not pronounce the word in this fashion. He leaves that to the Lancashire folk. What he says is "kum," sounding the vowel a little like the French. "Kummin" is as frequent in Devonshire as rosy apples and creamy complexions.

Miss Corelli has not mastered the Devonshire dialect, but she might have learnt a little of ornithology. Fancy a nightingale singing at the end of August! The lady's physical science is still worse. She actually speaks of the earth and the sun as "friendly planets." She also introduces a Mr. Skeet, a Positivist, and "a great friend of a person named Frederic Harrison," who tells the boy Lionel all about the Atom, and shows him an "enlarged drawing" of it "as seen through the microscope." Poor Marie Corelli! Someone has been "kidding" her. Atoms are not visible under the microscope. Nobody has ever seen one. They are hypothetical existences, too minute for visibility. In the physics of Marie Corelli, however, they are quite visible, and there are enlarged drawings of them—as though they were microbes. "A curious twisty thing," it is, "with a sort of spinal cord running through it." And this remarkable Corelli atom has a power of reproduction. The lady imagines it is the belief of the Materialists that there was "a little First Atom," which produced other atoms—and so, as the parson said who cut the genealogy short, they went on begetting each other to the end of the chapter.

Angels and ministers of grace defend us! We shall have rare science teaching in our schools when the "knowledge and love of God" is pushed to the front by the friends of Miss Corelli. The earth will soon be flat again, and then the children will be flat too, and everybody will be pious and ignorant enough for the Dark Ages.

Miss Corelli's views on the "Socialist workman" of Nazareth, on the absolute perfection of the character of Jesus, and on the transcendent benefits of Christianity to the human race, are not worth criticising. Nor will Agnostic women care for her censures. They know that it is not Christianity which has lifted her sex from "the low place of bondage and humiliation formerly assigned to them in the barbaric periods." Their elevation is the result of Science and Freethought.

G. W. FOOTE.

WHAT THE BIBLE REALLY IS.

AN important work on the Bible has been published simultaneously in London and New York. It is by Amos Kidder Fiske, and entitled *The Jewish Scriptures: The Books of the Old Testament in the Light of their Origin and History.* The English edition is published by David Nutt, 270 Strand. The work is a popular exposition of the results of rational criticism. A quarter of a century ago such a work might have evoked a howl of horror and consternation. Now-a-days it will only be regarded as another attempt to put off from the neck of modern religionists what Professor Goldwin Smith calls the millstone of belief in the inspiration of the Jewish writings.

Mr. Fiske states his aim to have been "to present the history and literature of the ancient Hebrews, as contained in the Old Testament, in a clear, concise, and candid way, accepting the benefit of the light revealed by modern research and learning, and applying the same calm judgment to which we are accustomed in dealing with the productions of other ancient peoples."

At the outset I have one grave fault to find with Mr. Fiske. He cites no authorities in support of his views, and gives his readers no opportunity of verifying or disproving his conclusions. This is to be the more regretted since, although Mr. Fiske is evidently a capable, impartial, and dispassionate student, it will be open to the orthodox to question him at any point. He admits this is so, but thinks it a lesser evil than the encumbering of his book—meant only to summarise, for the benefit of the general public, a vast amount of more or less inaccessible material—with innumerable footnotes and citations, the only real effect of which would be to distract the reader's attention and increase the size of the volume. In this matter I must express my dissent from the author. On a question so much the subject of controversy it was essential to the value of his book, especially in England, where his own authority is unknown, to refer, at least in an appendix, to his principal authorities. The work should also have been provided with an index.

After this criticism let me say at once that, in my judgment, Mr. Fiske has made an admirably clear narrative concerning what is known of the religion of Israel and the composition of its sacred books. How far removed from the old view are his narratives will be seen from a few extracts.

Mr. Fiske begins his book by declaring that it was some five centuries after the time of Moses when Hebrew writers first tried to make a record of the origin and early experiences of their race; and that, for three centuries after the "peculiar people" settled in Canaan, they had no written language which can be traced in inscriptions or other graphic records of any kind. "The oldest fragments of the documents used by the first writers whose productions have survived, embedded like primitive or metamorphic rocks in strata of later origin, date not less than five hundred years after the escape from Egypt, and yet another century or more passed before the two compilations were made in which these fragments appear, and which were at a still later time imperfectly fused into one. Even this one was subsequently modified and overlaid with new material" (p. 7).

Mr. Fiske finds the first glimpse of Israel as a nomadic race, who gathered in various quarters the legends which were afterwards to appear as parts of their own history. Of their legendary ancestors and stories of the patriarch he says: "Out of the fables to which these names and traditions gave rise no historic facts can be elicited, but only historic conjectures" (p. 16). He finds some nucleus of history in the account of the servitude in Egypt, but says: "Tradition unquestionably exaggerated greatly the number of the Hebrews in Egypt, the length of their stay, and the perils of their escape." He rationalises the miracles of the Exodus and those in the wilderness, the period spent wherein he reduces from forty years to more probably three months. On the other hand, the conquest ascribed to Joshua probably extended over a long interval of time.

In his chapters on *Early Conceptions of Deity* and *The God of Israel* Mr. Fiske points out that there are signs of an early belief in a mysterious set of beings called Elohs, or Elohim, representing the powers of nature after the manner of the divinities of polytheistic races; but these were gathered into a single personification, and Elohim became the

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designation for one all-pervading deity. "The conception of Jehovah, formed at the time of the long struggle from bondage to conquest, and designed to carry that struggle to success, represents a tribal deity not greatly different in characteristics from the Chemosh of Moab and the Baal of Ammon" (p. 35).

Telling of the invasion of the Promised Land, Mr. Fiske says (p. 43):—

> "Deceit, perfidy, treachery, and barbarous atrocities were attributed to divine command. Reverses were always due to the displeasure of Jehovah, whose will had been misunderstood or disregarded; and victories gained by ruthless slaughter were credited to his beneficent favor. The basest and most cruel acts were in some cases said to have been commanded by the deity, who even intervened with miraculous aid to give them effect."

With the establishment of the Davidic dynasty the first approximately accurate date in the history of Israel is fixed—1025 B.C. Under Mr. Fiske's candid pen the man after God's own heart appears as a successful brigand. He says (p. 88):—

> "If we penetrate the illusion cast over the antique records by the later writers, and by the gloss of centuries of veneration, we shall find that David's religious character was no higher than his moral standard, and that neither was above nor beyond his race and time."

As for the poetical gifts attributed to King David, the author says that a few of the older Psalms may be David's, but that is not certain, while it is beyond doubt that nearly all of the collection are of a later date (p. 89).

Of David's successor Mr. Fiske remarks: "The real Solomon could hardly have been a devout person, and his attachment to Jehovah as the national God was somewhat perfunctory and easy-going." Most of his wisdom was legendary. "There is no ground for regarding the illlustrative episode of the visit of the Queen of Sheba as having any authenticity."

With the troubles which followed the division of the kingdom arose the race of prophets who are the glory of Jewish literature, and who really founded Judaism. "The *Nabi* first appeared as a kind of sorcerer, and later as a seer, to whom great personal wisdom or clairvoyant powers were attributed." As in Samuel, he assumed a political *rôle* and became a personage of great importance, finding culmination in Isaiah, at once poet, teacher, and statesman.

In the second part of his work, to which the first serves as background, Mr. Fiske takes up the books of the Old Testament, first mentioning that the thirty-nine books "were not finally accepted as the canon of Jewish scriptures until two or three centuries after the beginning of the Christian era." The purport and probable date of each of the books are adverted upon briefly, the author's aim being rather to give a general idea than any minute details. A few extracts chosen here and there will show his point of view. Of the descendants of Noah given in Genesis x. he says: "The names are mainly those of places and of tribes, and cover most of the geography within the writer's knowledge" (p. 232). Of the Torah:—

> "The bulk of the proscriptions and prohibitions of the ancient Jewish law have no application to modern life, and are only of historic interest. So far as a moral standard can be derived from the general mass, it is not a high one. The idea of justice did not attain a broad or exalted level, and of the gentler virtues there was hardly a dim notion. The God of the Torah was created in the image of man; not kindly benignant or magnanimous, but harsh, jealous, and revengeful" (p. 259).
>
> "The David and Solomon of the Chronicles are beings of quite a different mould from the David and Solomon of the old legends embodied in Samuel and Kings, though the latter book underwent much pious editing. They are the idealised founders, not of the kingdom which, in the days of the Levite scribes, had passed away beyond hope, but of the temple and its worship" (p. 284).

Of the *Song of Songs*, which is not Solomon's, he says (p. 366): "Not only could it never have been written by Solomon, but it exhibits that monarch in the unpleasant light of being discomfited by a simple country maiden, whose charms he attempted to add to the attractions of his harem, but who persisted in her ardent fidelity to the rustic lover left in her native village, in spite of the allurements of the seraglio at Jerusalem."

The book of Daniel is placed in the time of Antiochus. The writer's purpose "was not historical, and he was as careless of facts as he was ignorant of details." I have by no means picked all the plums out of Mr. Fiske's work, which I welcome as a vivid and most interesting presentment, in brief compass, of what is most certainly known about the Old Testament. It is to be hoped that the author, or some other, will make an equally candid and impartial examination of the books of the New Testament.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW SECULARISM AROSE.

"We must neither *lead* nor *leave* men to mistake falsehood for truth. Not to undeceive is to deceive."—ARCHBISHOP WHATELY.

BEING one of the social missionaries in the propaganda of Robert Owen, I was, like H. Viewssiew—a writer of those days—a "student of realities." It soon became clear to me, as to others, that men are much influenced for good or evil by their environments. The word was unused then—"circumstances" was the term employed. Then, as now, there were numerous persons everywhere to be met with who explained everything on supernatural principles, with all the confidence of infinite knowledge. Not having this advantage, I profited as well as I could by such observation as was in my power to make. I could see that material laws counted for something in the world. This led me to the conclusion that the duty of watching the ways of nature was incumbent on all who would find true conditions of human betterment or new reasons for morality—both very much needed. To this end the name of Secularism was given to certain principles which had for their object human improvement by material means, regarding science as the providence of man, and justifying morality by considerations which pertain to this life alone.

The rise and development (if I may use so fine a term) of these views may be traced in the following records:—

1. "Materialism will be advanced as the only sound basis of rational thought and practice."*

2. Five prizes awarded to me for lectures to the Manchester Order of Oddfellows. These degree addresses (1846) were written on the principle that morality apart from theology could be based on human reason and experience.

3. "The *Reasoner* restricts itself to the known, to the present, and seeks to realise the life that is."†

4. A series of papers was commenced in the *Reasoner* entitled "The Moral Remains of the Bible," one object of which was to show that those who no longer held the Bible as an infallible book might still value it wherein it was ethically excellent.‡

5. "To teach men to see that the sum of all knowledge and duty is *secular*, and that it pertains to this world alone."§ This was the first time the word "Secular" was applied as a general test of principles of conduct apart from spiritual considerations.

6. "Giving an account of ourselves in the whole extent of opinion, we should use the word 'Secularist' as best indicating that province of human duty which belongs to this life."¶ This wasthe first time the word "Secularist" appeared in literature as descriptive of a new way of thinking.

7. "Mr. Holyoake, editor of the *Reasoner*, will lay before the meeting [then proposed] the present position of Secularism in the provinces."‖ This was the first time the word "Secularism" appeared in the press. The meeting above mentioned was held December 29, 1851, at which the statement made might be taken as an epitome of these papers.**

8. A letter on "The Future of Secularism" appeared in the *Reasoner*.†† This was the first time Secularism was written upon as a movement. The term was the heading of a letter by Charles Frederick Nicholls.

* *My Prospectus of the Movement* (1843).
† Preface to the *Reasoner* (1846).
‡ *Reasoner*, vol. v., no. 106, p. 17; 1848.
§ Ibid, Nov. 19, 1851; article, "Truths to Teach" (p. 1).
¶ Ibid, Dec. 3, 1851; p. 34.
‖ Ibid, Dec. 10, 1851; p. 62.
** Ibid, no. 294, vol. xii.; p. 129 (1852).
†† Feb. 4, 1852; p. 187.

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9. "One public purpose is to obtain the repeal of all Acts of Parliament which interfere with secular practice."* This is exactly the attitude Secularism takes with regard to the Bible and to Christianity. It rejects such parts of the Scriptures, or of Christianism, or Acts of Parliament, as conflict with or obstruct ethical truth. We do not seek the repeal of all Acts of Parliament, but only of such as interfere with secular progress.

10. "The friends of 'secular education' [the Manchester Association was then so known] are not Secularists. They do not pretend to be; so they do not even wish to be so regarded; they merely use the word 'secular' as an adjective, as applied to a mode of instruction. We apply it to the *nature* of all knowledge."† We use the noun "Secularism." No one else has done it. With others the term "Secular" is merely a descriptive; with us the term is used as a subject. With others it is a branch of knowledge; with us it is the primary business of life—the name of the province of speculation to which we confine ourselves. When so used in these pages, the word "Secularism" or "Secularist" is employed to mark the distinction.

A Bolton clergyman reported in the *Bolton Guardian* that Mr. Holyoake had announced as the first subject of his lectures, "Why do the Clergy Avoid Discussion and the Secularists Seek it?"‡

These citations from my own writings are sufficient to show the nature and origin of Secularism. Such views were widely accepted by liberal thinkers of the day as an improvement and extension of Freethought advocacy. Societies were formed, halls were given a Secular name, and Conferences were held to organise adherents of the new opinion. The first was held in the Secular Institute, Manchester, October 3, 1852. Delegates were sent from societies in Ashton-under-Lyne, from Bolton, Blackburn, Bradford, Burnley, Bury, Glasgow, Keighley, Leigh, London, Manchester, Miles Platting, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Oldham, Over Darwen, Owen's Journal, Paisley, Preston, Rochdale, Stafford, Sheffield, Stockport, Todmorden. Among the delegates were many well known, long known, and some still known—James Charlton (now the famous manager of the Chicago and Alton Railway), Abram Greenwood (now the cashier of the Co-operative Wholesale Bank of Manchester), William Mallalieu of Todmorden (familiarly known as the "millionaire" of the original Rochdale pioneers), Dr. Hiram Uttley (of Burnley), Thomas Hayes (then of Miles Platting, now manager of the Crumpsall Biscuit Works of the Co-operative Wholesale Society), Joseph Place (of Nottingham), John Crank (of Stockport), James Motherwell (of Paisley), Dr. Henry Travis (Socialist writer on Owen's system), Samuel Ingham (of Manchester), J. R. Cooper (of Manchester), and the present writer.

Chapter X.

HOW IT WAS DIFFUSED.

"Only by varied iteration can alien conceptions be forced on reluctant minds."—Herbert Spencer.

In 1853 a six nights' discussion took place in London (Cowper-street School-room) with the Rev. Brewin Grant, B.A. A report was published by Messrs. Partridge and Oakley, at 2s. 6d., of which 45,000 copies were sold, which widely diffused a knowledge of Secularistic views. Our adversary had been appointed, with clerical ceremony, on a "three years' mission" against us. He had wit, readiness, and an electric velocity of speech, boasting that he could speak three times faster than anyone else. But he proved to be of use to us without intending it. His acrid words turned the "sweet milk of kindness into curds," whereby he set many against the cause he represented. He had the cleverness to see that there ought to be a "Christian Secularism," which raised Secularism to the level of Christian curiosity. In Glasgow, in 1854, I met Mr. Grant again, during several nights' discussion in the City Hall. This debate also was published, as was one of three nights with the Rev. J. H. Rutherford (afterwards Dr. Rutherford) in Newcastle-on-Tyne, who aimed to prove that Christianity contained the better Secularism. Thus that new form of Freethought came to have public recognition.

The lease of a house (147 Fleet-street) was bought (1852), where was established a Secularist Institute, connected with printing, bookselling, and liberal publishing. Further Conferences were held in July, 1854; one at Stockport. At an adjourned Conference Mr. Joseph Barker (whom we had converted) presided.* We had a London Secular Society, which met at the Hall of Science, City-road, and held its council meetings in Mr. Le Blond's handsome house at London Wall. This work, and much more, was done before and while Mr. Bradlaugh—who afterwards was conspicuously identified with the movement—was in the army.

It was in 1854 that I published the first pamphlet on *Secularism the Practical Philosophy of the People.* It commenced by showing the necessity of independent, self-helping, self-extricating opinions. Its opening passage was as follows:—

> 'In a state of society in which every inch of land, every blade of grass, every spray of water, every bird and flower, has an owner, what has the poor man to do with orthodox religion, which begins by proclaiming him a miserable sinner, and ends by leaving him a miserable slave, as far as unrequited toil goes?
>
> "The poor man finds himself in an *armed* world, where might is God and poverty is fettered. Abroad the hired soldier blocks up the path of freedom, and the priest the path of progress. Every penniless man, woman, and child is virtually the property of the capitalist, no less in England than is the slave in New Orleans.† Society blockades poverty, leaving it scarce escape. The artisan is engaged in an imminent struggle against wrong and injustice; then what has he, the struggler, to do with doctrines which brand him with inherited guilt, which paralyse him by an arbitrary faith, which deny saving power to good works, and menace him with eternal perdition?'

The two first works of importance controverting Secularist principles were by the Rev. Joseph Parker and Mr. J. A. Langford. Dr. Parker was ingenious, Dr. Langford eloquent. I had discussed with Dr. Parker in Banbury. In his *Six Chapters on Secularism*‡ (which was the title of his book) he makes pleasant references to that debate. The *Christian Weekly News* of that day said: "These six chapters have been written by a young provincial minister of great power and promise, of whom the world has not yet heard, but of whom it will hear pleasing things some day." This prediction has come true. I told Mr. Freeman that the "young preacher" had given me the same impression in the discussion with him. Dr. Parker said, in his first chapter, that "If the New Testament teachings oppose our own consciousness, violate our moral sense, lead us out of sympathy with humanity, then we shall abandon them." This was exactly the case of Secularism, which he undertook to confute. Dr. Langford held a more rational religion than Dr. Parker. His answer (which reached a "second thousand") had passages of courtesy and friendship, yet he contended with graceful vigor against opinions three-fourths of which justified his own.

In an address delivered September 29, 1851, I had said that "There were three classes of persons opposed to Christianity—

"1. The dissolute.
"2. The indifferent.
"3. The intellectually independent.

The dissolute are against Christianity because they regard it as a foe to sensuality. The indifferent reject it through being ignorant of it, or not having time to attend to it, or not being able to attend to it through constitutional insensibility to its appeals. The intellectually independent avoid it as opposed to freedom, morality, and progress." It was to these classes, and not to Christians, that Secularism was addressed. Neither Dr. Parker nor Dr. Langford took notice that it was intended to furnish ethical guidance where Christianity—whatever might be its quality, or pretensions, or merit—was inoperative.§ The New Form of Free-

* *Reasoner*, no. 325, Aug. 18, 1852; article, "Nature of Secular Societies" (p. 146).

† See article, "The Seculars—the Propriety of their Name," by G. J. Holyoake, *Reasoner*, Sept. 1, 1852 (p. 177).

‡ *Reasoner*, no. 328, vol. xii., 1852; p. 294.

* *Reasoner*, no. 428, vol. xvii.; p. 87.

† Not entirely so. The English slave can run away—at his own peril.

‡ Published by my then neighbor, William Freeman, of 69 Fleet-street, himself an energetic, pleasant-minded Christian.

§ In 1857 Dr. Joseph Parker published a maturer and more important volume—*Helps to Truth Seekers; or, Christianity and Scepticism*, containing the "Secularist Theory—a Critique." At a distance of more than thirty-five years it seems to me an abler book, from the Christian point of view, than I thought it on its appearance.

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thought, under the title of "The Principles of Secularism," were submitted to Mr. John Stuart Mill, to whose friendship and criticism I had often been indebted, and he approved the statement as one likely to be useful to those outside the pale of Christianity.

A remarkable thing occurred in 1854. A prize of £100 was offered by the Evangelical Alliance for the best book on "The Aspects, Causes, and Agencies of" what they called by the odious, apostolic, defamatory name, "Infidelity."* The Rev. Thomas Pearson, of Eyemouth, won the prize by a brilliant book, which I praised for its many relevant quotations, its instruction, and fairness; but I represented that its price (10s. 6d.) prevented numerous humble readers from possessing it. The Evangelical Alliance inferred that the "relevancy" was on their side altogether, whereas I meant relevant to the argument and to those supposed to be confuted by it. They resolved to issue 20,000 copies at one shilling a volume. The most eminent evangelical ministers and congregations of the day subscribed to the project. Four persons put down their names for one thousand copies each, and a strong list of subscribers was sent out. Unfortunately, I published another article, intending to induce readers of the *Reasoner* to procure copies, as they would find in its candid pages a wealth of quotations of Freethought opinion, with which very few were acquainted. The number of eminent writers—dissentients from Christianity—and the force and felicity of their objections to it, as cited by Mr. Pearson, would astonish and instruct Christians, who were quite unfamiliar with the historic literature of heretical thought. This unwise article stopped the project. The shilling edition never appeared, and the public lost the most useful and informing book written against us in my time. The Rev. Mr. Pearson died not long after; all too soon, for he was a minister who commanded respect. He had research, good faith, and courtesy —qualities rare in his day.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

THE "PHARAOH OF THE EXODUS" EXPLODED.

PROFESSOR SAYCE, in his recent works, has repeatedly warned the Higher Critics not to be too certain of their theories, as they were liable to be overthrown at any moment by monumental discoveries. A monumental discovery has been made, but, as usual, it has not affected the position of the Higher Critics, but has overthrown one of the pet theories of Professor Sayce.

For a long time past we have been continually informed that the "Pharaoh of the Oppression" (or the Egyptian king who set the Jews to work) was Rameses II., of the 19th dynasty; and that his son Meneptah† was the "Pharaoh of the Exodus." A few years ago, when the mummy of Rameses II. was discovered, copies of the photograph were copied into a number of illustrated journals as the exact lineaments of the author of the Egyptian bondage; and whenever a European excavator came upon any brickwork of the time of Rameses II. he immediately announced that he had discovered an authentic relic of the labors of the Children of Israel. In 1885 Mr. Naville explored the ruins of a city apparently built by Rameses II., and bearing the common hieratic name of Pa-Tum = the place of the God Tum; which would, of course, apply to any city that contained a temple to Tum. He therefore announced that he had discovered the authentic site of the Pithom mentioned in Exodus; and this statement has been repeated *ad nauseam* by controversial writers who profess to deal with the evidence of the "monuments."

But this month's *Contemporary Review* contains an article by Professor W. M. Flinders Petrie, entitled "Egypt and Israel," which gives a translation of a monument of Meneptah, which at one blow overthrows all these elaborate theories. It is an account of the reign of Meneptah, and it concludes:—

> "The Sun of Egypt hath wrought this change; he was born as the fated means of revenging it, the King Merenptah. Chiefs bend down, saying, 'Peace to thee'; not one of the nine bows* raises his head. Vanquished are the Tahennu [North Africans]; the Khita [Hittites] are quieted; ravaged is Pakanana [Kanun] with all violence; taken is Askadni;† seized is Kazmel; Yenu [Yanoh] of the Syrians is made as though it had not existed; *the people of Ysiraal is spoiled, it hath no seed;* Syria hath become as widows of the land of Egypt; all lands together are in peace. Everyone that was a marauder hath been subdued by the King Merenptah, who gives life like the sun every day."

It is a pity that Professor Petrie does not give us a *fac-simile* of the group of hieroglyphs that he renders as "people of Ysiraal," as the decipherment of Egyptian inscriptions often raises disputable questions; but he and the other scholars who have seen the monument are quite satisfied that it means the "people of Israel." Here, then, the assumed "Pharaoh of the Exodus" expressly mentions the people of Israel as being in his time among the cities of Palestine, and in connection with the nations of Syria. If the Israelites were inhabitants of Canaan in his reign, he could not have been "the Pharaoh of the Exodus"; his father, Rameses II., could not have been the "Pharaoh of the Oppression"; the bricks which enthusiastic explorers have dug up could not have been made by the Israelites. Professor Petrie has to face this Frankenstein of his own creation. He himself was a warm advocate of the "Exodus" theory, and he therefore temporises, and hesitates to accept, the full consequences of his own discovery. He indicates five different views that may be taken of the italicised words in the inscription:—

(*a*) That they refer to the destruction of the Hebrew children in Egypt.

(*b*) That the Exodus had taken place, and the Jews were then in Palestine.

(*c*) That all the Children of Israel did not accompany Jacob into Egypt, but some remained behind to be smitten by Meneptah.

(*d*) That some Israelites went back to Canaan shortly after Jacob went down into Egypt.

(*e*) That Meneptah smote some scattered Israelites that had left the main body under Moses, and had penetrated into Palestine.

He admits that (*a*) is totally opposed to the tenor of the inscription, which undoubtedly places the people of "Ysiraal" in Canaan. He objects to (*b*) because the Book of Judges says nothing about the war with Meneptah. But he inclines to (*c*) (*d*) or (*e*), although he admits that, "to those who attach the fullest value to every word of the books of Numbers, Joshua, and Judges, some of these hypotheses that I have named will be somewhat hard." So that the accuracy of the Bible has got to be given up in any case.

Now, Rameses II. in 1340 B.C.‡ took his army into Syria, and occupied Moab, Judea, and Galilee, as Mr. Petrie also states. This monument of the fifth year of Meneptah (1276 B.C.) informs us that he spoiled the people of Israel. Rameses III., of the 20th dynasty (1220 B.C.), reconquered the whole of Syria as far as the Euphrates; and, as Professor Petrie says, "went through Judea as well as the North." None of these campaigns are mentioned in the Bible, and therefore it is assumed that the Israelites did not occupy Palestine till after the reign of Rameses III. If they were in Palestine in the reign of Meneptah, then Joshua, Judges, and Samuel do not give us a reliable history of the people of Israel, but suppress facts of the first importance. This is the dilemma, and we shall see a great deal of wriggling on the part of the controversialists in their attempts to get out of it.

CHILPERIC.

The old notion, that where nothing else could be found there was God, leaves but little room for the deity.—*L. K. Washburn.*

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* A term of intentional offence, as here used. "Infidelity" means treachery to the truth, whereas the heretic has often sacrificed his life from fidelity to it.

† Meneptah should really be Meren-Ptah [Egyptian—*Mer-n-Ptah; i.e.*, "beloved by Ptah"], but his name has been persistently misspelt to support the theory that he was the "Pharaoh of the Exodus."

* A generic name for the nations surrounding Egypt.

† Professor Petrie supposes that this is a mistake for "Askalni" or Askelon; but it is extremely unlikely that such mistakes would be made in an important royal inscription.

‡ These dates are only approximate, and might be some fifty years earlier. Mr. Petrie puts the date of Meneptah at 1200 B.C.

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ACID DROPS.

An awful account of the "Urfa Horrors" appeared in the *Daily News* of May 8. Thousands of Armenians were deliberately slaughtered, and the Christian part of the city was simply wiped out of existence. Torture, mutilation, and ravishing went on for days. Then came the crowning villainy: "Three thousand unfortunate persons had taken refuge in the cathedral, mostly women and children, where the priests conducted a continual service, calling on God to hear their cries. The Turks broke down the door with axes, rushed inside and took out the ornaments, then had large quantities of petroleum brought, which they poured inside and on the walls, and the cathedral was set on fire. The entire congregation was destroyed in the flames."

Just imagine those poor women and children crying to God for help! And then realise the help he sent them! Just think, too, how Christian Europe eats and drinks and makes merry while all this devilry goes on! The armies and navies of Christendom can only be employed to promote selfish interests; they cannot be employed to save men and women from massacre and hellish outrage. Oh, what a grand and glorious thing it is to be a Christian!

The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews has just held its annual meeting—of course at Exeter Hall, the great home of crazy causes. Its gross income for last year amounted to £39,393. The report states how all this money was expended in salaries, printing, etc. What the report does *not* state is the number of Jews who were converted. However, the Society is hopeful. It will convert a real live Jew some day.

Saint Isidore, the patron saint of Madrid, has had a stroke of good luck—or rather the priests have had it for him. His carcase (probably a mythical one) was carried about the streets with a view to giving efficacy to the prayers of the faithful for rain, and slight showers fell a few days afterwards. We congratulate the Spanish priests on this happy coincidence. It will be worth many thousand pounds to their reverences. They will be able to purchase Saint Isidore some fresh jewels for his shrine.

Holmes, the Chicago murderer, who did to death more women than will ever be known, has been duly hanged. Before his neck was stretched he knelt down and gazed steadily at a crucifix which he clasped in his hands. He was attended by two white-robed priests, one on either side of him, saying the prayers for the dead. No doubt Holmes has gone to glory, and joined the man after God's own heart and other sanguinary worthies.

While under sentence of death, Holmes wrote a long confession, in which he said: "I was born with the Devil in me. I could not help the fact that I was a murderer. I was born with the evil one standing as my sponsor, beside the bed where I was ushered into the world, and he has been with me since. The inclination to murder came to me as naturally as the inspiration to do right comes to the majority of persons." Theologians will probably regard this as an illustration of original sin; but will they tell us why a good and wise God ever created such a monster?

This now glorified murderer, who confessed that he has killed twenty-seven persons, had been admitted to the Roman Catholic faith through the rite of baptism. On April 16 the Rev. Father P. J. Dailey, accompanied by the Rev. Fathers Cantillon, Higgins, and McCabe, visited the county prison, Moyamensing, Pa., and performed the ceremony. The baptism was made "conditional," because Holmes had been previously immersed in the Protestant tank. He committed his crimes as a Protestant, but goes to glory as a Catholic.

Mr. Claude Falls Wright explains why the name of the successor of the late W. Q. Judge in the Mahatma agency has not been announced. He says: "If he were known, the tremendous thought-waves that would come at him from all over the world would, in his sensitive condition, kill him, just as they killed the late Mr. Judge and Madame Blavatsky. On the other hand, if knowledge of his identity is deferred for a while, there will be less curiosity, and the thought-waves will have become settled." Under these sad circumstances it is to be hoped that curiosity will be restrained.

The Rev. Murdo Macaskill, Jehovah's chief henchman in the Highlands, and the terror of all heretics in Dingwall, is again on the warpath against Sabbath-breakers. This time he fights the Highland Railway, who, it appears, do not stop the day traffic, but do their repairs on the blessed Sawbath. The Rev. Murdo Macaskill possibly forgets the passage of Scripture which tells how his chief succeeded in the mountains, but did not prevail against chariots of iron (Jud. i. 19).

The Rev. H. Lloyd and his wife, who keep an Orphanage, have been charged with cruelty to a child, aged two years, who had been entrusted to their care. The evidence showed that the little one had two black eyes, a nose terribly swollen, bruises on the arms, legs, and body, besides other marks of ill-treatment. The man of God's favorite text seems to have been, "Let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Proverbs xix. 18).

Bansemer, the Harlem church treasurer who defaulted with church funds and a woman, and who was arrested in Chicago and brought back to New York, has ended his career by committing suicide in the Tombs.

In the case of Mr. J. B. Wise, of Kansas, who sent a postcard to the Rev. Mr. Vennum whereon was inscribed the text of Scripture found in 2 Kings xviii. 27 and Isaiah xxxvi. 12, Judge Foster has found Mr. Wise guilty of obscenity and sentenced him to a fine of fifty dollars. The Bible is thus declared by a United States judge to be obscene, and its texts non-mailable.

The case is to be taken to the Supreme Court. If that court confirms the decision of Judge Foster, its pronouncement will be an important blow to the supposed immaculateness of God's holy word. It is not likely that the fine will be added to, and a decision by the Supreme Court that a Bible text is obscene should be well worth fifty dollars to American Freethinkers. Whichever way the case goes, it is sure to be a show up for the Bibliolaters.

The New York *Sun*, April 27, after a lot of nonsense about the Hall of Science, says: "General Booth looks forward with confidence to the time when Mrs. Besant will wear a poke bonnet and twang a Salvation guitar on the Hall of Science platform; and, considering the lady's intellectual gymnastics in the past and her always emotional nature, the thing is not wildly improbable."

The late Peter Mackenzie used to tell a story about a Yorkshire farmer and his son, who were both good Methodists. The farmer fell ill, and the son went to the prayer meetings and pleaded for his sick father at home. And this is how he did it:—

> Heavenly Father, glorious King,
> Look upon my faather Jim;
> Tak' him to thy heavenly throne,
> Then farm and stock'll be my own.

A Scottish minister (says Mr. Thomas Shaw, M.P.) once submitted an account for tithes to a blacksmith, whose exclamation, "But I don't go to church!" was met by the rejoinder, "No, but the door of my church is always open." Next day the blacksmith submitted an account for shoeing to the minister, whose exclamation, "But my horses are not shod at your smithy," was met by the rejoinder, "No, but the door of my smithy is always open."

When a missionary is not "Ju Ju"—which presumably means tender and succulent—the Cameroon cannibals will not eat him. The Rev. F. Auchtenreith, of the Basel mission, who has recently arrived at Liverpool, owes his life to this fastidiousness on the part of the natives. He was condemned to be killed and eaten, but the black gentlemen whose stomachs were to become his tomb did not like the look of him—at least for gastronomical purposes. They said he was not "Ju Ju," and he was therefore spared a roasting. It is to be hoped that missionaries who *are* "Ju Ju" will be sent to non-cannibal countries in future. Tender missionaries ought not to be eliminated by savage epicures, leaving only the tough ones to carry on the work of conversion.

Clericals have queer ways of raising the wind. Rev. W. C. Minifie, of Bournemouth, came up to preach at Raleigh Park, London, recently, and the chapel was crammed to its utmost capacity. The text for the evening was "Show me a penny." After the service the preacher offered to sell the penny he had used as the object-lesson for his sermon. When the congregation recovered from the shock the bidding went on briskly. The penny was first offered for half-a-crown, and was finally sold for a sovereign.

The vicar of St. Anne's, Kensington, is very anxious about the honor of the Holy Communion. The body and blood of Christ ought to be taken on an empty stomach (to match an empty head), so that it may not mix with food; and the vicar reminds his flock that "a cup of tea before the Communion breaks the fast as much as a beafsteak." He also advises gentlemen who wear moustaches to take precautions against dipping them into the Precious Blood. It would never do for a man to walk out of church with the

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Blood of Christ dripping from the hair on his upper lip. That is really worse than the Crucifixion.

"Onward, Christian Soldiers" is a popular hymn among muscular Christians. According to a dispatch from Vice-Consol Newton at Angora, published in an official Blue Book from the Foreign Office, its translation into Armenian has served to increase Turkish suspicion and hatred. Mr. Newton says: "I have seen a literal Turkish translation of it, and as it reads in the Turkish language it breathes a martial spirit, and by the uneducated, or by those who may be unable to comprehend its real meaning, may appear to be an exhortation to the people to arm themselves to fight against the common enemy. Of course, almost all Christians here look upon the Turk as a common enemy. In a country like this, where social and religious differences are so intense and easily aroused, the use of this hymn in its literal translation by the Armenians may lead the Turks to take it in its literal sense, and I much doubt whether some of the Armenians themselves comprehend its meaning." Mr. Newton further regrets that the compilers of the Armenian Protestant hymn-books should have included some of the most fiery-worded hymns out of Moody and Sankey's collection.

Consul Newton is not alone in this belief as to the Turkish suspicion of hymns. A poor native teacher from the American college at Marsovan, whose release was procured by Consul Longworth, owed his imprisonment to the possession of a New Year's hymn. This Consul says: "The hymn is in Turkish words, with Armenian characters. It is purely religious in expressions in all but its refrain, which does not harmonise with the context. This is, in English, as follows: 'Onward, brave soldier, on the battle-field; Christ is commander ("Saraskir") on earth as he is in Heaven.' Now, ignorant Moslems, taught from their childhood to fight for their religion, are apt to construe the meaning of these lines as sinister in aim and militant in spirit."

Fanaticism appears to have been the sole cause of the murder of Dr. Leach, the missionary, and his family, near Sfax, in Northern Africa. The victims were not searched, and money and valuable papers were found in the house undisturbed.

According to the *Queen's Regulations*, section vii., par. 316, "No soldier of any religious belief differing from that of the Established Church is to be compelled to attend the divine worship of the Church of England." But this clause, as at present interpreted, gives no relief to Freethinkers. *Truth* mentions that at an Indian station a soldier boldly applied to be registered as an Agnostic, and to be released from attendance at church, "being," as he expressed it, "of the settled opinion that we know nothing of God or the supernatural." The application went before the Commanding Officer and the General, but neither of them would release the brave soldier from compulsory attendance at church.

A military correspondent of *Truth* points out that, if you look at the cost of the Chaplain's Department, you will see that compulsory Church Service in the army costs the nation upwards of £32,000 per annum. It would never do to let Thomas Atkins proclaim himself exempt as an Agnostic, or very soon the services of the gentlemen in black might be dispensed with.

The writer in *Truth* says: "Precisely the same difficulty, to my personal knowledge, arose not long ago on board one of H.M. ships in the Mediterranean Squadron. A blue jacket, armed with a volume of Huxley (to such a point have we arrived), declared to his captain his disbelief in revelation. He and a comrade were released from the Church service. Up came another batch of sceptics in no time with a similar demand; whereupon the captain, doubtless thinking more of discipline than religion, told them that if every man on board was a Huxleyite he would make them go to church." This implies, as *Truth* says, that "in the army and navy a large proportion of men are ready to publicly repudiate the Christian religion to-morrow if by so doing they can escape attendance at public worship."

This reminds us of a story of a church parade of the militia. One man was loitering about, and the sergeant asked him in forcible terms why he did not fall in. He replied that he was a Unitarian. "Unitarian!" asked the sergeant; "what's that? There are only three religions. Fall in with the Roman Catholics."

The Rev. M. R. Fisher, who left Waco, Tex., under charges of immoral conduct, turned up a few days later at Golden, Col. There he was confronted with his record, and immediately quitted the town. He posed as a converted infidel, but is unknown among Freethinkers.

The Rev. C. O. Brown, of San Francisco, was on April 21 suspended from membership in the Congregational Conference. He had previously been found guilty of ministerial misconduct. Brown is a notorious "infidel smasher."

The *Sunday Chronicle* poet remarks:—

When now they are told of a case of divorce,
Whoever may lose it or win it,
The public assume, as a matter of course,
That a parson is sure to be in it.
He may, now and then, the petitioner be,
But the chances are far more than double
That, when some poor husband demands a decree
A parson has caused all the trouble.

The Rev. John Dickson, of St. Ninian's, Leith, risked a journey to Paris to observe for himself the haunts of evil. His greatest trial appears to have been the art galleries. Otherwise, like Balaam, he went to curse, but had to bless instead, for he says during all the five weeks he was on the Continent he never saw a person under the influence of drink. They keep the Sawbath better in Leith, but, then, they imbibe a tremendous quantity of whiskey.

Rev. Dr. Allen, in the Presbyterian General Assembly at Sydney, called his teetotal brethren "a crabbed, cranky, and miserable lot of mortals," and added that "their houses were made to look through, and not to live in." A Presbyterian who forswears whiskey is false to Scotland.

Rev. Mr. Maxwell, of Coatbridge, preaches Hell on Sunday, and naturally objects to the cool rivalry of the ice-cream vendors, against whom he is crusading with professional zeal.

Dr. John P. D. John, ex-president of De Pauw University, described as "one of the most logical thinkers in the Methodist Church," engaged Steinway Hall, Chicago, to answer Colonel Ingersoll's address to the Church Militant, which we have just reprinted for English readers under the title of *The Coming Civilisation*. Dr. John opened by deprecating abuse of Ingersoll: "I have not come to abuse Mr. Ingersoll. Abuse is not argument. He has proposed some difficult questions to the defenders of the Christian faith. It is not a sufficient answer to say that he is a blasphemer. That is to beg the question. Let him be a good man, that will not serve as a crutch for his logic if it be lame. Let him be a bad man, that will not make his logic limp if it be sound. Truth is in a sorry plight if it must rest on epithets. It is old enough to stand alone. The truth is worth its face though uttered by the Devil, and sophistry does not become logic in the mouth of a saint."

So far so good. But when we come to Dr. John's arguments we are astonished that the newspapers describe them as "masterly." For instance, Ingersoll urges the evil things done in the Bible at God's command, and the terrible suffering often inflicted on men by nature, as objections to the beneficence of the Christian God. Dr. John's reply comes to this—God made us all, and can do as he likes with us; which is an assertion of his power, and not a defence of his goodness.

"Ingersoll hates hell," said Dr. John, "and so do I; but neither of us can hate it out of existence." But the hell that Ingersoll hates was "long ago rejected by intelligent Christians." Hell is simply the natural result of sin. Which is all very pretty, in its way; but if hell be not a place, but a temper (as an old English divine wrote), it is played out for all practical purposes.

General Booth has been having "Two Days with God," and occasionally more, in various towns. At Leeds he is reported to have "saved" two hundred people at four meetings. The General may be sure of the number when he sees them properly seated in heaven. Until then it is well to remember the old proverb about the slip twixt cup and lip.

The old ladies of the Victoria Institute have had Dr. Kidd to assure them that the doctrine of evolution is perfectly compatible with design. It seems that the Almighty spends his eternity in hatching out improvements on his early inventions. He hasn't got very successful results after all these millions of years, but he has smashed up an awful number of creatures in the process.

The Dean of St. Paul's thinks that school teachers are paid quite enough already, if not too much. The *Daily News* says they "are not, however, paid nearly so much as deans, and they are far more useful to the community in which they live."

Sir Charles Elliott, K.C.S.I., who has been some forty years in India, speaking at the annual meeting of the Church Missionary Society, said the Government in India had to be impartial as between the various religions existing

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there, and the missionaries were filling a gap in supplying religious education. They had solved the problem. But the inquiry naturally arises, If the missionary societies can supply religious education in India, why cannot the churches which support the missionary societies abroad themselves pay for their religious education at home?—*Daily News.*

The Rev. J. F. Tinling declared, at the meeting of the Congregational Union on the Education Bill, that he would refuse to pay the education rate when used to support the churches. "If," said he, "a hundred ministers refused in London, and five hundred in the country, as the only method of opposition left open to them, no Government could long survive the effect." If Nonconformists had solid backbone instead of an india-rubber conscience, which accommodates principle to interest, they would all along have kept to the axiom that the State has nothing to do with the teaching of religion, by which they successfully overcame the imposition of church rates.

The Rev. Hardy Harwood, at the same meeting, declared they emphatically protested against endowments out of public money to men who were teaching ideas of religion which they believed to be false. So do we. But we protest also against public money being used to subserve the interests of Bible Christianity and the Nonconformist modicum of religion, which we believe to be as false as that of the Established Church.

Mr. Yoxall, M.P., the secretary of the National Teachers' Union, being interviewed by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, declares his belief that the extra five shillings per child to be given to "Voluntary" schools will be balanced by five shillings in subscriptions withdrawn. Mr. Yoxall also points out that the churches and chapels are mainly the landlords of these schools, and that the increased grant—if not all balanced by a decrease in subscriptions—will be absorbed as rent. No advantage will accrue to the hard-worked, and often underpaid, teachers.

Mr. Price Hughes, in the same journal, expresses himself as follows on the twenty-seventh section of the new Education Bill: "We want the Bible taught, but how would a school prosper with a Roman Catholic in one corner, an Anglican in another, and a Dissenter in another?" Well, the *school* might prosper, but *religion* might suffer. Perhaps the Catholic, the Anglican, and the Dissenter would not keep to their *corners;* they might draw to the middle of the floor, and settle their differences there—which would be rare fun, at least for the boys.

The merry May meetings are in full swing, and white chokers are as plentiful in the Strand as ladies of easy virtue. Most of the missionary societies show decreased income, and a usual feature is excess of expenditure over income.

"Five parsons who have been at Exeter Hall during the week had tea at a local coffee-shop, and after the waitress had run up and down stairs several times for bread, butter, bath-buns, etc., they actually gave her a tip—it was a penny tract."—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

Rome is making headway in England by calmly ignoring its past and putting on an aspect of holiness and tolerance. It is well, then, to be occasionally reminded of that past, as we are by a picture of Urban VI. in the Royal Academy. It represents the following passage from Lea's *History of the Inquisition*: "The Pope paced the garden under the window of the torture chamber, reading his Breviary aloud that the sound of his voice might keep the executioner reminded of his functions."

The Catholic *Weekly Register* (May 9) incidentally mentions Cromwell as "the fanatic and regicide"—an indication of how history looks in Catholic eyes.

The *Tablet* (May 9) says: "The miracle of St. Januarius has taken place at Naples, with an accompaniment of more than ordinary devotion on the part of the people." Anyone who knows what a fraud the miracle is, and that the devotion of the people is expressed by such terms as "Bravo, yellow belly," will be surprised at the audacity of Cardinal Vaughan's organ.

Deploring clerical poverty, the *Church Times* says: "In no other profession do men seek to take upon themselves the responsibilities of married life until they have at least a fair competence, enabling them to provide for a family. But young curates, scarcely priested, rush in where wiser men fear to tread, with the terrible result too often of life-long beggary." What is this but an admission that our moral guides are the worst examples of improvidence?

Father Black writes to the *Church Times* again on the Bishop of London permitting the re-marriage of divorced persons. He says: "There is a conspiracy of silence on the part of the bishops. They fear a disturbance of their relation to the State. There is, I believe, hardly anything they would not sell to preserve that relation." Father Black seems to have accurately gauged the moral standing of the heads of his Church.

Father Ignatius has been rigorously protesting against the practice of Christian people attending theatres. He says: "Is *The Sign of the Cross* a device of Satan to attract the people of God to his own temple?" Modern Christians, according to Father Ignatius, are half heathens. On Sunday they take the Sacrament, and on Monday visit the theatre to enjoy a burlesque or ballet.

George Macdonald, in the New York *Truthseeker*, notices the *Idler* attack on Mr. G. W. Foote on account of his St. James's Hall lecture on "The Sign of the Cross," and, on the supposition that the writer was Mr. Hall Caine, remarks that "England and the world lost a pious and exemplary, though hysterical, old lady when he turned out to be of the opposite sex."

Ingersoll often speaks about the poetry of Robert Burns. Somebody says that the name of the Scottish poet will make a good epitaph for Ingersoll. You just lay the emphasis on the second word—Robert *Burns.*

The British and Foreign Bible Society's income for last year was £126,372, being a decrease of £11,403. The receipts from salesfell from £93,552 to £87,590. Evidently the Bible is not in such demand as it was, even when offered at half-price.

The sooner Ireland gets Home Rule the better—in the interest of Home Rule in England. The new Education Bill does not extend to Scotland or Ireland; nevertheless, the Irish members are supporting the Government, at the bidding of the Catholic Church. The Bill is regarded as paving the way for Catholic *colleges*, maintained out of imperial taxation.

According to the *Daily Record*, a Kentucky editor said: "If there be one spot on earth nearer the warmest radiance of hell than another, it's that little Methodist church." The leading members of that church waited for him one night, and set about him as he went home. Now he goes about on crutches.

At the annual meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the Bishop of St. Albans said that Britain was destined to be the missionary nation, and "where her flag was unfurled the Cross was planted too, *whatever her motives in going.*" Comment would only spoil the delicious unction of this utterance.

According to the *Church Times*, in Sheffield only 1,099, or a proportion of only 1 to 300 of the population, were confirmed. Yet the Church claims to be the Church of the people.

A Museum of Barbaric Deities.

"The collection of Hawaiian idols belonging to the American board, which were sent to this country as curiosities by the early missionaries to the Sandwich Islands, have been sent back to Hawaii to be deposited in the national museum. They are said to be the only specimens of the original deities of the islands now in existence."

Had the barbaric gods of all countries been preserved, a world of light would have been thrown on all systems of religion. The one to whom David made sacrifices of oxen and fatlings, following up the entertainment with shouting, the sound of trumpets, and leaping and dancing, which the translators rendered Lord (see 2 Samuel vi.), and which was confined in an ark—chest—and was drawn by oxen, would be a novelty in these times, and, possibly, it would give us a correct idea of the sort of God the Jews always worshipped.

W. S. Lilly tells this story about John Henry Newman in the *Nineteenth Century* for June, 1894: "Shortly after he was made a Cardinal a witty person said to me, 'Dear old man! what a comfort that hat will be to him!' I asked for an explanation of this dark saying. My friend replied: 'Why, I take it that Newman is an inveterate doubter. God, the soul, immortality—they are all for him a Great Perhaps. But he will hang that hat up in his bedroom, and will turn to it the last thing at night, and will say: "Whatever is doubtful, this is clear—that there is a Holy Roman Church, and that I am a Cardinal of it; there's the hat."'" Of course Lilly says this is quite an erroneous view of J. H. N.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Saturday, May 16, Picton Hall, Liverpool :—8, "The Foundations of Faith."

Sunday, May 17, Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street, Liverpool :—11, "The New Education Bill"; 3, "The New Woman and the Bible"; 7, "The Curse of Creeds."

May 24, Glasgow Conference; 31, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 17, Plymouth; 24, Glasgow—the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. June 7, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

L. LEVINE (Charleston).—Never fear. We are not discouraged. On the contrary. We note your good work in supporting all the Freethought press, and thank you for sending us American papers.

BRIGHTON.—Will some friend inform us what newsagents sell the *Freethinker* in London-by-the-Sea?

J. PARTRIDGE, on behalf of the Committee of the Birmingham Branch, thanks Mr. Foote for the two lectures recently delivered by Mr. Watts under the Lecture Scheme. "Good audiences," he adds, "assembled at each lecture, the lecture at Aston breaking new ground with most satisfactory results."

JOHN SAMSON.—The amount of money still on deposit at the Birkbeck Bank, representing the unappropriated balance of the old Bradlaugh Memorial Fund, is, in our opinion, at the ultimate disposition of the subscribers who desired their money to be so retained. They should make application, and their communications will be dealt with by the N.S.S. Executive. The three trustees, in whose names the balance is banked, will of course honor the order of the Executive which appointed them.

J. BROWN.—We do not discuss party politics in the *Freethinker*. There is doubtless some truth in your contention.

W. KYLL.—Thanks for the cuttings. "Scrutator's" letters on the Education Bill are excellent. Your request noted.

H. C.—We don't know the circumstances of the reverend gentleman's bankruptcy. Perhaps he has been unfortunate. He was always a gentleman in his opposition to Secularism.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Huddersfield Branch, 7s. 6d.; North-West London, 2s. 6d.; Paisley, 8s.; Manchester, £2 3s. 9d.; East London, 2s. 6d.

D. GLOAK.—Glad to hear you are holding your own at Dundee, in spite of all disadvantages. Perhaps it will be possible to carry on an active propaganda during next winter. We hope to see some of your members at Glasgow on Whit-Sunday. There is every likelihood of a capital Conference.

K. W. B.—Thanks.

S. J. B.—There is no Branch of the N.S.S. near Chalk Farm. The North-West London Branch holds open-air meetings in Regent's Park. Apply to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

T. DUNBAR HARRIS writes: "I feel, as a Freethinker of 64 years' standing, that, poor as I am, I must strain a point to assist in a small degree in promoting Mr. Foote's masterly Lecture Scheme."

J. R. WILLOCK.—The clause referring to Rochdale in the Executive report should have been placed at the end of the sentence instead of in the middle. We have repeatedly referred to Mr. Thompson's labors at Rochdale, and he is well aware that we should be the last to rob him of any credit.

J. M. R.—Thanks for cuttings.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Collected at Mr. Watts's evening lecture at Plymouth, 10s. Three Dundee Friends, 3s.; T. Dunbar Harris, 10s.; J. D. Messor, 4s. Per C. Watts: Mr. Cartwright, 4s.

A. J. H.—*Great Thoughts* is rather a goody-goody paper. What the editor means is that he doesn't want any heterodox articles.

J. GALLOWAY.—Of course money could be left to a person, with a private understanding between him and the testator; but any reference to it in the will would render it invalid. The *Crescent* and *Islamic World* are published at 32 Elizabeth-street, Liverpool.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Echo—Nya Sanningar—Whitby Gazette—Isle of Man Times—Newcastle Chronicle—Yorkshire Post—Truthseeker—Freidenker—Rochester and Chatham Standard—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—New York Sun—Literary Digest—Sunday School Companion—Freedom—Progressive Thinker—World's Advance Thought—Universal Republic—Open Court—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Lucifer—Western Independent—Daylight—New York Public Opinion.

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

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

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE sudden fine weather on Sunday somewhat thinned Mr. Foote's morning and afternoon audiences at Manchester, but there was a capital audience in the evening, and the lecture on "The Curse of Creeds" was most enthusiastically applauded. A young clerical gentleman offered some opposition to the afternoon lecture on "Count Tolstoi's Christianity," and a ridiculous Christian, who is really not fit to speak at all, aired his pious nonsense in the evening, keeping the audience in convulsions of laughter, not *with* him, but *at* him.

The Manchester Branch would have been happy to assist the poor people who are being harried by the local police under the Sunday Trading Acts, but it is impossible to withstand the magistrates' orders, and all that can be done is to raise an agitation on the subject. Public opinion is the only check to the bigotry of Sabbatarians.

When the National Secular Society's Conference was held at Liverpool, the local Branch applied for the use of the Picton Hall for the evening public meeting. It was refused, however, and a heated discussion took place on the Town Council. The pretence was that the hall was "engaged," and with this fact in mind the Branch has once more applied for the use of Picton Hall—this time with a more successful result. Its use has been granted for a lecture by Mr. G. W. Foote on "The Foundations of Faith." The lecture is to be given on Saturday evening, May 16, under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, and the admission is free. As the time for advertising is rather brief, it is to be hoped that the Liverpool Freethinkers will do their best to fill Picton Hall on this occasion by urging the attendance of their Christian friends and acquaintance.

Mr. Foote lectures the next day (Sunday, May 17) three times in the Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street. The subjects are attractive, and will doubtless draw good audiences.

Mr. Watts commenced his ten days' lecturing tour in Devonshire and Cornwall last Sunday, when he had two good audiences at Plymouth. Many friends were present from surrounding districts, and both lectures were enthusiastically applauded. During this week Mr. Watts breaks new ground in Cornwall and Devonshire, under Mr. Foote's scheme, and he will give in next week's *Freethinker* an account of his tour.

To-day, Sunday, May 17, Mr. Watts again lectures, morning and evening, in the Co-operative Hall, Plymouth.

The Glasgow friends are looking forward to meeting a large number of their English brethren on Whit Sunday—the date of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference. Excursions run from all parts of the country. A return ticket from London, for four or eight days, only costs 25s., and a ticket to return any day within sixteen days costs 33s.

A good London friend, who does not desire publicity, will entertain the delegates to a hot luncheon at the North British Hotel, George-square, at one o'clock.

The Glasgow Committee-men, wearing a rosette (Northampton colors), will await the arrival of English trains—ordinary and special—afternoon and evening, on Saturday, 23rd inst., at the three railway termini. Friends coming by other trains, or from places in Scotland, who wish to be received at the station, should send particulars as early as possible to Mr. J. P. Gilmour, 439 Victoria-road, Govanhill, Glasgow.

In order to obviate delay and possible confusion on Sunday morning, delegates and members of the N.S.S., resident and non-resident, are particularly requested to visit the Committee-room, 110 Brunswick-street, on Saturday, any time between 2 p.m. and 10, when they can have their credentials viséd, and receive admission tickets for the business meetings of the Conference.

Friends who intend to join the excursion on Whit-Monday are reminded that, if they want hot luncheon (1s. 9d.) at Arrochar, it is imperative that they should have their names registered at once by Mr. D. Black, 332 Duke-street, Glasgow, as the hotel-keeper must know the number to be provided for, not less than a week in advance.

Under the title of *The Coming Civilisation* we have reprinted the two-hours' address which Colonel Ingersoll delivered to the members and friends of Rev. Dr. Rusk's "Church Militant" in the Columbia Theatre, Chicago, on Sunday, April 12. The pamphlet is well printed and stitched in a neat wrapper. The price is threepence. We may add that the address contains Ingersoll's views on other questions

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than religion—such as marriage, labor, and the treatment of criminals.

The meritorious work of the Humanitarian League has been extended by the establishment of a special department in order to advocate much-needed reform in our Criminal Law and Prison System, and a manifesto has been published by a sub-committee. Mrs. C. Mallet, 132 Cromwell-road, is devoting attention to this part of the work of the League, and will be happy to hear from those interested.

The Secularists at New Brompton had a meeting last Sunday week on the Education Bill. Councillor Lewington and Mr. W. B. Thompson were the principal speakers, and the proceedings were well reported in the local press.

London Freethinkers are again reminded that Mr. Foote's tenancy of the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, commences on Sunday, May 31. Sunday evening lectures will be delivered regularly there by the leading Freethought advocates. Mr. Foote opens the ball on May 31, the first Sunday after the Conference, and will be supported on that occasion by Mr. Charles Watts. There will be a charge for admission at the door, Mr. Foote having guaranteed the proprietor against any prosecution on that account.

Metropolitan friends who would like to visit the Athenæum before May 31 will have a good opportunity of doing so next Thursday (May 21), when an entertainment takes place in aid of the Lecture Scheme. Full details of this will be found in our advertisement columns. Mr. Watts takes part in a dramatic scene, and Mr. Foote gives a reading from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. The tickets are sixpence and one shilling.

THE BIBLE AND THE PEOPLE.

The people of England, it is said, are the people of a book, and that book, forsooth, is the Bible. I challenge the veracity of the statement, however. I admit that a comparatively small portion of the English public are virtually Bible-ridden; but, I aver, they are not, in any real sense, Bible readers, much less Bible students. The only people, I maintain, who have seriously studied the sacred volume in all its parts are the Sceptics or Freethinkers. Strange to say, the average church or chapel-goer is practically ignorant of its real nature and contents; all that can be said is that they hear it read or gabbled, as the case may be, on Sundays only, and there, for the most part, the matter begins and ends. The average man and woman, outside the Churches, is practically ignorant of its existence. The cultured people, for the most part, utterly repudiate its so-called divine authority and authorship, and regard it only as Hebrew and Christian tradition, or merely as ordinary literature, which is about all that can be truly or honestly alleged concerning it.

—*T. Oswald Detchon.*

The Church Christ.

In his name, millions and millions of men and women have been imprisoned, tortured, and killed. In his name, millions and millions have been enslaved. In his name, the thinkers, the investigators, have been branded as criminals, and his followers have shed the blood of the wisest and the best. In his name, the progress of many nations was stayed for a thousand years.

In his gospel was found the dogma of eternal pain, and his words added an infinite horror to death. His gospel filled the world with hatred and revenge; made intellectual honesty a crime; made happiness here the road to hell; denounced love as base and bestial; canonised credulity; crowned bigotry, and destroyed the liberty of man.

It would have been far better had the New Testament never been written—far better had the theological Christ never lived. Had the writers of the New Testament been regarded as uninspired; had Christ been thought of only as a man; had the good been accepted, and the absurd, the impossible, and the revengeful thrown away, mankind would have escaped the wars, the tortures, the scaffolds, the dungeons, the agony and tears, the crimes and sorrows of a thousand years.—*R. G. Ingersoll, "The Foundations of Faith."*

Ramsey-Kemp Testimonial Fund.—Mr. George Anderson, £5 5s.; W. P. Ball, £1; Dickinson, 5s.; R. H. Wharrier, 2s. 6d.; S. Holmes, 2s. 6d.; W. Ross, 2s. 6d.; J. Ross, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Dibden, 2s.; W. Cooper, 2s; Mrs. Wharrier, 1s.; James Latty, 6d.; Thornton Dixon, 6d.; Peter Harle, 6d.; John Heron, 6d.; Edward Laughaud, 6d.; James Smith, 6d.; William Fairtaine, 6d.; William Andrews, 6d.—G. Ward, *hon. treas.*

CHRISTIAN CRITICISM.

(Concluded from page 299.)

The editor of the *Consett Chronicle* says: "Mr. Watts appears somewhat doubtful as to what the soul really is." Now, the fact is that with me it is not a question of doubt. I frankly confess that I know nothing about the existence of an entity called soul, and I have never met anyone who could give me any trustworthy information upon the subject. We have had numerous speculations as to what the soul is; but that is not knowledge. I agree with Th. Ribot, the French professor of comparative and experimental psychology, who says the ego, or soul, "is not an entity acting where it chooses or as it pleases, controlling the organs in its own way, and limiting its domain according to its own wish. On the contrary, it is a resultant, even to such a degree that its domain is strictly determined by the anatomical connections with the brain, and that at one time it represents an entire body, less an undivided part, and at another time the half of a body, and in parasitic monsters such a limited domain that it does not suffice to support life, and accordingly is expelled prematurely" (*The Diseases of Personality*, p. 45). Dr. Cromwell also writes: "His [man's] proper *ego* is his whole self—his entire organism with all its faculties. His *ego* must be imperfect, even though it should be still an *ego*, if deprived of any part of his original organism, or of any faculty originally belonging to it; and the philosophical (or rather logical) *ego* framed for him must be alike imperfect if we do not embrace the conception of the proper organic man, with every faculty properly pertaining to him. Man, I again say, is the *ego*" (*The Soul and the Future Life*, p. 48). Here it is contended that the soul, or vital principle, in man is a force resulting from the combination of the material parts of which our bodies are composed. As Professor Graham observes: "Our modern physiologists have ascertained that thought is but a function of the brain and nerves; why should it not perish with these? . . . . . Why should it not collapse with the general break-up of the machinery? Why should it not cease when no longer supported by the various physical energies whose transformations within the bodily machine made its existence possible?" (*The Creed of Science*, p. 149).

Those who allege that man has a "soul" which is not dependent upon the body should be able to tell us what it is; when it enters, and when it leaves, the human frame; whether it leaves the body at death; and, if so, where it remains until the judgment day. Again, where are the "souls" of the unfortunate inmates of our lunatic asylums, who have diseased brains, and whose reason is gone? Have their "souls" lost all power of control? If so, of what value is the "soul" as a controlling force? When a drunkard becomes intoxicated, and loses all command over himself, where is the "soul" at that particular time? Has it been overcome by the drink? If yes, then it is not impervious to material conditions; if no, why does it not protect the intellect of the intoxicated person? Some of the leading scientists both of England and America have admitted that it cannot be proved that there is a life beyond the grave. For instance, Professor J. P. Lesley says: "Science cannot possibly either teach or deny immortality." Professor Lester F. Ward observes that, "So far as science can speak on the subject, consciousness persists as long as the organised brain, and no longer." And Professor R. S. Morse writes: "I have never yet seen anything in the discoveries of science which would, in the slightest degree, support or strengthen a belief in immortality" (*Knowledge*, October 1, 1888). The late Professor Tyndall wrote: "But to return to the hypothesis of a human soul, offered as an explanation or a simplification of a series of obscure phenomena. Adequate reflection shows that, instead of introducing light into our minds, it increases our darkness. You do not, in this case, explain the unknown in terms of the known, which is the method of science, but you explain the unknown in terms of the more unknown" (*Lecture on Science and Man*, pp. 27, 28).

The editor finds fault with me because I asserted that the lower animals are capable of thought. He says it is "a vexed question among the foremost scientists of the century." It is to be regretted that the names of those scientists were not given. Dr. W. B. Carpenter says that, though "in man we find the highest development of the

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reasoning faculties, it is quite absurd to limit them to him, as some have done, since no impartial observer can doubt that many of the lower animals can execute reasoning processes as complete in their way as those of man, though much more limited in their range" (*Gen. and Comp. Physiology*, p. 999). Sir Benjamin Brodie observes: "The mental principle in animals is of *the same essence* as that of human beings. . . . . I am inclined to believe that the minds of the inferior animals are *essentially of the same nature* with that of the human race" (*Psychological Inquiries*, pp. 164, 166). Darwin, in his *Descent of Man*, deals with this subject at considerable length, and on page 147 he writes: "Spiritual powers cannot be compared or classed by the naturalist; but he may endeavor to show, as I have done, that the mental faculties of man and the lower animals do not differ in kind, although immensely in degree." It seems to me hardly possible for anyone to watch the doings of many of the lower animals without arriving at the conclusion that they have the power of thought, which they exercise at times with marked precision.

The "safest belief argument" is made to do duty once more. In my article last week I pointed out that Secularists are on the safe side, whether there be a future life or not. The editor assumes that among the many religions in the world the only true one is that of Christianity. He seems to forget that he has only one chance out of many; for he rejects all the others, and I, as a Secularist, go one better and reject all. But future rewards, supposing there will be any, will not depend upon beliefs, but rather upon deeds, and some of the best of these are performed by men of every religion, as well as by those of no religion.

Let me assure the editor that Secularists do not believe in such nonsense as "that matter has created itself," and that the universe is the "result of chance." Those who accuse us of holding such preposterous views must be entirely ignorant of what our teachings are.

We Secularists are taunted by the editor with not having founded hospitals, etc. Is he aware that Secular organisations have not existed longer than about fifty years, and that during that time Christian-made laws have deprived us of money left for Secular work? Is he aware that the first Christian hospital was built by a Roman lady named Fabiola in the fourth century A.D.? It therefore took some time for Christianity to begin to develop this good fruit, though Egyptians, Greeks, and Hindoos had long before shown the value of it. If it is true that the world is indebted to Christianity for benevolent institutions, it would be a sad reproach to the supposed "Heavenly Father," who, until less than two thousand years ago, failed to inspire his children with active sympathy for those who required help.

The editor says that the one principle that is strong enough to regenerate mankind is love; but surely it will not be urged that this virtue is confined to Christianity. The great principle of love, humanity, and the brotherhood of man was understood and practised long before Christianity existed. "Love," says the great teacher of the Academy, "is peace and goodwill among men, calm upon the waters, repose and stillness in the storm, and balm of sleep in sadness." "Independently of Christian revelation," says Merivale, "the heathen world was gravitating, through natural causes, towards the acknowledgment of the cardinal doctrines of humanity" (*Conversion of the Roman Empire*, p. 118). In Mencius we have the noble statement that "Humanity is the heart of man." Lecky writes: "The duty of humanity to slaves had been at all times one of those which the philosophers had most ardently inculcated..... But these exhortations (on the duty of abstaining from cruelty to slaves), in which some have imagined that they have discovered the influence of Christianity, were, in fact, simply an echo of the teaching of ancient Greece, and especially of Zeno, the founder of the sect who had laid down, *long before the dawn of Christianity* [italics are mine], the broad principle that all men are by nature equal, and that virtue alone establishes a difference between them" (*History of European Morals*, vol. i., pp. 324–5).

It is not true that Secularism has neglected the elevation of woman. The endeavor to secure for her justice has been, and still is, among our foremost work. But what has Christianity done for her? The position of woman, according to the Bible, is low and humiliating in the extreme. It teaches that "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Genesis iii. 16). It enjoins that, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything (Ephesians v. 22–24). Women are not to speak in public, but to be under obedience, as also saith the law; they are not permitted to teach, but to learn in silence with all subjection, for the reason that "Adam was first formed, then Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression" (1 Timothy ii. 11–15). These notions are not, when accepted, calculated to elevate the character, or better the condition, of woman. Herbert Spencer says: "In England, as late as the seventeenth century, husbands of decent station were not ashamed to beat their wives. Gentlemen arranged parties of pleasure for the purpose of seeing wretched women whipped at Bridewell. It was not until 1817 that the public whipping of women was abolished in England. Wives in England were bought from the fifth to the seventeenth century."

I have now noticed some of the editor's errors and misrepresentations, and my earnest hope is that he will obtain a knowledge of those principles and teachings which he attempts to depreciate.

CHARLES WATTS.

CREATION.

MR. LEE says that God explains all—does it? (I say "it," because I take God now as an hypothesis.) God explain all? Not to me; God does not, to me, make anything any more intelligible. Here is an atom, you say; minute, invisible; how did it originate? The very question, "How did it originate?" involves the statement that it *did* originate. I deny your right to make the statement that the atom originated. I say that you have to prove that it did originate before you have a right to ask the "how."

Then, in the next place, if we assume, for the purpose of argument, that the atom did originate, I deny that you can think—you may believe, but you cannot *think*; that is, you cannot think out, you cannot realise in your own mind the idea—of a mind creating an atom. I deny altogether that anybody has the power to conceive creation in the religious or metaphysical sense of the word. All man can do by the exertion of his utmost powers is to shift matter—pre-existent matter, matter that will exist after he is dead—from one position to another. All creation is to us the re-shaping of pre-existent matter. I deny that the human mind is capable of realising creation in any absolute sense of the word.

It is no explanation of the atom to tell me that God made it. That is offering me one mystery as the explanation of another mystery. The origin of the atom is a mystery; a Being is brought in hypothetically, who is a greater mystery than the atom itself; and how can this mystery explain the other? I will tell you how a thing is explained. A thing is explained when Science shows us exactly its origin, its growth, its development, and possibly its decay and disappearance; tracing it from its initial stage to the completion of its career. That is a scientific explanation; and, when Science explains a thing like that, we understand it; but it is not a scientific or a rational explanation of a thing to say, "God did it." That is what ignorance has said in all ages.

It used to be asked, "Who made the world?" until the nebular hypothesis explained to us the history of worlds. Then the question was shifted farther back, and it was asked, "Who made all the various species of life upon this planet?" Darwin explained the Origin of Species—I will not say to the satisfaction of all parties, but to the satisfaction of scientific men. And now the question is put farther back—"Who made life? Or who made the atoms?" In other words, the banner of Theology is always planted at the point where knowledge ends and ignorance begins. It is driven farther and farther back. It is the banner, not of Knowledge, but of Mystery. It is the flag of Superstition, under which all the priesthoods of the world have gathered for the exploitation of the people.

G. W. FOOTE.

(*In the Foote-Lee debate on "Theism or Atheism: Which is the More Reasonable?"*)

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THE ORIGIN OF LANGUAGES.

(According to "God's Word.")

As Yahveh looked down from his heavenly box,
He angrily tugged at his long, flowing locks;
And his lips he did gnaw,
For the sight that he saw
Made him think it was time that he "pulled up his socks.'

For the Lord from his window, I'd have you to know,
Can distinctly perceive *terra firma* below;
And as Yahveh looked down,
With an ominous frown,
He exclaimed: "Well, I'm hanged, here's a deuce of a go!"

Now, the object of which the Lord God had caught sight
Which had so raised his dander and upset him quite,
Was a building of stone,
Which appeared to have grown
From the earth towards heaven to a very great height.

Said the Lord: "I'll go down to discover what's up";
So after he'd swallowed of wine just a cup,
Towards earth he did tear,
Without ladder or stair,
For the Lord's like a bird, and can fly through the air.

When he reached *terra firma*—in less than an hour,
He discovered that men were erecting a tower;
Thought the Lord: "With its aid,
They intend to invade
My heavenly mansion, and me overpower."

"If I let them continue to act in this way,
I expect there will be just the Devil to pay."
And he muttered: "Great Scott,
I will show them what's what;
In their own proper sphere I'll compel them to stay."

So he made them strike work by confounding their speech
(Hitherto had one language been spoken by each).
'Twas a deuce of a fix,
For if one asked for bricks,
His request was no more understood than a screech!

. . . . . .

Now, it seems that some sceptical scoffers surmise
That this narrative's built up with nothing but lies;
That a God with such power
Could have thrown down the tower
Without taking the trouble to come from the skies!

But I trust that the tale is believed in by you,
For 'tis taken from Scripture, and so *must* be true;
And though infidels sneer
At the Bible, 'tis clear
That it truly depicts how all languages grew!

Ess Jay Bee.

A KING'S VALUE IN HARD CASH.

(Daniel, Book V.)

"Expende Annibalem!"—*Juvenal, Satira, x., 147.*

"Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" is a mere expression of value, such as may be found chalked on a piece of furniture in a broker's shop. M. Clermont Ganneau has shown that these Chaldee words should be rendered: "A maneh, a maneh, a shekel, and a fraction."

The wag (*farceur*) who wrote the words on the wall of Belshazzar's dining-room appraised the king at £15 3s. 1½d. A maneh is about 60 shekels. Poor Belshazzar! I cannot imagine a more flagrant case of *lèse majesté*. The wily Scotch got rid of Charles I. at a much higher figure—£400,000. They are a mercenary race. Even their ministers like to do a good stroke of business. When Prince Charles Edward Stuart was a fugitive, and hiding at Benbecula, the laird received him kindly. The Christian minister, McAulay, called upon him, and said: "You harbour a man for whose head £30,000 has been promised by the English Government. I propose that we should give him up and divide this money." The honest laird drew his sword, and swore he would take the minister's life if he divulged the secret. The prince found a refuge in a robber's cave. Seven of these outlaws, to whom the poor pretender made himself known, provided him with food, and would have died rather than betray the unhappy fugitive. Among the *basest* of needy Scotchmen was not a man more base than this minister of the Gospel who made such an infamous proposal. What a pity that lynch law was not in vogue in those days—1746

C. K. Laporte.

MOTHER THOUGHTS.

A man's real faith is never contained in his creed, nor is his creed an article of his faith.—*Thoreau.*

The language of friendship is not words, but meanings.—*Thoreau.*

Goodness is the only investment that never fails.—*Thoreau.*

He that feeds man serveth few;
He serves all who dare be true.—*Emerson.*

The time to be happy is now, and the way to be happy is to make others so.—*Ingersoll.*

The wise have much in common with one another.—*Æschylus.*

Worldliness is better than other-worldliness.

As the final word of nature is man, the final word of man is love.

If a man spreads my failings abroad, he is my master, even though he were my servant.—*Goethe.*

No teaching is, or can be, final: "let knowledge grow from more to more."

What shelter to grow ripe is ours?
What leisure to grow wise?—*Matthew Arnold.*

How fair a lot to fill
Is left to each man still.—*Matthew Arnold.*

Our business henceforth is not with death, but with life.—*G. Sand.*

The truest liberality is appreciation.—*Goethe.*

Live pure! Speak true! Right wrong!—*Edna Lyall.*

Live openly. Live for others.—*Auguste Comte.*

Our finest hope is finest memory.—*George Eliot.*

Choose equality and flee greed.—*Menander.*

Heredity is the scientific doctrine that "like begets like"—in other words, that what we are, that in a measure will our children be.

So many gods, so many creeds—
So many paths that wind and wind,
While just the art of being kind
Is all the sad world needs.—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox.*

Disagreeableness is more tolerated than insignificance.—*Goethe.*

All true work is unpaid.—*Comte.*

Work and despair not.—*Goethe.*

Man is placed as a real being in the midst of a real world, and endowed with such organs that he can perceive and produce the real and also the possible.—*Goethe.*

Generosity wins favor for everyone, especially when it is accompanied by modesty.—*Goethe.*

For life to be fruitful, life must be felt as a blessing.—*G. Sand.*

To most people, I imagine, God is "the mystery made darker with a name."—*T. Oswald Detchon.*

A man may be as wise as any other man, but he cannot be wiser than all.—*L. Stephen.*

What a true saying it is, that he who wants to deceive mankind must before all things make absurdity plausible.—*Goethe.*

Pious Gambling.

The Baptist Missionary Society has profited by the rise in the value of Consols. A large proportion of the Centenary Fund, which was raised two years ago to commemorate the society's centenary, was invested in Consols, which have, however, been sold at a profit of £1,200, and the proceeds invested in Metropolitan Consolidated Stock. The announcement of this smart business transaction created some amusement and considerable satisfaction at the society's meeting on April 20. It is not often that a religious organisation benefits from Stock Exchange fluctuations, and the Baptist missionary authorities are naturally proud of their novel achievement.

Obituary.

On Monday morning last, at his residence, 140 Old Kent-road, Mr. G. Cheal died, after a short and painful illness. Mr. Cheal was a sturdy Freethinker, and an earnest worker in most progressive movements. He was a great admirer of the late Charles Bradlaugh, and of Mr. G. W. Foote, President of the N.S.S. He was a very energetic member, also, of the National Sunday League. He died as he had lived, free from superstition and an ardent worker for human progress. He leaves a wife and many friends to mourn his loss.—Arthur B. Moss.

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BOOK CHAT.

Mr. E. F. Knight, in his interesting work, *Madagascar in War Time* (Longmans, Green & Co.), says that the Nonconformist Christianity of the Hovas is "a matter merely of teetotalism, non-smoking, Sabbatarianism, and chapel-going, and is absolutely unconnected with the higher rules of conduct." Mr. Knight is not one of those "who believe in the sudden conversion and permanent reform of a scoundrel at an hysterical revival meeting," and he has no belief in the reports of the missionaries, whom he finds characterised by ignorance and spiritual arrogance, while their converts he calls "conceited and hypocritical prigs."

* * *

Told at the Booksellers' Dinner: A lady entered a bookshop in search of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's Universalist story, entitled *Burglars in Paradise*. What he asked for was "Smugglers in Heaven."

* * *

In the *Academy* of May 2 Mr. Alfred W. Benn contributes a translation of the last lines by the great German Freethinker, David Friedrich Strauss. They were sent to a lady a few weeks before his death, and are found, in the original, in the recently-published correspondence of Strauss, edited by his friend, Professor E. Zeller:—

Let me not bewray it,
Call not this a wail;
She to whom I say it
Feels I do not quail.

As a spent note sighing
Breathes itself away,
As a low light dying,
Life goes out to-day.

Yet, though weak and weaker,
May my last note here,
May my light's last flicker
Still be pure and clear.

* * *

The *Athenæum*, reviewing Lady Mary Lloyd's translation of the letters of Ernest and Henriette Renan, says: "There is one matter in the history of these years in Renan's life which is strongly brought out in these letters, and which cannot fail to impress the English reader, and that is the extraordinary facilities offered by the public system of education in France to a young man desirous to pursue serious studies." After many years we have not caught up to "infidel" France in this respect, nor are we likely to do so while the clericals retain control.

* * *

The *Scotsman*, noticing Mr. Dobell's publication of James Thomson's *Biographical and Critical Studies*, says: "The frankness of his disbelief in established religions renders him obnoxious to respectability. But his writing is so much better and healthier than the goody literary appreciations of ecclesiastical orthodoxy that it is to be hoped the present volume and its successors will win readers for this sincere writer even among those whom his contentions in matter of religion cannot reach."

* * *

The Litany of Loreto has been supposed to be one of the most ancient of Christian liturgical documents. The Rev. J. Sauren, a Catholic of Cologne, has, however, critically examined the authorities, and found that the Litany does not go back beyond the fifteenth century, and that it did not take its rise in Loreto itself, but was carried there by pilgrims to the bogus Holy House.

* * *

Mr. George Gissing has some reputation as a realistic novelist. *His Brother's Keeper*, which we notice as an attempt to connect romance with Freethought, will not add to this. The story is, briefly, of the lunatic brother of Mark Ellerton, a Secularist lecturer, who follows him about lecturing in opposition, and finally, believing it to be his mission to prevent his brother doing mischief, shoots him. We do not think much of the story, but the moral is good.

* * *

A pamphlet entitled *The Claims of the Jews' Messiah*, by M. L. Rossvally, of Leeds, would deserve no notice but from the fact that it claims to have circulated 750,000 copies. More barefaced effrontery in putting forward spurious Christian evidence we have rarely seen. It sets out by citing the notorious forgery in Josephus, which it follows with the bogus *Acta Pilati* "transmitted by Pontius Pilate to the Emperor Tiberius." It then coolly says: "The facts, therefore, in the New Testament must be admitted to have really happened." It says, what every Jew knows is false, that David distinctly calls the Messiah Jehovah. Of Christ's genealogy it says "not even the slightest taint of a suspicion of its genuineness can in any conceivable possibility be attached to it." These are but a few specimens of the "arguments" used to show that the claims of Jesus to be the Messiah are incontrovertible. Mr. Rossvally does not tell us why intelligent Jews refuse to accept Jesus, but an answer might be found in the flimsy and fictitious character of his own arguments.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FREETHOUGHT SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Every Freethought Society ought to have its Sunday-school. Christianity in this country rests on the Sunday-school. As fast as we draw men and women out of the church by one door a stream of new disciples passes into the church through the Sunday-school avenue. I am astonished at the short-sightedness of so many Freethinkers in this matter.

Where there's a will there's a way. Aided by a few loyal colleagues in the East London Ethical Society, I have for years kept going a school in which the children never pray, never lift a word of praise to God, and never shudder at the word Hell. This school is full, and no more children can be enrolled at present. But I should be glad to draw attention to the South London Ethical Sunday-school, which meets every Sunday morning at a quarter past eleven in a room attached to the Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New Road. The Secretary is Miss F. A. Law, daughter of the well-known and esteemed Mrs. Harriet Law. We teach the children plain moral lessons on a purely rational and human basis. The school banner bears Thomas Paine's motto, "To do good is our religion." Miss Law and I will be happy to receive into the school the children (between the ages of 6 and 13) of Camberwell Freethinkers. The entrance is by the right-hand door, and the class-room is upstairs.

F. J. Gould.

12 Meynell-road, Hackney Common, London, N.E.

PROFANE JOKES.

Aunt—"Why did you stare at that gentleman so rudely, Ethel?" Little Ethel—"Oh, he's a dreffful man; he never goes to church or nothing. I heard father say he was an acrostic."

New Housemaid—"Eh, Janet, lassie, I let the teapot fa' jist the noo, an' it brak tae bits. The maister saw it, an' he didna' say onything!" Cook—"Wheesht; it's Sunday, an' the maister's far ower conscientious a man tae gie vent tae his feelin's on siccan a day. Bit wait tull the mornin', ma wummin, an' winna ye get a sweerin'!"

A German in Rahway, N.J., noted years ago for his ability to compose and carve epitaphs, received the following from a German, which he carved on the tombstone as requested: "My wife, Susan, is dead. If she'd had life till next Friday, she'd been dead shust two weeks. As a tree falls so must she stand. All things is impossible mit God."

An ardent evangelist on a Pullman train became interested in the porter, a jolly African, and attempted his conversion. "Are you a Christian?" he feelingly asked. The porter grinned and replied: "Well, you don't take me for a Jew, do you?"

A new church having been built for a parish in a certain Western county of Scotland, the materials of the old one were disposed of under the hammer of the auctioneer. Attending the sale was a country laird of a good-natured disposition, but as he was supposed to be deficient intellectually he was often made the object of his neighbors' harmless banter. When the pulpit was put up for sale the minister addressed him: "Man, Sandy, you should buy the pulpit; it would make a fine calf's crib." "Na, na," said Sandy, "let it gang for something else noo; it's been a calf's crib lang eneuch!"

"Bruddahs an' sistahs," began the Rev. Jackson Jones "I fine dat de collection for dis ebening am jus' one dollar an' fo' cents. Shame on yo'! Shame on yo'! Foh, while ebery one ob yo' pays yo' lan'lord from one to fo' dollars ebery week fo' de loan of a po', shaky, dispointed home here, yo' expec' de good Laud to gib yo' a beautiful an' glorious eberlastin' home—a manshin in de skies—fo' two cents a week. Ah, my deah bruddahs an' sistahs, I feah dat de future eberlastin' homes ob some ob yo' won't be no biggah than hen-coops. What hab been said hab been said in all mannah of lub. Let us all ingage in silent prah."

'Tis better to live like a man though you die like a dog, than to live like a dog and die like a saint.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.15, Robert Forder, "Bradlaugh's Parliamentary Struggle." Saturday (23rd), concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Creation and Modern Criticism."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, J. A. Hobson, M.A., "Property: True and False."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Belief in a Personal God."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, J. F. Green, "The Struggle for Freedom in Russia."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Belief in a Personal God."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, meeting to discuss Conference agenda.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Bible of the Future."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. James, "Can we be Saved?"

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation."

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand): 11.15, C. Cohen, "What Think Ye of Christ?" 3.15, Stanley Jones, "Jesus Christ."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A. B. Moss, "*Joshua Davidson*; or, Christianity in Practice." Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, L. Keen, "Evolution"; 3.30, A. B Moss, "The Day of Judgment." Wednesday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 10.45, A. Guest, "The Bible and Woman."

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, L. Keen, "Evolution."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Now the Birth of Jesus was on this Wise."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Thomas Paine."

REGENT'S PARK: 3, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Alexandra Hall, Hope-street): 7, special members' meeting.

BARNSLEY (Black-a-moor Head Hotel): 11.30 and 6.30, Willie Dyson will lecture.

BRISTOL BRANCH: 2.30, members and friends meet at the Fountain, top of Blackboy Hill, Durdham Down, for ramble to Coombe Dinga, Penpolepoint.

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, annual meeting of members; 6.30, social meeting.

HECKMONDWIKE (Lumbard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, a meeting.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, N. P. Billany, "How the Spirit Moves Me."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Mr. Cook opens discussion on "Vaccination."

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The Freethinker

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

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THE FLIGHT OF JESUS.

THE resurrection of Jesus Christ would have been a very awkward thing for the Apostles if it had not been rounded off by his ascension. Preachers of the "risen Christ" would have been asked, "Where is this Son of God now? Why cannot we see him? Why is he only visible to you? Or has he ceased to appear to anyone, and is it likely that he will never be seen again? If so, what has become of him?" Such questions would have been very embarrassing if the preachers had not an ace of trumps in the ascension. To all inquiries after their Master, who had been dead and was alive again, they could give a most satisfactory reply. When they were asked, "Where is your Jesus?" they could answer, "He is gone up." That settled the matter. He could not be followed or brought back, and no one could prove that he had *not* ascended into heaven.

Nor was there anything very novel and startling in the story of these preachers. The career of all the great Saviors or Sun-Gods of antiquity had been rounded off with a similar incident; and even in the comparatively cultivated city of Rome, the capital of the civilised world, in the very century before the birth of Christ, the people had lent a ready ear to marvels attending the death of Julius Cæsar. "The enthusiasm of the multitude," says Mr. Froude, "refused to believe that he was dead. He was supposed to have ascended into heaven, not in adulatory metaphor, but in literal and prosaic fact." Even the Jews, who had less mythology and a sterner faith than the Gentiles, were beyond the reach of surprise in this matter. Their greatest prophet after Moses, namely Elijah, had ascended into heaven in a chariot of fire drawn by flaming coursers.

Anybody who looks at the Christian story with common-sense eyes must see how well it is guarded against practical exposure. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was unattested by a single independent witness. His post-mortem appearances were all made to his own little party. His arrest, his trial, and his execution were all public; but the demonstrations of his resurrection were all private. This fact was not overlooked by the great Newman, who argued that it was a necessity of the situation, since it was requisite that a chosen body of men, instead of the general public, should be the custodians of a truth which was to form so large a part of the basis of the Christian Church. Whatever may be the force of this argument, the fact itself is obvious that the risen Christ never appeared except to his personal followers. Evidence was absolutely denied to the people who were to be called upon to believe.

The evidence of the ascension is of the same private character. It reminds us very forcibly of the old Jewish story of the ascension of Elijah, which rested entirely on the witness of Elisha. That gentleman returned alone from an expedition in which he had accompanied his master. He declared that Elijah had gone up to glory, leaving his disciple his mantle and the goodwill of the business. In the same way, the disciples of Jesus declared that he had flown up to heaven, after giving them a commission to carry on his work on earth.

How they actually told the story we shall never know. All we have is the story as it appears in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles after passing through many channels. Curiously enough, the ascension is not related in Matthew and John, although the writers of those gospels, according to the orthodox theory, were personal disciples of Jesus and actual witnesses of the occurrence. They say not a word about what they are supposed to have seen. All the details are given by Mark and Luke, who were not present. Nor do these hearsay witnesses agree with each other. According to Luke, Jesus ascended from Bethany, a place near Jerusalem, and on the very day of the resurrection, or the next morning at the latest; while, according to Mark, he ascended at some time, which is not specified, from Galilee, the most southern part of which is sixty miles from Jerusalem. Of course the ascension could not have occurred at two different places, and this is a fatal discrepancy. A man could not be hung for committing one and the same murder in two different towns. Everything happens in time and space. What happens at *any time* and *anywhere* is not history, but romance.

The author of the Acts of the Apostles, who is said to have been Luke, differs from both the authors of the gospels of Luke and Mark. He represents Jesus as spending forty days on earth after his resurrection, passing most of the time with the apostles, and finally taking them to Mount Olivet to witness his ascension. After promising them the Holy Ghost, which he appears to have given them before, and treating them to a last speech, he "was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." Some think it was not Jesus who was lost in a cloud, but the apostles themselves, and all who afterwards believed this romantic story.

How remarkably the wonders of the career of Jesus Christ are copied from the Old Testament! Jesus was a supernatural child; so was Isaac, so was Samuel, and so was Samson. Jesus fasted forty days and nights; so did Moses, and so did Elijah. Jesus multiplied food, and cured diseases, and raised the dead; all which things were done by the Hebrew prophets. Jesus ascended into heaven, and so did Elijah. Nay, the ascension of Elijah was a magnificent affair in comparison with the ascension of Jesus Christ. Elijah was taken up in a fiery chariot with fiery horses, while Jesus Christ was taken up in a miserable damp cloud—which is a perfect wet blanket on the imagination.

Altogether the story of Jesus Christ's ascension is one of the thinnest that ever was imposed upon human credulity. It is contained in writings of unknown authorship, and the different versions of the "inspired narrative" are utterly irreconcilable with each other. And the most singular thing is that two men, who are said to have witnessed the ascension, and also to have been authors of two of the four gospels, are entirely silent in those very books (if they wrote them) about this very occurrence.

The "cloud" in the story, which received Jesus out of the sight of his apostles, seems an artful arrangement. Had it been declared that he ascended in broad daylight, under a clear sky, people might have asked how it was that no one in the vicinity of Mount Olivet, except those eleven favored mortals, caught a glimpse of the performance. The event took place on a cloudy day, and a special cloud enveloped Jesus Christ, so that the people below could not have seen his exit even if they had been on the tiptoe of expectation. That cloud was a capital piece of stage-business, and an admirable shelter against all pressing inquiries.

When the Christians talk to us, in the language of Scripture, about the "cloud of witnesses" to the truth of their faith, we admire the appositeness of the expression. The evidences of Christianity are decidedly *cloudy*.

G. W. FOOTE.

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CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN.

THERE have been many attempts to Christianise Japan since the days of St. Francis Xavier, who seems to have attained a greater measure of success than any of his successors. Recent events, which have shown the Western World that Japan is henceforth to be reckoned with among the comity of nations, have given renewed interest to the question of the religious faith of the land of the Rising Sun, and of the likelihood of Christianity replacing the older religions of Shintoism and Buddhism.

It is now possible for a mere stay-at-home English reader to form some fair estimate upon this question. The editor of the *Kokumin-No-Tomo; or, The Nation's Friend*, the leading Japanese periodical, issues a monthly edition of the magazine in English, entitled *The Far East*.* In the first number of this very interesting publication there is an article on "Christendom and Heathendom," by Ukita Kazutami. This gentleman, as we learn from an editorial note, is Professor of History and Philosophy in the Doshisha College, Kyoto. What makes his article of special interest is that he was educated for the Christian ministry in Yale University, in the United States, and for some time he was chief editor of the *Kirisutokyo Shimbun* (the *Christian Journal*), of Tokyo. Now, like other Japanese converts, he has discovered that Christianity, as seen in practice, is far from satisfactory, and that its historical pretensions are false. He sets out by noticing how the Pope Alexander VI. calmly assigned all one hundred leagues west of the Azores to Spain, and all eastward to Portugal, imagining that, as the earth was flat and boundless, the two nations could never after this come in collision.

"In those days," says Mr. Ukita, "the Christian nations of Europe never recognised that there were men outside of Christendom whose right and freedom they were under obligation to respect. The Roman Popes, who were revered as the highest moral authority on earth, have repeatedly recommended the most abhorrent maxim, that no Christian is bound to keep faith with unbelievers. They looked upon the lands of the so-called *heathen* people as if they were properties belonging to nobody." After adverting to the horrible barbarities which attended the Christian conquests of Mexico and Peru, he contends that the practice of Christendom is still "universal robbery." Behold its anointed kings and sovereigns, its baptised presidents and ministers, who are, in the phrase of Hobbes, "in continual jealousies, and in the state and posture of gladiators; having their weapons pointed, and their eyes fixed, on one another—that is, their forts, garrisons, and guns upon the frontiers of their kingdoms; and continual spies upon their neighbors; which is a posture of war." This is the reason why the expectation of war is one of the principal phenomena of our present civilisation. It manifests itself in the system of armed peace.

Needless to say, Gautama Buddha, Laotse, Confucius, and Mencius have accustomed those of the far East to a higher ideal than this. Our Japanese writer says: "Modern Christendom, with all its enlightenment and its scientific appliances, is thus in reality a disguised barbarism. It is, in fact, a gigantic double-faced monster. On the one hand, it sends out its missionaries to preach the gospel of peace to *heathen* nations, and, on the other, it dispatches armored ships and torpedoes to destroy and conquer them. Sometimes the former enter the *heathen* lands by the very door which is forced open by means of the latter. Thus the missionaries got into China, which was compelled by Protestant England, by means of guns and bayonets, to buy opium and receive Christian missionaries at the same time. Sometimes the opposite method is employed to attain the same end. Such were the cases in Hawaii and Madagascar, first Christianised by the missionaries, and afterwards swallowed up either by revolution or by conquest."

The missionary, he points out, always wants to be backed up by the gunboat. To-day, he says, "all the causes of war among the civilised nations exist only in Christendom. Heathendom is not responsible for war." He urges that "the only hope for the future of mankind is in the progress of liberty and enlightenment, promoted by science and arts, and especially in the growth and development of America and Asia." Sooner or later, he thinks, the Monroe doctrine will bring America into conflict with Europe. "The system of the balance of power among the European nations will be destroyed, and, perhaps, in its place a European Republic will arise." Mr. Ukita holds that the capacity of China to reform and improve is not broken by the late war, and urges that the true policy of China and Japan is to unite against Christian aggression, "to stand up for the principle of 'Asia for the Asiatics,' and put an end forever to that damnable European system of plunder and tyranny."

From the prominence given to this paper there can be little doubt that it expresses a sentiment already largely prevailing, and which, in my opinion, is likely to increase as the history of Christendom and its practices and politics become more widely known. It will be remembered that a Commission sent out some years ago by Japan to investigate the religions of the West reported adversely to Christianity, which was found to be accompanied by a larger share of crime than Buddhism.

The late encounter with China, while it stimulated Christian endeavor, also aroused national patriotism, with the result that, whereas Christianity had in the previous generation made considerable progress together with all other European ideas, it is now considered unpatriotic and unsuited to the Japanese people. Mr. D. C. Greene, a Christian contributor to *The Far East*, admits that it cannot be denied that there has been a reaction against Christianity; and, he adds, "neither can it be denied that it has checked the progress of organised Christianity. In many cases churches have hardly gained enough to repair the normal waste. Some of the pastors, too, have become disheartened by the apparent lack of results, and in the community at large there has been much abatement from the sanguine hopes of earlier years." The reason is not far to seek. The religion of the people with telegraphs and ironclads at first sight appeared the necessary concomitant of their civilisation. It was embraced by many as the necessary sign of a progressive spirit. But it has since been seen that Japan can master all Western science without, in doing so, taking up any of its religion. Nay, in becoming imbued with the scientific spirit they find its influence decidedly adverse to the faith of Christendom. Mr. Greene says: "Another influence which is acting powerfully upon Japan at the present time is that which comes from the general acceptance of the doctrine of evolution, and its gradual application to the various departments of learning. One need not be a close observer to see how profoundly religious thought has been affected, that of Japan even more, probably, than that of Western lands, because of the relatively small inertia of the Christian community. Even in Christian lands it has led to an insistence upon the divine immanence, the side of Christianity which looks towards pantheism. It is not strange that in Japan it should lead to a type of faith in many minds which seems to imply a denial of the divine personality." Evidently it it not all plain sailing for Christianity in Japan.

J. M. WHEELER.

* Published at No. 4 Hivoshicho, Tokyo, Japan.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER XI.

SECULAR INSTRUCTION DISTINCT FROM SECULARISM.

"A mariner must have his eye on the rock and the sand as well as upon the North star."—*Maxim of the Sea.*

IT is time now to point out what many never seem to understand, that secular instruction is entirely distinct from Secularism. In my earlier days the term "scientific" was the distressing word in connection with education; but the trouble of later years is with the word "secular." Theological critics run on the "rock" there. Many persons regard secular teaching with distrust, thinking it to be the same as Secularism. Secular instruction is known by the sign of separateness. It means knowledge given apart from theology. Secular instruction comprises a set of rules for the guidance of industry, commerce, science, and art. Secular teaching is as distinct from theology as a poem from a sermon. A man may be a mathematician, an architect, a lawyer, a musician, or a surgeon, and be a Christian all the same—as Faraday was

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both chemist and devout Sandemanian; as Buckland was a geologist as well as a dean. But if theology be mixed up with professional knowledge, there will be muddle-headedness.* At a separate time theology can be taught, and any learner will have a clearer and more commanding knowledge of Christianity by its being distinctive in his mind.

Secular instruction neither assails Christianity nor prejudices the learner against it; any more than sculpture assails jurisprudence, or than geometry prejudices the mind against music. If the secular instructor made it a point, as he ought to do, to inculcate elementary ideas of morality, he would confine himself to explaining how far truth and duty have sanctions in considerations purely human, leaving it to teachers of religion to supplement, at another time and place, what they believe to be further and higher sanctions. Secular instruction implies that the proper business of the school-teacher is to impart a knowledge of the duties of this world; and the proper business of chapel and church is to explain the duties relevant to another world, which can only be done in a secondhand way by the school-teacher. The wonder is that the pride of the minister does not incite him to keep his own proper work in his own hands, and to protest against the school-teacher meddling with it. By doing so he would augment his own dignity and the distinctiveness of his office. By keeping each kind of knowledge apart a man learns both more easily and more effectually. Secular training is better for the scholar and safer for the State; and better for the priest if he has a faith that can stand by itself.

If the reader does not distrust it as a paradox, he will assent that the secular is distinct from Secularism, as distinct as an act is distinct from its motive. Secular teaching comprises a set of rules of instruction in trade, business, and professional knowledge. Secularism furnished a set of principles for the ethical conduct of life. Secular instruction is far more limited in its range than Secularism, which defends secular pursuits against theology, where theology attacks them or obstructs them. But pure secular knowledge is confined to its own pursuit, and does not come in contact with theology, any more than architecture comes in contact with preaching.

A man may be a shareholder in a gas company, or a water-works, a house-owner or landlord, a farmer or workman. All these are secular pursuits, and he who follows them may consult only his own interest. But if he be a Secularist, he will consider not only his own interest, but, as far as he can, the welfare of the community or the world, as his action or example may tell for the good of universal society. He will do "his best"—not, as Mr. Ruskin says, "the best of an ass," but "the best of an intelligent man." In every act he will put his conscience and character, with a view so to discharge the duties of this life as to merit another if there be one. Just as a Christian seeks to serve God, a Secularist seeks to serve man. This it is to be a Secularist. The idea of this service is what Secularism puts into his mind. Professor Clifford exclaimed: "The kingdom of God has come; when comes the Kingdom of Man?" A Secularist is one who hastens the coming of this kingdom; which must be agreeable to heaven if the people of this world are to occupy the mansions there.

Chapter XII.

THE DISTINCTIVENESS MADE FURTHER EVIDENT.

"The cry that so-called secular education is Atheistic is hardly worth notice. Cricket is not theological; at the same time, it is not Atheistic."—Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D., *Times*, October 11, 1894.

Nor is Secularism Atheism. The laws of the universe are quite distinct from the question of the origin of the universe. The study of the laws of Nature, which Secularism selects, is quite different from speculation as to the authorship of Nature. We may judge and prize the beauty and uses of an ancient edifice, though we may never know the builder. Secularism is a form of opinion which concerns itself only with questions the issues of which can be tested by the experience of this life. It is clear that the existence of Deity and the actuality of another life are questions excluded from Secularism, which exacts no denial of Deity or immortality, from members of Secularist societies. During their day only two persons of public distinction—the Bishop of Peterborough and Charles Bradlaugh—maintained that the Secular was Atheistic. Yet Mr. Bradlaugh never put a profession of Atheism as one of the tenets of any Secularist society. Atheism may be a personal tenet, but it cannot be a Secularist tenet, from which it is wholly disconnected.

No one would confuse the Secular with the Atheistic who understood that the Secular is separate. Mr. Hodgson Pratt, a Christian, writing in *Concord* (October, 1894) a description of the burial of Angelo Mazzoleni, said "the funeral was entirely secular," meaning the ceremony was distinct from that of the Church, being based on considerations pertaining to duty in this world.

In the indefiniteness of colloquial speech we constantly hear the phrase, "School Board education." Yet School Boards cannot give education. It is beyond their reach. Most persons confuse instruction with education. Instruction relates to industrial, commercial, agricultural, and scientific knowledge and like subjects. Education implies the complete training and "drawing out of the whole powers of the mind."* Thus instruction is different from education. Instruction is departmental knowledge. Education includes all the influences of life; instruction gives skill, education forms character.

The Rev. Dr. Parker is the first Nonconformist preacher of distinction who has avowed his concurrence with Secular instruction in Board schools. When Mr. W. E. Forster was framing his Education Act, I besought him to raise English educational policy to the level of the much-smoking, much-pondering Dutch. "The system of education in Holland dates from 1857. It is a secular system, meaning by secular that the Bible is not allowed to be read in schools, nor is any religious instruction allowed to be given. The use of the school-room is, however, granted to ministers of all denominations for the purpose of teaching religion out of school hours. The schoolmaster is not allowed to give religious instruction, or even to read the Bible in school at any time."† No State rears better citizens or better Christians than the Dutch. Mr. Gladstone, with his customary discernment, has said that "secular instruction does not involve denial of religious teaching, but merely separation in point of time." It seems incredible that Christian ministers, generally, do not see the advantage of this. I should probably have become a Christian preacher myself had it not been for the incessantness with which religion was obtruded on me in childhood and youth. Even now my mind aches when I think of it. For myself, I respect the individuality of piety. It is always picturesque. Looking at religion from the outside, I can see that concrete sectarianism is a source of religious strength. A man is only master of his own faith when he sees it clearly, distinctly, and separately. Rather than permit secular instruction and religious education to be imparted separately, Christian ministers permit the great doctrines they profess to maintain to be whittled down to a School Board average, in which, when done honestly towards all opinions, no man can discern Christianity without the aid of a microscope. And this passes, in these days, for good ecclesiastical policy. In a recent letter (November, 1894) Mr. Gladstone has re-affirmed his objection to "an undenominational system of religion framed by, or under the authority of, the State." He says "It would, I think, be better for the State to limit itself to giving secular instruction, which, of course, is no complete education." Mr. Gladstone does not confound secular instruction with education, but is of the way of thinking of Milton, who says: "I call a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." Secular instruction touches no doctrine, menaces no creed, raises no scepticism in the mind. But an average of belief introduces the aggressive hand of heresy into every school, tampering with tenets rooted in the conscience, wantonly alarming religious convictions, and substituting for a clear, a frank, and manly issue a disastrous, a blind, and timid policy, wriggling along like

* Edward Baines (afterwards Sir Edward), who was the greatest opponent in his day of National schools and secular instruction, sent his son to a secular school because he wanted him to be clever as well as a Christian. He was both, as I well know.

* Henry Drummond gave this definition in the House of Commons, and it was adopted by W. J. Fox and other leaders of opinion in that day.

† Report from the Hague, by Mr. (now Right Hon.) Jesse Collings, M.P., May, 1870.

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a serpent instead of walking with self-dependent erectness. This manly erectness would be the rule were the formula of the great preacher accepted who has said: "Secular education by the State and Christian education by the Christian Church is my motto."* Uniformity of truth is desirable, and it will come, not by contrivance, but by conviction.

Someone quoted lately in the *Daily News* (September 19, 1895) the following sentences I wrote in 1870:—

> "With secular instruction only in the day school, religion will acquire freshness and new force. The clergyman and the minister will exercise a new influence, because their ministrations will have dignity and definiteness. They will no longer delegate things declared by them to be sacred to be taught secondhand by the harassed, overworked, and oft-reluctant schoolmaster and schoolmistress, who must contradict the gentleness of religion by the peremptoriness of the pedagogue, and efface the precept that 'God is love' by an incontinent application of the birch.....It is not secular instruction which breeds irreverence, but this ill-timed familiarity with the reputed things of God which robs divinity of its divineness."

The Bible in the school-room will not always be to the advantage of clericalism, as it is thought to be now.

Mr. Forster's Education Act created what Mr. Disraeli contemptuously described as a new "sacerdotal caste"—a body of second-hand preachers, who are to be paid by the money of the State to do the work which the minister and the clergyman avow they are called by heaven to perform—namely, to save the souls of the people. According to this Act, the clergy are really no longer necessary; their work can be done by a commoner and cheaper order of artificer. Mr. Forster insisted that the Bible be introduced into the school-room, which gives great advantage to the Freethinker, as it makes a critical agitation against its character and pretensions a matter of self-defence for every family. Another eminent preacher, Mr. C. H. Spurgeon, wrote, not openly in the *Times* as Dr. Parker did, but in *The Sword and Trowel* thus: "We should like to see established a system of universal application, which would give a sound secular education to children, and leave the religious training to the home and the agencies of the Church of Christ." It is worthy of the radiant common sense of the famous orator of the Tabernacle that he should have said this anywhere.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

CHRIST AND MODERN REFORM.

IN one of my recent articles upon "The Christ has Come," which appeared in the *Freethinker* dated March 29 of the current year, the following two sentences occur: "Assuming that he [Christ] came as stated, he left the world in much the same condition as he found it. All great reforms and improvements have been achieved since he left, and in many instances in direct opposition to his teachings." Referring to the above allegations, Mr. Thomas Pateman Barrow (of Leicester) denies their accuracy, and adds: "There never has been, and never can be, any reform, of whatever nature, antagonistic and in direct opposition to Christ's teachings." My correspondent invites me to point out in these columns "only some of the instances" that would prove the truth of my assertions. This I propose to do as briefly as possible; but for a full justification of my statements Mr. Barrow is referred to my two pamphlets, *The Claims of Christianity Examined* and *Was Christ a Political and Social Reformer?*

If my correspondent still denies what I assert in the first sentence to which he takes exception, let him show us what reforms Christ secured during the supposed time he was on earth. To put the same questions in reference to Jesus as are put by Christians to Secularists, it may fairly be asked, What science did Christ initiate? What hospitals did he establish? What libraries did he institute? What societies for social reform did he organise? What association did he form to obtain the domestic rights of women, the political equity of man, and the kind treatment of the lower animals? What movement did he originate to relieve the world of the pangs of poverty and the curse of slavery? Finally, what principles did he lay down to inspire within man the spirit of self-help and of self-reliance, which are the basis of all personal and general improvements? Is it not the fact that reforms, connected with all the above subjects, have been won since the alleged death of Christ? Is it not also true that the reforms here mentioned have taken place principally during the present century, the very period when practical dependence upon the teachings of Christ has steadily but surely declined?

Now for proof that many modern reforms are antagonistic to certain teachings ascribed to Jesus. The foundation of all national progress is a correct system of education; but Christ nowhere propounded such a system. His advice to the people was to take no thought "what ye shall say," for the Holy Ghost shall "teach you what ye ought to say" (Luke xii. 11, 12). So long as "instruction" was left to the Holy Ghost, gross ignorance among all sections of society prevailed. The schoolmaster with his secular instruction (which is not found in the New Testament) has done more during the last twenty-five years to educate the people than the third person of the Trinity has accomplished through all time. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ's idea of "education" is set forth, and what is it? A number of meaningless platitudes, without any instruction as to their applicability to daily life; the inculcation of poverty of spirit, and a mournful disposition; the teaching of what Christ himself did not comply with; the sanction of self-mutilation, and the non-resistance of evil; and the recommendation to do that which it is impossible for human nature to carry out. The keynote of Christ's method of "education" was to teach people how to die; the object of modern educationists is to instruct the rising generation how to live, so that they may become good and useful citizens.

One of the greatest reforms at the present day, which affect the intellectual progress and happiness of mankind, is the cessation of punishment for heresy. Persecution for disbelief has proved itself to be one of the greatest curses that ever robbed humanity of its freedom; yet Christ, so far from condemning it, actually sanctioned and recommended it. For proof of this see Matthew x., Mark xvi., and John xv. In these passages the bitterest spirit of persecution is enjoined towards those who did not accept the Christian faith. For ages men—believing that what Jesus said was right—imprisoned, tortured, and put to death those whom they deemed "heretics." And although we have still legal enactments upon the statute book, which were placed there by the followers of Christ, the Secular love of justice prevents such enactments being put in force as they once were. Christ exacted uniformity of belief in himself, and, unless this uniformity was observed, hell-fire was the threatened penalty. Modern reformers have shown that such uniformity of opinion is impossible, and, therefore, mental freedom is held, in spite of Christ, to be an inalienable right of every member of the human family. The present age is pre-eminently one of Freethought; but thought cannot be free if it is forced in one direction, under the influence of the threat of the severest penalties that it is possible for the mind to conceive.

Co-operation, which is the very essence of self-help, forethought, and prudence among the masses, is a very important reform of the present century. But it is nowhere mentioned by Christ as being needful; on the contrary, its principle is condemned by his teachings as reported in the sixth chapter of St. Matthew. It is there plainly taught that those very things which are necessary to life and social comfort (such as food, drink, and clothing) are not to be even thought of; for we are told to "seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." To seek after the requisites of existence was to be left to the "nations of the world" (Luke xii. 30). A similar antagonism is shown by Christ to improved sanitary measures when he said: "Take no thought for your life," and when he assured his followers that they could have whatever they desired by praying for it (Mark xi. 24). But the opposition of Jesus to the reforms here mentioned is apparent in his teaching that the necessaries of life are supplied by God, without the exercise of thought upon the part of man, and that relief from sickness and death is provided by miracle. Hence Jesus

* The Rev. Joseph Parker, D.D.

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relied upon the very opposite of physiological facts to cure disease, which he thought was caused through the patients being possessed with devils. The cure was supposed to be affected, not by medical skill and the science of medicine, but by faith in Christ (Matthew ix. 22), and by exorcism of evil spirits from the poor sufferers (Mark v., ix.; Luke iv., v., and viii.). The present generation has so much improved upon Christ's method of "healing the sick" that, when certain enthusiasts attempt the "faith cure," they are punished by law.

Many social reformers have arrived at the conclusion that husbands and wives, who cannot live happily together, had better separate; but Christ was opposed to this, for he said: "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery" (Mark x. 9–11). Further, he said Moses allowed divorce "for the hardness of your heart." Our Post Office Savings Bank is found to be a very useful institution, but it would not be required if Christ's injunction were obeyed: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Let the commands of Jesus, "to resist not evil," and "whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also," be strictly carried out, and but little progress would be made in the suppression of despotic power. But Christ gives the explanation why he had no concern for the reforms of society, when he said: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36).

I have now stated a few of the modern reforms to which, it appears to me, the teachings of Christ are opposed. There is, however, a kind of test, laid down by Christ himself, by which his relation to reforms may be judged. He says: "He that is not with me is against me" (Luke xi. 23). He certainly does not exemplify by his teachings that he was in sentiment *with* the reforms that have aided the civilisation of the world; therefore, according to his own standard, he was against them. It is not here denied that men calling themselves Christians have assisted in bringing about recent reforms; but the question is, Are such reforms based upon the teachings of Jesus? My allegation is that they are not. Nothing seems clearer to my mind than that, *if only* Christ's teachings had prevailed in Europe for the last hundred years, civilisation to-day would have been comparatively unknown, and that those beneficent influences which now embellish social life would be absent. Ignorance, superstition, and lack of self-reliance, that, according to history and the Gospels, once so extensively abounded, would still mar the happiness of the human race.

Fortunately, science has transformed the relations of nations, and changed the aspect of the various phases of society. Reforms in government and in law have enlarged human freedom, and increased the opportunities for the attainment of justice. The agencies, however, by which these reforms have been established were not among the "things generally known" by Christ. Happily, the political and social forces, created by human energy and intellectual activity, are now sufficiently strong to resist impediments to further progress.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE BIBLE AND THE EAST.*

THIS work may be characterised, in the words of Dean Farrar, as "one of those slovenly treatises which only serve to throw dust in the eyes of the ignorant." As in all works of this character, no references are given to assist the student in judging what weight is to be attached to the arguments advanced; but a number of statements are made upon the authority of the writer (which is not very great).

The chief argument of the book is that the primitive documents of the Jews were written upon clay tablets in the cuneiform character, and that this explains the variations and anomalies of the Scripture narratives; for, when these cuneiform documents came to be transcribed into alphabetical characters, the polyphony of the cuneiform syllabary caused the scribes to vary in their transcriptions. In support of his theory that the earliest Hebrew books were "tablets," he refers us to Habakkuk ii. 2; but a reference to that passage will show any sane person that the prophet is not speaking of cuneiform tablets at all. He says: "Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." Anyone who has seen a cuneiform tablet will be quite certain that it is impossible to *run* and read it; it is difficult enough to read when you are sitting down quietly. Such statements and theories as these of Colonel Conder's are only insidious attempts to get out of the glaring fact that there are *no* references to writing upon clay tablets to be found in the Old Testament. Clay was used only for sealing (*cf.* Job xxxviii. 14). Whenever writing is mentioned, pens, ink, and rolls are spoken of; and it is unnecessary to remark that ink is useless on a clay tablet, and that you cannot make terra-cotta into a roll. Furthermore, when a prophecy of Jeremiah was read before Jehoiakim, King of Judah, we are told (Jeremiah xxxvii. 23) that the king cut it with a penknife, and then put it in the fire, where it was consumed; so that it is clear that clay tablets were not used by the Jews for writing, for it would be quite useless to put a terra-cotta block into the fire to destroy it. When we look at the letters of the Moabite Stone, the oldest known specimen of the Hebrew language, we see at once that the letters in use were habitually written with ink upon paper, or similar material; for many of the letters are formed in curves, or have curly tails, which would be difficult or impossible to draw with precision upon wet clay. Then, again, we find that several of the Psalms are written alphabetically, with each line or section commencing with some letter of the Hebrew alphabet; positive proof that the authors used the Semitic alphabet, and not any cuneiform syllabary. A similar alphabetic arrangement occurs in Proverbs and Lamentations, while in Genesis xiv. 1 the names of the kings are arranged in alphabetical order. It is self-evident that the authors of the books of the Old Testament wrote with the Semitic alphabet, and knew of no other system of writing Hebrew.

Colonel Conder also repeats the exploded notion that the variations in the numbers mentioned in various parts of the Bible are to be explained as due to the use of figures instead of writing the numbers in full, when it is notorious that there is no trace of the use of figures, or symbols, but that in every known Hebrew MS. of the Bible the numbers *are* written in full.

The gallant Colonel repeats several other long-exploded hypotheses, and professes to refute some of the conclusions of the Higher Criticism, of which he appears to possess only a second-hand knowledge. It is significant, however, that, like all other modern writers, he admits the book of Daniel to be spurious. He shows that no part of it is of earlier date than the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, and seems to imagine that the Aramaic portion of the book may probably have been written after the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey in the year 65 B.C. He also admits the late date of Esther, but makes a feeble attempt to believe that it may have some historical basis! The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles are also partially given up.

With regard to the New Testament, Colonel Conder admits that Cyrenius did not govern Syria in the time of Herod the Great, and that the Angora inscription disproves the "taxing" mentioned in the Gospels. When, however, we are calmly told that "Exploration of Palestine has done much to establish the genuineness of the fourth Gospel, by showing its accuracy in matters of geography," it is evident that the gallant officer has yet to master the elementary principles of Biblical criticism. E. P.

* *The Bible and the East.* By C. R. Conder, Lieut.-Col. R E. (William Blackwood & Sons; 1896.)

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JURISPRUDENT JEHOVAH.

In days of old, Jehovah told the Jews a thing or two;
The things they often, seldom, always, never ought to do;
He taught them how to pray and steal, to worship and to fight,
And regulated all their lives from morning until night.

He wrote a list of lawful food, and food that was taboo:
The "Bill of Fare," or what is called in Peckham French, "menoo";
He solemnly commanded them to shun, lest harm result,
The esoteric saveloy, and "sassenjer" occult.
To eat a pig was *infra dig.*; all pork they must eschew—
The unassuming "trotter," and the mild poloney too.

The rite of circumcision he did ruthlessly enforce—
That is, upon the Jews themselves, and not the pigs, of course.

He also ordered them to cut the throats of lambs and sheep,
That he might glut his gaze on gore, and thus his temper keep;
The sweetest pleasures to his ears, his nostrils, and his eyes
Were gushing streams of reeking blood, and tortured victims' cries.

On Sabbath he compelled them all to rest from work and play,
By doing all their hardest to do nothing all the day—
In short, he forced the Jews to be, on pain of lapidation,
A strictly-pious, godly, cruel, slavish, brutal nation.

But, later on, he told the world, through Jesus Christ, a Jew,
That all those laws were foolish fads that would no longer do;
He saw—when fresh experience had changed his mind and mood—
That stoning folk to death was bad, and Sabbath trips were good;
And said he must at last admit—though "climbing down" was sad—
That sacrifice was not so good, and pork was not so bad.
In fact, his words implied, or said, that all his priestly rules
Were products of his "salad-days," and only fit for fools.

Said he: "I've got a scheme at last by which I'll manage man—
A God-belauding, hell-delighting, man-deluding plan!
I'm tired of Moses and his code; the whole affair's a pest!
Simplicity's my motto now; simplicity and rest.
I'm sick of watching people's deeds, and noting all that's said,
Of ceremonies, rules, and rites, and priestly tape that's red!
Instead of telling men to do a *score* of silly rites,
That only serve to worry me, and spoil my rest o' nights,
I've hit on *one*, more hard for man than all the rest combined,
But easier for me, because I'll only have to find
If men perform this single one, instead of keeping count
Of all the fussy ancient ones—a pretty good amount;
'Tis this: Believe that I and Christ and Ghost are one in three;
That I, as Christ, was nailed to death, to bribe the Ghost and me;
That I, as Christ, began to be, yet always was, my son;
That each, yet none, is I, and I am each, and all are one!

"These statements—strange to those who ne'er for godly knowledge thirst,
Are simple when you know them; but you've got to know them first.

"Take notice! all ye creatures who possess immortal souls!
That henceforth I have done with 'works' and priestly rigmaroles!
Believe the Gospel story of myself and Ghost and Son;
And then, no matter how you've lived, your place in heav'n is won!
Believe the simple story of the Jewess and the Ghost;
Or else, no matter how you've lived, your soul in hell will roast!"

It took but fifteen hundred years to show the great "I Am"
The uselessness of temples, and the usefulness of ham;
To show that golden candlesticks and choicest kidney-grease
Can never "hold a candle" to belief in God's decease.

The time will likely come when God *again* will change his mind,
And start a dispensation of an *anti*-Christian kind;
He might, when civilised enough, leave earth's affairs alone,
And thus, in some small measure, for his sad mistakes atone;
Or, very likely, he'll restore the ancient code of Moses,
And estimate all moral worth by curvature of noses;
Establish bloody works again—he's just the God to do it—
And substitute for faith in Christ the fumes of burning suet

However, for the present, we have all, if bound for glory,
To credit his incredible, discreditable story.

G. L. Mackenzie.

ACID DROPS.

It is amusing to watch the antics of the Nonconformists who have been stung by the Irish members' vote on the Education Bill. Dr. Joseph Parker formally announces that he "withdraws his interest" in Home Rule. Dr. Berry and Rev. Hugh Price Hughes both declare that Home Rule must now take a back seat at least. All these irate gentlemen assert that the Irish vote on an English bill is a violation of the Home Rule principle. This is true enough, but, then, Home Rule has not come yet, and Englishmen still go on legislating for Ireland. Besides, as Mr. William Redmond points out, the Nonconformists were not so anxious that each country should settle its own affairs when they denounced Parnell and labored to deprive him of the leadership of the Irish party.

The Nonconformists complain that the Irish members are Catholics first and politicians afterwards. But what on earth did these gentlemen expect? Are not the Nonconformists themselves Christians first and citizens afterwards? They insist on having religion taught in the State schools, where it has no right to be taught on the strict principle of Nonconformity; and their only cause of complaint is that they cannot decide the exact quantity and quality of that religion *themselves*.

Freethinkers should all remember Mr. Balfour's declaration in the House of Commons that he hoped to see School Boards abolished. This was letting the cat out of the bag with a vengeance, and we must see that the animal is not put back again.

Sabbatarianism is strong in Cornwall. The fishermen there will not fish or land fish on Sunday, and they naturally hate to see other people making a profit when they refrain from making any themselves, for your true bigot always likes to make others share the cost of his own convictions. Accordingly, the Newlyn fishermen, aided by their women folk and neighbors, have "gone for" the Lowestoft men who tried to land their catch on the holy Cornish quayside on Sunday morning. Fifteen thousand mackerel from one boat, thirteen thousand from another, and other hauls from other craft were tossed into the harbour, which they will help to sweeten rarely in this warm weather. The police were unable to stop the row, and the authorities requested the assistance of a gunboat.

Further details of the Orfah massacre are published in the newspapers. One scene is worth a special notice: "About a hundred stalwart young Armenians were thrown on their backs and held down by their hands and feet, while a Sheikh, reciting verses of the Koran, proceeded to cut their throats after the Mecca rite of sacrificing sheep." Everyone can see the beautiful part played by religion in these atrocities.

The coronation of the Czar is a big affair, and will cost a lot of money. Of course the Czar is a sincere Christian, but, as a matter of fact, he is directly responsible for the continued massacre of the Christians in Armenia. It is the Russian government which frustrates the efforts of other governments to put effective pressure on the Sultan.

John Wesley is credited with the saying that the Chinese language was an invention of the devil to keep Christian missionaries out of China. At any rate, they often make a sad hash of it. Long controversies went on as to how the word God should be rendered in Chinese; the word for Lord is usually pronounced as if it represented the word pig, so that Jesus Christ is known throughout the Chinese Empire as the pig Jesus. The Rev. J. F. Masters says he once heard a missionary preaching on the heavenly father. The Chinese word for heavenly is teen, with an aspirate on the vowels. The preacher left out the aspirate, with disastrous results. Teen without an aspirate means "crazy." He wondered what the pigtails were smiling at.

Rockfeller, the Standard Oil monopolist and millionaire, advertised himself by giving a large sum of money to the University of Chicago. He is now much concerned that the president, Dr. Harper, is alleged to be an Atheist. Rockfeller says he shall henceforth let it be known that his money must be used for religious purposes only.

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Thomas Harris, a distinguished member of the local Salvation Army at Jarrow, will spend six months in Durham jail, with hard labor, for assaulting his wife in a brutal manner. He was letting her know that, according to the Bible, the man is the head of the woman, and he did this in striking fashion.

The Rev. G. Moore, vicar of Cowley, is always at loggerheads with his parishioners. At a meeting of the local county council he called out, "Blackguardism!" "Ruffianism!" Personalities were freely indulged in, and such colloquies as the following:—Vicar to Mr. James White: "You're a devil." Mr. James White: "Don't you call me a devil, or I'll punch your head. What do you mean, you blackguard?" The Vicar: "You only come here to abuse me." Mr. James White: "No, I don't." The chairman had to close the meeting amid great disorder, and the report in the *Oxford Times* ends: "A chorus of hoots saluted the vicar as he walked from the room in a contemptuous and defiant manner."

At Brooklyn, N.Y., Harry M. Covert, an evangelist, and a very active and pious member of the Hansom Place Baptist Church in that city, deserted his wife and eloped with Mrs. Helene Springer, a wealthy and dashing widow whom he met about two years ago at a religious meeting.

The Church party at Ipswich has had a lady down to lecture on "Flaws in the Theory of Evolution." There was "not a large attendance," though Miss Nina Layard has a large belief in her own ability to shatter the teachings of Darwin, Huxley, and all the rest of that school. Canon Garrett, in moving a vote of thanks to the lecturess, assured the small audience that "the Darwinian delusion was on its last legs." Of course the wish was father to the thought. Darwinism has as many stout legs as there are branches of science made fruitful by the theory of evolution.

The Rev. Charles Voysey—a well-meaning man with very decided intellectual limitations—has published a recent sermon of his on "The Prosperity of the Wicked." The wicked are the *priests* who are always aiming after fresh tyranny, as they are doing through the new Education Bill. There is a clerical reaction, and Mr. Voysey undertakes to explain it. "At the bottom of it," he says, "lies the fear, a deep and real and, as I think, even a justifiable fear, lest the foundations of society should be overthrown by Atheists, Anarchists, and would-be plunderers." This catalogue is "Voysey" all over. Atheists, however, are not necessarily Anarchists, and they are not particularly strong on "plunder," except in the way of denouncing it. Mr. Voysey appears to dread "a deluge of Atheism." We fear there is no ground for his apprehension. Passion may, but reason cannot, sweep along in a flood.

Religion seethes under political issues even in the United States, as seen in the recent attempt to get God into the Constitution, happily thwarted for a time by friend Putnam and his co-workers. Another illustration is seen in the Presidential campaign. The Democrats will have, as usual, the Catholic vote; but the leading Republican candidate, McKinley, may lose his chance through the opposition of the American Protective Association, because of his alleged friendliness to Catholics, though he is a Methodist Episcopal and Freemason. Those behind the scenes back a dark horse—Senator Cullom, of Illinois.

The *Journal and Messenger* says that it is "sorry to see" an esteemed contemporary, the *Baptist News*, "repeating the old and exploded story about Thomas Jefferson and the little Baptist church in the vicinity of his home—that he was accustomed to attend its business meetings, and from them got his idea of our federal Government. That story has had its day, and ought now to be let alone. It is not true now, and never was true. Do let it drop." But if religious journals let exploded fictions drop, they will considerably diminish their stock-in-trade.

It appears from a work published in New York, entitled *The Failure of Protestantism*, by Mr. T. Dixon, of the People's Church, that the slump in Methodism and among the Baptists is more than paralleled in New York. Mr. Dixon gives statistics showing that none of the religious bodies are holding their own, the increase of membership among the Baptists being less than quarter the increase of births, and among Methodists less than half. The Lutherans show an actual decrease. They have not only failed to hold their own children, but have lost 625 of the older ones.

"But," says Mr. Dixon, "these figures do not tell all the pitiable story. Every one knows, who knows anything about the history of New York churches, that the rolls are not kept to-day as they were twenty or thirty years ago. Then church enrolment meant a pretty accurate summary of the members on the field; now some of our churches keep even the dead on their rolls, on the ground that their establishment extends over this world and the next! One of these mushroom records collapsed the other day by a fire, and out of a roll of over 4,000 there could not be found 200 members! This is undoubtedly an extreme case, but it is to the point. There are actually fewer Baptists in New York to-day than there were twenty years ago; there are fewer Methodists than there were twenty years ago."

"The churches," says Mr. Dixon, "represent fashion, pride, wealth, and social caste. The best attended of these great churches are crowded simply by the social attraction of the wealthy families who rule them. To keep out the herd of vulgar social aspirants who wish to scrape acquaintance by jostling the children of the rich, some of these churches have separate Sunday-schools for the rich and the poor."

Well, then, according to Mr. Dixon, Protestantism is a failure in New York. Is Catholicism any better? No, he says. "The foreign population of New York—that is, foreign-born and the children of the foreign-born—is eighty per cent. of the total. The Catholic population of the city, by the census of 1890, is 380,000—twenty per cent. By a careful examination of the sources of our immigration it will be found that at least fifty-four per cent. of it is Roman Catholic. This should give the Roman Catholic Church an aggregate of 972,000 in New York City. It actually is only 380,000, showing a loss in New York alone of 592,000! Protestantism has not held its own in New York. The record of Roman Catholicism is even worse." Of course, Mr. Dixon thinks the statistics indicate a bright future for his own, the People's, Church. But do they not indicate that the people are beginning to look elsewhere than to churches of any description?

Exeter Hall has set its face against the mummies. In the course of the May Meetings it has been discovered that the Sunday opening of museums is a State recognition of the desecration of the Sabbath. Dear, dear me! So you may stay at home on Sunday afternoon and read about the Pharaohs, but you must not indulge in the giddy, secular joy of gazing upon their poor, mortal remains until Monday morning. But why and wherefore? Surely, while Exeter Hall goes on inventing additions to the Decalogue in this high-handed fashion, the May Meetings had better be called the Mayn't Meetings.—*Pick-Me-Up.*

The *Churchman*, ignoring that Christianity has on its shoulders the burden of more religious wars than any other faith, has an alarmist article on the dangerous element to the peace of India from the mighty force of sixty millions of Moslems there who might be aroused by the cry for a religious war. "This," says the *Churchman*, "will remain a source of danger to the peace of the world, as long as the precepts of Mohammed endure." The *Churchman* surely forgets the bloodthirsty precepts of the Old Testament, and the fact that Jesus said he came not to bring peace, but a sword.

The West London Mission, of which Hugh Price Hughes is superintendent, has just held its ninth anniversary. The function seems to have been very successful, and the Mission is now "marching forward with quickened step to the completion of its great ideal—a saved London." But this is a very large order. We reckon that London will drop out of the map of the world before it is "saved" in the Methodist sense of the word.

For a good while before the anniversary the Methodist public was informed, again and again, that the West London Mission wanted £3,000. A fortnight beforehand the principal agents of the Mission held a midnight prayer-meeting and begged the Lord to let them have that £3,000. They got it, and they call it an answer to prayer. But how about the big preliminary advertisement?

"Now that by God's mercy we have the £3,000 asked for, let us make a bold push for £2,000 more," says the *Methodist Times*. These people approach God as a man approaches a doubtful dog—first patting his head to see whether he will stand it, and then stroking him all down the back.

The West London Missioners also prayed for fine weather for their anniversary. They got it, and so did cricketers and racing men. As an answer to prayer, the weather was singularly impartial. Besides, it was put on at the expense of the farmers, who badly want rain, especially for their hay crops. The £3,000 obtained by the West London Mission is nothing to the loss inflicted upon agriculturalists by the drought.

Donahoe's Magazine, an American Catholic organ, has a paper on "Shakespeare's Authorship and Religion," a conversation between Ignatius Donnelly and Rev. John Conway. It is hard to say which of the interlocutors is more ridiculous. Ignatius says Shakespeare's real name was Jack Peter. He gets this from his cryptogram, a subject upon which he is as daft as Delia Bacon. Ignatius thinks his cypher the eighth wonder of the world, and fancies that Bacon was the

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founder of the Rosicrucian Society, which, mistaking it for that of the Illuminati, he says was "established to protect liberty of thought against the encroachments of kings and Churches." Ignatius is either misreported, or he makes an unpardonable mistake, or tells a downright falsity about the British Museum library catalogue.

Father Conway does not swallow Donnelly's nonsense, having to support a case of his own—viz., that Shakespeare was of the true Church, which Bacon evidently was not. He attempts to get over the mistake in *Romeo and Juliet* of alluding to evening mass by supposing that vespers were so-called. He says of Shakespeare: "Every allusion of his to sacred subjects is made in the most reverential tone." How reverential is Sir John Falstaff's allusion to the oil that is in him setting hell on fire? And how reverential is Mistress Quickly's allusion to his going to Arthur's bosom—substituting the mythical English hero for the Jewish one? How reverential is Richard of Glo'ster's saying, "For you shall sup with Jesus Christ to-night"?

"Further," says Father Conway, "when the great dramatist deals with distinctly Catholic personages he gives them their due respect throughout." Let it be noted, on the other hand, that he invariably makes his prelates worldly. The words of religion are on their lips, but ambition influences their lives. Cardinal Pandulph, the holy legate of the Pope, in *King John*, is a specimen of the real ecclesiastic as seen by Shakespeare.

The *Daily News* Vienna correspondent says that during the solemn millennial service on Sunday at Lipto St. Miklos, in Hungary, the Roman Catholic chaplain violently attacked the Hungarian Government, the civil marriage law, and all Liberal institutions. His remarks caused indignation among the congregation, and all the educated persons present rose and left the church. By common accord they went across the Market-place to the Jewish Temple, where a millennial service was also being conducted, and heard the sermon of the Rabbi, who was eulogising the patriotic aspirations of the Hungarian nation.

Another case of clerical intolerance is reported from Olmutz, where it has caused great indignation. The clergy of Olmutz refused to attend the funeral of the wife of Herr Carl Berghof, a theatrical director, on the plea that she was not a "good" Catholic. Frau Berghof had lately attended church as the godmother of a little girl, and had signed herself in the church register. On Wednesday all the Liberal citizens of Olmutz turned out, and an immense procession followed the coffin to the cemetery. Here fresh indignation broke out, for the grave had been dug in unconsecrated ground without the cemetery proper, and the deceased woman was laid side by side with a man who lately murdered his wife and committed suicide. The coffin was placed in the grave upside down, notwithstanding all the family could say to prevent it. The reader has possibly already guessed that Frau Berghof, though a Roman Catholic all her life, was the wife of a Jew.

The Lord's Day Observance Society must not continually neglect the duties for the fulfilment of which they collect money from the public. The next Drawing Room, or dress show, "by the command of the Queen," is to be held on a Monday. This will necessitate the florists, dressmakers, and hair-decorators working the whole of the preceding Sunday. We await with interest the denunciation of the Court by the Lord's Day Society.—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

Little "Christian Evidence" jokes go a long way at Exeter Hall! There was a doubting Rationalist who had presumably swallowed the snake story, the fish story, and the donkey story, but boggled at the Ark. That Mr. Noah got in the animals two by two, and all the rest of it, presented no difficulties to this honest doubter; but "when he was asked to believe that the children of Israel carried it about with them for forty years in the wilderness, well, his faith broke down!" The Christian Evidence lecturer's kind explanation made things clear at once. These are just the deep problems I should expect the average Christian Evidence lecturer to be able to solve.—*Weekly Times and Echo.*

Mr. Ernest T. Hargrove, an Englishman, has been chosen President of the American Theosophical Society, in succession to the Mahatmic messenger, William Quan Judge. Hargrove has only spent twenty-nine years in his present incarnation, but then he has been incarnated exactly four hundred and ninety times—that is, the seventy times seven required to bring supernormal wisdom. The new President announces that he only needs endowments to establish a Theosophical University. The Mahatmas never send cheques themselves, but only messages exhorting the faithful to supply the needful.

The *New Age*, in a carping notice of Mr. H. S. Salt's *Percy Bysshe Shelley*, says: "He appears seriously to believe that Atheism is rapidly spreading, and that free love is hard upon us. Surely the very slightest observation of the actual facts of contemporary life would convince him that never since the foundation of Christianity has the belief in 'God, Freedom, and Immortality' been more potent than now in the minds and actions of men." Mr. A. E. Fletcher is a sentimental Christian, with a faculty for seeing just what he wishes to see. It is natural for people to impute their own character to others, but he goes beyond the mark when he says of Mr. Salt that "it is extremely doubtful whether, did he not think that Shelley was an Atheist, a vegetarian, and a free lover, he would discover the slightest appreciation of Shelley's poetry."

The most celebrated shrine in Moscow is that of the Iberian Virgin, whose chapel few Russians pass without crossing themselves. This virgin—that is to say, her icon—like the Bambino of Ara-Cœli in Rome, frequently goes to visit the sick at their homes. She has carriages and horses for the purpose. During such absences a substitute takes her place in her niche. She brings in from 400,000 to 500,000 roubles a year.

The proceedings in connection with the Czar's coronation cost over a million pounds. The dear people cannot expect to have such a blessing as a head of the Church and State without paying for it.

Dr. Lyman Abbott, Beecher's successor at Plymouth Church, is slowly hobbling after Ingersoll. He calls himself "a theistic evolutionist," and it seems to mean an evolutionist who clouds his real belief with verbiage. He rejects the Atonement, and speaks of eternal life, not as a continuation of human existence, but as the immortality of God himself brought into God's children.

The *English Churchman*, the organ of the very Low Church, is much discouraged. It laments: "Men are ever more and more bent on going their own way instead of God's way. They are turning from his Sabbaths, and encouraging that fearful heresy of sacerdotalism, which, whether Anglican or Roman, is contrary to God's Word." All the poor old Evangelical organ can do, however, is to bid the world beware of the wrath to come.

Sir Robert Peel said nearly half a century ago: "The battle of the Reformation will have to be fought again in this country." Certainly the Church is getting more Romanised yearly, and last Sunday, when the Catholics had a procession round the West-end of London, a number of people thought they were witnessing merely a procession of Ritualists.

The *Baptist* says: "Robert Browning has a great deal to answer for in some of our Congregational pulpits. He is all very well in his way, but he is very much out of his way when his poetry takes the place of the New Testament." We guess the pastors only supply Browning to meet a demand; and that congregations prefer *The Ring and the Book* to the Apocalypse is an encouraging sign.

"I am concerned," Mr. Gladstone writes to a Belfast correspondent, "to hear that the passion of unbelief in any degree prevails in Belfast, for I hoped that the town was, like Ireland in general, exempt from its sway." We do not know the name of Mr. Gladstone's correspondent, but we do know that there is a good deal of "unbelief" in Belfast. There ought also to be a strong Branch of the National Secular Society. The old Branch there was fairly strong at one time, but some of its leading members went into the Labor movement, and a few of them appear to have gone out of their way to injure the Branch which they had no further time or occasion to support.

"They say, 'God sends the little babies.' Of all the dastardly, revolting lies men tell to suit themselves, I hate that most. I suppose my father said so when he knew he was dying of consumption, and my mother when she knew she had nothing to support me on, and they created me to feed like a dog from stranger hands. Men do not say God sends the books, or the newspaper articles, or the machines they make; and then sigh and shrug their shoulders, and say they can't help it. Why do they say so about other things? Liars! 'God sends the little babies!' When people are married, though they should have sixty children, they throw the whole onus on God. When they are not, we hear nothing about God's having sent them. When there has been no legal contract between the parents, who sends the little children then? The Devil, perhaps! Odd that some men should come from hell and some from heaven, and yet all look so much alike when they get here."—*Olive Schreiner, "Story of an African Farm."*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

May 24, Glasgow Conference; 31, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Engagements.—May 24, Glasgow—the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society. June 7, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

Louis Levine (Charleston).—Many thanks for *Literary Digests*. Ingersoll's text, "There is no darkness but ignorance," is from *Twelfth Night*, act iv., scene 2. Hearty greetings.

John Bradley.—Branch excursions in the summer are good agencies for holding the members together.

W. Kyll.—It would be rather absurd to discuss Darwinism, at any rate in pure biology, before an audience ignorant in all probability of the elementary facts of the science. Of course, a debate on Religion as affected by Evolution is a different matter.

Kettering Freethinker.—Pleased to hear from you. You are at least a person of courage. Let us know the sequel in due course.

X.—The remedy for all such grievances—at least the chief remedy—is the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal. It seems to us useless for the public at large to discuss cases like that of Mrs. Maybrick.

Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme.—R. T. Jones, 3s. 6d. Per Miss Vance: Edinburgh Branch, 9s. 6d.; J. F. Dewar, 2s. 6d.; Cohen, 1s.; McLeish, 1s.

Goliath.—(1) We never saw Mr. Woodman's pamphlet, and never heard of the *Infidel's Catechism* he refers to. The ridiculous samples you give from the reverend gentleman's heap of rubbish are certainly not extracts from Edgar Monteil's *Catechisme du Libre Penseur*, which is a serious book by a man of position and ability, who received some assistance from M. Littré, the great French scholar—a member of the Academy, and the author of the famous Dictionary. (2) Good and evil are relative terms. There is no absolute morality. Nature—or God, if he controls nature—is perfectly indifferent whether a sailor hooks a shark or a shark eats a sailor. It all depends on the point of view. Morality simply means conduct which is beneficial to men, which increases their happiness or diminishes their misery.

J. Saunders (Reading) laughs at Marie Corelli's nonsense about Atheistic nostrils being offended by the perfume of flowers, and will be happy to show the lady four dozen varieties of roses grown by himself as an amateur. This correspondent promises to send us a box of roses presently. They won't offend *us*, anyhow.

F. Sayers.—Miss Vance, secretary, has sent you particulars. Pleased to hear you are joining the N.S.S.

John Grahame (Paisley) wants to know how many gods the Bible represents. Does he mean all the gods mentioned in the Bible—or what?

J. Proctor.—Fresh cards will be forwarded. Thanks.

The Plymouth Branch desires to acknowledge 10s. 6d. from "A Friend."

J. G. Crozier (Sunderland), who has £1, a subscription to the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund, lying at the Birkbeck Bank, authorises its appropriation to Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, which will be done in due course.

W. S. Clogg.—We wish Mr. Neate all happiness in his marriage. He has been a most loyal and devoted soldier of Freethought for many years.

S. Burgon.—No apology is needed. We are always pleased to hear from readers, and especially from lady readers. Glad to know you like the *Freethinker* yourself. Of course it is impossible to keep out everything that might frighten a timid Christian. That would not satisfy our special public.

Papers Received.—Land and Labor—Consett Guardian—Oxford Times—Consett Chronicle—New York Public Opinion—New York Sun—Weekly Digest—Far East—Freethought Ideal—Truthseeker—Open Court—Secular Thought—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Boston Investigator—Jarrow Guardian—Liberty—Kansas Lucifer.

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

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

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

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

Picton Hall, Liverpool, which was refused by the Town Council for the National Secular Society's Conference in 1894, was granted for a lecture by Mr. Foote on Saturday evening, May 16. It was the first local meeting under the Lecture Scheme, and it was a great success. A fine meeting, consisting of nearly a thousand people, listened to Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Foundations of Faith" with deep interest, and, judging by the applause, a great deal of sympathy. Mr. Laurence Small, who took the chair, had a fairly easy task, though many questions were asked, and several Christians took advantage of the opportunity for discussion. The Liverpool friends are delighted with the result of this experiment, which they intend (if possible) to repeat in the near future.

It was nearly half-past ten when Mr. Foote left the Picton Hall platform, and the next day (Sunday) he had three lectures to deliver in the Oddfellows' Hall. Four lectures in twenty-four hours made a pretty stiff bit of work in such weather. However, Mr. Foote was in first-rate form on Sunday night, and the applause was tremendous. A feature of the Sunday meetings was the presence of an unusual number of strangers, probably attracted through the Picton Hall experiment. One lady, in the afternoon, rose to contradict a male speaker who said that Christianity was the best friend of women. She remarked incidentally that she had never heard an Atheist lecture before, and was very agreeably surprised.

One result of Sunday's meetings is the certainty of Liverpool being represented at the Glasgow Conference. There was some doubt about it before—there is none now. One delegate is sure to go, and there will probably be a second.

The Glasgow Committee-men, wearing a rosette (Northampton colors), will await the arrival of English trains—ordinary and special—afternoon and evening, on Saturday, 23rd inst., at the three railway termini. Friends coming by other trains, or from places in Scotland, who wish to be received at the station, should send particulars as early as possible to Mr. J. P. Gilmour, 439 Victoria-road, Govanhill, Glasgow.

A good London friend, who does not desire publicity, will entertain the delegates to a hot luncheon at the North British Hotel, George-square, at one o'clock.

In order to obviate delay and possible confusion on Sunday morning, delegates and members of the N.S.S., resident and non-resident, are particularly requested to visit the Committee-room, 110 Brunswick-street, on Saturday, any time between 2 p.m. and 10, when they can have their credentials visé'd, and receive admission tickets for the business meetings of the Conference.

The Shadow of the Sword, by Mr. Foote, is reviewed by the *Vegetarian Messenger*, which says: "The publications of the Humanitarian League have always been distinguished by a sound common sense, and this pamphlet is no exception to the rule. . . . . The author disclaims any intention of attempting to alter human nature, but shows that self-interest, humanity, and reason all point to the advantage of substituting arbitration for the sword in international disputes." The Rev. J. Page Hopps writes in *The Coming Day*: "No. 19 of the Humanitarian League's publications is a militant tract against the military interest, blazing with right feeling, and strong in good sense. It gathers together, and forces into one strong bolt, a hundred electrical emotions and arguments. We only wish it could be made to hit the mark."

Reynolds's Newspaper (May 17) calls Mr. Foote's *Sign of the Cross* "a scathing criticism," and says: "We commend this criticism as a telling exposure of unlearned methods."

The Heine fountain, which was rejected by New York City, will be placed in the picnic ground at North Beach, a pleasure resort on Long Island across the East River from Harlem. Members of the Heine Memorial Committee have contributed the site, which is within the boundaries of the Greater New York, and will pay the expense of erecting the fountain.

The British Museum has purchased a hitherto unpublished letter from J. S. Mill to Thomas Carlyle. It is dated from the India House, 30 June, 1837, and, referring to Heraud, the author of *The Descent into Hell*, which Jerrold said he would like to see, Mill remarks of Heraud's disregard of contemporary opinion, "which would be greatness if he were not so sure of living forever": "He reminds me of the dying penitent's answer to his confessor, who proposed to him as a motive for patience the example of Christ. 'Ah,

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father, when J. C. died on Friday he knew well he would rise again on Sunday.'" Mill tells Carlyle that he is busy with a book "which you will think very little worth doing —a treatise on Logic."

On Sunday last the new N.S.S. Branch at Leeds had its first Sunday excursion. About a hundred members and friends went by rail to Ilkley, where they spent some hours most delightfully. Other excursions are under consideration.

Mr. A. B. Moss has been re-elected on the Camberwell Vestry, this time for three years. Mr. Moss delivered three open-air lectures on Sunday, which proves that he intends to make no abatement in his Freethought propaganda.

"My annual holiday," Mr. Moss writes, "commences this year on Saturday, July 25, and I propose to spend about a fortnight in Rhyl, North Wales. I desire, also, to make a week's tour around about Manchester and the neighbourhood. On week evenings I shall lecture under Mr. Foote's scheme, commencing at Blackburn on July 27, and I propose to go to Bolton and other towns and spread the gospel of Freethought. Societies needing outdoor lectures should communicate with me at once at 44, Credon Road, London, S.E."

Mr. J. G. Neate, secretary of the local N.S.S. Branch, has been elected a member of the Bethnal Green Vestry. There were fifteen candidates in the South Ward, and Mr. Neate headed the poll with 595 votes. Among the unsuccessful candidates was Mr. Alley, of the Christian Evidence Society, who polled 333 votes, and was twelfth on the list.

Colonel Ingersoll's address to the Church Militant, Chicago—published at our office in pamphlet form as *The Coming Civilisation*—was telegraphed verbatim all over the United States. Four hundred copies were used by the press, and the address must have been read by several millions of people.

We have received the annual report and balance-sheet of the Huddersfield Secular Sick and Funeral Society. There has been a decrease in the sick expenditure, and a corresponding increase in the bonus account. Altogether, it is an extremely healthy document.

The National Secular Society's Executive had a final special meeting on Thursday, May 14, to receive and pass the annual report and balance-sheet. Mr. John Samson raised the matter of the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund, the balance of which (about £50) is still on deposit at the Birkbeck Bank. On the motion of Mr. Samson, seconded by Mr. Hartmann, the following resolution was passed on the lines of the reply given to Mr. Samson in the *Freethinker*:—"That the subscribers to the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund who ordered their subscriptions to stand over in the Birkbeck Bank be asked through the *Freethinker* how they now wish their money to be disposed of, and that the trustees be desired to carry out their wishes, and that after the expiration of two months the unclaimed balance be paid over to the National Secular Society." This was carried unanimously.

London Freethinkers, especially in the West-end, are once more reminded of the Sunday evening lectures which will begin at the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday, May 31. Mr. Foote will deliver the first lecture, and Mr. Watts will take the chair. Full details will appear in our next issue, and in the advertisements.

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain a full report of the National Secular Society's Annual Conference at Glasgow.

How to Help Us.

(1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
(2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
(3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
(4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
(5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
(6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

The Church is at rest only when she has everything her own way, or is able, without let or hindrance, to trouble the tranquillity of others.—*Voltaire.*

LECTURING NOTES.

I HAVE just concluded an eight days' lecturing tour in Devonshire and Cornwall, where Secular propaganda is sadly needed. During my thirty-five years of Freethought advocacy I have never found districts wherein so much ignorance and priestly influence abounded as exist at the present time in these two Western counties. Apart from a few of the larger towns, the people appear to lie under the absolute control of the Church; and what is the result? An entire absence of all intellectual aspiration and mental freedom. In the rural districts a forced obedience to the dictates of the clergy is lamentably apparent. The church and the public-house are the principal institutions which seem to command adherents in the small towns and villages of both Devonshire and Cornwall. The degraded spectacle presented in these places is an evidence of what the general condition of the rural population will be if the education of the young is once more placed under clerical control. Talk of civilising the "heathens" abroad! Those who have had similar experience to that of mine during the past week will know that there are heathens at home who are existing in a semi-barbaric state. Let attention be directed to these unfortunate people, with a view of securing for them personal freedom, and exciting within them a desire for self-elevation and self-reliance. The Church has failed to do this, therefore other means must be evoked.

It is the mission of Freethought to aid in this noble work, and, through Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, more is now being accomplished in this direction than has ever even been attempted in the history of the Secular movement in this country. Our efforts are not confined, as formerly, to towns, where Freethought happily abounds, but we go to country districts, the very hot-bed of orthodox supremacy, and attack the enemy upon his own ground. The Lecturing Fund enables us to carry the Secular Gospel to thousands who previously had not heard of it, and thus practical and useful work is being done. If Lord Salisbury and his Church allies are determined to endeavor to "capture the Board schools," we must be persistent in striving to rescue the helpless victims of theological domination from the snares of priestcraft. Those persons who suppose that religious persecution is at an end should visit the outlying districts of Cornwall and Devonshire, and if such persons are open to conviction they will soon discover their mistake. During my tour in the West I learnt with pain that many men, who acknowledged that they had no faith in the teachings of theology, dared not attend my lectures in case they should be deprived of the means of providing for their wives and families. At Liskeard, in Cornwall, friends who had promised to assist in the local arrangements were compelled to withdraw their aid at the last moment on account of Christian intimidation; and in Plympton, only a few miles from Plymouth, a tradesman lost all his business, and was driven from the place, simply because he refused to attend church and profess a faith in which he could not believe. Such attempts to enforce hypocritical profession, and such persecution of those who resist the immoral action, are disgraceful, and show the pernicious influence of Christian theology. A man who has only himself to consider may make himself a martyr to religious persecution, but it is hard to expose one's wife and children to want in consequence of the honest avowal of opinions sincerely held.

My four Sunday lectures in Plymouth were given under the auspices of the local Branch of the N.S.S. The audiences were good, and much larger than those I had at my previous visits. Friends attended from surrounding districts, and all present were most enthusiastic in their approval of the lectures. Thanks to the persistent activity of Messrs. Barter, Smith, Rennolls, and Pascoe, the prospects of the local Branch have much improved, and I am glad to record the fact that the Branch will be represented at the Glasgow Conference. In Plymouth and the two adjoining towns, Stonehouse and Devonport, Freethinkers are very numerous, and I earnestly hope that they will give practical help to the local Branch. Arrangements are being made by the Plymouth friends to carry on an extensive propaganda during the coming season, and if all Secularists will render what aid they can good results will be sure to follow.

All my week-night lectures were under Mr. Foote's scheme, and meetings were held where Secular views were

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previously unknown. The opposition offered was (with two exceptions) very thoughtful and gentlemanly. Numerous questions were asked, and the greatest possible attention was given to the lectures. The exceptions were at Devonport and Tavistock. At the former place a wild and incoherent exhorter, by the name of Thomas, created much amusement by throwing about a huge Bible, declaring that he believed every word of it. Fortunately, his folly was somewhat counteracted by a calm speech from the local Unitarian minister. In referring to this incident, the *Western Evening Herald*, of May 12, has the following editorial note:—

> "Mr. C. B. Courtnay Thomas has lain low for some time. But he is popping up again. He was present at a lecture by Mr. Charles Watts, the Secularist, at Devonport last night, and made his presence felt, as 'tis his nature to. Mr. Watts's lecture was not very aggressive, and could hardly have offended anybody who went to hear it in the full assurance that he was to hear an exposition of Secularist doctrines. This was the view that the Rev. Tyssul-Davies, who took part in the discussion, adopted. He was able to keep cool. But Mr. Thomas was not. He became excited, and interrupted Mr. Watts in his reply to the criticism passed upon his address."

The *Western Daily Mercury* gave a fair report of my lecture. At Tavistock a long debate followed the lecture, and, strange to say, the policeman who was on duty to keep order asked, in a very inquisitorial style, if I dared to deny that "Jesus possessed all power on earth and in heaven"? He seemed quite astonished when I informed him that his New Testament stated that Christ was limited in power, and that he confessed that of himself he could do nothing. On leaving the hall with my friends, this "protector of the law" hissed us most vehemently. His Christian fanaticism was evidently more potent than his love of duty.

On each evening a party of Plymouth friends, including Mr. Barter and his two daughters, Mr. Pascoe and his sister, Mr. Rennolls, Mr. Couch, Mr. Searle, and Mr. Smith, the energetic president of the Plymouth Branch, accompanied me to the place of meeting, and one and all worked hard to make the lectures a success. As soon as the Lecturing Fund will allow it, these towns must be again visited, when no doubt the seed that has been sown in truly orthodox soil will have borne good fruit.

The pleasure of my tour has been considerably enhanced by the kindness shown me by the Plymouth friends. Mr. Barter and his wife made a capital host and hostess, who, with their two charming daughters, did everything for my comfort. It was indeed pleasant to be entertained by such a happy family, where the halo of Secular joy illuminates the domestic circle. CHARLES WATTS.

BUDDHISM AND GOD.

A PECULIAR lesson is involved in the fact that Buddhism, the greatest non-Christian religion, which is distinguished for inculcating the noblest moral maxims, such as love of enemies, chastity, sincerity of heart, and charity towards all suffering creatures, knows nothing about God. Unfriendly critics have on that account branded Buddhists as Atheists, and yet they face the same facts of life and have derived therefrom the same rules of ethical conduct. The main difference between Christians and Buddhists consists in the employment of different systems of comprehending and symbolising the facts of experience. Both religions, Christianity as well as Buddhism, recognise an authority for moral conduct. The former call it Christ, the latter Buddha. Christ reveals to Christians the will of God; Buddha teaches men enlightenment. There is this difference: that Christ appears as the son of God, and therefore his teachings must be accepted as revealed truth, while Buddha is a man, who, after a diligent search, at last obtained the highest wisdom, that will deliver mankind from evil. In Christianity the sonship of Christ vouches for the truth of Christ's message, while in Buddhism Buddha's enlightenment constitutes his Buddhahood. Now, Buddha teaches that enlightenment is the same, and that all Buddhas teach the same religion, which consists in the abandonment of the vanity of self-hood, of all hatred and envy, and of lust, implying at the same time a far-reaching and unbounded love (which refuses none, not even those who hate and despise us), compassion with all those that suffer, and holiness. Enlightenment is a living recognition of the truth seen in its moral application to practical life, and truth is a summarised statement of facts, or rather the laws pervading the facts, and constituting a comprehensive aspect of their eternality. And this essence of Buddhahood, the eternal laws, the recognition of which constitutes enlightenment, has been formulated by the later Buddhists under the name of Amitabha, which means illimitable light, and is conceived as eternal, immutable, and omnipresent. It is the *Sawbhoga-Kaya* (the body of bliss) among the three personalities of Buddha, the other two being the *Nirmana-Kaya*, the apparitional body of Buddha the teacher, and the *Dharma-Kaya*, the body of the law, which is Buddha's religion in its historical development.

The facts are the same in Buddhism and in Christianity; only the modes of formulating them in symbolical expressions vary. Both religions recognise an authority of conduct which, in a word, we may call "the ethical law of the universe, as manifested in the evolution of life."

According to Buddhist notions, every man is responsible for his fate, for every living creature is the incarnation of his karma. We are our own makers. We reap what we have sown. In this conception every single creature is no longer regarded as an individual being whose fate begins with its birth and ends with its death. Every creature is regarded in its connection with the whole world of life as the continuation of preceding life. Every creature is the result of the karma done in its former existences.

The aim of the Buddhist is to understand the law of life, and to act in agreement with it. Enlightenment concerning the problems of man's soul, implying the right attitude of mind with regard to our duties, constitutes Buddhahood. Thus, to the Buddhist, there is no problem of a conflict between the existence of evil in the world and the goodness of Amitabha, the external conditions of Buddhahood. The existence of evil in this world is the result of our own doing. We are the builders of our own fate, and we must be our own saviors.

If a bridge breaks down under the weight of railroad cars too heavy for its construction, is the law of gravitation responsible for the lives that are lost in the wreck? According to the Buddhist conception, the engineer is responsible. There is no Brahma responsible for our mistakes, or even for our ignorance; but we ourselves are guilty of both. The constitution of life, and the laws of life, are no secrets. They are open to all, and can be investigated and obeyed; and if the bridge be constructed by an intelligent engineer, it will carry the passengers over the river to the other bank. He who understands his own being and the laws underlying the development of life will no longer throw the responsibility of his misfortunes on others, be they gods or men; but will, like Faust in Goethe's grand drama, seek salvation in helpful deeds that will live after him, and preserve the bliss of his life in all generations to come.

—*The Open Court.* P. CARUS.

A PRECIOUS TEXT.

"THOU shalt not suffer a witch to live!"
So runs the Hebrew law;
And we must implicit obedience give,
Or else with the devils for ever we'll live
In a country which can't be called "braw"!

Now, I know a witch, and her spells I have felt—
Indeed, she is one living spell;
Her bonnie blue eyes, where the love glances melt,
Her cherry-ripe lips, whose soft pressure I've felt,
All, all, her dire witchery tell.

'Tis pity old Moses had not seen her once,
When the love-light shone bright in her eye;
He'd have listened to justice (if but for the nonce),
And altered his bloodthirsty law right at once
To "A witch thou shalt never let die!"

AMIGO.

The prayers that God answers are those that require somebody else to do something.

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TALMAGE THE TURGID.

MR. TALMAGE is quite sure that God was on the side of the allies at the Battle of Waterloo; that he was on the side of the Russians during the French invasion. Mr. Talmage does not take it upon himself to explain, however, how the deity chanced to be on the other side at Marengo and Austerlitz! No wonder that war is a risky business, if the God of battles changes his allegiance so erratically, and without apparent provocation! Mr. Talmage should advise the Government to cease expending money for ironclads and coast fortifications. In case of a foreign complication it were "all day with us" if the Autocrat of the universe were swinging a battle-axe against us; while, if we chance to have him with us, we could send Baby McKee out with the jaw-bone of a hen, and put the armies of the world to shame!

Mr. Talmage should retire to some secluded spot and make a careful analysis of his sermons before firing them out to the press. They may sound all right in the big tabernacle, where a great volume of noise is the chief desideratum; but they make very poor reading. Like a flap-jack, they may tickle the palate when served hot and with plenty of "sop"; but, when allowed to grow cold, are stale, flat, and unprofitable.

Mr. Talmage is troubled with the diarrhœa of words, and should take something for it. Perhaps the best possible prescription would be a long rest—of a couple of centuries or so. How, in God's great name, the American people ever became afflicted with the idea that he is a great man is a riddle which might make Œdipus cudgel his wits in vain. He is not even a skilful pretender, shining, like the moon, by borrowed light—for he does not shine at all. His sentences are neither picturesque, dramatic, nor wise. His so-called "sermons" are but fragmentary, and usually ignorant allusion to things in general. He seldom or never encroaches upon the realms of science and philosophy, although he frequently attempts it, and evidently imagines that he is succeeding admirably, when he is but sloshing around, like a drunken comet that is chiefly tail, in inane limboes.

I can find no other explanation of Mr. Talmage's distinction than that, like Elliot F. Shepard, he can be more kinds of a fool in a given time than any other man in his profession. That were indeed distinction enough for one man, well calculated to cause the world to stand agaze! Notoriety and fame have, in this age, become synonymous, if not exactly the same. The world guages greatness by the volume of sound which the aspirant for immortal honors succeeds in setting afloat, little caring whether it be such celestial harp-music as caused Thebe's walls to rise, or the discordant bray of the ram's horn which made Jericho's to fall; and Mr. Talmage is emphatically a noise-producer. From the lecherous but learned and logical Beecher to the gabbling inanity now doing the drum-major act is a long stride.

—*Brann's Scrap-Book.*

Natural Forces not Laws.

No philosophical speculation should begin with a fiction, and it is altogether a fiction to represent natural law (*i.e.*, the qualities of objects around us) as commands. No commands are issued, and none should be assumed. It is equally indulging in fiction to speak of observing and transgressing the said laws; of reaping the reward attendant on the first, and incurring the punishment appointed for the second. The truth involved in this verbiage is nothing more than that similar causes uniformly produce similar effects, and that it is a knowledge of these uniform successions which enables us to adjust our conduct to them so as to avoid evil and to secure good.—*Samuel Bailey, "Letters on the Philosophy of the Human Mind," third series, p. 73.*

François Peyrard, a French Mathematician and Revolutionist (1760–1822), wrote *Nature and its Laws.* He asks the pertinent question: "Si Dieu n'a pas voulu rendre ses creatures completement heureuses dans ce monde, quelle raison ont ils de croire qu'il le voudra dans un autre?"—"If God never cared to make his creatures completely happy in this world, what reason can they have for believing he wills it in another?" When people are rational that question will destroy all their faith in future happiness. If man is ever happy, it is in spite of God, whose torturing instruments surround and fill him from his first moment to his last. And the God who made and conducts this world is certainly not the God to make and conduct a good one. It would be more rational to expect beasts, birds, and reptiles of prey to enter into compact to preserve animal life, or Popish priests to become friends of truth and practical teachers of morality. God has always behaved as badly as possible. What reason can men have for expecting him to repent, reform, and become good in future?—*J. Symes.*

AT THE MOUTH OF HELL.

BOB INGERSOLL PROMISES TO POSE FOR A PICTURE REPRESENTING HIM THERE, WITH MEPHISTO BY HIS SIDE.

New York, May 3.—It is not every man who would care to stand up and be pictured as entering the infernal regions, but that is what Robert G. Ingersoll is going to do very shortly.

So much of Mr. Ingersoll's life has been spent in mentally struggling with hell-fire that he doesn't mind having himself illustratively injected into the midst of it, even though it be such lurid hell-fire as is shown in the painting soon to be put on exhibition by G. S. Perhacs, a Brooklyn artist. All that is necessary to put the finishing touch to Hades is the figure of the noted infidel, and he will pose for that purpose within a short time.

The idea of painting a picture of hell struck Mr. Perhacs some years ago while he was travelling through Europe studying art in the various galleries. It seemed to him that the subject had not received that attention from painters which it deserved, so he decided to embody his ideas of the region in a picture of great size.

Two years ago he began the work of painting it, and it is now finished but for the two main figures. It represents the mouth of hell.

Hell is represented as a vast chasm surrounded by lofty mountains, between the peaks of which can be seen stretches of pale, cool sky, in effective contrast to the fiery depths below. Over the chasm hover demons armed with bows to drive back such of the damned as attempt to rise above their sphere in the future life, and a body tumbling into the gulf transfixed by an arrow serves as an awful warning to others meditating escape.

A large flat rock stands in the most conspicuous position, and it is on this rock that Mr. Ingersoll will stand, accompanied by Mephisto, who plays Virgil to the infidel's Dante. Mr. Ingersoll's attitude will be that of a spectator, which is not the *rôle* that many people would pick out for him under such circumstances.

He will have his pick of several emotions to depict: Horror, pity, distress, or incredulity.

Before taking steps to place Mr. Ingersoll at the mouth of hell, Mr. Perhacs took steps to obtain his permission, which proved to be an easy matter. Furthermore, the lecturer consented to pose, even though it involved wearing a Roman toga.—*Boston Daily Globe* (May 4).

However positive anyone's persuasion may be, not only of the falsity, but of the pernicious consequences—not only of the pernicious consequences, but (to adopt expressions which I altogether condemn) the immorality and impiety of an opinion; yet if, in pursuance of that private judgment, though backed by the public judgment of his country or his contemporaries, he prevents the opinion being heard in its defence, he assumes infallibility. And, so far from the assumption being less objectionable or less dangerous because the opinion is called immoral or impious, this is the case of all others in which it is most fatal. These are exactly the occasions on which the men of one generation commit those dreadful mistakes which excite the astonishment and horror of posterity. It is among such that we find the instances memorable in history, when the arm of the law has been employed to root out the best men and the noblest doctrines; with deplorable success as to the men, though some of the doctrines have survived to be (as if in mockery) invoked in defence of similar conduct towards those who dissent from *them*, or from their received interpretation.—*John Stuart Mill.*

The following "verses" were discovered the other Sunday by a gentleman on the flyleaf of a hymnal in a city church:—

Saith Coleridge, "Sleep's a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole";
So in this place, when we don't sing,
The drowsy god o'erspreads his wing—
We snore through sermons whole.

The parson fulminates in vain,
The sleeper sounder grows;
Thus while he's in the house of God
He travels in the Land of Nod,
And tells this by his nose.

Two infinite entities are impossible. God, if he exists, must be an infinite entity. The universe *is* an infinite entity. Hence—draw your own conclusion.

The priest does the cackling, but the congregation lays the eggs.

"Where will you spend eternity?" menacingly inquires the parson. Where we spent it before we were born.

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BOOK CHAT.

Christ and the Creator Glorified; or, Our Savior and Science Reconciled, by One Oppressed (Glasgow and Edinburgh: Menzies and Co.), is the very orthodox title of a very heterodox book. The writer is evidently a person who has in childhood been deeply impressed with religious doctrines, has encountered many difficulties in their literal acceptance, and has sought, like so many others, to reconcile the conclusions of reason and science with the teachings of the Gospels. The result is a bulky book of 653 pages, with another 181 pages of an anthological excursus culled from all sorts of authors. We find cheek by jowl Jesus Christ and Kingdon Clifford, Aristotle and Mr. Haweis, Cicero and *Science Siftings*, Plato and Thomas Paine.

* * *

The whole book is, indeed, a museum of curiosities, full of extracts from the works of great masters, with occasional items of rubbish from such charlatans as Prophet Baxter. In one instance, at least (p. 570), a verse from Thomas Moore is mislabelled Sir Thomas More. A surprising variety of topics in connection with religion, philosophy, and sociology is dealt with, and the manner in which the author contrives to effect his reconciliation of incompatibles reminds us of some recipes for salad-making. He prepares an immense quantity of the most diverse ingredients, and by dint of much stirring forms a mixture which you may fancy amalgamated if you do not examine the various particles. Yet it must be confessed we have gone through the book with some pleasure. One is always lighting on a good thing generally taken with acknowledgment from other works, and these are so numerous that the book is probably more suggestive than any well-arranged and easily-digestible treatise would be.

* * *

The author of *Christ and the Creator Glorified* is evidently a well-read man, of large sympathies, touched, as so many are in these days, with the mania of reconciling the old fictions of religion with the new facts of science. He has discarded the worst features of theology, but runs an ideal Christ of his own, who is the perfect embodiment of natural science. He tells us "the world only needs to turn to science to re-discover Christ," who is "the protagonist of Nature," and the exponent of the true relation of man to the cosmos.

* * *

We have no objection to "One Oppressed" "re-conceiving the Christ," and running, as so many others do, one of his own brand; nay, we confess his conception is vastly superior to the little tin Jesus on wheels who receives the devotion of the multitude; but he must not expect us to identify his ideal with the thaumaturgic Jew of the Gospels, any more than with the theological Christ whom he repudiates. His theosophic reconciliation is buried beneath a dense mass of discussions, and those who dive for it are just as likely to bring up some pearls of Freethought as the old theological mud.

* * *

Vol. 1 of the new translation of the Sacred Books of the Buddhists, edited by F. Max Müller, and published at the cost of the King of Siam, is the *Gâtakamâld, or Garland of Birth Stories*, translated from the Sanskrit by J. S. Speyer. These stories profess to relate the lives of Gautama Buddha previously to his attainment of Buddhahood, and illustrate the boundless compassion and charity towards all creatures which attended him on the road. Teetotalers may not know that one section is devoted to a discourse against intoxicating liquors—an item found also in the Koran, but not in the New Testament.

* * *

The Old Light and the New, dealing with the chemistry of color and the new photography, is an illustrated little manual by William Ackroyd, Headmaster of the Chemistry Department at the Halifax Technical School. Mr. Ackroyd regards the X-rays as probably of the nature of ultra-violet rays, propagated by movement of the ether particles. The *brochure* contains some original views on the chemistry of color.

* * *

Is there a Devil? is the printed report of an address delivered in Anerley Congregational Church by the Rev. Joseph Halsey. This man of God uses his carnal reason to question the existence of the Devil, without any qualms that he may thereby throw in doubt the existence of his Deity. Indeed, he argues from the supposed existence of an all-good being for the non-existence of a devil. But if the latter is an invention to account for the phenomena of evil, is not the former an invention to account for the opposite phenomena? Mr. Halsey glides gently over the Scripture evidence for the Devil, and conveniently forgets that his existence was taught by the Church, and believed in by all Christians, in the days before scepticism flourished.

* * *

John Burroughs is unswerving in his devotion to the memory of Walt Whitman, whom he was one of the first to make known to the wide reading world. He has recently delivered an address on Whitman before the Phi. Beta Kappa Society at Yale, in which he says the poet's purpose was "to lead the way to a larger, saner, more normal, more robust type of men and women on this continent, to prefigure and help develop the new democratic man—to project him into literature on a scale and with a distinctness that cannot be mistaken. To this end he keeps a deep hold of the savage, the unrefined, and marshals the elements and influences that make for the virile, the heroic, the sane, the large, and for the perpetuity of the race. We cannot refine the elements—the air, the water, the soil, the sunshine—and the more we pervert or shut out these from our lives, the worse for us. In the same manner, the more we pervert or balk the great natural impulses—sexuality, comradeship, the religious emotion, nativity—or the more we deny and belittle our bodies, the further we are from the spirit of Walt Whitman, and from the spirit of the All."

PROFANE JOKES.

A little girl in a small town watched the putting in of electric lights with much interest. They had been completed for about a week when she looked out of the window and saw the moon. She leaned out on the sill and said: "Now, Mr. Moon, you may go back into heaven and tell Mr. Jesus that we don't need you any more. We've got electric lights now."

"I was surprised, Willie," said his Sunday-school teacher, "to see you keep your seat when the superintendent asked those who wanted to go to heaven to rise. Don't you want to go to heaven?" "Yes'm." "Then why didn't you rise?" "'Cos he didn't have no right to tell me to rise, ma'am," answered Willie. "He ain't no Angel Gabriel."

Colonel George Christ, of Arizona, who was collector of customs at Nogales, tells a story aimed against himself with gusto. "I was a candidate," said he, "for the governorship of Arizona, and came up to Washington to see about my prospects. I had plenty of backing, but secretary Noble had decided upon giving it to another man. My first experience with the secretary was not very pleasant. On going to have a conference with him I sent in my card, which simply read 'G. Christ.' Pretty soon the messenger came back and reported that the secretary could not see me. I was somewhat indignant, because of this flat turn down, and wanted an explanation. 'Why won't he see me?' I asked of the man. 'Well, I don't exactly know, sir,' he answered, 'but I has an idea the secretary was a little bit huffy at you for spelling Jesus with a G.'"

A country farmer once excused himself for sleeping during the vicar's sermon by observing: "Lor', sir, when you are in the pulpit we know it is all right."

A little girl was to recite a verse of Scripture in Sunday-school, but failed to remember it. She said: "Mamma, what is my verse? Oh, I know now—'Blessed are the dressmakers.'"

"Boys," said a teacher in the Sunday-school, "can any of you quote a verse from Scripture to prove that it is wrong for a man to have two wives?" He paused, and after a moment or two a bright boy raised his hand. "Well, Thomas?" said the teacher, encouragingly. Thomas stood up, and said: "No man can serve two masters."

It was a north-country colliery proprietor, and he was instructing his five-year-old daughter in the doctrine of future punishment. The little girl was extremely anxious to know the exact nature of hell. Her father explained that it was a fiery gulf of unlimited extent. The child reflected a moment. Then "Father," she said, "couldn't you persuade the Devil to take his coals from you?"

HOT-WEATHER PHILOSOPHY.—"Do you fear death?" "No"—mopping the perspiration—"not in some forms." "What, for instance?" "Oh, well; say freezing."

APPEALING TO THE RECORD.—"As to the right mode of baptism," argued Deacon Baconside, "I reckon everybody knows how John the Baptist used to do it; and John the Baptist was a man with a great head." "He was," replied Uncle Bungley; "but he couldn't keep it."

To speak your honest thoughts, to teach your fellow men, to investigate for yourself, to seek the truth—these were all crimes, and the "Holy Mother Church" pursued the criminals with sword and flame. The believers in a God of love—an infinite father—punished hundreds of offences with torture and death. Suspected persons were tortured to make them confess. Convicted persons were tortured to make them give the names of their accomplices. Under the leadership of the Church, cruelty had become the only reforming power.—*Ingersoll.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.15, E. Calvert, "Is Free Speech Conducive to Truth and Progress?" Saturday (30), concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, F. J. Gould, "Margaret Fuller."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Hell and its Ethical Substitutes."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, S. C. H. Carter, "The Wants of Man."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Hell and its Ethical Substitutes."

PENTON HALL (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Life of Lessing."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Bible Tales of Heroes."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Ethics and Theology."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Mr Jones, "Christian Religion."

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand): 11.15, E. Pack, "Christian Infidels"; 3.15, H. Courtney, "The Upshot of Secularism."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, J. Fagan, "Is there a God?" Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, F. Haslam will lecture; 3.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed." Wednesday, at 8, J. Fagan will lecture.

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, F. Haslam will lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, Mr. St. John. "Has Man a Soul?"

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "A Plea for Secular Education."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, J. Rowney will lecture; 3.15, W. Heaford will lecture.

COUNTRY.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): Annual Excursion to Welton Dale—leave Hall at 9.30.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): No meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street); 7, A Professional Gentleman will give a series of character-delineations of notable persons, with special recitals, musical and otherwise, in which Mrs. F. V. Pearson will also take part.

Lecturer's Engagements.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—May 24, New Brompton; 31, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

"THOROUGH."

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The Freethinker

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

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CHRIST OR JUDAS—WHICH?

IN Shakespeare's tragedy of *Othello* there are two characters, the Moor of Venice and Iago, his Ancient, who are of about the same value in representing the plot of the play. Indeed, among members of the theatrical profession it is a matter of opinion which is the leading part; hence all our great actors have usually alternated playing Othello on one night and Iago on the next. There is a like similitude between Christ and Judas in their relation to the tragedy of the Cross. We do not refer to the supposed life of Jesus, but to the episode of his death, as recorded in the New Testament. In Matthew (cxxvi.) we read that Judas, who was one of the twelve Apostles, betrayed his Master with a kiss, and thus gave him into the hands of the chief priests who sought his arrest. This was the first of the acts which led to the crucifixion of Christ; and we are told "that thus it must be, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled" (Matthew xxvi. 54, 56). It, therefore, appears that Judas was originally "cast" for the part he played in the "Sign of the Cross," and to him may be ascribed the taking of the initiation in the arrest, trial, condemnation, and execution of the "Savior of the world." If this be so, we fail to see that Christians are justified in abusing, as they do, the man Judas. In betraying Jesus he was only doing what had been arranged, not *by* him, but *for* him. It might have happened that, if Judas had not acted as he did, there would have been no arrest, and consequently no crucifixion and no "redeeming sacrifice."

We have been induced to consider this subject through a sermon which was delivered at Clapham by Dr. Guinness Rogers (who is described as "the grand old man of modern evangelical thought"), a report of which appeared in a recent issue of the London *Daily Chronicle*. The Doctor, having taken for his text verses 3 and 5 in Matthew xxvii., wherein it is recorded that Judas, finding he was condemned for betraying Jesus, "went and hanged himself," "pictured the awful fate of the betrayer of his Lord" in thus ending his life. But if Dr. Rogers had taken for his text the account of the death of Judas as given in the first chapter of Acts (verse 18), he might have pictured a still more "awful fate" of Judas. The two accounts are entirely contradictory; in the one it is said that he hanged himself, while in the other it is stated that, "falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." Now, a man cannot commit suicide in two different ways, and it would be interesting to know which account given in "God's word" can be relied upon as being the true one. Both records cannot be accurate. It may be "awful" to see a man dangling at the end of a rope, but that is not nearly so "awful" as to behold the disgusting scene as pictured in Acts. It may be urged that the important point in the story is that Judas did put an end to himself, and that it does not matter how he did so. We maintain, however, that it does matter, and that very much; for, according to orthodox Christianity, the Holy Ghost inspired the writers to pen both accounts, which are totally different. It is therefore open to grave doubt if either record is trustworthy.

We have not space here to discuss the various theories that have been held in reference to the alleged conduct of Judas. Dr. Rogers mentions, among others, the German theory, which is, "that Judas was not so bad as he had been represented; that he had no intention to betray his Lord; that, in short, he thought the Master slow and backward; and that he would help the Master to assert his power and royalty and supremacy." This theory the Doctor thinks "very ingenious," but he adds that he does not see why it should be accepted. But surely this theory is as reasonable as the one held by orthodox Christians? What is Dr. Rogers's theory upon the matter? Simply this, that, although Judas was one of Christ's chosen Apostles, he was a very wicked man; that it was arranged that he should betray his Master, yet for doing so he deserves the severest condemnation; that, according to the New Testament, it appears that the betrayal was a necessary feature of the redemption scheme, yet because Judas played the part assigned to him the Doctor terms him a "thief" and a "villain"; that the chief priests had to give Judas "thirty pieces of silver" (Matthew xxvi. 14, 15) to enable them to recognise Jesus, who was then the best known man in Bethany; and, finally, that the very book upon which the Doctor relies for the whole story gives two contradictory accounts of the death of the betrayer. Such a theory as this is the very essence of inconsistency. In our opinion, no theory that has hitherto been propounded is sufficiently reasonable to justify us in believing it to be true. Further, we regard the whole narrative of the betrayal and crucifixion to be untrue, for we have never seen any trustworthy history that gives an account of such events.

Dr. Rogers says: "At any rate, we have the fact that the remorse of Judas was so great that he went out and hanged himself." Now, the word "fact" here should read "assertion," and, instead of saying that Judas "hanged himself," the statement should be that he fell down, etc. Those persons who differ from us upon this point must doubt the veracity of the "inspired" recorder of the speech of Peter, as given in Acts (i.). He there mentions the surviving potter's field (see Matthew xxvii.) in confirmation of his allegations. Moreover, he says that it (the suicide of Judas by falling headlong, etc.) "was known to all the dwellers in Jerusalem." But the most powerful blow is dealt at the root of the salvation scheme by Dr. Rogers quoting approvingly the following words ascribed to Christ: "Good were it for that man if he had never been born" (Mark xiv. 21). Now, inasmuch as the betrayal was as important a part of the tragedy as any act upon the part of the betrayed, we fail to see how the death of Christ to save sinners could have been effected without Judas. Besides, Peter, in his speech, points out that "the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas, who was to guide them that took Jesus" (Acts i. 16). In the face of this plain statement by Peter, the severe condemnation of Judas, and his awful example to us, as given by Dr. Rogers, seem really farcical in the extreme. How could the man meditate and act upon his own account if he had been appointed to do what he did so far back as the time of "the mouth of David"? If Judas had "sold" his "Master" without having been selected for the transaction, his case might have been different. We submit that, if the story in the New Testament be true, it is the height of absurdity to speak of the instrument of God, in aiding the salvation of the world, as if he were a low villain engaged in some unholy undertaking.

But even if we admit that it would have been better for Judas if he had not been one of the twelve apostles selected by his omniscient master, it is clear that some other victim would have been chosen to carry out the plot of the piece. Dr. Rogers appears to us not to recognise the position, for if the betrayer "had better not have been born," the same would apply to the one betrayed, and, in that case, the

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whole plan of the crucifixion was a gigantic blunder. Whatever is condemnable in Judas is equally so in all the other agencies invoked in the tragedy. If Dr. Rogers's theory be accepted, it seems to us that there is no escape from the conclusion that it would have been a fortunate thing for the world if no such mode of redemption as the one in which Christ and Judas played such prominent parts had been arranged for its special benefit. The entire scheme is as inconsistent and absurd as it has proved itself to be useless to achieve its avowed object. No marvel that this orthodox plan of salvation fails to win the assent, at the present day, of many intelligent minds, even of those within the Christian fold. Most of those believers who profess to give it their adherence do so without considering its improbable and contradictory nature. Their position is precisely similar to that of the thousands of easily-satisfied persons who have witnessed the performance of the much-talked-of drama of *The Sign of the Cross*. They are caught by the exciting incidents of the story, overlooking its many incoherent and unhistorical features.

Dr. Rogers concludes his sermon, as reported in the *Daily Chronicle*, by denouncing Judas as a thief and a villain, and declaring that "our only security is in God." Is it possible that Judas, who was selected by Jesus to be one of his twelve apostles, was destitute of such security? Can we conceive of a more direct instance of the dismal failure of Christianity than the one set forth by Dr. Rogers? Here was a man who lived with Jesus, walked with him, talked with him, heard his exhortations, and saw his wonderful miracles; yet we are told this very man proved himself at the end to be a thief, a villain, and a deceitful rascal! Truly it says but little for the ennobling character of Christ's personal influence. If such of his daily companions as Judas and Peter were not affected by his example, and by listening to the teachings from his own mouth, it is not surprising that to-day so many who profess to follow Jesus make no serious efforts to emulate what he is supposed to have done. Let the truth be told: orthodox Christianity is a disgraceful sham and a humiliating hypocrisy.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER XIII.

SELF-DEFENSIVE FOR THE PEOPLE.

What suits the gods above
Only the gods can know;
What we want is This World's sense
How to live below.

BY its nature, Secularism is tolerant with regard to religions. I once drew up a code of rules for an Atheistic school. One rule was that the children should be taught the tenets of the Christian, Catholic, Moslem, Jewish, and the leading theological systems of the world, as well as Secularistic and Atheistic forms of thought; so that, when the pupil came to years of discretion, he might be able intelligently to choose a faith for himself. Less than this would be a fraud upon the understanding of a man. In matters which concern himself alone, he must be free to choose for himself, and know what he is choosing from. That form of belief which has misgivings as to whether it can stand by itself is to be distrusted.

It is the scandal of Christianity that for twenty-five years it has paralysed School Board instruction by its discord of opinion as to the religious tenets to be imparted. In secularity there is no disunity. Everybody is agreed upon the rules of arithmetic. The laws of grammar command general assent. There are no rival schools upon the interpretation of geometrical problems. It is only in divinity that irreconcileable diversity exists. When secular instruction is conceded, denominational differences will be respected, as aspects of the integrity of conscience, which no longer obstruct the intellectual progress of the people.

But there are graver issues than the pride and preference of the preacher—namely, the welfare of the children of the people. What the working classes want is an industrial education. Poverty is a battle, and the poor are always in a conflict—a conflict in which the most ignorant ever go to the wall. The accepted policy of the State leaves the increase of population to chance. It suffers none to be killed; it compels people to be kept alive, and abandons their subsistence to the accident of capitalists requiring to hire their services. Thus our great towns are crowded with families, impelled there by the wild forces of hunger and of passion. From the working man thus situated the governing class exact four duties:—

(1) That he shall give the parish no disquietude by asking it to maintain his family.

(2) That he shall pay whatever taxes are levied upon him.

(3) That he shall give no trouble to the police.

(4) That he shall fight generally whomsoever the Government may see fit to involve the nation in war with.

Whatever knowledge is necessary to enable the future workman to do these things is his right, and should be given to him in his youth in the speediest manner; and any other inculcation which shall delay this knowledge on its way, or confuse the learner in acquiring it, is a cruelty to him and a peril to the community which permits it; and the State, were it discerning and just, would forbid it.

In April, 1870, in a letter which appeared in the *Spectator*, I wrote as follows:—

> "In the speech of the Bishop of Peterborough, delivered at the Educational Conference at Leicester, and published in a separate form by the National Education Union, his Lordship quotes from a recent letter of mine to the *Daily News* some words in which I explained that 'unsectarian education amounts to a new species of parliamentary piety.' It is a satisfaction to find that the Bishop of Peterborough is able to 'entirely endorse these words.' The Bishop asks: 'Whose words do you suppose they are? They are the words of that reactionary maintainer of creeds and dogmas—Mr. Holyoake.' So far from being a 'reactionary' in this matter, I have always maintained that every form of sincere opinion, religious or secular, should have free play and fair play. I have never varied in advocating the right of free utterance and free action of all earnest conviction. The State requires a self-supporting and tax-paying population. But the State cannot insure this, except by imparting *productive* knowledge to the people. It is necessary for the people to receive, it is the interest of the State to give, *productive* instruction in national schools."

If people realised how much extended secular instruction is needed, they would be impatient with the obstruction of it by contending sects. Children want industrial education to fit them for emigrants. A knowledge of soils, of cattle, of climate, and crops, and how to nail up a wigwam and grow pork and corn, is what they need. For want of such knowledge Clerkenwell watch-makers, Northampton shoemakers, Lancashire weavers, and Durham miners perish as emigrants, and their bones bleach the prairies. Yet all orthodox teaching turns out its pupils uninstructed, for, as Tillottson has said, "He that does not know those things which are of use and necessity for him to know is but an ignorant man, whatever he may know beside." To know this world, and the secular conditions of prosperity in it, is indispensable to the people.

Christianity is entirely futile in industry. If a workman cannot pay his taxes, the most devout Chancellor of the Exchequer will not abate sixpence in consideration of the defaulter's piety. The poor man may believe in the Thirty-nine Articles, be able to recite all the Collects; he may spend his Sundays at church, and his evenings at prayer-meeting; but the reverend magistrate, who has confirmed him and preached to him, will send him to gaol if he does not pay. The sooner workmen understand that Christianity has no commercial value, the better for them.

Why should purely secular instruction be regarded with distrust, when purely religious education does not answer? It does not appear in human experience that purely religious teaching, even when dispensed in a clergyman's family, is a security for good conduct. It is matter of common remark that the sons of clergymen turn out worse than the sons of parents in other professions.

We want no whining or puling population. The elements of science and morality will give children the use of their minds, and minds to use, and teach justice and kindness, self-direction, self-reliance, fortitude, and truth. There is piety in this instruction—piety to mankind—exactly that sort of piety for the want of which society suffers.

The principles for which during two centuries Nonconformity in England has contended are, that the State should forbid no religion, impose no religion, teach no religion, pay

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no religion. In 1870, the year in which Mr. Forster's Act came into operation, I was the only person who issued a public address to the "School Board Electors" in favor of free, compulsory, and secular instruction. Two of the proposals, the least likely to be favorably received, have since been adopted. The turn of the third must be near, unless fools are always at the polls.

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE.

SOME visitors from the South to Glasgow find the city grey and gloomy. The Brunswick-street Hall, however, in which the delegates of the National Secular Society assembled last Sunday, was bright and gay with floral and other decorations. Portraits in oil of Robert Owen and Alexander Campbell, and other large-size portraits of Paine, G. J. Holyoake, Charles Bradlaugh, and Colonel Ingersoll, adorned the walls around, which were emblazoned with mottoes from Hobbes, Hume, Voltaire, Burns, Paine, Carlile, and Ingersoll.

There was a good muster of delegates and friends, the following Branches being represented:—Barnsley, T. Wombwell, C. Birdsall; Bethnal Green, C. Cohen; Bolton, T. Holstead, C. N. Atkinson; Bedlington, R. Forder; Bristol, W. Hawker, M. Kay; Blackburn, J. Umpleby, J. Titherington; Birmingham, R. Taylor, S. Armfield; Bradford, J. Sunderland; Camberwell, S. Hartmann; Derby, F. Swain, W. H. Whitney; Edinburgh, J. F. Dewar, R. Brown; Finsbury, E. Bater; Finsbury Park, Miss E. Robins, G. Ward; Glasgow, J. P. Gilmour, T. Robertson, D. Black; Heckmondwike, H. Long, Mrs. Long; Huddersfield, W. H. Spivey, T. Ollerenshaw; Hull, R. Forder; Islington, R. Forder; East London, G. Ward; West London, Miss Brown; North-West London, Miss A. Brown; Liverpool, J. Ross, J. Billing; Leeds, E. Roberts, J. Badlay; Manchester, S. Hunter, C. Pegg, Mrs. Pegg, E. G. Taylor; Paisley, W. McLean, J. R. McLelland; Plymouth, C. Watts; Stockton, J. G. Dobson; South Shields, R. Chapman, J. T. Horsman; Stanningley, J. W. Gott, W. Ray; Todmorden, E. Stansfield, J. W. Gott; Westminster, H. J. Stace.

In addition there were present individual friends from Blackburn, Cupar Fife, Carlisle, Coatbridge, Dundee, Dunoon, Greenock, Hamilton, Hull, Kilmarnock, London, Motherwell, Paisley, Wolverhampton, etc.

Mr. FOOTE took the chair at 10.30, and Mr. C. Watts, Mr. R. Forder, Mr. J. M. Wheeler, and Miss Vance accompanied him on the platform. The PRESIDENT, in formally opening the proceedings, expressed a hope that differences of opinion would not interfere with harmony of work towards their common object. The minutes of the last Conference having been taken as read, the PRESIDENT read the Executive's Annual Report, as under:—

It will be graceful to begin this Annual Report by referring to an incident at the last Conference of the National Secular Society. A gentleman was present on that occasion who spoke in the name of the Freethinkers of America, and he was elected a vice-president of our Society. Since then Mr. Putnam has returned to his own country, where he has been particularly active in opposing the orthodox attempt to insert a Christian declaration in the preamble to the United States' Constitution. During his trip to Great Britain our American visitor won all hearts by his genial character. He bade us farewell at a public dinner, organised in his honor at London, and since his return to America he has expressed his delight at the reception he met with on this side of the Atlantic.

Mr. Putnam sends an official letter to this Conference, which will be read presently. On behalf of the American Secular Union he invites two of your officers to visit the United States in the fall of this year, and to attend the Annual Convention at Chicago. Should the Conference respond to this appeal, it will doubtless be a leading object of those two officers to bring about a visit from Colonel Ingersoll. The presence of that illustrious Freethought advocate in this country, if only for a brief while, would certainly give a great impetus to the Secular movement. (Applause.)

Some months ago the English newspapers gravely reported the conversion of Colonel Ingersoll. The best contradiction of this *canard* is the extraordinary activity which Ingersoll has since displayed in the lecture-field. His tours have covered thousands of miles, and night after night he has addressed great crowds of people in large halls and theatres. His movements are well reported in the newspapers, and eminent ministers of religion are trying to answer his discourses. Among these ministers may be mentioned the Rev. Dr. John, ex-President of De Paw University, who replied to Ingersoll's famous address to the members and friends of the Church Militant at Chicago. It is worthy of note, as illustrating the strong hold which religious bigotry still has upon women, even when they regard themselves as advanced reformers, that the Women's Temperance Union refused to let the Church Militant (which was using their Temple for Sunday services) bring Ingersoll to speak on any subject whatever in their holy building, and his address had, therefore, to be delivered in the Columbia Theatre, where it attracted an audience which included the greater part of the foremost public men in Chicago. On the other hand, it is also noteworthy that Ingersoll's address was telegraphed verbatim all over the United States, four hundred copies being taken by the newspapers, involving several millions of readers.

Before turning to home affairs, it may be well to mention here that two of your vice-presidents are zealously advocating Secularism at the Antipodes. Mr. Joseph Symes appears to have surmounted the grave difficulties which beset him last year, and which threatened the extinction of his journal, *The Liberator*. He will be glad to see by this Report that he lives as ever in the recollection of his old friends and colleagues in the mother country. Mr. W. W. Collins, who is a busy member of Parliament, does not slacken his Freethought propaganda. He lectures every Sunday at Christchurch, New Zealand, and is supported by an apparently strong society.

The International Federation of Freethinkers held its triennial Congress at Brussels in September. Messrs. Robert Forder and George Ward attended it as representatives of your society. These gatherings cannot, in the present condition of things, be of much practical service to the Freethought movement in the various countries of Europe, but they serve to show that the movement is international, and thus supply a certain stimulus to the workers in all lands.

Turning now to home affairs, we take first the resolution carried at the last Conference, appointing a sub-committee to consider the possible improvement of our lecture system. The sub-committee met, and, after receiving from the President an outline of what he proposed to do in this matter, decided to adjourn *sine die*. This was communicated to the Executive, who resolved to give the President's scheme its moral support, and to leave him a free hand in carrying it into execution. At a later stage of this Conference the President will make a statement upon his Lecture Scheme. Meanwhile, it must be observed that the scheme has undoubtedly quickened Freethought in the provinces, besides maintaining the platforms at the Foresters' Hall, the Athenæum Hall, and St. James's Hall, in London. Messrs. Watts and Cohen have been the principal lecturers under the scheme in the provinces, though some of the work has been done by the President and by Mr. Heaford. New ground has been broken, unusually large audiences have been secured, and several new branches have been established, while others are in process of formation. The branches established are at Paisley, Heckmondwike, Bingley, Stanningley, Todmorden, Leeds, Carlton and Netherfield, Motherwell, and Northampton. Branches have also been established independently at Newark and Rochdale. The Northampton Branch is, perhaps, worth a special mention. For many years local political reasons have been allowed to interfere with Secular activity in that borough. During the lifetime of our great leader, Charles Bradlaugh, there was some reason in this policy; but no such reason exists now, and your President felt justified in making a descent upon Northampton, with a view to re-organising its Freethought forces. There are many Freethinkers in the town, and, with careful nursing during its infancy, the new branch should become strong in itself, and a source of strength to the surrounding district.

Wherever the Lecture Scheme has been applied, it has done more than carry our flag into fresh territory. It has supplied a new motive to the existing Branches that have undertaken the local arrangements; it has extended their horizon, broadened the field of their operations, and given them a larger hope. Change and variety are as necessary to movements as to men, and in helping others we strengthen ourselves.

Several debates have been held during the year by Messrs. Watts and Cohen, and meetings of this kind are always serviceable to Freethought, which is thus introduced to fresh hearers, who would otherwise be deaf to its advocates.

With respect to London, it is necessary for provincial Secularists to be on their guard against interested and misleading statements. Freethought activity has not been so dreadfully affected by the loss of the Hall of Science—a matter which has been sufficiently explained to the Secular party, but which the Christian public naturally refuses to understand. A change of address is not a funeral, and the shifting of platforms is not an earthquake. The very first Sunday after the cessation of lectures at the Hall of Science, lectures were begun at Milton Hall, and afterwards in the large Foresters' Hall. An attack was also made upon the West-end of London, which was almost virgin soil, and successful courses of lectures were delivered at St. James's Hall. The Athenæum Hall, in Tottenham Court-road, has now been taken for regular Sunday evening lectures; and

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for some months a Freethought platform has been maintained in connection with the new Club and Institute in North London. There has been simply a change of scene, in consequence of material misfortunes, which are directly due to the villainous laws which Christians maintain for the oppression of Freethinkers. (Applause.)

Those villainous laws are responsible for the failure of all efforts to raise a Freethought Memorial to Charles Bradlaugh. On a commercial basis this enterprise has been demonstrated to be impossible. Whether the proposal on the Agenda for circumventing these laws will avail, discussion, inquiry, and, above all, experience must decide. In any case an *alteration* of the law is not to be expected in the immediate future. Neither the Liberty of Bequest Bill nor the larger Bill for Abolishing Prosecutions for Religious Opinion has had a very illustrious history. Both are now practically dead, or at least in a state of indefinitely suspended animation; and who can hope for any act of justice to Freethought from the present reactionary House of Commons?

The shameless way in which Christians abuse law and equity to their own selfish advantage is conspicuously exhibited in the history of the Gifford Trust. The late Lord Gifford, an eminent Scottish judge, and a man of great attainments and liberality, left a considerable sum of money to found Natural Theology lectureships in the Universities of his native land. He distinctly forbade all appeal to Revelation; he insisted that the subject should be treated in a purely scientific spirit; and he stipulated that the most extreme unbelievers should not be debarred from access to the lectureships. But no unbeliever has been invited to lecture, the Christians have monopolised the endowment, and they have even defied the founder's intentions by having sectarian lectures delivered at Glasgow in a church, and as part of a denominational service.

It may be noticed, however, in this connection that the unjust policy of Christians does not prevent the growth of a certain liberal spirit amongst the general public. There is, for instance, a marked decrease of Sabbatarianism. The National Museums are now opened on Sunday in England, and the public baths are open on Sunday morning in Glasgow, so that cleanliness may have a chance as well as godliness. It is obvious, too, in all parts of the country, that people are more and more enjoying themselves on "the Lord's Day." Cyclists spin along the country roads in thousands; excursions are run to the seaside, and steamers ply on rivers and along the coast. All this must lead to a diminution of worship, and worship is the essence of religion.

The new Education Bill, for endowing Denominational Schools and smothering School Boards, is a well-matured piece of priestcraft, fathered by Tory statesmen in the interest of the faith which enslaves children, and makes it easy to rob and govern adults. Such, at least, is the opinion of your Executive. We were therefore glad to receive an invitation from the London Trades Council to take part in a Conference on the subject. We signified our readiness to participate in such a Conference, and to bear our share of its expenses; but we have heard nothing further of this proposal. It seems to us that the tight corner into which the Nonconformists are driven by their treachery to their old principle of absolute separation between Religion and the State creates an opportunity for showing them the error of their ways, and of demonstrating that nothing but Secular Education will bring peace and goodwill into the public schoolrooms. (Applause.)

We conclude this report with two items of domestic interest. A committee was appointed at the last conference to consider a proposal by Mr. George Anderson that a sum should be raised in order to save the President from absolute loss in attending to the Society's business. The committee issued an appeal for £100 for the current year, leaving the matter to be further dealt with by the Conference. £86 has been subscribed to the President's Honorarium Fund, and has been paid over to him from time to time by the committee. The other item is this: We are strongly of opinion that the Society would much profit, financially as well as otherwise, by having good offices in London, where visitors could depend on finding one or other of the Society's officers, where Executive and other business meetings could be held, and where the President, or any of the vice-presidents, could make appointments with members of the party, or with other persons interested in the Society's progress. If this can be managed, we feel it will be of great advantage to the movement.

And now, in the name of the whole Society, we express our satisfaction that the Annual Conference, after a revolution of ten years, once more meets in the great commercial capital of Scotland. On the previous occasion a testimonial was presented to Robert Ferguson, then an old man, who undauntedly faced prison in defence of his right to sell Freethought literature. Robert Ferguson only died this very year, worn out with sheer old age, but true as steel to the very last. That brave man's hour of trial proved that a host of Glasgow Freethinkers were ready to share his defiance of bigotry and persecution. It is Glasgow, too, which has most cordially welcomed our Forward Movement, and cheerfully labored at its extension to the whole south-west of Scotland. On behalf of the entire National Secular Society, then, we wish the Glasgow Branch good-speed; and may its honorable past be but the earnest of a more glorious future. (Applause.)

Mr. E. G. Taylor (Manchester) moved that the Report be adopted. Mr. Sunderland (Bradford) seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

In connection with an item in the Report, the following letter from Mr. George Anderson was read:—

"You will remember that at last annual meeting a conversation arose as to procuring some annual remuneration to the President, and it was arranged that a Committee should meet to consider it.

"That Committee met, and unanimously decided that, for the current year, the sum should be limited to £100, leaving the future to be decided at next congress.

"As the Society is about to meet, I beg to remind you of the arrangement, and I trust the members present will consider the expenses the President is put to, both in time and money, for our benefit.

"I object to any man working for me for the mere honor of the thing."

Mr. Watts moved, and Mr. Bater seconded, that the Committee appointed at the previous Conference to look after this matter be re-appointed. Mr. Forrester suggested its reference to the Executive, and this was carried unanimously.

The Financial Report was then taken, and several delegates expressed the opinion that it should be sent out earlier. Mr. Forrester (Glasgow) thought that there was no other way in a voluntary association. Miss Vance explained that this was owing to the secretaries failing to send in earlier, and the auditor having to come up to London.

On the motion for the election of President, the chair was taken by Mr. C. Watts.

Mr. Black, on behalf of the Glasgow Branch, moved that Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President for 1896–7. They would find it very difficult to get another such good fighter.

Mr. Dewar, of Edinburgh, seconded. Messrs. Bater, of Finsbury, and Ward, of Finsbury Park, explained that their Branches had, as previously, set down this motion; but, under the circumstances, gave place to the Glasgow Branch.

Mr. Watts, in putting the motion, said he had been connected with the Society from the beginning, and knew from experience of intimacy the trouble, expense, and anxiety connected with that office. He was quite sure it could not be better filled, and testified to the thoroughness with which Mr. Foote carried out his labors.

The motion was carried with acclamation.

Mr. Foote, in responding, said he valued this honor above any other that could be conferred upon him. When other calls were made for his services he answered that he was pledged to Secularism. His life was given to it, and, as long as he could, his devotion should continue to be given. Any society that has a president is sure to have a little sport of president-baiting. He, however, was entitled as much as the humblest member to fair consideration. Any member in doubt should plainly ask him, Is so and so true that is said about you? He expected to be treated frankly and openly. He thanked the Society for the great, loyal, not servile, but manly support accorded to its officers. Everything was open and above board, and there was no need for accusation of despotism or servility.

On behalf of the Executive the following gentlemen were nominated for re-election as Vice-Presidents: Dr. T. R. Allinson, G. Anderson, D. Baker, E. Bater, N. B. Billany, J. E. Brumage, Dr. L. Büchner, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, J. F. Dewar, R. Forder, J. P. Gilmour, S. Hartmann, W. Heaford, P. A. Le Lubez, A. B. Moss, T. Parris, S. M. Peacock, W. Pratt, S. P. Putnam, J. H. Ridgway, V. Roger, J. Samson, Dr. E. Schlaeger, J. Symes, E. Truelove, J. Umpleby, Miss E. M. Vance, C. Watts, J. M. Wheeler.

These names were seconded and carried. The following were also nominated by the Executive for election: John Grange (Bradford), T. Gorniot (North-West London), F. Schaller (West London), H. J. Stace (Westminster), S. R. Thompson (Manchester, late Wood Green), G. J. Warren (East London).

On the motion of Mr. Hunter (Manchester), the standing orders were suspended, and the names of Mr. Charles Pegg and Mr. E. G. Taylor, of Manchester, added to the list of Vice-Presidents.

A letter from Mr. Putnam was then read, as under:—

"American Secular Union and Freethought Federation.

"April 18, 1896.

"*To the Members and Friends and Delegates of National Secular Society and Conference of Great Britain.*

"I wish to greet you in your work in the Old World, and to assure you of the hearty sympathy of the Freethinkers of the New World. We feel that we are one in this universal cause of freedom and humanity.

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"I shall never forget the cordial welcome I received from so many of you during my visit to your country. I feel that it has made more close and beautiful the association of British and American Freethought. As pioneers of human progress we need this broad and stimulating companionship.

"We in America desire to respond to your generous and splendid welcome. We desire to hail your representatives on this side of the Atlantic, to let them know what America is, and through them also to give you the hand of friendship and loyalty.

"I hope, therefore, that, as the united band of British Freethinkers, you will send Mr. G. W. Foote, your President, and Mr. Charles Watts, your Vice-President, to America, that they may help us here in our great struggle for human rights. I desire this visit to be memorable as an exhibition of British and American comradeship, and, therefore, I desire them to be your official delegates and representatives to our National American Congress, that in every way our common work can be recognised, and also the alliance of our forces.

"For their own sake we would give to Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts the heartiest welcome, for simply as men their labors are grand and significant; but we wish to feel that in them, as your chosen representatives, we give a welcome to every member of the National Secular Society. We wish to feel that in organisation we are associated; that the two great Freethought organisations of the English-speaking world are officially united in a cosmopolitan fellowship broader than the oceans that separate or the skies that span.

"I ask you, then, as a Conference of the British Freethinkers, to give us for a while your noble workers and officers, that, not only to their fame and merits, but to you, one and all, we can give honor and welcome, and that the thousands in Great Britain and the thousands in America may form one grand army of Freethought and progress. I believe that the greatest issues are now before the world. I believe there was never a greater necessity for co-operation. Never was it so apparent that the world's reformers must be united. The vast conflict is by no means ended. Even despotisms are combining and making common cause. Let us join heart and hand, and as Freethinkers proclaim to the world that between Great Britain and America there shall be peace, friendship, the noblest sympathies, and one purpose—liberty and justice to all mankind.—Yours truly,

"(*Signed*) SAMUEL P. PUTNAM,
"*President of American Secular Union.*"

The letter was received with much applause, and it was moved and seconded that the request of the American Secular Union should be assented to. The motion was carried with one dissentient, Mr. Black, who held that the gentlemen named were wanted at home; Mr. SWAIN (Derby) supporting, on the understanding that Colonel Ingersoll should visit England.

Mr. R. TAYLOR then moved, on behalf of the Birmingham Branch: "That the position of President of the N.S.S. shall not be held by one person more than three years in succession, and that two years at least shall elapse from such term of office before he become again eligible for election." He disclaimed any personality in the matter, which he regarded as one of principle. Mr. ROBERTSON (Glasgow), in seconding the motion on behalf of his Branch, said that, personally, he was opposed to tying their own hands. Mr. SUNDERLAND (Bradford), Mr. BROWN (Edinburgh), and other delegates, spoke in opposition, and on a vote being taken the motion was lost.

Mr. R. TAYLOR then moved: "That the first Sunday in November in each year be fixed as a special day on which all Branches shall make their annual collection for the Benevolent Fund." He thought a common fixed day would ensure the work being done. Mr. SWAIN (Derby) seconded.

Mr. TAYLOR (Manchester) thought the local Branches best able to determine for themselves when collections should be taken.

Mr. STACE (Westminster) pointed out that in London many Branches met only in the open air, and a Sunday in November would mean no collection.

Mr. BATES endorsed this, but would have no objection to two Sunday collections—one in winter and one in summer.

Mr. HARTMANN (Camberwell) and Mr. ROSS (Liverpool) held that the societies were the best judges, and, on the motion being put, it was defeated by a considerable majority.

This concluded the morning sitting, and the delegates adjourned to the North British Hotel, where a good luncheon was provided. A tasteful *menu*, with views of Glasgow, was specially designed by one of the local members.

Upon reassembling, Mr. WATTS arose in reference to the resolution standing in his name: "That, in the interest of vigor and continuity of action, it is advisable that, without any interference with the autonomy of the Branches, the Central Executive, which transacts all general business, should consist of a definite number of persons well known to the party at large; that these persons should be the President and Vice-Presidents elected yearly at the annual Conference; and that such Vice-Presidents as, by reason of distance, cannot often attend the Executive meetings should be communicated with in regard to any matters of exceptional importance." He felt great responsibility with regard to this resolution, as he found it had been much misunderstood. He had never believed in the power of the Society being in one or two hands, but in that of the collective wisdom of the whole body. He thought the Executive required strengthening; the delegates were constantly changing, with the result that the work was left to a few. It was with a view of increased efficiency he brought this forward, and should again bring it forward; but, as he had been accused of raising a storm at the Conference, he should, in the interests of harmony, decline to move the resolution, and would give them a year to think over it.

Mr. THURLOW said, although what was proposed was a new departure, he had never heard anything against Mr. Watts for proposing it, and he asked him to go on and let it be thrashed out now.

The PRESIDENT said the sum and substance of Mr. Watts's statement was, that the time was not opportune. If defeated now, it would not be easy to bring it on again. He (the President) had heard much of one-man government, but should hardly have thought this would have been said of a proposal to form the Executive from the pick of the party.

A delegate asked that a tell-tale of the attendance at the Executive should be published, and this was assented to.

On behalf of the East London Branch, Mr. WARD moved the resolution standing in the name of G. J. Warren: "That the Organisation Committee be not re-appointed." The reason assigned for this was that it never had been called. Mr. Warren himself had been a member of that body, and thought, if there was no business, it should not be re-appointed.

Mr. FOOTE stated that, although he attended the meetings of the Committee *ex-officio*, it was no part of his duty to call Committees together. The Secretary was always at the service of any Committee.

Mr. BATER thought the Committee should lapse, since the real power was with the Executive. Mr. STACE concurred.

On the resolution being put to the meeting, it was carried by a narrow majority.

Mr. CHAPMAN, on behalf of the South Shields Branch, moved: "That the Conference consider the possibility of arranging for a special lecturer permanently stationed in the North." He thought this desirable from the difficulty of keeping up the supply of lecturers as in London. Mr. E. G. TAYLOR seconded the motion.

Mr. COHEN said it was valuable if it could be carried out. The difficulty was to make it practical.

Mr. PEGG thought such men should be at the service of the whole Society.

Mr. SWAIN (Derby) wanted the North defined. He thought they should do their best to strengthen Mr. Foote's scheme.

Mr. CHAPMAN considered too much attention was paid to London.

Mr. BATER (Finsbury) referred to the immense population of London and the little-cultivated fields for Freethought in the West of England.

On the motion being put, it was supported by a fair minority.

Mr. FOOTE's Lecture Scheme was the subject of a statement by himself. He related how in past years he had endeavored to promote the enterprise as well as the organisation of the Society, and how good resolutions had been carried by Conferences, which, however, were but words on paper until someone had resolution to carry them into effect. At last, as his own life was slipping away year by year, and he saw himself on the wrong side of forty-five, he determined to wait no longer for others, but to see what he could do himself. His lecture scheme was not a hard-and-fast plan; he had worked along the line of least resistance. Still, it had a leading idea. It was perhaps the germ of the elaborate lecture scheme which some hoped to see realised in the future. Mr. Foote then told what had been done by means of his scheme, both in the provinces and in London. Mr. Watts had taken up the work with the greatest loyalty and devotion, as those who knew him might expect. He had carried the torch of Freethought into places where its light had never gleamed before. Mr. Cohen, a younger man, who was winning golden opinions, had delivered no less than sixty-six lectures under the scheme since the middle of November, in addition to the many lectures delivered under private arrangement with Branches. Mr. Heaford had lectured under the scheme occasionally as he was able, and the President had also taken a share in the work. Several courses of week-night free lectures had been given in London, unfortunately at considerable expense. The Sunday platform (with free admission) had also been maintained for many months in the Metropolis. And in all cases the lecturers had been paid, if not adequately, yet reasonably. It was not consistent with the dignity of Freethought that lecturers should work without even an assurance of bread. When he (Mr. Foote) first started the scheme the Executive resolved to give him moral support and a free hand. Of course he could not take responsibility without control. When the scheme was so developed as to be almost self-working, it might be handed over to a committee, but at present it required careful nursing. If the

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Conference thought otherwise, or had not sufficient trust in him, he would not stand in the way of any plan it might decide upon. In that case he would write "finis" to his scheme as President, while reserving whatever right he had to act as an individual, and make a last statement in the *Freethinker* for the benefit of subscribers. The vote on the next motion on the agenda would decide his position in the matter.

Mr. FORDER, on behalf of the Islington Branch, moved: "That the President be asked to allow his Lecture Scheme to be continued in future under the control of the National Secular Society." This was asked on the ground of its giving greater confidence. Mr. ROBERTSON seconded. Upon being put to the meeting it was lost by an overwhelming majority.

Mr. WARD then moved the resolution standing in the name of Mr. Warren: "That this Conference urges Branches to register the names and addresses of all Secularists residing in their respective districts (who are not members of the Society) for the purposes of organisation and united effort at School Board and other elections." This was seconded and carried without any dissentient.

The next item on the Agenda stood in Mr. Foote's name. It was a brief sketch of a scheme for defeating the Blasphemy Laws as affecting the right of Freethought Societies to hold property with full legal security. Mr. FOOTE said that the legal disability of Freethought Societies was too well known to the Conference to require any explanation. What he wished to emphasise was the fact (as he conceived it) that there was little prospect of any real improvement in this odious state of things in the immediate future; indeed, he doubted whether any of them would live to see the Christians perform this act of justice to Secularists. Meanwhile it was certain that the Secular movement was losing heavily in consequence of legal disabilities. To his personal knowledge thousands of pounds had been lost in this way during the six years of his Presidency. At present, if anyone wished to leave money for Freethought purposes, he could only do so by leaving it absolutely to one or more persons, in the expectation that it would be used in accordance with his private directions. But this was very unsatisfactory; for, in the first place, the person or persons might, at least conceivably, depart from those directions, and, in the next place, a leading Freethinker, who had money left him by another Freethinker for his own private use, might always be liable to the insinuation of having appropriated what was meant for a public purpose. Nor was this the end of the difficulty. Even if the testator had the most complete reliance on the discretion and integrity of the legatee, still the legatee was himself mortal and liable to the accidents of life, and his death or his bankruptcy would throw all his estate into the hands of others. Even his executors, if they shared his convictions and were willing to carry out his private engagements, would be unable to do so, as they were bound by the law in all their actions. Besides, a legacy might be contingent on the deaths of other persons than the testator himself, such as a wife, or child, or other dependent; and in that case it might not accrue to the legatee at all, as he might by that time be dead, and if it accrued to his heirs or executors it would almost certainly fall into private hands for private purposes. In these circumstances he (Mr. Foote) had long been considering whether it was possible to circumvent the law by which Freethought Societies were oppressed and plundered. At length he had hit upon a plan which he submitted to a very capable lawyer, who had frequently acted for the late Charles Bradlaugh. After much discussion and reflection, the plan had been worked out so that it could be presented in outline to the National Secular Society's Conference. First of all, there was no "one man" element in it, as some of his "candid friends" had been suggesting. A Society could be formed and registered, so as to enjoy full legal rights; its objects could be stated in a way to satisfy Secularists; its members might number tens, hundreds, or thousands, if they would pay the annual subscription after going through the careful forms of election; the articles of association could prevent the members, as such, from deriving any profit whatever, in the shape of dividend or otherwise, from the Society; and the rules as to the Board of Directors could be of such a nature as to secure the thoroughly proper and efficient control of the Society's affairs in the interest of Secularism. The Society itself would not necessarily carry on any propaganda, but would be a pecuniary feeder of the National Secular Society. It would, so to speak, provide many, instead of one or a few, trustees for property given or bequeathed for Secular objects. This was a rough outline of the Scheme which he (Mr. Foote) regarded as tremendously important, if it could, as he believed it could, be carried out. If the Conference endorsed it, as he hoped it would, at least in principle, he would have the Articles of Association drawn up immediately, and, after the fullest consideration and possible amendment, they might be printed and circulated, while a few trusted Secularists became the first members, so as to control the admission of subsequent candidates for membership. Mr. Foote concluded by moving the resolution standing in his name: "That as there seems no immediate probability of any alteration in the law by which Secular Societies are denied the common right to hold property and receive gifts and legacies, and as the National Secular Society continues to suffer very great financial loss in consequence, it is necessary that some indirect means be taken whereby property could, with reasonable security, be devoted to the Society's objects; and to this end the Conference endorses the plan just sketched out, and authorises the President, with what assistance he may require from the Executive, to carry the said plan into realisation with the utmost possible dispatch."

Mr. HARTMANN, after some questions, seconded, and the resolution was carried unanimously.

The final resolution, with reference to the new Education Bill, and desiring the Executive to issue a Manifesto on the lines agreed to, was also unanimously adopted.

A very hearty vote of thanks to the Glasgow Branch for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference, and for the comfort of visitors, was proposed by Mr. WARD, of London, seconded by Mr. Ross, of Liverpool, and carried unanimously with much acclamation. In briefly closing the proceedings, Mr. FOOTE expressed a hope that next year's Conference might prove as large, harmonious, resolute, and useful.

The evening meeting was held in the large Waterloo Hall near the Central Station. There was a good attendance. The President was supported on the platform by Messrs. Bater, Cohen, Dewar, Forder, Gilmour, Hartmann, Pegg, Stace, Taylor, Thurlow, Watts, and Wheeler. The Chairman, after adverting to the proceedings of the earlier part of the day, first called on a local gentleman, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, who gave a first-rate brief discourse on the successive phases of religious thought in Scotland. Mr. Forder followed with a good speech, in which he referred to the services of Mr. Bradlaugh, the attitude of the Church to education, and the duty of Freethinkers not to let the Church instil its dogmas into the defenceless minds of children.

Mr. COHEN gave a pithy address on the fight between science and theology and the triumphs of Freethought, which was everywhere growing. Our policy, he urged, was not to establish a sect, but to spread principles. We must beware of the folly of underrating the strength of the enemy, and the real fight, that with the Catholic Church, has yet to come.

Mr. THURLOW spoke of the advance made by Freethought. What would Luther or Knox say of praying for infidels? They would say, Burn them. But it was the sceptics who were best able to appreciate these men, who were earnest in what they thought right, despite their limitations and the intolerance of their time.

Mr. WATTS, in view of those who might never have understood the Secular position, expounded it in an eloquent speech. He referred to the dense ignorance and bigotry still found in parts of Devonshire and Cornwall, where he had just been, and concluded with a stirring appeal to all Freethinkers to rally round the President.

Mr. FOOTE remarked that he was no stranger to Scotland. As a boy he had read Scott and Burns, and plunged in the wake of Hume, Mill, and Bain, so that when he first came to Scotland long ago he felt, as it were, on his native heath. He then referred to the necessity of Freethought in Ireland. There were many movements of progress, but Freethought was the most tabooed, because the privileged knew that Freethought was the real danger. As the German invested, not every little town, but Paris, so our business was to carry the citadel, to overcome the historic enemy of humanity cheating men out of pleasant life here with promises of another world. We want men to make the most of this life, so that of each it might be said, as Burns wrote of his friend:—

> If there's another life, he lives in bliss;
> If not, at least he made the best of this.

On Monday morning a large party left Queen-street Station on an excursion to Loch Lomond. It included a considerable number of delegates from the provinces, and many London friends, amongst them being Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, Forder, Ward, Stace, and Bater, and Miss Vance and Miss Brown. From Balloch Pier the party went by steamer to Tarbet. The sail over the lake in such fine weather was inexpressibly delightful, and the Englishmen were loud in their praises of the grand scenery. The water was hardly rippled, the islands were radiant with young summer greenery, and Ben Lomond stood out in the clear air with magnificent boldness. From Tarbet some walked and some drove to Arrochar, where the rest of the day was spent. A luncheon was prepared for the party at one o'clock, and a tea at five, and at seven the return was made to Glasgow by train along another route, past Loch Long, Gareloch, and the estuary of the Clyde. Altogether, it was a great treat to the Englishmen, and also to the one Irishman, Mr. Knox, of Belfast. Messrs. Gilmour and Black worked very hard for the comfort of the whole party, and are entitled to warm thanks for their ungrudging exertions. Of course, they were assisted by other Glasgow friends, too numerous to mention individually.

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ACID DROPS.

The Rev. Joseph Pullman, D.D., pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church in Bridgport, Connecticut, against whom a suit for $25,000 damages for slander was recently brought by Mdlle. Jane May, a French actress, he having denounced her in his pulpit as "a low, brilliant, swell, Parisian courtesan," published a full retraction of these defamatory words, admitting that at the time when he uttered them he had no knowledge whatever of the actress, and that he had never heard a word uttered by anyone against her character. With the man of God, till pulled up for slander, to be an actress was synonymous with being a courtesan. Mdlle. May is to be congratulated upon her courageous vindication, and it is to be hoped the Lord's own will take warning.

A dispute between the elders of Zion Baptist Chapel, Chatham, and the pastor, the Rev. W. Osborne, was recently referred to the Baptist Board of Arbitration. The arbitrators are of opinion that the sermon of the pastor which caused the rupture was unwise and injudicious, and calculated to annoy innocent persons; but they blame the dissentient deacons for withdrawing from the church and absenting themselves from the services. They recommend the discontinuance of services in another building in the town; that, in consequence of the divided state of the church, the pastor should remove; that all interested should try to promote this object as speedily as practicable; and that in future the church secretary should not take minutes of conversations at meetings which were calculated to create misunderstanding and perpetuate strife.

Since Freethinkers have exposed the errors and contradictions of the Bible, it has been a great point with liberal theologians that the Bible is not the complete word of God, but contains it. In arguing against the right of Mr. J. B. Wise, of Kansas, to send a postcard with a Bible text through the public mails, the prosecutor seems to have taken the position that the Bible is not a book of filth, but it contains it.

This May pilgrims have flocked in large numbers to the Holy House at Loretto, special indulgences being given to pilgrims in the month of Mary. The Church still profits by this notorious fraud, full particulars of which are given in *Crimes of Christianity*.

The British and Foreign Bible Society has issued nearly 140,000,000 Bibles, Testaments, and portions of the Scriptures. This has undoubtedly brought some business to printers, paper-makers, etc.; but otherwise the good done by this quality of literature is very questionable.

In the case of John Jones, of Anna, Ill., sentenced to be hanged for the murder of Mrs. Mendenhall, it seems that the jury which convicted him remained, for one night, eight for hanging and four for life imprisonment. The next morning one juror, of a religious turn of mind, sent out by the bailiff for a Bible, which was taken into the jury-room, and a sermon delivered from the law of Moses, whereupon the jury returned a verdict of hanging. The attorneys for Jones will go before Governor Altgeld and see what he thinks of the law of Moses, and if he will not commute Jones's sentence to a life imprisonment.

Mdlle. Couédon, whose prophecies were said to have been inspired by the angel Gabriel, has been investigated by Canon Brettes, of Notre Dame, who reports that the spirit that speaks through her mouth is not the angel Gabriel, but the Devil. This is evident, because the spirit says the Pope talks drivel and is often mistaken. Evidently the evil spirit knows a thing or two, though, according to Canon Brettes, he did not understand the word "Labarum." The Devil is said to have promised Mdlle. Couédon, who is on the shady side of thirty, a husband; and Gabriel, or the Devil, true to his word, has found for the lady the long-desired person.

This case may suggest the difficulty of deciding what is a test of divine inspiration. If something is prophesied, and it comes true, that may only be an instance of the Devil's artfulness to deceive the elect. In fact, if you once introduce devils, angels, or gods, there is always a difficulty to tell the other from which.

God, as Cowper informs us, moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. He plants his footsteps on the sea, and rides upon the storm. One would fancy that the cyclone in Texas, which lifted houses bodily from their foundations and left them in ruins, killing some hundred and twenty persons, and injuring a hundred others, must be rather the work of a fiend than of a father.

On Thursday, the 23rd ult., at Maysville, Kentucky, the Rev. James C. Caywood, aged sixty years, a distinguished clergyman of the Southern Methodist Episcopal Church, committed suicide by hanging while insane, his particular hallucination being that he must hang himself in order to save his soul.

A Theosophic lady journalist is responsible for the statement in the New York *Journal* that a child has been born with three eyes in Portland, Oregon. The eye is in the middle of the forehead, and is supposed to be a development of the pineal gland, and the organ of a new faculty for seeing into the middle of next week. We wonder if Miss Olds, of the Portland Secular Sunday-schools, has heard of this phenomenon.

A pious congregation in Hartford, Conn., recently imported a barrel of "holy water" from Rome, the fluid having been blessed by the Pope. The "bar'l" bothered Uncle Sam's collector at New York. He didn't know under what head the stuff could be admitted. It wasn't Apollinaris or any mineral water, and it wasn't ardent spirits. He finally gave it up, and passed the problem on to Secretary Carlisle, who was puzzled at first, but eventually called it an "unenumerated article," and put on a duty of 10 per cent. for luck. This happened in the year of enlightenment 1896.

Father Logan reminds the faithful that cremation is condemned by the Church. The practice of corpse-burning might upset the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Most Christians, by the way, fancy it is their souls that are going to be resurrected, and they appeal to the resurrection of Christ's body in attestation.

Talmage says: "The grave is only the place where we go to dress for the glorious resurrection." Talmage will take care that he steps out of his dressing-room with his necktie neatly arranged, as he is going to act as M.C. on the occasion.

Dr. Hoch gives the following criminal statistics with regard to the religions of India:—There is one criminal to every 274 European Christians, one to every 509 Eurasians, one to every 709 native Christians, one in 1361 Hindus who follow Brahmanism, and one in 3,787 Buddhists.

A good story from Canada is going the rounds of the American press, as follows:—An infidel at Qu'Appelle was dying, and two well-known men of that place were watching at his bed-side. Suddenly those in the adjoining room heard a piercing cry, and, rushing into the sick room, found the two watchers insensible and the infidel dead. The men have never since been able to speak of what they saw, and cannot refer to the matter. One of them is not expected to live. It is believed they saw the Evil One. This smacks of Catholic origin, and is doubtless as true as it is well authenticated.

The following pretty Christian story appears in *The Signal and Gospel Union Gazette*, for May 20, under the caption, "An Infidel Struck Dead": "A young man, entering upon the practice of medicine, had become a scoffing infidel through the reading of wretched books. He seized every opportunity to pour forth a tide of shocking blasphemy against Christ, and held up the Bible among his companions to coarse and obscene ridicule. At length he went so far as to perpetrate a monstrous fraud. In order to express his contempt for Christianity, he pretended to be converted, and asked permission, in a meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association, to confess the Lord Jesus publicly by leading in prayer. Of course his request was gladly granted, but meanwhile he had prepared a prayer addressed to the 'unknown God.' It was filled with horrible irreverence and thoughtfully planned insult to the Savior. Spreading the manuscript before him on a seat, he kneeled down and commenced to read his ribaldry, when his voice was suddenly hushed, and his body was heard to fall upon the floor. The young men who were present hastened to him, but found that he was dead." It would be impertinent to inquire the name of the infidel, or even that of the Young Men's Christian Association. The place and date of this event, and the observations of the coroner at the inquest, may be left to the imagination. All we should like to know is, what became of the manuscript prayer that provoked the Almighty to murder?

Another item of death-bed mythology is reported in the New York *Truthseeker*. The "great Atlanta divine," Rev. J. B. Hawthorne, preached a sermon on infidelity recently, in which he said that "Ingersoll was not an honest infidel, like one who, when he was on his death-bed, confessed that he had been mistaken, that he had given his children nothing but stones, and that if he had his life to live over he would do differently." As Dr. Hawthorne failed to give the name of the repentant infidel, he was written to on the subject. He replied: "The infidel referred to in my sermon was Francis Newport. I saw the quotation in the published

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sermons of Rev. Daniel Baker, D.D., more than thirty years ago. I had the volume in my library, but it has disappeared." As with our contemporary, we have never heard of Francis Newport. The unbelievers we have heard of and known died as they had lived. When a man has to go back more than thirty years and quote a book that has "disappeared" about a man of whom the infidels to-day have never heard, in order to find a case to illustrate his point, it is, as our contemporary says, quite possible that as an infidel Francis Newport is a myth.

Reuben May, whose proceedings were mercilessly exposed in *Truth* some years ago, is still at Golden Lane. A bill is sent us with his signature, in which he says: "Whit Sunday is Holy Ghost Day. On the first Whitsuntide 3,000 unbelievers were converted to Christ (see Acts ii.). Why should there not be 3,000 or more become Christians here about this Whitsuntide?" Reuben's cant and rant appear in his very handbills.

The requests for prayer in Christian papers sometimes make the profane smile. In the *Life of Faith* one following the craving of blessing on a mission, which is an advertisement in disguise, is as under: "For the conversion of a young man who has fallen into a habit of betting that he may kiss the Savior's feet." Of course there should be a comma after "betting."

Mr. Joseph Collinson, of the Humanitarian League, is very much dissatisfied with the Howard Association and its work. There is certainly too much Lord Jesus Christ about the Society, and much too little genuine humanitarianism, for it to be in touch with the spirit of the times.

Please to pity the indigent clergy! Sir Francis Powell, who has not hitherto been regarded as a humorist, asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention had been drawn to the numerous complaints that had come from the clergy in all parts of the country as to the exceedingly heavy incidence of rates and taxes upon their incomes; and whether he could see his way to affording them any relief in the Budget beyond the general reduction of the land-tax in which they would participate. This was rather good. But it was not quite good enough. The clergy, having secured relief for their land and doles for their schools, are quarrelling with their rates and their income-tax. Times have changed with a vengeance since the Teacher of Christianity had not where to lay his head.—*Star.*

Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone unite in one thing. Both are High Churchmen, and have given their patronage to that section of the Church. A petition has been presented by the evangelical party, urging upon the Prime Minister the importance of appointing to positions of ecclesiastical authority those prepared to uphold the character of the Church of England as settled at the Reformation, and declaring that "it has long been felt that this section of the Church has not of late years received the recognition and representation in the government of the Church that might reasonably and justly be expected." The petitioners ask Lord Salisbury to give such consideration to their memorial "as may tend to remove just ground of complaint from a large and most loyal body of Churchmen." The petition comes too late. Nearly the entire bench of bishops are of the sacerdotal Romanising party, and of course the best livings go to those of their own views.

Prophet Baxter has a great supporter in the Rev. Webb Peploe, who, we are informed, after having assured his hearers of the speedy coming of the long-delayed Christ, closed with an appeal for a liberal contribution towards erecting a new church.

The Pool of Siloam has been much investigated by Palestine explorers. It is an insignificant well, but the water came, from an unknown source, sometimes more copiously than at others. This probably gave rise to the yarn about an angel coming down to trouble the water. The idea of crowds waiting can hardly have suggested itself to those who know the spot, which measures 14 feet by 18.

Some of the Methodists attribute the decline in their membership to the "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons," which, they say, draw only a pleasure-loving following. But, then, all the churches and chapels must do something to compete with Sunday secular attractions.

A writer in the *Methodist Recorder*, who has occupied his brain with attempted solutions of the "slump," has come to the sage conclusion that probably bicycles have a deal to do with it.

Brother C. C. Moore, the infidel Prohibitionist editor of the *Blue Grass Blade*, said roughly that Jesus manufactured thirty gallons of wine at the Cana marriage feast. Brother Councilman takes him to task and reckons 136 gallons. Dr. F. A. Paley, in his notes to the Gospel of St. John, says between sixty and seventy gallons. There is a controversy as to how much the Greek measure, *metretes*—translated firkins—represented. A usual computation makes a measure equal to five gallons, so that Jesus made from sixty to ninety gallons. As the guests had well drunk all originally provided, and the new brew was better stuff, nothing can be said against the thaumaturgist on the score of generosity.

A minister was reported as speaking of the harrowing influence of the Cross. He wrote to say that he used the word "hallowing." But readers of *The Sign of the Cross* may find that the first word was by far the more appropriate.

A writer in the *English Churchman* complains that, while there is a royal box at most of the West-end theatres for the royal family to enjoy the drama, there is no royal box at Exeter Hall that they may hear the stories of the missionaries. Perhaps the Prince of Wales would find some of them quite as amusing as the drama.

The Rev. W. Bayard Hale, noticing in the *Forum* the robust candor of a clergyman, who, in his speech at the opening of a church bazaar, said, "They come to be cheated—(laughter and applause)—and if they don't come to be cheated a little, they deserve to be cheated a good deal"—(renewed applause)—remarks: "It is a matter of common knowledge that churches have methods of raising money which are fraudulent, and nobody is horrified by the knowledge, because nobody to-day takes the churches any more seriously than they take themselves."

In the land of liberty, and the free state of Arkansas, a man and woman have been kept in irons for keeping the Sabbath as commanded in the Bible, and working on the Sunday established by the Church. They were Adventists, who observe the same Sabbath as that observed, or not particularly observed, by Jesus, and they are kept in prison and in shackles by their fellow Christians, who are doubtless "persuaded all the Apostles would have done as they did."

The *Daily Chronicle* recently declared that "if there be any highway of faith known to Christendom at all, it is that which leads to Rome." Mr. Massingham, the editor, has recently been to Rome, and had an interview with the Pope, and so now people are asking if he went on the highway of faith.

The *English Churchman* called the Czar's coronation "a function of extraordinary magnificence." "A most imposing imposition," added a reader.

The Rev. J. Guinness Rogers rounds nicely upon Dr. Parker. Joseph wrote to the *Times* mentioning that in 1872 the Congregational Union passed a resolution in favor of purely secular education, and that all subsequent trouble had come from deserting that principle. "Yes," says the Rev. J. G. R., "but I supported that resolution, and you, Joseph Parker, moved an amendment." It is amusing to see the Nonconformists either blaming each other for the desertion of principle for which they will now have to suffer, or, like the editor of the *Methodist Times*, trying to put all the blame on the Irish party.

Another religious riot has occurred in India. The trouble arose from the Moslem hands at a jute mill wishing to sacrifice a cow for the Bakrid festival in sight of the Hindoo hands at a paper mill at Tittaghur. The Hindoos could not see their sacred animal slaughtered calmly, and, but for the arrival of a military detachment, the ructions would have been serious. As it was, fifteen persons were injured, and a company of soldiers had to take possession of the paper mill.

William Coppin stood before the Hull Police-court in the character of a Messiah. Accused of taking sheets from the house where he lodged, he said: "I cannot steal. I stand before God as His son, so that all the world belongs to me." Dr. Mason examined the prisoner, but would not write a certificate that he was insane, and he was committed to prison for thirty days.

The *Sunday Companion* is giving "Stories from the Diary of a Chaplain." Chapter vii., which appears in the number for May 23, is "How I Met the Infidel." The Atheist of the story, which is doubtless as true as gospel, is an ex-convict, who attempts to murder the chaplain who seeks to befriend him, but is providentially stricken with paralysis at the very moment when he fired at him. The romancer says: "One simple explanation is enough for me—that He whom the infidel despised had stood by me in that hour of greatest peril, and had rendered impotent both the weapon and the arm which had been turned against me." At the conclusion we read, *Another grand story next week.* These tales about infidels are usually grand stories.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, May 31, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, "Priests and Children: and the Quarrel between Nonconformists and Irish Nationalists."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 7, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

A. G. LEVETT.—Thanks for cuttings, etc.

L. LEVINE (Charleston).—Mr. Foote is very busy, but the pamphlet, *Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?* will not be lost sight of. Thanks for papers.

W. B.—We are always pleased when little-known Freethinkers of talent are made known to us.

H. GILL.—We see from the papers that the Theosophists report 13 lodges and 231 members—guinea ones, we presume.

J. GRANDON.—Mr. W. T. Lee is not bound to debate with everyone who challenges him. He is arranging to debate shortly in Wales and elsewhere with Mr. G. W. Foote, and that will keep him pretty well occupied. Detailed announcements will soon appear in our columns.

OWING to the Glasgow Conference, and Mr. Foote's absence from London, much correspondence stands over till next week.

DISGUSTED.—What else could be expected in Russia, and at Moscow, its orthodox old capital? After all, is it not natural that the Czar's coronation should be accompanied by the ringing of church bells and the booming of cannon? Those two sounds have always gone well together in Christendom. The worshippers of God have always been particularly ready to slay their fellow men.

DANIEL BAKER, of Birmingham, was unable to attend the Glasgow Conference, much to his regret. His many friends will be pleased to hear that he is in fair health for a man of his advanced age. Mr. Baker sends £2, being his subscription for May and June to Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme.

POSITIVIST.—Mr. Holyoake appears to have been mistaken about the cheap edition of Pearson's book on *Infidelity*. It is long ago to trust entirely to memory.

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

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

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE opens the ball this evening (May 31) at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, and Mr. Watts will take the chair and make a speech on Secular work in London, with special reference to this new departure and its probable developments. Mr. Foote's subject will be "Priests and Children; or, the Curse of Religion in Schools; with special reference to the quarrel between the Nonconformists and the Irish Nationalists." As this is a subject which possesses "actuality," as the French say, it ought to attract a crowded audience. Freethinkers should endeavor to bring their more orthodox friends on this special occasion.

Mr. Foote returns from the Glasgow Conference once more President of the National Secular Society. There was not a sound or a sign of opposition to his re-election, and he received a particularly warm greeting on his resumption of the chair. Mr. Foote will write a special address to the Secular party for next week's *Freethinker*.

The Conference was in every way a great success. The utmost good-temper prevailed at both sessions, and there was an exceptionally large attendance of delegates and members from all parts of the kingdom. One delegate came all the way from Bristol. The one expected from Plymouth did not arrive. Belfast was represented by Mr. Knox, who lost an eye a few years ago through preaching Freethought in the open-air to his intolerant fellow-citizens. Mr. Knox is inclined to take up the work again, and Mr. Foote has promised to revisit the Ulster capital.

Mr. J. Umpleby, of Blackburn, the oldest N.S.S. vice-president after Mr. Truelove and Mr. Daniel Baker, was present at the Conference, and seemed to be bearing his age remarkably well. His mind is as bright as ever, and he emits his old humorous flashes. Mr. Holstead, of Bolton, who is over seventy, was also present. He is as active as a youth. Mr. Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, was unfortunately prevented from attending by domestic reasons. His name was applauded on being mentioned by the President. Mr. George Anderson, of London, was of course in the minds of the delegates. His letter to the Conference was listened to with profound respect.

A very agreeable feature of the Conference was the presence of a number of ladies, who helped to brighten the tables at the luncheon. Miss Vance had less to do than usual, owing to the zeal of Mr. Gilmour and other Glasgow friends; but some of her duties required a good deal of tact and attention, and she performed them most admirably.

Mr. Watts's genial face and jolly figure were an ornament to the platform. We entirely agree with him as to the policy of not moving the resolution which stood in his name. There certainly had been some misrepresentation, and it is just as well that the resolution stands over till the next Conference, when it can be discussed in an equable temper, and when justice may be done to its object and method.

Mr. Watts spoke with great power and eloquence at the evening meeting, and was enthusiastically applauded. Mr. Gilmour's speech was a fine mixture of logic and poetry. Mr. Cohen's sentences were full of good matter, and admirably turned. Altogether, the meeting was treated to a fine display of oratory, and the audience was evidently in strong sympathy with the speakers.

On Thursday, May 21, the Athenæum Hall was opened for a dramatic performance and social entertainment. The program was good and well carried out. The opening piece was Buckstone's *Good for Nothing*, in which the character of "Nan" was admirably sustained by Miss Katie Watts; Messrs. Reynolds, Bell, Cotterell, and Angel contributing to the humor of the piece. A pianoforte solo by Miss A. Butland made one wish that so brilliant an executant had a grand instrument to display her abilities, which are of the highest order. Mr. Foote gave a soliloquy from *Hamlet*, which excited the enthusiastic applause of the audience; and Madame Burgwitz sung some ballads in a charming manner. The performance concluded with the screen scene from *The School for Scandal*, Miss Brown enacting "Lady Teazle," Mr. G. T. Reynolds "Sir Peter Teazle," Mr. Charles Watts "Joseph Surface," Mr. Percy Bell "Charles Surface," and Mr. F. Cotterell "Joseph's" servant. All the parts were creditably sustained, and the audience seemed very well pleased with the entertainment.

The Manchester Branch holds its annual picnic to Chester (for Eaton Hall and neighborhood) on Sunday, June 14. The railway fare is 2s. 9d. return; children half-price. Members and friends will please give in their names to the secretary at once, so that a saloon may be secured if possible. Further particulars will be announced later.

The *Wallasey Times* devotes two columns and a half to a report of the lecture by Mr. Foote in the Picton Hall, Liverpool. *Daylight*, of Norwich, has a well-merited rebuke to Miss Marie Corelli for her nonsense about "the infamous cause of education without religion."

The late Baron Hirsch, the millionaire philanthropist, was, as everyone knows, a Jew by birth. It appears, however, from an article in the *English Illustrated Magazine*, by a personal friend, that he was not one by conviction. The writer says: "He told me that he never entered a synagogue for worship."

The *Free Review* for June opens with an article on "Robert Burns and the Church." E. S. Galbraith writes on "The Holocaust of Infants"; J. M. Robertson resumes his papers on "The Revival of Phrenology"; Mr. Stanley takes up "Miscarriage of Justice in England"; Florence Edgar Hobson "The Decline of Literary Taste." She finds prevalent a lack of sincerity and earnestness, and a pursuit of cheap fame. Mr. J. P. Gilmour, under the title "A New Sciotheistic Theory," concludes his review of a work on *God and Science Reconciled*. His contribution is valuable and full of point. Fred Wilson has a contribution on "Foreign Missions," which Freethinkers should also read, and Geoffrey Mortimer writes capably on "The Higher Music Hall Art."

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THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS.

In Matthew xxv. there is a vivid representation of the final judgment, with the son of man sitting upon his throne, and all the holy angels around him; and before him are to be gathered all the countless millions of people that have ever lived upon this mundane sphere. He will divide them as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. He will set the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left; the former, presumably, representing all the good people, who are to be welcomed into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world; but to the goats he will say: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels."

We are told by those disinterested friends of ours, the clergy, that there is to be found in the teaching of Jesus the purest system of morality ever taught to man; let us see if we can find the moral lesson that underlies this fable of the sheep and the goats.

First, then, be a sheep! Not that a sheep is any better than a goat, but by being a sheep you will get penned in the kingdom of heaven, and save your mutton and fleece from everlasting fire.

No matter who else gets scorched, your wife and children, your dearest friends, all that is dear to you, may be goats ranged on the left; leave them all, and be a sheep. God made them all, both sheep and goats, for his own glory; but he has found out that he can get no glory from having made goats, as they have no wool to shear. His agents and representatives, the clergy, discovered that long ago when they commenced the shearing process. The inducement held out to be a sheep may be an appeal to your selfishness; but remember that it comes from God, and is intended to increase his glory, not your own comfort or happiness, except as it enables you to escape the long cooking process in the everlasting fire.

Next comes the threat of endless pain to the goats because they are not sheep, though God made them to be goats; and, as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, or the leopard his spots, so the goat cannot make himself a sheep, and must perforce go into the fire.

Now, God must be supposed to act from some motive, or for some purpose; what is it that actuates him in cursing the goats and sending them into the everlasting fire? It certainly cannot do the goats any good, neither can it benefit the sheep. God himself can derive no good from it. An endless sizzle in the fire, without any hope or chance of escape from it, connot tend to a reformation, for the time of reformation has passed. It cannot operate as a warning to others, because all things have passed away, and there is nobody left to be benefitted by the example. It must be, then, that God thinks it will redound to his glory, or that he expects to derive pleasure from the gratification of that most degrading of all passions, revenge. God must be short on glory, if he thinks such an exhibition as that is likely to promote it.

Among the old savage barbarians who invented God, revenge was not only a duty, but one of the highest virtues; and as God was, according to their notion, the embodiment of all the virtues, they made him to be fierce, vindictive, and revengeful; and, everlasting fire without hope of respite or mitigation being the worst they could think of, they made God plunging those he didn't like in that ever-burning furnace that they called hell. Now, God never changes; everything developes along the line of knowledge except theology; that remains stationary. Men have become civilised; they have developed a higher conception of humanity, a better system of ethics, and nothing would induce a civilised man to forever torture a fellow creature in such a fire as the inventors of God imagined he would take pleasure in. They pictured him standing upon the ramparts of heaven and looking down upon the writhing bodies of his enemies tortured in the everlasting fire, and rejoicing in their suffering, and laughing at their ineffectual cries for mercy. And that is the God that the Bible has transmitted down to us, in all his primitive savagery, for our worship and admiration.

But when the "Son of Man" takes his seat upon his throne to pass judgment upon the sheep and goats, he may find it difficult to divide and classify them. He will find that they have run together so long that the breeds have got mixed, so that he cannot tell one from the other. He might as well try to pick out an Anglo-Saxon from the conglomerate population of Britons, Romans, Danes, and Normans that now make up the modern English people. No man is all good nor all bad; it will be found that there is no sheep that has not a considerable mixture of the goat in him; and, on the other hand, there will be no goat found but will be largely sheepish. He will find that a large majority of those who range themselves on the right have nothing of the sheep about them but the skin, while among the goats on the left will be found under the coarse hair of the outside more genuine mutton than can be found in the pet lambs of that sheep-fold, the Church. How can he divide them?

On which side will he rank Jim Bludso, the swearing, drinking, fighting, rowdy engineer of a Mississippi river steamboat, who had a wife in every stopping-place from St. Louis to New Orleans? Bad as he was, when his boat took fire he ran her ashore, and

> There was runnin' and cussin', but Jim yelled out
> Over all the infernal roar:
> "I'll hold her nozzle against the bank
> Till the last galoot's ashore."
>
> Through the hot, black breath of the burning boat
> Jim Bludso's voice was heard,
> And they all had trust in his cussedness,
> And knowed he would keep his word.
>
> And sure's you're born, they all got off
> Afore the smokestacks fell—
> And Bludso's ghost went up alone
> In the smoke of the "Prairie Bell."

We all know what the ideal Jesus—the Palestine tramp of nineteen hundred years ago—would have done with such a man as Jim Bludso; he liked that sort of a man; he, no doubt, would have made him one of his apostles, and perhaps the chief of them all, and as Saint Jim he might have ranked Saint Peter, and become the Primate of the holy Catholic Church, the predecessor of all the popes; and who can doubt that, if he had, that Church would have been better, a thousand times better, than it ever has been since?

But the Jesus sitting upon a throne, monarch of all he surveys, may be a very different person from the tramp who was glad to dine with publicans and sinners. A consensus of ecclesiastics, who now claim to hold his power of attorney and speak for him and by his authority, would, no doubt, consign Jim Bludso to the everlasting fire, without benefit of clergy, and without even a chance through *habeas corpus* proceedings to mitigate his sentence. Nay more, if they should find Jim among the sheep on the right of the great white throne, they would sign a protest, and threaten a strike or boycott, if such a fellow was to be admitted among them.

Again, what can the great judge, who sits upon the throne, do with the two Christian Endeavor sheep who went on such a whiz down in Galveston lately? They had been working for Jesus at the great Christian Endeavor meeting in Boston, and no doubt were tired, and needed rest and recreation. The pious work they had done in the good cause entitled them to a little indulgence in sin, which would readily be forgiven if they only prayed for it, asking for it in the name of Jesus. They might have gotten off without detection, and no fuss made about it, if they had not tried to cheat the hackman by jumping out of the hack on the way home. God wouldn't have said anything about it; but the hackman wanted his money. Perhaps they had spent all they had in the houses they had visited during the night, and had nothing left to give the hackman; and, if so, how could they pay him?

These cases show the difficulty the "Son of Man" will meet with when he comes to discriminate between the sheep and goats. Often it happens that the finest wool covers the backs of those who are essentially goatish; and every goat will be found to have some redeeming qualities that will cause the judge to hesitate before consigning them to the irredeemable place on the left.

But, after all, perhaps that everlasting fire may not be so bad as it has been represented. The priests who wrote the Gospels had a personal interest in making it as uncomfortable as possible, but we now know that out in the regions of space, beyond the atmosphere of this earth—which is to be burned up to furnish the fuel for the fire, no doubt—it is intensely cold, much more so than the coldest spot on the earth that has ever been visited by arctic or antarctic explorers. Maybe God is not so wicked and revengeful as the priests have painted him; maybe the everlasting fire will be just what we want to make us perfectly

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comfortable and happy. Who knows? Nobody has ever been there and come back to tell us. Who knows where the place is, or anything about its climate? Who knows that the son of man will ever occupy the throne and undertake the impossible job of dividing the sheep and goats? Who can tell us who he is, and by what right he assumes the office of judge, without having been elected to it by the people? We are republicans, and our theory of government is that all power emanates from the people, and is exercised for the good of the people. It surely cannot be for the good of the people to torture ninety-nine one-hundredths of them forever.

Who knows whether this pretended judge has the power to carry his threats and promises into execution? And, finally, who knows that there is any God at all? If there is anybody who has any reliable evidence upon any of these points, let him come forward and settle the questions that the world has quarrelled over ever since the first dawn of history, and upon which nobody has ever offered anything but guesses based upon dreams or imagination.

It is incomprehensible to a rational mind how generation after generation, for so many thousands of years, can be induced to believe in such marvellous stories that have not a particle of evidence to support them, and never had any from first to last. It reminds one of Carlyle's characterisation of the population of England as "thirty-seven millions of people, mostly fools." Not all fools though, for the last census gives seven millions of infidels in England and Wales. J. P. RICHARDSON.

—*Independent Pulpit.*

FROM HEINE.

(Aus alten Märchen winkt es.)

FROM ancient stories beckons
To me with snowy hand
A singing and a ringing
From an enchanted land,
Where gay, bright flowers are blowing
In evening's golden light,
And fragrantly are glowing
In bridal garments dight.

And leafy trees are singing
The songs of long ago,
The breezes softly ringing
With birdies' warbling flow;
And cloudy pictures greet me
From earth's remotest clime,
And dance in joyous mazes
In wondrous choral time.

And azure sparks are flashing
On all the leafy sprays,
And rosy lights are dashing
In whirling, twirling maze;
And bubbling springs are breaking
From ev'ry rocky height,
And weirdly in the brooklets
Gleams the reflected light.

Ah! could I only reach thee,
And ease my aching heart,
Ah, free from care and sorrow,
I'd never from thee part.
O distant land of rapture,
I see thee in the gloam;
But when the morning breaketh
Thou vanishest like foam.

FRANK PAYNE.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder, because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

Any human being, however humble or liable to error, may render an essential service to society by making, through a whole lifetime, a steady, uncompromising, dispassionate declaration of his convictions as they are matured.—*Harriet Martineau.*

BIBLIOLATRY.

THE selection of the various books of the Bible was the work of Church councils. These councils were composed of bishops and other delegates from all parts of the Christian world; men sincere, no doubt, for the most part, but in many cases full of prejudice and bigotry. Not seldom were these members appointed through intrigue and bribery, while at the councils themselves votes were too often extorted by force or won by flattery. Like Church councils ever since, the ecclesiastical gatherings of that day were largely political. The questions upon which the members divided were not so much the genuineness of this book or the authenticity of that, as the East against the West, Rome against Alexandria, the Imperial against the anti-Imperial party. The canon of our New Testament depends, then, upon the action of Church councils, the members of which were men of virtues, vices, strength, and weakness like unto our own. There is, therefore, to one who would fain preserve the Bible in its old status, no way out of the dilemma other than to assume, as do the Roman and Anglican Churches, that these early councils were divinely guarded, so that mistakes were impossible.

From the end of the fourth century to the present has continued this bibliolatry, this worship of the Bible—one of the most pernicious tendencies ever introduced into Christianity. The Bible has been the touchstone, the great test of truth. When Columbus said to the learned doctors, "I will reach the east by sailing to the west," they quoted Revelation, "I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth," and asked: "Can a sphere have four corners?" When Galileo said, "The sun is the centre of our system, and the earth revolves round the sun," the learned doctors replied: "Doth not the Psalmist say, 'The sun ariseth,' and did not Joshua stay the sun in Gibeon, and the moon in the Valley of Ajalon?" When witchcraft was the terror of the world, and every market-place had its fagot and its stake, was there not found in the Bible the command, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"? When slavery was struggling for its life in all civilised lands, did not earnest ministers of the Gospel quote the Mosaic law as to slaves, and St. Paul's injunction: "Servants [*i.e.*, slaves], be obedient unto your masters according to the flesh"? Does not the Church of Rome to-day rest its claim to supremacy largely upon the text, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"? Are not ecclesiastical courts still judging men upon Bible texts? What is all this but making an idol of a book? It is exactly what a learned commentator did when he wrote: "We can say nothing against a certain deed of Samson's, because Samson was a divinely-commissioned man; but had anyone else done the deed, he would have deserved to be hanged." J. H. LONG.

Blasphemy.

It is clear that the good old gods of our race—sun, sky, thunder, and beauty—are to be replaced by philosophic abstractions—substance, energy, and life, under the patronage, respectively, of the persons of the Christian Trinity..... Why this particular trinity of the great Ptah, Horus the Son, and Kneph the Wind-god, retained and refurbished by bishops of Alexandria and Carthage out of the wrecks of the Egyptian superstition? Not because it is contained in the unseen universe, but because we were born in a particular place.....These sickly dreams of hysterical women and half-starved men, what have they to do with the sturdy strength of a wide-eyed hero who fears no foe with pen or club? This sleepless vengeance of fire upon them that have not seen and have not believed, what has it to do with the gentle patience of the investigator?.....That which you keep in your hearts, my brothers, is the slender remnant of a system which has made its red mark on history, and still lives to threaten mankind. The grotesque forms of its intellectual belief have survived the discredit of its moral teaching. Of this, what the kings could bear with the nations have cut down; and what the nations have left, the right heart of man by man revolts against day by day. You have stretched your hands to save the dregs of the sifted sediment of a residuum. Take heed lest you have given soil and shelter to the seed of that awful plague which has destroyed two civilisations, and but barely failed to slay such promise of good as is now struggling to live among men.—*W. K. Clifford.*

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THE SKOPTSY.

In Anatole Leroy Beaulieu's work on *The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians*, translated by Z. A. Ragozin, is an interesting account of the White Doves, or Skoptsy, who, like the early Christian father, Origen, endeavor to find peace for the soul by the emasculation of the body. In their hatred against the senses and the flesh, the Skoptsy go to the root of temptation. They hold that the surest way of attaining ecstasy and the gift of prophecy is to set the spirit free from the body's desires. In order to unite himself with God, man must become similar to the angels, who are sexless. These frenzied dreams and vagaries are poetically developed and set forth in their sectarian hymns. It is in allusion to this ideal purity at which they aim that the Skoptsy give themselves the symbolical appellation of White Doves. In their hymns they boast of being whiter than the driven snow. They are the pure, the saints who walk untainted through this world of sin, the virgin beings who, in the Revelation, follow the Lamb everywhere.

It is pointed out by the author that even in these mystics may be recognised the old Muscovite realism which insinuates itself even into Illuminism, materialising asceticism, and making salvation to depend on a surgical operation. The rock on which the Skoptsy take their stand is the text in Matthew xix. 12: "For there are eunuchs which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs which were made eunuchs by men; and there are eunuchs which make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake; he that is able to receive it, let him receive it." This text is buttressed by that other text: "If thy right eye lead thee into temptation, pluck it out and cast it from thee; if thy right hand leadeth thee into temptation, cut it off and cast it from thee." This advice these modern followers of Origen consider a command.

It appears that it is not usually on children or very young boys that the Skoptsy perform their characteristic rite, but on mature men, when the sacrifice is most grievous and the operation most dangerous. The mutilation is partial or complete, the latter being known among the sectarians as the "royal seal," the former as the "second degree of purity." Women are not always spared the gruesome baptism, but with them it is generally the faculty of nursing children which is destroyed, not that of bearing them. It seems, at first sight, that such a religion can recruit its followers only by means of proselyting. Yet this is not entirely the case. The Skoptsy do not absolutely condemn marriage and generation. Considering themselves as the elect of God, as the keepers of his holy teachings, there are those among them who think it right to bring into the world children, future propagators of the true faith. It is frequently only after the birth of a child that a father enters the purely spiritual state, and the child grows up with a knowledge of the sacrifice which, in his turn, will be demanded of him. The man who, when the hour has struck, would refuse to submit to the baptism of blood would become the target of his co-sectaries' vengeance, and they form a vast association, which spreads like a net over the whole empire, the members of which, like those of political secret societies, take it on themselves to do justice on traitors and deserters. Lugubrious tales are told on this theme. One Skopets, for instance, had a son who, when he reached man's estate, ran away from home, and went abroad and married. Fifteen years later he thought it safe to return to his native land. He was recognised by his father, and presently disappeared.

Whether for the purpose of perpetuating their tenets with their race, or the better to blind the authorities, the Skoptsy frequently marry; and, strange to say, these marriages, though entirely or prematurely barren, frequently appear happy, as though such unions were all the more peaceful from the absence of sexual passion. According to statements made to the author of this book, there are among the White Doves husbands good-natured enough to tolerate that their wives shall bear them children to which they themselves can lay no claim. Married or not, however, and with or without heirs of their own blood, the Skoptsy could not keep up their sect out of their own numbers. They have to look for proselytes, and, to get them, they spare neither pains nor wiles nor money. Wealthy merchants frequently devote their entire fortune to this propaganda, and there is, it seems, a great deal of wealth among these sectaries.

"Were I a banker," a Russian once said to the author of this book, "I should not want anybody for my cashier but a Skopets. For a cash-box, as well as for a harem, there is no safer keeper. At the bottom of every case of defaulting or breach of trust there is a woman. With these people you can sleep soundly and in peace." There is no doubt that millionaires are no rarities among the Skoptsy, and all their riches are devoted to the propagation of their sect. We may say further that these cruel fanatics are in daily life the mildest as well as the most honest of men. They are distinguished for frugality, probity, and simplicity of manners and habits. Their gatherings are harmless. They merely sing hymns and take communion in the shape of bread made of black rye or purest white wheat flour. There is nothing criminal about them but their doctrine and their rage for making proselytes; yet even that is far less horrible than the greed of those parents in Italy who sell their children to be made soprano singers of. The number of the Skoptsy is said to be on the increase, though at present it is not estimated at over two or three thousand.

FAITH'S REVISION.

Satan.—Biblical translation, *Devil*; literally, an adversary.
Diabolis.—Biblical translation, *Devil*; literally, false accuser, calumniator.
Daimon.—Biblical translation, *Devil*; literally, a departed human spirit.
Sheol.—Biblical translation, *Hell*; literally, a pit or the grave.

The servants of God have been recently busy—
Deans, bishops, archbishops—with learned research,
Poring over old Greek and Hebraic tomes hazy,
Commenting, connoting,
Discussing and quoting,
Revising "God's Word" for the good of their Church.

The result of their labours is patent before us,
Wherein we now learn the past errors of faith;
Old "Satan" no more lies in wait to devour us,
The rogue is a myth
Like old "Vulcan" the smith,
And his phantom existence on *this side of death.*

"Hell" means but "the grave" when 'tis rightly translated;
That we *all go to hell* cannot now be gainsaid,
Unless we are buried at sea, or cremated:
What frenzy and terror
Were due to this error!
E'en Reason half-stifled with sulphur seem'd dead!

These worthies should now re-revise their revision,
Expunge from its pages those barbarous tales
Of rapine and murder 'neath God's supervision!
Such tales are a libel
On God in the Bible,
Morality shocks, and shames Justice's scales.

Theology frowns on poor Freedom, despondent
Where'er Christianity's flag is unfurl'd;
The present and past furnish proof most abundant
That "priestcraft" 's the "devil"
Most potent for evil,
Sweet Liberty's bane, and the curse of the world.

"Be good and do good" is a creed short and simple;
Love to God and mankind is true happiness' source;
Man's Bible is Nature, the heavens his temple;
Virtue is heaven's jewel;
And Vice, the hell-fuel,
Will consume us to ashes of bitter remorse.

Education and Science march cheerily onward;
Priestcraft is in danger, and nothing can save,
Its course in the future must surely be downward;
The world is progressing
When priests are confessing
Their "Devil's" a phantom and "Hell's" "but the grave"!

Proclaim the glad tidings to every nation,
That man may no more superstitiously dread
The red furnace of "hell" and "eternal damnation";
E'en let the creeds perish,
This truth let us cherish—
Hell-fire is extinct and the Devil is dead.

H. N.

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BOOK CHAT.

Puritanism in the Old World and in the New, by J. Gregory, of Edinburgh, is rather a panegyric than a history. It tells us nothing that is new, but puts things in as favorable a light for Puritanism as possible. Mr. Gregory would fain give the Puritans credit for establishing toleration, but he is forced to admit that Catholics, Anabaptists, and Quakers (he might have added Jews, Freethinkers, and supposed witches) came in for no share of the toleration which the Puritans claimed for themselves. The fact is, as Lecky notices, toleration is the offspring of scepticism. When men really believe in the awful reality of another life, any measure to put people on the right road thitherward becomes justifiable. There was something to admire in the earnestness of Puritanism, but it is false to claim it as a force making for complete enlightenment.

* * *

Volume i. of the new edition of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Methuen & Co., 36 Essex-street) has a carefully-written Introduction of 36 pages, by the editor, J. B. Bury, whose *Later Roman Empire* has proved his competence for the task. Professor Bury mentions the progress of research since Gibbon. But, he says, "in the main things he is still our master, above and beyond 'date.'" It will be in the next volume that Gibbon's famous fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, on the rise, progress, and alleged early persecutions of Christianity, come under review, and we shall note with interest whatever Professor Bury may have to observe on those topics.

* * *

A curious book is *Without Sin*, by "Mr. Pritchard." The author, or, as we suspect, authoress, pictures a young Jewish girl, Mary Levinge, of the present time, who, like the carpenter's affianced wife, finds herself with child "without sin," and appeals to Isaiah vii. 7, in confirmation that such things may be. But any educated Jewess knows that that passage is a mistranslation, and that a young woman, not a virgin, is alluded to.

* * *

Three penny sixteen-page pamphlets reach us from the Manchester Labor Press, 59, Tib-street—one an address on *Character and Environment*, by Ben Tillett; another address on *The Socialist's Program*, delivered by Tom Mann at Aberdeen; and a thoughtful paper on Co-operation, by Caroline E. D. Martyn, who recommends the co-operative movement to Socialists.

* * *

Jésus Christ est-il un Personnage Historique ou une Fiction? by Citoyen J. Poupin, is a *brochure* issued by the Freethought Society at Argenteuil (21 Boulevard Thiers). The author, like many others who have seriously examined the question of the existence of Jesus, comes to the conclusion that there is no more evidence of the historic character of the hero of the Gospels than of the actual existence of the heroes of fairy tales.

* * *

The Child: its Origin and Development, by Dora Langlois (W. Reeves, 185 Fleet-street; 1s.), is, as stated on the cover, "a manual enabling mothers to initiate their daughters gradually and modestly into all the mysteries of life." Merely taking exception to the word "all," we should say that Mrs. Langlois carries out her object. Many a girl has had cause to regret that she had not such wise warnings in a serious tone, and from the proper quarter. But why should any mother wish her daughter to read Leviticus xviii.? This reference to the Bible seems to cover a shirking of maternal duty. The object of Mrs. Langlois is, however, excellent, and she will have the commendation of all who do not think that innocence is necessarily bound up with ignorance.

* * *

The Damnation of Theron Ware is an American story of the degradation of a Methodist minister. There is a good sketch of a pious Methodist of the old type, who expresses his views on religion thus:—"They tell me there's some parts where hell's treated as played out, where our ministers don't like to talk much about it, because people don't want to hear about it. *Such preachers ought to be put out. They aint Methodists at all.* What we want here, sir, is straight-out, flat-footed hell; the burnin' lake o' fire an' brimstone. Pour it into 'em, hot an' strong. We can't have too much of it. *Work in them* awful deathbeds of Voltaire an' Tom Paine, with the devil right there in the room, reachin' for 'em, an' they yellin' for fright! that's what fills the anxious seat, an' brings in souls hand over fist." The Scotch Presbyterian elder expressed it even more pithily when he said: "A kirk wi'out a hell is na' worth a damn."

If a jackass were to describe Deity, he would represent him with long ears and a tail.—*Dod Grile.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—During the last half century I have, in business and other matters, had interviews with several Church of England clergymen, who, without a single exception, claimed to be direct descendants of the Apostles. I sometimes feel disposed to admit of their claim, simply on the ground of their being all professional fishermen; but in other respects they materially differ, as our present-day Apostles, having the advantage of living in a more enlightened age, are not so stupid as to go about preaching gratuitously like their predecessors; neither, like them, are they satisfied with a few small fish only, but, with the aid of all sorts of alluring but questionable bait, they find no difficulty in filling their nets to the brim with both loaves and fishes.

T. DUNBAR HARRIS.

PROFANE JOKES.

"Yes," said the Christian Evidence man, "whenever we *look back* upon the untrodden paths of the *future* we see everywhere the footprints of an Almighty *hand!*"

Little Carrie had been instructed to learn a Scripture verse with the word "good" in it. Accordingly, her parents taught her, "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." The little maid repeated her text many times softly to herself before the beginning of the general exercise, in which all the Sunday-school classes were to join. Then, when her turn came, she sent a ripple over the audience by reciting, in clear but lisping accents, "It is awful to be good on the Sabbath day."

This awful suggestion appears on the book-ledges of a suburban church—"All kneelers should be hung up at the end of the service!"

Impecunious Lover—"Be mine, Amanda, and you will be treated like an angel." Wealthy Maiden—"Yes, I suppose so. Nothing to eat and less to wear. No. I thank you."

Bishop—"Do you think it is right to partake of this hash on Friday?" Low Church Clergyman—"Entirely orthodox; it is composed of the Thirty-nine articles."

Teacher—"Why did Joshua make the sun stand still?" Tommy—"I guess it didn't agree with his watch."

Rev. Thirdly—"Did Missionary Goodman succeed in introducing religious practices among the cannibals?" Returned Seaman—"Yes, I think he did. They said grace before they ate him."

There was a Kerry priest named Ned Shea, and he had the fashion of hearing confessions with a slate and a pencil; and he'd write down every sin, and the price of it opposite. Well, one day a big fellow came to him to do duty, and says he: "I bruk a man's head last Hallowe'en." "That's ninepence," says the priest. "I cut the tail off Larry Kelley's cow." "That's a shilling—Oh, begob, a shilling that is." And down it went on the slate. "I nearly murthered me wife twice." "That's threepence. Go on." "I kilt an Orangeman." "Whorro!" says the priest, wiping off his slate. "That clanes out all the rest."

Castleton—"Is it true that Miss Wiberley referred to me as an Agnostic?" Clubberly—"She said you didn't know anything."

A "Salvation Army" Convert.

I'm Scroggins, the noted house-breaker; I was thoroughly bad and depraved
Till I joined the Salvation Army; but now, thank the Lord, I am saved;
I never performed a good action, I always was tricky and mean.
I was always indicted a nuisance in every place I have been;
I always was wicked and lazy, I always was drunken and low,
But I'm washed in the blood of my Savior, and now I am whiter than snow.

My parents are dead—they're in heaven—for better no man ever had;
But my mother I sent to the workhouse, and kicked in the street my poor dad;
I murdered my wife by ill-treatment, though a truer the world never saw;
From the time I was only a nipper I've never kept clear of the law;
But Jesus refused not to take me, though vile I had been for so long:
I now am as pure as a baby; if I wanted, I couldn't go wrong.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.15, Moncure D. Conway, "The Domestication of Conscience." Monday, June 1 (8.30), concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. James, "How Stands Christianity Now?"

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, F. J. Gould, "Mary Carpenter."

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand): 11.15, E. Calvert, "Is there Design in Nature?" 8.15, A. Guest, "Following God."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, R. Forder, "The Exodus."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Ethical Culture as a Religion."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Evil and Devil."

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Miss Jessie Craigen, "Anti-Vivisection."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James, "Morality in the Ages of Faith."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, W. Ramsey, "Life Beyond the Grave."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "The Devil's Doom."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, A lecture. Thursday, at 8, Stanley Jones will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards will lecture; 3.30, R. P. Edwards will lecture. Wednesday, at 8, S. E. Easton will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 10.45, E. Pack, "The Confidence Trick."

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, E. Calvert, "Is the Right of Free Speech Conducive to Truth and Progress?"

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus?"

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Is the Bible Man's Highest Guide to Morality?"

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate): 3.30, Debate, "Which is Better for Mankind—Christianity or Secularism?" Lecture and addresses to follow.

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, J. Rowney will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss will lecture.

COUNTRY.

HECKMONDWIKE (Lumbard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, a meeting.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Captain Monro, "Real Blasphemy."

LEEDS (Vulcan Club, Vulcan-street, Benson-street): 7, Report of the delegates to the Conference, and members' meeting.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, J. Read, "God's Goodness."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Evans, "Science the Friend of Man."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 11, Monthly meeting of members; business, Mr. Cohen's lecture on race week.

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, To receive reports of recent lectures, and of delegate to Conference.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street); Members' and friends' Excursion Tour. Meet in front of Victoria Station at 1.5. Train leaves for Wortley at 1.15; from there walk round by Wentworth Castle, and return home by 7.57. Train from Birdwell; return fare, 1s.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

NORTHAMPTON (Cow Meadow): W. Heaford—11, "Is the Bible Reliable?" 6.30, "Religion at the Bar of Reason."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): Mr. Thompson—3, "Is the Bible True?" 6.30, "Who are the Infidels?"

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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—No. 23. SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

SQUIRMING NONCONFORMISTS.

A FREETHINKER would be more or less than human who did not enjoy the spectacle of the Nonconformists squirming under the new Education Bill. It is the religious difficulty which screens all the reactionary elements of this measure, and the religious difficulty would not exist if the Nonconformists had not been treacherous to their own principle of the absolute separation between Church and State. They are, therefore, caught in their own trap, and their outcries are music in the ears of their enemies.

The only Nonconformist who keeps a level head, and sees the situation clearly, is Dr. Joseph Parker. During the last School Board elections in London this gentleman contributed to the *Times* a striking letter, which was such a splendid defence of Secular Education that it was reprinted by Mr. Charles Watts and circulated to promote his candidature in Finsbury. Dr. Parker now writes to the *Times* again, and stigmatises the "Compromise," of which his Nonconformist brethren are so enamored, as "the criminal surrender of an essential principle."

Dr. Parker's letter has aroused the anger and indignation of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who has completely lost his head (whatever that may be worth) in the present crisis. Directly the Irish Nationalists voted for the second reading of the Education Bill, Mr. Hughes declared that their action meant the death of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule, and admitted that the Ulster Methodists, whom he had unceremoniously rated for opposing Home Rule, were after all nearly, if not altogether, right. Mr. Hughes suddenly discovered that the Irish Nationalists were Roman Catholics, and he was surprised to find that Roman Catholics give the first place to the interests of their Mother Church. Of course he contended that their voting on a Bill which did not extend to Scotland and Ireland was a violation of the principle of Home Rule for England, which is as just and necessary as Home Rule for Ireland. But the obvious answer is, that Home Rule is not yet a fact, that the Irish members still form an integral part of the imperial parliament at Westminster, and that they are entitled to promote what they regard as the essential interests of their co-religionists in England. Besides, it is pretty certain that if the Irish Nationalists had voted *against* the Education Bill, the Nonconformists would have gladly accepted their assistance, without concerning themselves in the least about its consistency with the principle of Home Rule.

In the circumstances it is not surprising that Mr. Hughes is very wroth with Dr. Parker, whom he accuses of dividing the forces of Nonconformity and strengthening the hands of the clerical party. Dr. Parker's attacks on Nonconformists and their principles (heaven save the mark!) are "untimely," and Mr. Hughes rushes in to defend "the imperilled interests of Christianity." It does not occur to him that Dr. Parker is animated by conviction, nor does he condescend to explain the "untimely" character of the defence of a great principle in the hour of its necessity. The implication of his argument is that Dr. Parker should open and close his mouth at the bidding of the "Evangelical Church"—that is, at the bidding of Mr. Hughes, Dr. Clifford, and Mr. Guinness Rogers; but, with all his faults, Dr. Parker is not the man to yield to their ridiculous dictation.

Setting aside Mr. Hughes's scolding of Dr. Parker, let us examine his criticism. He starts by asserting that all the Nonconformist communities are "standing shoulder to shoulder in defence of Bible truth and Bible morality in the public schools of England." We do not dispute this assertion. What we maintain, and what Dr. Parker maintains, is that the public school is not the place to defend Bible truth and Bible morality. The proper place is a church, or a chapel, or any other building which the Bible-truth-and-morality people like to build or hire at their own expense. It is the action of Mr. Hughes and his like that forces citizens, *as* citizens, into theological controversy; for if the Bible is thrust into the public schools, and lay teachers are compelled to read it and explain it to the children, every serious citizen is obliged to see whether its "truth" and "morality" are quite fit for the situation. The fact is, the Nonconformists have not sense enough to see that Bible reading is the thin end of a bad wedge; they insist on inserting it, and they throw up their hands in holy horror when others drive it in deeper. They want religion in the public schools, but they want it of their own pattern. Any other pattern is an outrageous injustice. They cry out against dogma, forgetting that the inspiration of the Bible is a dogma. They stand up for what Mr. Hughes calls "loyalty to the Divine Christ," forgetting that the deity of Christ is a dogma. They do not really object to dogma—which is, after all, no more than a precise statement of religious doctrine—but they want to supply the dogma themselves; where they choose it is to begin, and where they choose it is to end; whereas, if religion is to be taught in the public schools at all, there are only two logical ways of doing it—either the State should decide what is true and teach it universally, or the parents should select their own brand for their children's consumption. The new Education Bill accepts the second alternative; and although it will practically serve the interests of the Church of England, because that body controls such a vast number of schools, it is theoretically sensible and fair in comparison with the fantastic and one-sided policy of the Nonconformists.

Whoever seeks to establish religion in the public schools forfeits his right to denounce the establishment of religion in public churches. Mr. Hughes tries to evade this issue. He says that Mr. Guinness Rogers has proved the contrary. Mr. Guinness Rogers has *not* proved the contrary. No man *can* prove it. Mr. Hughes himself stumbles badly in attempting this impossible feat. "There is," he argues, "an essential difference between the condition of a child and the condition of an adult," and his conclusion is that this alters the principle of the thing. But it does nothing of the sort; indeed, it tells directly against the Nonconformist argument. For the State to teach children religion is a worse tyranny than to teach adults. There is no compulsion on adults. If they have to support a church, they need never attend it. They can pay the bill, and then laugh at the church and its teaching. But there is compulsion on children. They cannot help themselves. They must go to school whether they like it or not. Establishing religion in the public schools is therefore the worst form of establishment; it is establishment with the biggest net of the closest texture; the only escape being the difficult aperture of the Conscience Clause, which Nonconformists themselves never weary of denouncing as a sham when they have to send their own children to Church of England schools.

'Is the State," asks Mr. Hughes, "to teach them [the children] everything except the Bible?" Certainly not. It is not to teach them the Koran, the Vedas, or the

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Buddhist scriptures. It is not to teach them any kind of *opinions*—especially opinions about another life, which they must die to verify or disprove. It must teach them *knowledge*. It must teach them what the citizens agree about; not what they differ about, what they always have differed about, and what they always will differ about. It is really opinions, and not knowledge, that the Nonconformists are fighting for; only they veil their object with a cloud of hypocrisy, while the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England frankly proclaim their purpose.

Mr. Hughes soon shuffles away from this treacherous ground, and takes up a fresh position, which he says is the historic position of Nonconformity. Dr. Parker's "fundamental assumption that the State has nothing to do with religion" he asserts is "an attitude of mind appropriate only for an Atheist." It is "a hideous idea," and "the notion that the State is wholly secular and non-religious was first conceived and propounded by the Atheists of the French Revolution"—which, in our opinion, is very much to their credit. Mr. Hughes affirms that "it is as much the duty of the State as of the individual to obey Christ." Very well then. That means religion, not only in School Boards, but in Vestries, in Town and County Councils, in Parliament, and in the Cabinet. It means the undoing of all that Liberalism has effected during the present century on the lines of religious liberty and equality.

Before the Price Hughes faction commit themselves irretrievably to the principle of State Christianity, they should settle accounts with theologians like the late Bishop of Peterborough, who declared that if the State tried to carry out the teaching of Jesus Christ it would go to ruin in a week.

Meanwhile, we beg to remark that if the Nonconformists, as Mr. Hughes alleges, are "as vehemently opposed to secular as to sectarian education," they are fighting against education altogether. Secular education is education without religion. That is plain enough. But if you have religious education at all, it must be sectarian. It is impossible to teach Christianity in general. There is not, and never was, any such thing. There are Roman Catholic Christians, and Greek Christians, and Church of England Christians, and Wesleyan Christians, and Presbyterian Christians, and Baptist Christians, and Congregational Christians, and Salvation Army Christians—and so on to the end of the distracting catalogue in Whitaker's Almanack. But where are the mere Christians, bearing the ticket of no particular denomination? Even if the Bible is read and explained in the public schools, the very teachers belong to various denominations, and cannot help giving a denominational bias to their explanations. Unsectarian religious education is one of those rhetorical phantoms that vanish at the touch of reality. The Nonconformists are in a dream, and they will probably experience a rude awakening. They are no match for the better organised Churches of England and Rome in party warfare, and we believe they will be beaten ignominiously. And when they see the full extent of their disaster, they will suffer the additional pang of knowing that they brought it all on themselves by treachery to the only principle which justifies their separation from the Established Church.

G. W FOOTE.

PAIN.

There was never yet philosopher
That could endure the toothache patiently;
However, they have writ the style of gods,
And made a pish at chance and suffering.
—SHAKESPEARE, *Much Ado About Nothing*, v., 1.

SIR HUMPHREY DAVY tells how, when a boy, he held, with the easy optimism of youth, that pain was no evil. He was refuted by a crab, who bit his toe while bathing, and made him roar so as to be heard half a mile off. It were to be wished that some of the theologians who have written on the divine purposes of pain really understood what they were writing about. I begin to scribble this article with my right hand, while my left, which has undergone an operation, is in constant pain, with occasional twinges of excruciating agony. This, as being an incidental not a normal state, may not bring perfect equanimity in treating my topic, the only one I feel competent to take up this week; but it will ensure that the neglected left-hand side has attention. Our theologies and philosophies have been formulated by the leisured and well-to-do—and rejected by the poor and suffering. Beautiful things have been written on the beneficence of pain, but when the God-given infliction has descended, anæsthetics, which, on their introduction, were denounced as attempts to thwart the divine decree, have been welcomed.*

I imagine sleek Paley, "in fair, round belly with good capon lined," sitting rod in hand at the stream's bank on a beautiful summer's eve, and thinking the fish rather enjoy the sport. But life in a hospital, surrounded by the mighty heap of human calamity, "the miseries which make impatience call on death," presents Nature or Nature's God in another aspect, and there are moments when we say with Mainländer, "Life is hell, and the sweet still night of absolute death is the annihilation of hell."

Pain, we are told, is a beneficent protector, giving warning of danger. This guardian angel deserts us in the gravest cases. Accidents, epidemics, malaria, consumption—that scourge of our clime—come without any sign from our angelic monitor. Some poisons give no pain at all. In most cases the warning is useless, coming after the injury is inflicted. In many the dose is stronger than necessary. In animal, and to some extent infant life, pain may subserve preservation. Where there is no conception of death it may deter from life-destroying actions. But even a child does not need pain to warn it not to cut its hands off. Intelligence dispenses with the necessity of pain, and pain itself should be removed wherever possible. It is an atavism, a recrudescence of a rudimentary form of protection, reminding us of savage ancestors, and largely helping to keep us like them. Revenge, in a former state of society, was a valuable preservative from worse. Now it is an odious perpetuation of barbarity; and the same may be said of pain. Civilisation, which accentuates sensitiveness and increases pain by saving sickly life, should vigorously attempt to get rid of this angel, which is rather of the destroying than preserving order. It will never do so while pain is held to be supernatural and divine—an essential part of God's purposes.

Sometimes we are told that pain is a punishment for sin. Such sophistry is worthy only of a Jesuit Inquisitor. The punishment, forsooth, falls on the weak and ignorant, on the victims of crime, not on its perpetrators. It treats misfortune as crime, and racks the delicate child while sparing the callous criminal. If this theological nonsense were really believed, it would dry up the fountain of sympathy. We should let sufferers endure the full extent of the divine chastisement. Christians pretend to regard pain as a good thing, yet labor for its extinction, betraying the same inconsistency as when they sorrow for the dead, believing they are in heaven.

The late James Hinton, a lovable man, whose life was devoted to the relief of suffering, wrote a beautiful little book, marred by Christian mysticism, on *The Mystery of Pain*. In reading Hinton I do not feel, as in reading Paley or Drummond, that here is one to whom pain is little, because the writer has not suffered. Hinton was acquainted with the mighty griefs as well as "the mighty hopes that make us men." To him, as a Theist, pain was an awful mystery, which he seeks to clear up by such mysticism as that God is a sufferer, and that sacrifice is the highest good. A beautiful nature like Hinton's is sure to extract such sweets as may be distilled from adversity; but he is forced to confess "there are pains innumerable which benefit neither the body nor the soul." The confession is inconsistent with his creed. Indeed, on this, as on other points, Christians find it difficult to square their faith and practice. Without pain, say the theologians, we should be still more wicked and worthless than we are. In the same breath they tell us there is no pain in heaven:—

There is a land of pure delight
Where saints immortal reign;
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain.

The celestials must surely deteriorate for want of the salutary influence of suffering.

Much has been written on the moral benefit of pain. It is a rare topic for a Torquemada. A fine nature may educe strength and sympathy from suffering, but with the average *homme sensuel* pain degenerates, and engenders selfishness,

* Sir James Young Simpson was accused of antagonising the curse of God, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children."

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cowardice, and irritability. To feel that one's pain is but a drop in the wide ocean of human suffering is but to enhance misery in a sensitive mind. As true a bond of brotherhood may arise from participation in common delights. The holy sacrament of sympathy need be no bitter draught, but the pure, refreshing wine of love.

There is really no more mystery in pain than in everything else. It follows from the constitution of our nervous structure. The mystery comes in when you attempt to reconcile the suffering of sentient beings with the will of an almighty, all-benevolent God. This difficulty, older than Epicurus, cannot be cleared up by mere words, such as saying, "God is a sufferer." The fact is, pain is felt as an evil to be got rid of as speedily as possible. That there is something in the world amiss gives no assurance that it will be unriddled by and by. Let us right the wrong here and now. Let us not attribute to God what we should be ashamed to inflict upon any animal. There is far too much suffering in the world. The object of every good man should be to minimise the suffering said to be sent by God. Let us, instead of regarding pain as supernatural, make every effort for its diminution and elimination.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER XIV.

REJECTED TENETS REPLACED BY BETTER.

"False ideas can be confuted by argument, but it is only by true ideas they can be expelled."—CARDINAL NEWMAN.

ERROR will live wherever vermin of the mind may burrow; and error, if expelled, will return to its accustomed haunt, unless its place be otherwise occupied by some tenant of Truth. Suppose that criticism has established:—

1. That God is unknown.
2. That a Future Life is unprovable.
3. That the Bible is not a practical guide.
4. That Providence sleeps.
5. That prayer is futile.
6. That original sin is untrue.
7. That eternal perdition is unreal.

What is Freethought going to do? All these theological ideas, however untrue, are forces of opinion on the side of error. After taking these doctrines out of the minds of men, as far as reasoning criticism may do it, what is proposed to be put in their place? When we call out to men that they are going down a wrong road, we are more likely to arrest their attention if we can point out the right road to take.

No mind is ever entirely empty. The objection to ignorance is not that it has no ideas, but that it has wrong ones. Its ideas are narrow, cramped, vicious. It likes without reason, hates without cause, and is suspicious of what it might trust. It is not enough to tell a man who is eating injurious food that it will harm him. If he has no other aliment, he must go on feeding upon what he has. If you cannot supply better, you cannot reproach him who takes the bad. But if you have true principles, they should be offered as substitutes for the false. Secularist truth should tread close upon the heels of theological error.

1. For the study of the origin of the universe Secularism substitutes the study of the laws and uses of the universe, which, Cardinal Newman admitted, might be regarded as consonant to the will of its Author.

2. For a future state Secularism proposes the wise use of this, as he who fails in this "duty nearest hand" has no moral fitness for any other.

3. For Revelation it offers the guidance of observation, investigation, and experience. Instead of taking authority for truth, it takes truth for authority.

4. For the Providence of Scripture Secularism directs men to the Providence of Science, which provides against peril, or brings deliverance when peril comes.

5. For prayer it proposes self-help and the employment of all the resources of manliness and industry. Jupiter himself rebuked the waggoner who cried for aid, instead of putting his own shoulder to the wheel.

6. For original depravity, which infuses hopelessness into all effort for personal excellence, Secularism counsels the creation of those conditions, so far as human prevision can provide them, in which it shall be "impossible for a man to be depraved or poor." The aim of Secularism is to promote the moralisation of this world, which Christianity has proved ineffectual to accomplish.

7. For eternal perdition, which appals every human heart, Secularism substitutes the warnings and penalties of causation attending the violation of the laws of nature, or the laws of truth—penalties inexorable and unevadable in their consequences. Though they extend to the individual no farther than this life, they are without the terrible element of divine vindictiveness, yet, being near and inevitable—following the offender close as the shadow of the offence—are more deterrent than future punishment, which "faith" may evade without merit.

The aim of Secularism is to educate the conscience in the service of man. It puts duty into Freethought. Men inquired for self-protection, and from dislike of error. But if a man was in no danger himself, and was indifferent whether an error—which no longer harmed him—prevailed or not, Secularism holds that it is still a duty to aid in ending it for the sake of others. It was J. W. Fox, the most heretical preacher of his day, who said (1824): "I believe in the right of religion and the *duty* of free inquiry." He is a very exceptional person—as we know in political as well as in questions of mental freedom—who cares for a right he does not need himself. A man is generally of opinion, as I have seen in many agitations, that nobody need care for a form of liberty he does not want himself. It is as though a man on the bank should think that the man in the water does not want a rope. Duty is devotion to the right. Right in morals is that which is morally expedient. That is morally expedient which is conducive to the happiness of the greatest numbers. The service of others is the practical form of duty. "He," says Buddha, "who was formerly heedless, and afterwards becomes earnest, lights up the world like the moon escaped from a cloud."

Constructiveness is an education, which attains success but slowly. Some men have no distinctive notion whatever of truth. It seems never to have occurred to them that there is anything intrinsic in it, and they only fall into it by accident. Others have a wholesome idea that truth is essential, and that, as a rule, you ought to tell it, and some do it. This is a small conception of truth, but it is good as far as it goes, and ought to be valued, as it is scarce. If anyone asks such a person whether what he says is what he *thinks*, or what he *knows*, to be true, he is perplexed. The difference between the two things has not occurred to him. He has been under the impression that what he believes is the same thing as what he knows, and when he finds the two things are very different his idea of truth is doubled, and is twice as large as it was before.

There is yet a larger view, to which many never attain. To them all truth is truth of equal value. All geese are geese, but all are not equally tender. Though all horses are horses, all are not equally swift. Yet many never observe that all facts are not equally succulent or swift, nor all truth of equal value or usefulness.

Social truth has three marks—it must be explicit, relevant to the question in hand, and of use for the purpose in hand. But it requires some intelligence to observe this, and judgment to act upon it.

CHAPTER XV.

MORALITY INDEPENDENT OF THEOLOGY.

"Religion, as dealing with the confessedly incomprehensible, is not the basis for human union, in social, or industrial, or political circles, but only that portion of old religion which is now called moral."—PROFESSOR FRANCIS WILLIAM NEWMAN.

Bishop Ellicott was the first prelate whom I heard admit (in a sermon to the members of the British Association for the Advancement of Science) that men might be moral from other motives than those furnished by Christianity. Renan says that Justin Martyr, "in his *Apology*, never attacks the principle of the empire. He wants the empire to examine the Christian doctrines." A Secularist would have attacked the principle, regarding freedom as of more consequence to progress than any doctrine without it.

Those who seek to guide life by reason are not without a standard of appeal. "Secularism accepts no authority but that of nature, adopts no methods but those of science

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and philosophy, and respects in practice no rule but that of the conscience, illustrated by the common sense of mankind. It values the lessons of the past, and looks to tradition as presenting a storehouse of raw materials to thought, and, in many cases, results of high wisdom for our reverence; but it utterly disowns tradition as a ground of belief, whether miracles and supernaturalism be claimed or not claimed on its side. No sacred scripture or ancient Church can be made a basis of belief, for the obvious reason that their claims always need to be proved, and cannot without absurdity be assumed. The association leaves to its individual members to yield whatever respects their own good sense judges to be due to the opinions of great men, living or dead, spoken or written; as also to the practice of ancient communities, national or ecclesiastical. But it disowns all appeal to such authorities as final tests of truth."*

Morality can be inspired and confirmed by perception of the consequences of conduct. Theology regards free-will as the foundation of responsibility. But free-will saves no man from material consequences, and diverts attention from material causes of evil and good. Under the free-will doctrine the wonder is that any morality is left in the world. It is a doctrine which gives scoundrels the same chance as a saint. When a man is assured that he can be saved when he believes, and that, having free-will, he can believe when he pleases, he, as a rule, never does please until he has had his fill of vice, and is about to die—either of disease or the hangman. If by the hangman, he is told that, provided he repents before eight o'clock in the morning, he may find himself nestling in Abraham's bosom before nine. Free-will is the doctrine of rascalism. It is time morality had other foundation than theology. The relations of life can be made as impressive as ideas of supernaturalism. But in this Christians not only lend no help, they disparage the attempt to control life by reason. When Secularism was first talked of, the President of the Congregational Union, the Rev. Dr. Harris, commended to the Union the words of Bishop Lavington of a century earlier (1750): "My brethren, I beg you will rise up with me against mere moral preaching."† A writer of distinction, R. H. Hutton, writing on "Secularism" in the *Expositor* so late as 1881, argues strenuously that moral government is impossible without supernatural convictions. The egotism of Christianity is as conspicuous as that of politics. No ethic is genuine unless it bears the hall-mark of the Church. Secularism does not deny the efficacy of other theories of life upon those who accept them, and only claims to be of use as commending morality on considerations purely human, to those who reject theories purely spiritual.

Anyone familiar with controversy knows that Christianity is advertised like a patent medicine, which will cure all the maladies of mankind. Everybody who tries reasoned morality is encouraged to condemn it, and is denounced if he commends it.

It is a maxim of Secularism that, wherever there is a rightful object at which men should aim, there is a secular path to it.

Nearly all inferior natures are susceptible of moral and physical improvability, which improvability can be indefinitely advanced by supplying proper material conditions.

Since it is not capable of demonstration whether the inequalities of human condition will be compensated for in another life, it is the business of intelligence to rectify them in this world. The speculative worship of superior beings, who cannot need it, seems a lesser duty than the patient service of known inferior natures and the mitigation of harsh destiny, so that the ignorant may be enlightened and the low elevated.

Christians often promote projects beneficial to men; but are they not mainly incited thereto by the hope of inclining the hearts of those they aid to their cause? Is not their motive proselytism? Is it not a higher morality to do good for its own sake, careless whether those benefitted become adherents or not?

Going to a distant town to mitigate some calamity there will illustrate the principle of Secularism. One man will go on this errand from pure sympathy with the unfortunate; this is goodness. Another goes because the priest bids him; this is obedience. Another goes because the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew tells him that all such persons will pass to the right hand of the Father; this is calculation. Another goes because he believes God commands him; this is theological piety. Another goes because he is aware that the neglect of suffering will not answer; this is utilitarianism. But another goes on the errand of mercy because it is an immediate service to humanity, knowing that material deliverance is piety and better than spiritual consolation; this is Secularism.

One whose reputation for spirituality is in all the Churches says: "Properly speaking, all true work is religion, and whatsoever religion is not work may go and dwell among the Brahmins, the Antinomians, Spinning Dervishes, or where it will. Admirable was that maxim of the old monks, '*Laborare est orare*' (Work is worship)."* In his article on Auguste Comte, Mr. J. S. Mill says he "uses religion in its modern sense as signifying that which binds the convictions, whether to deity or to duty—deity in the theological sense, or duty in the moral sense. This is the only sense in which a Secularist would employ the term. Religious moralism is a term I might use, since it binds a man to humanity, which religion does not." "Without God," said Mazzini to the Italian working men forty years ago—"without God you may compel, but not persuade. You may become tyrants in your turn; you cannot be educators or apostles." One night, when Mazzini was speaking in this way, in the hearing of Garibaldi, arguing that there was no ground of duty unless based on the idea of God, the General turned round and said: "I am an Atheist. Am I deficient in the sense of duty?" "Ah," replied Mazzini, "you imbibed it with your mother's milk." All around smiled at the quick-witted evasion.

In one sense Mazzini was as Atheistic in mind as orthodox Christians. He disbelieved that truth, duty, or humanity could have any vitality unless derived from belief in God. Devout as few men are, in the Church or out of it, yet Mazzini believed alone in God. Dogmas of the Churches were to him as though they were not; yet there were times when he seemed to admit that other motives than the one which inspired might be operant for good in other minds. In a letter he once addressed to me there occurred this splendid passage:—

> "We pursue the same end—progressive improvement, association, transformation of the corrupted medium in which we are now living, the overthrow of all idolatries, shams, lies, and conventionalities. We both want man to be, not the poor, passive, cowardly, phantasmagoric unreality of the actual time, thinking in one way and acting in another; bending to power which he hates and despises; carrying empty popish or Thirty-nine Article formulas on his brow, and none within; but a fragment of the living truth, a real individual being linked to collective humanity—the bold seeker of things to come; the gentle, mild, loving, yet firm, uncompromising, inexorable apostle of all that is just and heroic—the Priest, the Poet, and the Prophet."

Mazzini saw in the conception of God the great "Indicator" of duty, and that the one figure, "the most deeply inspired of God, men have seen on the earth was Jesus." Mazzini's impassioned protest against unbelief was itself a form of unbelief. He believed only in one God; not in three. If Jesus was inspired of God, he was not God, or he would have been self-inspired. But, apart from this repellent heresy, if Theism and Christianism are essential to those who would serve humanity, all propaganda of freedom must be delayed until converts are made to this new faith.

The question will be put, Has independent morality ever been seen in action?

Voltaire, at the peril of his liberty and life, rescued a friendless family from the fire and the wheel the priests had prepared for them. Paine inspired the independence of America, and Lloyd Garrison gave liberty to the slaves whose bondage the clergy defended. The Christianity of three nations produced no three men in their day who did anything comparable to the achievement of these three sceptics, who wrought this splendid good, not only without Christianity, but in opposition to it. Save for Christian obstruction, they had accomplished still greater good without the peril they had to brave.

None of the earlier critics of Secularism, as has be

* I owe the expression of this passage, whose comprehensiveness and felicity of phrase exceed the reach of my pen, to Professor Francis William Newman.

† *British Banner*, Oct. 27, 1852.

* Carlyle, *Past and Present*.

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said (and not many in later years), realised that it was addressed, not to Christians, but to those who rejected Christianity, or who were indifferent to it, and were outside it. Christians cannot do anything to inspire *them* with ethical principles, since they do not believe in morality unless based on their supernatural tenets. They have to convert men to Theism, to miracles, prophecy, inspiration of the Scriptures, the Trinity, and other soul-wearying doctrines, before they can inculcate morality they can trust. We do not rush in where they fear to tread. Secularism moves where they do not tread at all.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

THE SECULARIST'S "GREAT LOSS."

MANY persons who admit that, so far as this life is concerned, the principles of Secularism may be useful, allege that in confining our attention to the things of earth we incur a great loss through not believing in heaven, and in that future life which, it is said, is in store for us "when we have shuffled off this mortal coil." It appears to us that an important fact is here overlooked by those who make such an allegation. As Secularists, we cannot believe in that of which (to us) there is no evidence. We positively refuse to assume a belief for which we can find no evidential justification. Moreover, whatever views we may entertain in reference to "a life beyond the grave" will not affect its reality. If we *are* to "live again," we shall do so; while, if death ends all, believing the contrary will not alter the fact. The Secularist's position is a safe one, inasmuch, if he honestly act up to the light within him, no just God would punish him for holding opinions which had been sincerely arrived at. Where, then, is the Secularist's loss? Is it not rather a gain to devote one's time and energy in the endeavor to make the best, physically, morally, and intellectually, of the life we now have? By so doing we perform our duty here, and, at the same time, take the wisest precautions to secure the advantages of any possible hereafter.

If it be contended that Secularists lose the consolation imparted to some by the belief in heaven, we answer: Those who cannot derive any comfort and solace from the Christian's belief in heaven realise a nobler consolation from other sources. What higher pleasure can be felt than that which is imparted by the knowledge that we are constantly striving to elevate humanity to the highest possible ethical degree? If Secularists have no hope of a heaven in "another world," their desire is to secure the purest happiness on earth. Their sweetest consolation is afforded by the persistent performance of those duties that tend to lessen human misery, develop human freedom, augment human comfort, and assist human progress. And be it remembered that this enduring consolation, which is the outcome of Secular conduct, is not marred by the belief in the fiction of the Christian's hell. For, while Christianity offers its believers what to them is a pleasant future, stimulating within them hopes delightful to indulge, and supplying their imagination with splendors enchanting to contemplate, it also presents to them gloomy forebodings, associated with a being who is represented as constantly sowing the seeds of discord and unhappiness among society, who has nothing but frowns for the smiles of life, and whose chief business it is to crush and awe the minds of men with fear and apprehension. If Christianity furnishes its devotees with hopes of heaven to buoy them up, it also gives them the dread of hell to cast them down. The one is quite as certain as the other.

Even if the Christian's heaven were a reality, its loss would not be a great misfortune. The child of reason need not be unhappy at the thought of not being permitted to share in those things which, as St. Paul says, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man." The opponents of Galileo, it is said, refused to look through his telescope to test the accuracy of his description of the visible heavens We, however, have not such scruples in reference to the Christian's heavenly telescope; we will, therefore, look through it, and try to ascertain what sort of a place, according to their own account in the New Testament, the Christian's heaven actually is. The first impression that was made upon our mind on reading the description of this heaven as given by St. John in Revelation was that it is a kind of a theological zoo; a menagerie of wild and strange beasts. Some of these marvellous animals are represented as having resemblance to a lion, a calf, a man, and an eagle, possessing six wings each and "eyes before and behind," besides being "full of eyes within." But, stranger still, they are said to be musical beasts, and can sing to some tune, for "they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." Then we have what may be called a chorus, in which the beasts are joined by the elders, and by "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" of angels. To be compelled to live for ever in such company, and amidst such a howling noise, would not be a very pleasant prospect. The lightning, thunder, and the curious antics of the saints as recorded in the nightmare of St. John may be exciting, but the performance does not evoke within us any desire to be present. Whoever invented this Christian idea of heaven must have had some strange notions of the tastes of cultured society. But perhaps the place was not intended for them, and we doubt if many of the members of the refined and intellectual class will be found there.

For those individuals who like the society of saints, angels, and wild beasts, the Christian's heaven may be all right; and those who have any longing for such a place, let them go there by all means; but we would rather be excused. Then we are told that such persons as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are to be there; also, according to their "last dying words," nearly all the murderers, who were deemed too wicked to live on earth, are to form a part of the "heavenly host." Now, such an association may be pleasant enough for those who are "all one in Christ"; but to Secularists the presence of those who have disgraced the very name of man would make eternal life utterly miserable. We have no wish to rob even "the vilest sinner" of his prospect of heavenly bliss"; but no decent Freethinker can sing of such a place: "Oh, that will be joyful, when we meet to part no more." The separation of Christians from Freethinkers in this world has been successfully maintained for many ages, and, if St. John's account is trustworthy, we should prefer the separation to continue in the "next world." A heaven, to be desirable, should be a place where suffering is unknown, where the true and the noble of the earth can dwell in peace and harmony, undisturbed by personal pain, or a knowledge of the gloom and sadness of others. To us the Christian's heaven appears destitute of every redeeming feature, and it would be no pain to us to see it occupied by pious saints, with ourselves shut out.

It is amusing to hear preachers and others talk about heaven as if they knew where it is, and what it is; whereas they know nothing of such a place. The late Mr. Austin Holyoake put some important questions upon this subject in a very concise form. He asked: "In what part of the so-called Sacred Writings shall we find a clear and intelligible description of this abode of bliss—this promised land of never-ending pleasures, which is to be the reward of all true believers? It appears to be situated, by common consent, up above—beyond the clouds—beyond immeasurable space—and yet in the clouds. Whether in the torrid or the frigid zone, we are not informed. What its climate will be no man knoweth. Will there be there the severe winter, with its snows and chilling blasts; the genial and budding spring, giving promise of the warm and sunny summer, when all nature, in the plenitude of her wealth and beauty, showers her blessings on mankind; to be followed by the mellow and glowing autumn, when the seasons, resting as it were from the labors of production, smile upon the bounties scattered broadcast over the earth? Men of all climes are to go to heaven who believe in the proper number of orthodox nostrums; but how will the Laplander fare in a climate which is suitable to the Asiatic? How will the Englishman live and be happy where the African can thrive, or the Russian of the wilds of Siberia will be at home? Are all to be dumb there, or are all to speak one language? If all are to have the power of articulation, are those only of one country to talk together, except the happy few who may possess the gift of tongues? If so, it will be but a repetition of the educational inequalities of this world, which the schoolmaster is now making strenuous efforts to rectify. Will all retain the same intellectual power which they possessed when on earth? If so, what gratification will the change bring to the idiots from birth, who are not capable of comprehending anything? They

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cannot be *restored* to their senses, seeing that they never possessed any."

We do not forget that it is said that on one occasion Jesus spoke of the kingdom of heaven as being "within you"; but this makes it a *condition* in this life, not a *place* wherein to dwell in some future existence. Besides, it is not in harmony with another statement ascribed to Christ, where he alleges: "In my Father's house are many mansions.....I go to prepare a place for you" (John xiv. 2). Moreover, that the Christian's heaven is not supposed to be a mere condition of the mind is evident from the New Testament. In Luke (xvi. 19–31) we read of "a certain beggar" and of "a certain rich man"; the one was in heaven and the other was in hell, and both were in hearing, seeing, and speaking distance of each other. From heaven the rich man was seen being tormented in hell. St. John also states (Rev. xiv. 10) that a certain person "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in tht presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." Now, to suppose that such sights as these are desirable to behold is an outrage upon our humanity. Just imagine being shut up in heaven, and looking at others being tortured in the flames of hell. Why, to be excluded from a place where these ghastly sights are possible would be no loss, but a great gain. Better believe that "the dead know nothing" than to indulge the thought of going to such a heaven as is here described.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE CHURCH AND SCIENCE.

DR. ANDREW D. WHITE'S *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*, in two volumes, ought to be an eye-opener to Christians. It is full of the facts that tell. Dr. White shows that in the era preceding Christianity men had begun the study of nature, and many ideas that are the glory of modern science had taken vague shape among the Greeks. With the advent of the divine religion all this was changed. Learning was regarded as a wile of the Devil. Intense intellectual darkness followed the advent of the Light of the World, and for centuries enwrapped the whole world where Christendom had sway, being only dispersed by contact with Jews, Moslems, and Sceptics.

Instead of continuing the work so well begun by the Greeks, and which the Roman philosophers and poets were pushing to its logical conclusions, the Christian Church decided that in the records left by a semi-barbarous Semitic tribe was to be found a complete and accurate account of the universe from the day on which its creation began. More than this, the Church proclaimed, with all the weight of its authority, that in those records was to be found whatever man could or should learn of astronomy, geology, geography, meteorology, medicine, sanitation, zoology, botany, chemistry, physiology; in short, that in what is now recognised by all who think, orthodox and heterodox alike, to be an almost inseparable compound of borrowed myths and distorted history had been divinely compressed all secular as well as all religious knowledge.

Still further did the Church go; it insisted that a text which had passed through the hands of an indefinite number of scribes, not one of whom possessed even the rudiments of a literary conscience, could not be contradicted by the stars in their courses, by the evidence of men's senses, or by the calm testimony of mountains and seas and rivers. Wherever and whenever the power to do so existed, direct investigation was forbidden, under pain of death in this world and eternal torture in the next; when and where the ecclesiastical power was less, contempt and ostracism replaced the severer immediate penalty, but the solemn threat of future agony still rang bold and high.

Ignorance and arrogance characterised the Christian Church during the whole of its palmy period. The Ages of Faith were the Dark Ages. Wrong upon every subject upon which it professed to guide men, it yet claimed to be the one infallible divine faith.

Dr. White shows that on every point wherein the Church has come in conflict with science, from the time of Galileo to that of Darwin, it has had, eventually, to give way under hated but irresistible compulsion. At first there has always been the fierce denial of an observed fact; then came the period of persecution, justified by a text; finally, the text was declared to be in exact harmony with the fact it had disproved. The progression has been about like this: "Your assertion is not true, because Moses asserts the exact contrary, and if Moses is wrong there is no basis for Christian belief; your assertion may be true in a way, and, if so, that is probably what Moses meant; anybody could see that your assertion is true, for Moses made it 4,000 years ago, but, as the matter was not one connected with faith and morals, the Church gave it no careful attention, and a few of her followers made for a time an inconsequential mistake in interpretation."

DOCTORS AND PARSONS.

DR. CAMPBELL BLACK, Professor of Physiology in Anderson's College, Glasgow, has an interesting paper in the *Scalpel* on "Medical Ethics or Etiquette," showing much common sense on this topic. Incidentally he discusses the question whether fees should be accepted from clergymen. Dr. Black says: "My distinct opinion is that poverty and suffering never appeal in vain to the worthy disciple of the old man of Cos; but I distinctly fail to see why, because a man is a clergyman, he is entitled to sponge, particularly on a young and poor practitioner of medicine. In my opinion, and I submit it with all humility, especially in the City of Glasgow, the clergyman in receipt of over £1,000 per annum is grossly overpaid; and, as a rule, clergymen are the most pampered members of the community. Every now and again do I notice the presentation of £400 or £500 to some clergyman, especially one with his comfortable £1,000 per annum, to enable him to go and take a four or five months' holiday, after a series of fierce encounters with Beelzebub, or of his having a pecuniary jubilee or semi-jubilee. When did you ever hear of a poor, hard-wrought doctor ever receiving a £5 note from the public, if run down in health? Of course the money is ostensibly given to our friend, the parson, to strengthen the faith (and if anything can do this money will) by a run to the 'Holy Land'—a very dirty place, as I understand from men who have been there, and still refuse to swallow Jonah or his whale, or the Gadarean pigs. Considerations of health often demand, on the part of our ecclesiastical friend, that he should sojourn (that, I believe, is the word) in the 'gay city' for a considerable number of days, *en route* to and from Jerusalem; and if you looked into the 'Jardin Mabile,' the 'Moulin Rouge,' or the 'Folies-Bergère,' the chances are you would find the shepherd there, propagating the gospel, in continental fashion, and evincing a familiarity with the locality and a delight in its enjoyment worthy of a Glasgow Bailie!"

IN MEMORIAM.

N. B. BILLANY, OF HULL.

O, FAITHFUL friend, who bore the blast
Of bigots' hatred, and who stood
Unshak'n in thy iron mood,
At Error thy keen darts to cast:

Who brav'd the public scorn, and flung
On mankind's altar thy great heart
To teach the world a nobler part,
And paralyse the critic's tongue:

Who strove the heights of Truth to reach,
Tho' lone the path, and steep and wild;
And learnt from Nature as a child
Takes lessons from its mother's speech:

Who sought not shameful fame to gain,
By whisp'ring mellow-sounding phrase,
To please the general ear and raise
Weak, idle dreams within the brain:

If life there be beyond the tomb
Of recompense for mortal man—
The keystone of some mighty plan
We see but dimly limn'd in gloom—

And if fair act and honest thought,
Devotion to man's service here,
Are worthier than that servile fear
Which holds all kindly deeds as nought;

Then in that life shalt thou be crown'd
With higher rank and larger bliss
Than e'er thou couldst have gain'd in this,
Where cruel censure kept thee down.

E. PERCY SCHOFIELD.

No one but a madman can reject the use of reason. No one who admits its authority in any department of human affairs can deny its absolute supremacy in all as the one guide to truth.—*Sir J. Fitzjames Stephen.*

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ACID DROPS.

Believers in Providence should tell us what they think of the terrible cyclone at St. Louis. It will not do to remind us that God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. Nor will it avail to quote the old text about his loving those he chasteneth, for we never observe that the pious persons who make the quotation are anxious to have his love demonstrated to themselves in that particular fashion. What we want to know is this: How is the cyclone reconcileable with God's infinite wisdom and infinite love?

It is frequently said that suffering is the result of man's folly or wickedness. But the people of St. Louis were quite unable to foresee this sudden calamity, and there is not the slightest ground for supposing that they were morally worse than the people of any other American city, or, indeed, of any other city in the world. Cyclones are no respecters of persons. They crush fools or philosophers, saints or sinners, with perfect impartiality, or rather with perfect indifference.

Hundreds of men, women, and children were killed at St. Louis, and the damage to property is estimated at twenty-five million dollars. It is a very fine stroke of Providence. We should think the people of St. Louis don't want any more Providence for the next twenty years.

St. Louis churches suffered heavily in the cyclone. It will cost half a million dollars at least for repairs and rebuilding. Jehovah has no respect for his own houses when he is on the rampage. He runs amuck like a drunken Malay.

St. Louis is not the only place that has suffered from the recent storms in America. Washington itself was visited. Roofs were torn off houses there, and two churches were demolished. Churches seem to suffer badly when Providence is moving.

"All the carpenters of the city are now engaged night and day in making coffins." Such was Monday morning's news from Moscow. The Czar had been crowned with immense ceremony, in which the rites of religion were very conspicuous, and Providence was supposed to be smiling benignly on his reign. Then came the climax. More than half a million people assembled on the Chodinsky Plain to eat free dinners and scramble for mementoes of the coronation. The result was a dreadful, brutal crush, in which three thousand people, many of them women and children, were trampled to death, so that the place presented a more sickening appearance than a battlefield.

This is a peculiar display of the "Providence" which has (so the Church says) taken the Czar under its keeping. And just fancy the beautiful state of society which the said Church blesses in the name of God, when the Czar commands millions of money for the purposes of luxury and ostentation, while myriads of his subjects will sit up all night, and wrestle with each other in the morning, for the chance of getting a cotton handkerchief containing sausage, gingerbread, cake, and nuts! Athens and Rome—mere Pagan cities—never exhibited such a degrading spectacle.

Lord Kelvin is a very eminent physicist, and it is pleasant to note that the jubilee of his professorship is to be celebrated at Glasgow. Dr. Macleod has taken this opportunity to remind the world that Lord Kelvin is not an infidel—which it is hardly possible for any professor to be in Scotland. "He is neither Agnostic nor Materialist," says Dr. Macleod, but, like Newton and Faraday, has continued "a humble Christian worshipper."

Surely this is a most unfortunate reference. Newton's writings on the subject of Prophecy are generally allowed to exhibit the weaknesses of a great mind, and Faraday deliberately refused to submit his religion to any test of reason.

Dr. Macleod writes about Lord Kelvin's religion in the following fashion: "His studies have led him into the wildest fields of speculative research as to cosmogony and the destiny of the material universe. He has weighed everything, from atoms and molecules to sun, moon, and stars; he has calculated the rate of loss of energy in the sun's heat; he has entered with zest on speculations as to the origin of life on this planet, and has seen in the dash of meteors suggestions as to the conceivable source of those seeds from which evolution has proceeded; he has dealt with geologic time and plutonic forces; but none of these fascinating and awful problems have ever shaken his faith in God."

No doubt this is very interesting, but what is it worth? Weighing everything, from atoms to stars, has little bearing on the question of the existence of God. The greatest physicist, like the greatest chemist, really finds nothing in the universe but matter and force. He may dream of something behind matter and force, but the dream is not a scientific hypothesis. Biology has a far more direct bearing on theology, and it is significant that Darwin advanced from Christianity to Deism, and from Deism to Agnosticism.

"Faith in God" is a phrase which reveals the whole secret of Lord Kelvin's religion. The very word *faith* implies something independent of *reason*. And faith, in the ultimate analysis, is nothing but authority. Dr. Macleod's statement, therefore, really means that Lord Kelvin still clings to the religious beliefs that were instilled into him in his childhood.

A great heresy case has just been settled in Scotland. Our readers will recollect that the Rev. Alexander Robinson, parish minister of Kilmun, is the author of a book entitled *The Savior in the Newer Light*, of which we gave an account some months ago in the *Freethinker*. Mr. Robinson rejects all the miraculous part of the Gospels as out of harmony with a rational and scientific view of the universe, and as ridiculously unsupported by anything like adequate evidence. Jesus Christ himself he regards as man, not as God; as a great moral and religious teacher, not as wonder-worker of superhuman powers. In short, his position is very much that of the advanced Unitarian; and such a position, of course, could hardly be maintained within the pale of the Established Church of Scotland. It was inevitable that Mr. Robinson should be proceeded against for heresy. Being condemned by the local Presbytery, he appealed to the General Assembly. This body discussed his case at a sitting which lasted till two o'clock in the morning. Finally, by a majority of thirty-nine, the Assembly suspended Mr. Robinson for a year; it has also enjoined him to withdraw his book, and to report at the next assembly whether he has repudiated his teaching.

Mr. Robinson's case, twenty years ago, would not have been discussed till two o'clock in the morning. It would have been settled in half an hour. Two hundred and fifty years ago he would have been clapped in prison, tortured, and probably executed. He may thank his stars that he lives in the second half of the nineteenth century.

We are quite unable, however, to sympathise with Mr. Robinson in clinging to a Church whose teachings he repudiates. It would have been more manly and dignified if he had resigned his pastorate, especially as (according to report) he has some private means which would save him from the worst evils of resignation.

Jehovah's worshippers are very apt to imitate his conduct. Some of them are out in South Africa, suppressing what they call "the Matabele revolt"—that is, the rising of the natives against the Christian gentlemen who have kindly come over to take care of their land for them. If the Matabele kill a foreigner, it is murder; if the foreigners kill a hundred Matabele, it is a just punishment. In fact, the Christian intruders go to work as their deity did at St. Louis. Colonel Napier, for instance, reports that he has already burnt 250 kraals, captured 1,300 cattle and 200 sheep and goats, and destroyed enormous quantities of grain. In other words, he has burnt the dwellings of these poor "heathen," so that their wives and children will be without shelter; and destroyed their food supplies, so that their wives and children, as well as themselves, will be reduced to absolute starvation. Such is Christian warfare nineteen hundred years after Jesus Christ!

At the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland one minister had the honesty to move for a lay committee to inquire into the value of Jewish missions, which were said to cost over £4,000 for every Jew converted. Really, said the Rev. Mr. Menzies, the missions were only agencies for giving the Jews cheap education. To speak of them as missions for the conversion of the Jews was to mislead the people. He only found five supporters, the mass of the Assembly knowing that the Jewish racket is a good one to work to raise finances. If they would only convert Rothschild, they might feel easy ever after. We fear that the Church of Scotland fails in rightly directing its mighty power of prayer.

Last winter, at a season when we did not need rain, and in the barren mountains of Kentucky, it rained so hard that the streams washed away houses and drowned women and children before they could escape. This spring, in the Blue Grass region of Kentucky, it has failed to rain scarcely any from the first of April to May 12, when I am writing, and the drought is ruinous.—*Blue Grass Blade.*

War costs $10,000 a minute, and religion costs $500 a minute. If some men of brains can get possession of the $500 a minute that is paid to dead-beat preachers and missionaries,

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and put the preachers and missionaries to making their livings by honest labor, and use that $500 a minute to stop the war expenditure of $10,000 a minute, it can be stopped, and would be good finance these hard times.—*C. C. Moore.*

Mr. Brander Matthews, an American novelist, says: "I have known volumes of Sunday-school books more pernicious than the French novel, because they told lies. They taught that the boy who goes fishing on Sunday is drowned, while the boy who goes Saturday has a good time."

It turns out that "the veiled Mahatma" who recently wedded Mr. Claude Falls Wright, the secretary of the American Theosophical Society, to Miss Leonard, and who was mysteriously denominated "He-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed," is a woman. It was, says the *New York Herald* (May 17), Mrs. Kate Tingley, a Spiritist lady who gets her living as a clairvoyant, who kindly consented to enact the Mahatma on this occasion. She assured the wedded couple that their courtship extended back to the year 15,279 B.C. There is nothing like accuracy in such matters. Mrs. Tingley was the guide, philosopher, and friend of the late W. Q. Judge, playing with him the *rôle* of Blavatsky towards Olcott.

In our last week's "Book Chat" we noticed a little book on *The Child: its Origin and Development.* We took exception to the authoress referring daughters to the Bible. We learn that Mrs. Langlois is a Christian, and that, in consequence of her being brave enough to publish that innocence should be founded on knowledge, and not on ignorance, she is to be refused Holy Communion, and her daughter, aged seven, is likely to be expelled from school as unfit for her associates, because of her mother. So much for Christian charity in Chipping Norton. Mrs Langlois writes: "Strange to say, those who are most bitter against me confess that they have not read my book." This is not strange, but rather the usual course of things. New ideas are most resented by those too cowardly to investigate them, and who prefer the ease of regulating their lives by usages and prejudices, whose antiquity gives them an air of respectability.

A new candidate for missionary honors in the Dark Continent looms up in the shape of Buddhism. Buddhist missionaries from Ceylon are at work, and the Sikhs and other natives employed in the police are said to be engaged in the work also. Between Mohammedanism and Buddhism Christianity will have a hard struggle, even if aided by gunpowder and rum, for they both advocate abstention from alcohol.—*Secular Thought.*

The *Canada Presbyterian* calls attention to the fact that Talmage's old congregation, numbering at one time three thousand members, has fallen to pieces, and it draws the lesson that to attract a crowd is not the chief business of the minister. Few church managers will agree with this, we imagine, except in such a case as that of Trinity Church, New York, which holds such a vast mass of stolen property that its object is to keep things snug and select. In almost all other cases the man that draws a crowd is still looked upon as the best man in the business. He gets the biggest pay, the highest honor, and the largest stack of slippers and smoking-caps.—*Secular Thought.*

Eliza Ker, of 21 Urswick-road, died while at prayer, and with an open Bible before her. Verdict, "Death from natural causes."

Lecturing at the Royal Institute, Mr. E. A. Wallis Budge, the keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities in the British Museum, compared the morality of the ancient Egyptians very favorably with that of any country of the present day. During his paper on "The Moral and Religious Literature of Ancient Egypt," he said that the old Egyptians had but seven books containing moral precepts. One of the most notable of these books contains a man's chief duties. His first was to God, his second to the dead, and his third to his family and neighbors.

Millsom hopes for a happy time in Heaven. As every repentant murderer in England is going there, it will be quite a relief to find one's self in the other place.—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

William Webb has a fancy for breaking into churches and emptying the collection boxes. He has already been convicted of indulging in this pastime in Wiltshire, Gloucester, and Gravesend, and he is now charged with a similar amusement at Croydon. He says he went into the church to see the flowers. But this is a very timid excuse. Why not say that he went in to pray and see what God would send him?

Rev. David Evans, of St. Mark's, South Shields, has fallen into the hands of the Philistines. Allegations of immorality and intoxication were made against him, and Chancellor Dibdin has found them proved; in fact, he says they are the clearest, as well as the worst, he has ever heard. Poor David Evans! It is really shameful to expose a man of God in this fashion. Was it not Constantine the Great who said that if he caught a bishop in the act of adultery he would throw his mantle over the holy sinner, rather than bring scandal on the Church?

During a conference of representatives of North Staffordshire School Boards at Stoke, one of the speakers incidentally referred to "priest-ridden Spain," whereupon Father Nunan rose in his wrath and exclaimed—"Withdraw that expression, sir. I refuse to sit quiet unless you withdraw. How dare you say that, sir? I am a priest, and have a right to sit here." Father Nunan has really a wonderful regard for Spain, or he would never lose his temper in this way over its reputation. Perhaps, after all, he is chiefly anxious about the character of his own profession, and feels personally insulted if anything is said against priests in any part of the world. In that case, he is probably fated to suffer a good deal before he leaves the profession.

Dr. Boyd tells a good story in *Longman's.* Two hard-drinking Forfarshire lairds were wont to ride into Dundee for a spree. On the way home one night the drunkest slipped off his horse and slipped down a steep bank to the brink of the Tay. His companion, missing him, turned back, and called out, "Faar [where] are ye, B——?" At last a voice came up the steep, "Lord kens faar I am, but it's no hell, for here's watter."

The tender mercies of the wicked are said to be cruel, but the tender mercies of the righteous are not altogether grateful. We read in the *Sunday Companion* of a little girl named Ina Crabtree, who had the evil courage to whisper in McCulloch Church, Portsmouth, Ohio, during divine service. For this crime the beadle gave her in charge to a policeman, and, on being brought before the magistrate, she was sentenced to pay a fine of five dollars and costs, or to go to prison for ten days. Being a poor little orphan, without so much as a cent in her pocket, she was taken to the gaol; and it required a special indignation meeting of the citizens to effect her release.

The Boston *Globe* says two sermons were lately preached on Sunday in New York, one of which was entitled "To Heaven on a Bicycle"; the other in a Presbyterian Church, wherein cheap ice was referred to as "In the summertime a chunk of heaven on the brink of hell." Anything to gain a hearing is the motto of these sensationalists.

The *New World*, the leading Catholic organ of Chicago, says of Ingersoll's pulpit discourse: "Has Ingersoll come to the Church, or has the Church gone to Ingersoll? A glance at the Colonel's address to the members of the Church Militant reveals no surrender on his part. He stands where he has always stood, in bitter hostility to everything religious, a declaimer against God, and a calumniator of those who profess faith in God. His address last Sunday was possibly the ablest presentation of his view of things that he has thus far given to the public." It goes on to declare that the substance was poison, and that the orator is "a shallow sophist, a juggler of words, a vilifier of men, and a preacher of despair." This abuse is, of course, to be expected from a Catholic organ.

On the other hand, the *Cleveland Plain-dealer* says: "The appearance in the pulpit of a Christian church of a man who, for a score of years, has been pouring his invectives upon the Church is indeed a notable event, giving hope for the dawn of that day in which intolerance of honest differences of opinion will be only a memory among intelligent men."

Mr. Holyoake, in a very interesting article which appears in another part of this journal, refers to the monkish proverb, *Laborare est orare*, which is rendered as "labor is worship," though *orare* more strictly means "*to pray.*" Mr. Holyoake thinks the proverb admirable, but is he quite sure that he understands it? The construction of the sentence is such that it can be read forward or backward, and it has been contended that the real meaning of the proverb is exactly the opposite of the previous rendering—not that "work is worship," but that "worship is work." The latter is far more compatible with the spirit of monkery.

If science does not succeed in getting the upper hand over superstition, superstition will extinguish science. Between the two opposing forces the combat is to the death. —*E. Renan.*

Science is the getting of knowledge from experience on the assumption of uniformity in nature, and the use of such knowledge to guide the actions of men.—*W. K. Clifford.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 7, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, "Mr. Gladstone's Letter to the Pope."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 7, Manchester; 14, Northampton; 21 and 28, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

H. N.—It is not without merit, but several lines do not scan.

WOOD-GREENER.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. THWAITES.—The verses are not up to the mark for publication. As you live in a small country town, and are not in an independent position, we advise you to be careful. Think for yourself, and put in a word for Freethought when you can; but do not sacrifice your living. The world's charity, after all these centuries of Christian cant, is a very cold thing to trust to in the hour of an honest man's necessity.

J. MUIR.—If you refer to Mr. Wheeler's article again, you will see that the periodical mentioned is published in Japan.

GOTTHEIL.—Thanks for cutting.

H. D.—It is an old story; quite eighty years old, to our knowledge.

W. BRADBURN.—Pray accept our sympathy in your bereavement. Thanks for cuttings.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) Evolution is not a cause, but a process. (2) Yes, the Christadelphians deny a general resurrection. They believe in the supernatural immortality of the elect. (3) It will cost you a halfpenny to send the *Freethinker* to America.

ENQUIRER.—You will find a good selection of Socialist books and pamphlets, and also of social literature which is not exactly Socialistic, at the publishing office of the *Clarion*, in Fleet-street. If you cannot call, you can easily write for a catalogue.

W. CARVER.—We do not care to tackle any more of Marie Corelli's books. *The Mighty Atom* was quite enough for one lifetime. We cut up a ridiculous book now and then, but we prefer more profitable reading.

LINCOLN BILLANY.—We had the highest esteem for your father. See our obituary notice in another column. Thanks for the cuttings.

P. SABINE.—Very pleased to hear from you. Go on. Mr. Foote will be happy to pay your Branch an early visit.

P. B. (Manchester).—Thanks for the reference. Will deal with it in our next.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: Collected at Glasgow Conference (evening meeting), £4 4s.

I. HOOPER.—A paragraph was already in type.

J. M. R.—Always glad to receive your cuttings.

J. JONES.—Thanks for the report, but we don't quite understand it, and criticism is impossible in the dark.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Samuel Seal, £1 1s. Per R. Forder: J. A. Roberts (New Zealand), 8s. 6d.; J. C. (Greenock), 4s. Per Miss Vance: Edinburgh Branch, 1s. 6d.

G. WARD.—Tuesday afternoon is too late. The list stands over till next week.

A. MONRO.—Have written an obituary notice. Sorry to hear you are unwell.

W. A. TURNER.—Colonel Ingersoll is not bound to answer every Christian who criticises him. He receives hundreds of challenges every year. When a foeman worthy of his steel appears he is always ready for the fray; and, having discussed with Judge Black, Dr. Field, Mr. Gladstone, and Cardinal Manning, he can well afford to laugh at the little free-lances who call him a coward because he will not advertise them. *Ingersoll As He Is*, recently published in America, refutes all the silly slanders you refer to. We began a summary of it in the *Freethinker*, and it will soon be completed, and issued as a pamphlet.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Freethought Ideal—Lucifer—Open Court—Truth Seeker—Watts's Literary Guide—Positivist Review—Progressive Thinker—Secular Thought—Dominion Review—Post—Isle of Man Times—New York Public Opinion—Glasgow Herald—Vegetarian Messenger—Freedom—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—Nya Sanningar—Independent Pulpit—New York Herald—Blue Grass Blade—Freethought Magazine—Daily Mail—Independent Pulpit.

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

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SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

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

PRESIDENTIAL NOTES.

FOR the eighth time the National Secular Society has done me the honor to elect me as its President. I value the post very highly. It gives me a great opportunity of usefulness. Yet the work and anxiety, to say nothing of grutuitous worries, are sometimes so oppressive that I have to carry my mind back to the morning when Charles Bradlaugh handed me the President's hammer in order to sustain my devotion. Further, it is perfectly clear to me that I should be in a better financial position if I attended exclusively to my own business; and this is an important consideration as one advances in life, with the cares of a family growing heavier on one's shoulders.

The Conference endorsed my plan of a registered Association for at least partially defeating the Blasphemy Laws as they affect the right of Secular Societies to hold property. There are many reasons why no time should be lost in pushing forward this project. I am having the Articles of Association prepared. Of course they will be fully discussed before registration. A few friends are waiting for the honor of being the first members. Mr. Hartmann was the first to make me a handsome offer of support if the scheme is carried into effect.

The Conference decisively rejected the proposal that I should be asked to hand over my Lecture Scheme to the National Secular Society—that is, to a more or less well-selected committee in London. Personally, I should be delighted if this were possible. I do not desire unnecessary work and trouble. But at present it is *not* possible. Nothing but vigorous personal control will achieve any real success in this new direction. Later on, when the scheme is thoroughly worked out, better understood, and regularly supported, it will fall into the general body of the Society's work. Until then, with the vote of the Conference behind me, I shall press onward as I can, heedless of a very small minority who are original in nothing but criticism. I cannot please everyone, and I do not mean to try. The great thing is to get on with the work. It is the work that tells in the long run.

The Lecture Scheme cannot be continuously worked without money, and I appeal to the party for adequate support. My resources are exhausted, and I am responsible for engagements, which I shall honor out of my own poor earnings if necessary. Some men in our party have fairly flourishing bank accounts, and should send cheques for preaching the Gospel of Freethought to the heathen. The less well-to-do, also, might easily spare something for this great object.

One matter was raised at the Conference on which I can only speak with much reserve. The proposal to compensate the President for loss of time and money in attending to the Society's affairs was first made rather against my wishes, but since it has been adopted I venture to remark that it cannot be pleasant to me to see a committee *begging* for this purpose. The proposal, I take it, is meant as an act of justice, not as an act of charity.

I may say, in conclusion, that Miss Vance is looking about for a suitable central office for the National Secular Society. When it is secured we shall be far better able to transact business, besides dealing more effectively with the great mass of my correspondence. G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

SUNDAY'S weather was glorious. It was a well-nigh irresistible invitation to the open-air, especially in the evening, when the heat abated and a delicious coolness spread over the sunburnt metropolis. Nevertheless, a capital audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall, in Tottenham Court-road, where Mr. Foote lectured on the new Education Bill, with special reference to the quarrel between the Nonconformists and the Irish Nationalists. Mr. Watts, who occupied the chair, made a brief introductory speech on the Glasgow Conference, the President's Lecture Scheme, and the immediate future of our work in London. Mr. Foote's lecture was highly relished and very warmly applauded.

London Freethinkers not familiar with the locality are reminded that the Athenæum Hall is No. 75 Tottenham Court-road, on the west side—that is, the left going from Oxford-street—nearly opposite Store-street. The hall is comfortably seated and well-ventilated.

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Mr. Foote lectures again at the Athenæum Hall this evening (June 7), his subject being "Mr. Gladstone's Letter to the Pope."

Mr. Charles Watts lectures three times to-day, Sunday, June 7, in the Secular Hall, Manchester. The morning subject, "Dangers Ahead," is an important one, and should draw a good audience. On the following Sunday, June 14, Mr. Watts visits Northampton after many years' absence.

Mr. Charles Watts has reprinted in pamphlet form the articles which he recently contributed to the *Freethinker* on "The Death of Christ." It is an excellent propagandist pamphlet, and deserves a wide circulation. Mr. Watts's connection with this journal has evidently done him no harm. He writes with more force and point now than he did when he was ten years younger—which, in another sense, is a great tribute to his vitality.

Twelve months ago Mr. Watts held a four-nights' debate at Glasgow on "Secularism and Christianity," his opponent being Dr. Alexander Jamieson. This debate is now published at one shilling, and can (we presume) be obtained from Mr. Forder. Mr. Watts tried to debate the subject, and his speeches are the only valuable part of the publication. Dr. Jamieson cuts a very ridiculous figure. His speeches reek with personality. He thinks it a sufficient answer to an argument to quote something which one Freethinker has at some moment in his life been provoked into saying about another Freethinker; just as if the controversies of Christians did not display a thousand times as much ill temper and regrettable language. Dr. Jamieson's speeches bristle with quotations from "Saladin." It reminds one of the Crusades, only it is not so interesting and chivalrous. On the whole, it may be well for Secularists to read this Scotch doctor's speeches. They contain the worst that Christian malignity, coming to the assistance of dialectical incompetence, can say against the Secular movement; and, after reading them, a Secularist will be inoculated for ever against the attacks of pious vituperation. Dr. Jamieson's attacks on Mr. Foote in this debate will shortly be dealt with in our columns. They are almost incredibly stupid, as well as almost incredibly malicious.

The *American Wheelman* says: "Robert G. Ingersoll, the talented Agnostic, is one of the latest converts to wheeling. His conversion to this has been easy, while his conversion to Christianity has been laborious and fruitless. However, the stately lecturer, now that he has a racer, can prepare for scorching."

The *Sydney Bulletin*, an influential journal published at the antipodes, has become very pronounced in its references to Christianity. This is what it recently said about the Bible and religious education: "The State is a union of citizens of all creeds to secure good government on earth; it has no business to tax un-Christian citizens in order to teach the children of Christian citizens how affairs are managed in heaven. And, if the truth must be told, the Bible is behind the morality of the age; it was full time the Chicago churches bowdlerised it. Every decent church or family has bowdlerised it long ago. All the purity of its selected maxims cannot nullify the force of the sanction which it gives to depraved conduct. In its totality, as a moral work, the Bible is not fit to be read to children."

Mr. William Heaford last Sunday gave a successful start to the open-air propaganda of the newly-formed Branch at Northampton. Two orderly and attentive meetings, of between four and five hundred persons, took place in the morning and evening at the Cow Meadow. Some mild opposition was offered at the morning meeting, but the evening gathering passed away without the desired discussion. The Branch is highly satisfied with the result of its first operations, and intends to go forward encouraged to its work.

Mr. A. B. Moss had two first-rate out-door meetings on Sunday, one at Wood Green, the other at Edmonton, where he drew away nearly all the people from the Christian Evidence lecturer. The crowd was very good-humored.

The Battersea Branch is now being reorganised. Mr. Cohen lectures at Battersea Park Gates on Thursday evenings, June 4 and 11, at 7.30, under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme. A meeting of members will be held at Mr. J. Martin's, 17 Pearson-street, Clapham Junction, on Wednesday, June 10, at 8.30. Miss Vance will be present, and all members are earnestly requested to attend.

The Annual Excursion of the West London Branch will take place on Sunday, June 28, to Taplow, by the Great Western Railway. Taplow is one of the most popular of the up-river resorts, being in close proximity to Maidenhead, whence cheap trips may be taken to Marlow, Henley, etc. The train leaves Paddington at 9.45, and special accommodation will be reserved for those who purchase tickets issued by the Branch. The fare is 2s. 9d. for adults, and half that amount for children. Tickets and full information may be obtained of the secretary, F. Todd, 21 Abdale-road, W.

Mr. P. Sabine is the new secretary of the Camberwell Branch, in place of Mr. R. S. Hose, who has resigned the office. Mr. Sabine is determined to put new life into the Branch. He is making arrangements for a course of Sunday afternoon lectures on Peckham Rye, beginning on June 14, when Mr. C. James will speak from the Branch platform. The meetings may, of course, be a trifle disorderly at first; but that is a reason why the local Freethinkers should rally around the lecturer. A little tact and courage, of course, will put everything right in the end.

The Hull Trades and Labour Council have passed a vote of condolence to the widow and relatives of "their deceased brother-in-arms, N. B. Billany." The vote was proposed by Councillor Millington, and seconded by Mr. F. Maddison, both of whom spoke of the deceased in the highest terms of praise. The *Eastern Morning News* publishes a biography and two editorial paragraphs, couched in language of warm laudation. The *Hull News* gives an account of the funeral, with a long list of the leading citizens who attended. The *Hull Times*, like the other journals, does not try to conceal his Atheism. It records that shortly before his death he said to his son: "If the sentence has gone forth, Lionel, don't be alarmed; I am ready for it."

Humanity, in a review of *Vivisection and Freethought*, by Mr. E. H. B. Stephenson, says that it "is a well-written pamphlet showing that vivisection has no claim on the sympathy of Freethinkers. It should be studied by those who have shared the entirely mistaken and mischievous opinion expressed by Ouida in *The New Priesthood*, that 'the vast and ever-increasing body of persons who are opposed to any form of religion has unhappily conceived that in encouraging vivisection it encourages Freethought.'"

We have just received a brief letter from our old friend, Mr. Joseph Symes, who, as most of our readers are aware, is gallantly upholding the Freethought flag at Melbourne. Mr. Symes informs us that his intimate friends, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bear, are on their way to England, and says that any courtesy shown to them will be taken as shown to himself. Of himself Mr. Symes writes: "I am well in health, but poor as a church mouse, wondering every day how the ceaseless struggle may end, but not without hope of pulling through. Wife and I work hard, live frugally, and do our best to keep the flag flying, though I have seen the staff bend and heard it crack, too, in the sweeping hurricanes that have assailed us. Greeting to you all, and increasing success in our greatest of all movements. Though we workers and fighters go under, as we must, the great change must still go forward, and man become a self-reliant being, instead of the crouching slave of God and priest. I see no prospect of visiting you yet, and to invite you here would be to ask you to what is practically a penniless land."

Mrs. Louisa Samson, who has just resigned the editorship of the *Spinning Wheel*, has conducted that paper since its commencement, between three and four years ago. It may not be generally known that Mrs. Samson is an artist of considerable ability, and that the black and white sketches signed "L. S.," which are so familiar to the readers of many London papers, are from her pen.

Professor Albert Réville, of the Collège de France, writes in *The New World* on "The Miracles of Jesus," which he attributes to mistakes of tradition and enthusiasm. He says: "If anything denotes the change in the human mind which has taken place during a century and a half, it is assuredly the point of view from which miracles have come to be regarded by the immense majority of men who know and reflect. Their scepticism, not to say their incredulity, in this respect has spread among the masses."

The *Behar Times of India* (April 17) says: "*The Shadow of the Sword*, by G. W. Foote (William Reeves, 185, Fleet-street, London, E.C.), is one of the Humanitarian League's publications. It is an essay which ably deals with the subject of war from a rational and humane and practical standpoint."

The *Freethought Magazine* for May gives its readers a portrait of Miss Nettie A. Olds, a young lady who upholds the banner of Secularism in Oregon. She is superintendent of the Portland Secular Sunday-schools, and lecturer at the Secular Church. There is also a portrait of Dr. Charles J. Lewis, M.A., who contributes an article entitled "Mind: A Brain Product," and another portrait of Mr. Philip G. Peabody, a Boston Freethinker and well-known anti-vivisectionist. Mr. G. J. Holyoake writes on "A Real Relic of Paine," and there is a paper on Elizabeth Cady

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Stanton, the Woman's Bible, and the resolution passed at the Women's Annual Convention.

Mrs. Cady Stanton is now a very old woman, but she replies with some verve to her many critics with regard to the Woman's Bible. She says in conclusion: "The Woman's Bible comes to the ordinary reader like a real benediction. It tells her the good Lord did not write the book; that the garden scene is a fable; that she is in no way responsible for the laws of the universe. The Christian scholars and scientists will not tell her this, for they see she is the key to the situation. Take the snake, the fruit tree, and the woman from the tableau, and we have no fall, no frowning Judge, no Inferno, no everlasting punishment—hence no need of a Savior. Thus the bottom falls out of the whole Christian theology. *Here is the reason why*, in all the Biblical researches and higher criticisms, the scholars never touch the position of woman." The truth of this will be generally recognised some day, and meantime we congratulate Mrs. Stanton and her co-workers on their efforts to disenthral their sex.

Professor Max Müller recently delivered a very interesting address on Coincidences before the Royal Society of Literature. The Lord Chancellor presided, and some of the things that were said must have been distasteful to his bigoted orthodoxy. The learned Orientalist pointed out a great number of similarities between Christianity and Buddhism. "One of the most striking coincidences," he said, "was that of the miracle of walking on the water, which was common to Buddhism and Christianity, and was, of course, far anterior in the former to the Christian story. Such coincidences as this appeared to indicate an historical connection. It was important that they should both be collected, and their historical and philosophical import be carefully traced. The Buddhist canon was certainly in existence before Christianity, and the exact nature of the relation between the two religions remained for scholars to determine."

This must be gall and wormwood to certain Christian Evidence people who are always boasting (often ignorantly enough) of the originality of their religion.

Naturally the Lord Chancellor could not let it pass without comment. In moving a vote of thanks to Professor Max Müller, he said that "the evidence of early Christian antiquity was much more cogent with him than that producible from the Oriental records with which the Professor was so familiar." Of course! But what is the value of his lordship's opinion on the subject? Professor Max Müller must have smiled at the noble chairman's announcement.

The *Literary Guide* (Watts & Co.) for June is an interesting number. It is announced that this publication is to be enlarged next month to sixteen pages, the price being increased to twopence. Journals advocating ideas cannot be issued without loss at a penny, as they suffer from the lack of paying advertisements. The increase in price ought not to interfere with the circulation of so useful an organ as the *Literary Guide*.

The latest (21) number of the Humanitarian League's publications is a pamphlet by Joseph Collinson on *What it Costs to be Vaccinated*. It is admirably written, and we recommend it to all who are interested in the subject—and everyone *should be* while there is a Compulsory Vaccination law. A parent who will let a medical man put a lot of dirty stuff into his child's blood, without being assured of its absolute necessity, is negligent of his first duty as a parent, which is to look after the health of his children. Mr. Collinson gives strong reasons, backed up by statistics and medical admissions, for believing that vaccination, while it is not preventive of small-pox, is a frightful means of spreading loathsome diseases. It will not do for medical men to pooh-pooh this pamphlet; they must answer it.

A Conference on the Government Education Bill was convened by the London Trades Council at the Club Union Hall, Clerkenwell-road, on Friday evening, May 29. Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Moss attended to represent the National Secular Society. Unfortunately there was a very scanty attendance of delegates from other bodies. This was attributed to the holidays and the inadequate notice. At any rate, the Conference was adjourned for a fortnight, by which time it is to be hoped that the working classes of London will be more alive to the importance of this Education Bill in relation to their own children.

Mr. Foote sent in a motion on behalf of the N.S.S., which was placed on the agenda. It is a direct pronouncement in favor of Secular Education as the only real solution of the problem. Freethinkers in London, who are connected with social or political organisations, should press such organisations to be represented at the adjourned meeting, and endeavor to get the delegates instructed to support Mr. Foote's resolution.

Chicago is becoming a great literary centre, and in removing there, from Topeka, Kansas, *Lucifer* should widen the sphere of its influence. Its address is now 1,394 West Congress-street, Chicago.

The *Positivist Review* for June contains a paper on Charles Bradlaugh, by S. H. Swinny. The paper is written in a judicial tone, and Mr. Swinny is doubtless anxious to be fair; but we cannot say he impresses us as having any special qualifications for dealing with his subject. Like so many of our Positivist friends, he affects a tone of *de haut en bas*, which is by no means appropriate.

TWO KINDS OF MORALS.

Some weeks ago the Rev. Dr. Morgan, a fashionable preacher of New York, delivered a sermon which he did not compose, but stole. The Rev. Dr. Lee wrote to the newspapers and exposed the thief. Thereupon a number of clergymen also wrote to the newspapers, vigorously denouncing—whom? Not the thief, but Dr. Lee, who had been so little regardful of the interests of the Church of God as to bring one of its ministers into public contempt. The New York *Sun* has been moved by this peculiar manifestation of holy wrath to inquire editorially whether clergymen are morally accountable. The answer is simple. Clergymen are morally accountable. But the morals of the Churches differ greatly from the morals which obtain outside of them. Conduct which in a worldling would be considered infamous is held to be venial in a clergyman. On the other hand, the worldling may do things without reproach from his fellows that would instantly cost a clergyman his pulpit. The Rev. Mr. Goodwin, pastor of a San Francisco Methodist Church, has recently given a striking illustration of the divergence of Church morals from ordinary morals. The Rev. Dr. Brown, Congregationalist, was, under newspaper pressure, reluctantly removed from his pulpit for adultery, perjury, subornation of perjury, bribery of witnesses, the intimidation of women, and the harboring under the same roof with his wife of a woman notoriously unchaste, who confessed to being in love with himself. Mr. Goodwin was so incensed at the punishment inflicted upon Dr. Brown that he at once did him the honor to invite him to occupy the Goodwin pulpit for a Sabbath. On Sunday last, however, Mr. Goodwin proved that he has a high regard for the sort of morals patronised by the Churches. He denounced all forms of gambling, including cards in the house, and even raffles at Church festivals. He also sternly condemned theatre-going, and is doubtless wide-awake to the unspeakable wickedness of Sabbath-breaking, profane swearing, and dancing.

The Congregational clergy of Iowa have, like Mr. Goodwin, been shocked by the action of the Congregational clergy of California in expelling Dr. Brown from the ministry. They have taken the persecuted brother into their own fold, and he will doubtless find a pulpit in Iowa. It is intimated, too, that the attention of the Congregational clergy of the whole of the United States will be called to the case of the ill-used ex-pastor of the First Congregational Church.

Two months ago the Rev. Colburn, pastor of the Grace M. E. Church, San Francisco, was arrested in Golden Gate Park for a crime too horrible to be specified. The Park Commissioners thought it better to refrain from prosecuting him than to inflict upon the public the loathsome scandal that a trial would mean. The Rev. Colburn has sought no vindication in court, and has made no complaint against the policeman who took him to jail in the patrol wagon. He continues to preach, and his congregation is satisfied.

Now, had either Dr. Brown or the Rev. Colburn been convicted of playing a game of billiards, or of attending a Sunday picnic, or of uttering the word "damn" in a moment of irritation, he would have been unfrocked with the hearty approval of the clergy and laity of his sect everywhere. There would have been no sympathetic invitation to preach from Brother Goodwin's pulpit, no resolutions of condolence and confidence from the Iowa brethren, no ladies to sigh out their unimpaired trust in beloved Pastor Colburn, and to lay flowers at his dear feet.

The attention of the secular press of the American continent is being attracted to the queer standard of morals to which the Churches hold the clergy accountable. And it is timely to say that, unless the Churches shall rediscover the Ten Commandments, men and women who desire to be of clean repute will sedulously avoid the sanctuary.—"*San Francisco News Letter*," *May 9, 1896.*

The whole of the prevalent metaphysics of the present century is one tissue of suborned evidence in favor of religion.—*J. S. Mill.*

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A LIGHT ON THE OBFUSCATION OF MR. AND MRS. CHAMWELL.

"God bless me," ejaculated Mr. Chamwell to his wife, as he returned to their breakfast-table, from which he had been called on the arrival of a messenger to say that "Mr. Frankman was dying, and would be glad to see Mr. Chamwell as soon as convenient."

"God bless me, you don't say so," responded Mrs. Chamwell, when she heard the purport of the message.

"Yes," murmured Mr. Chamwell, with lengthened visage, "this is what it always comes to at last."

"Yes, *at last*," assented his wife lugubriously, adding, after a solemn silence, the inquiry, "How long has he been an Atheist? I think I remember hearing that he was brought up in the Lord's fold. How came he to stray from the good shepherd and become a lost sheep?"

"I don't know precisely how long," answered Mr. Chamwell; "but I believe that ever since he was a boy he has been sceptical. I once suggested to him that his youthful mind had been corrupted by the obscene writings of that horrible Atheist, Tom Paine, whereupon he cut me short by inquiring whether I alluded to the reverent Deist, Thomas Paine, and, if so, whether I could point to a single instance of anything remotely resembling obscenity in his writings. I changed the subject, because, of course, I have never read anything the wretch wrote; in fact, I have never even taken the trouble to look up his full name and history in the *Newgate Calendar*. Let me see," pursued Mr. Chamwell, tapping his forehead to awaken his dormant memory, "Tom Paine, Tom Paine—I forget now whether my father saw him hanged outside Horsemonger Gaol, or whether the criminal escaped to France, living there on his plunder of church missionary boxes, until he joined some smugglers and went to America, where he died mortal drunk and calling upon Christ to save his soul."

With her hands before her face, Mrs. Chamwell shut out the dreadful picture, and then she proceeded to call up some reminiscences of her own, including the case of a boy who played truant from Sunday-school to go fishing and got drowned. Worse still was the case of a youth who ran away from home, joined a gang of coiners, got sentenced to a long term of imprisonment; afterwards lived on the proceeds of a woman's shame; burglariously robbed his poor old parents; broke his mother's heart; committed an outrage on her grave; and deliberately assaulted his blind and crippled father, with fatal effect. And this scoundrel was a Freethinker! At least, if he was not exactly a professed Freethinker, he was just as bad. Anyway, he was extremely negligent about saying his prayers and attending divine worship. Which surely proves convincingly that——. But there, there; why labor the point? The circumstances plainly indicate that he was a good-for-nothing Freethinker.

Mr. and Mrs. Chamwell rose from their breakfast-table, and with great gravity made preparations for carrying Christian counsel to the Atheist's death-bed.

They were a good-natured, well-meaning old couple, were the Chamwells; but, unfortunately, if their hearts were soft, their heads were not less so; and their childish credulity sucked up Sunday-school sensationalism with ravenous avidity. During the five years that had elapsed since their retirement from the retail provision trade they had busied themselves with the parochial affairs of the village of I——, and had pottered between the church and the vicarage, with occasional dashes of frivolity at a magic-lantern show or a fancy-dress bazaar (on behalf of church funds), feeding their minds meanwhile on such literary pabulum as the *Church Magazine* and the *Meeting-house Messenger*. In short, the old couple were guided through life by the lights of their forefathers; and, while they never did any conscious harm, they wasted a deal of innocent effort upon spurious "good." Now and again their own native good-heartedness would assert itself, undiluted and unencumbered by conventional piety. Thus it was that they had always maintained a friendly demeanor towards the Atheist, Ernest Frankman, whom their fellow worshippers, for the most part, regarded as a "child of the Devil," outside the pale of sympathy, and beyond the borders of their toleration.

Not that Mr. and Mrs. Chamwell understood Ernest Frankman one whit better than their co-religionists—not by any means; but religious bigotry had not quite dried up the fountains of their better natures, and they yearned unaffectedly towards their "erring brother," and longed to lead him into the arid jungle which they mistook for the path of light and sweetness.

Mr. Frankman, his wife, and daughter lived quietly at their little draper's shop in the village. Their trade was not so prosperous as it might have been if they had not repeatedly added contumacy to impiety, by refusing to pay Church rates. Still, their little income was sufficient for their frugal wants, for even the most Christian of the cottagers dealt at Frankman's when they wanted to be quite certain of getting value for their money.

Mr. Frankman's inherited consumption had now brought him to the point of death, and speculation was rife in some quarters as to whether the Atheist's customary tranquility would at this juncture give place to terror-stricken frenzy.

When the Chamwells received the momentous message from the dying man, they made no manner of doubt that their worst forebodings were being realised. Mr. Chamwell tried hard to preserve an outward composure as of a man who should say: "I told them so, but they wouldn't believe me, and now they are suffering the consequences of their unbelief. However, poor things, I will help them if I can." He placed a packet of tracts in his pocket, and meditated over an impromptu prayer; while his wife, whose feverish excitement was unconcealed, searched hurriedly in a cupboard for that fascinating volume, *Exhortations to the Dying*, by the Rev. Ebenezer Snuffles. Mrs. Chamwell had no difficulty in persuading her husband to drink a nip of brandy, and then he started up the road to Frankman's house; but had hardly gone ten yards on his way when his wife ran after him with a box of jujubes, and suggested that they might be useful to mitigate the sufferer's gnashing of his teeth. "They are very wholesome," said she, "and they may save the poor man from chewing the counterpane."

Unmistakable nervousness assailed Mr. Chamwell as he neared Frankman's house, and he fell to straining his ear to catch the supposed shrieks of the stricken "infidel." No shriek pierced the morning air, but Mr. Chamwell gave fearsome glances at the house in the half expectation that he would descry a demoniac head, wearing a pair of horns and a sardonic grin, emerging from the bedroom chimney. Closer still he fancied he saw a flash of blue flame issue from a window, and simultaneously he could have sworn that he caught a glimpse of a barbed tail and a cloven hoof disappearing round the water-butt.

By this time Mr. Chamwell's nerves were in such a state that he began to wish he had brought somebody with him, and he was just pausing, undecided whether to go back, when he was recognised from the parlor window by Mr. Frankman's son, who had been telegraphed for from London. The young fellow came out, and, with a polite bow, requested the visitor to walk inside. "His cough is slightly easier, and he will be glad to see you now," was the answer given to Mr. Chamwell's stammered inquiry.

The quietude of the house and the repose of the young man's manner, despite the traces of sorrow on his face, somewhat reassured the visitor, whose knees began to grow firmer as he followed his guide upstairs.

With a slight tap on the door of the sick room, the son entered, and said: "Here, father, is Mr. Chamwell to see you."

"Show him to this chair," feebly replied the invalid, indicating a chair at the head of his bed.

As Mr. Chamwell stood face to face with the dying Atheist, it would have been difficult to decide which was the paler.

Mr. Chamwell enclosed for a moment in his fat palm the bloodless hand of the invalid, said "Good morning, my dear friend," in a husky undertone, and then moved round to the chair allotted him, bowing mechanically to Mrs. Frankman and her daughter, who stood near the window.

The partial recovery from collapse of the visitor's nerves had been coincident with the total derangement of his mental faculties, which, indeed, had lapsed into numb bewilderment. His recent anticipations had collided so suddenly with his immediate experiences—had met, as it were, in such a dynamic concussion—that the result was temporary suppression of his intellectual potentiality. For once in his life Mr. Chamwell was dumb. His tongue was deserted by all the good old stock phrases about the "peace of God which passeth," etc., and "who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten," and so forth and so on.

"Had you any idea why I invited you here now?" asked the invalid.

Now, Mr. Chamwell had left home in the sure and certain faith that he had been sent for to pray with a miserable sinner; but events had knocked up against that pious program with rude and damaging irreverence, and Mr. Chamwell fumbled the tracts over in his pocket without venturing to take them out.

Receiving no answer, and noticing, perhaps, his visitor's awkward hesitancy, the sick man went on: "I sent for you because you had more than once endeavored to assure me of the dreadful experiences that were to be mine when, in the inevitable process of nature, my life should draw to its close; and it seemed to me only right and in the interests of truth that you should at least have an opportunity of being present here to-day."

The speaker's words were articulated with difficulty, and the effort somewhat exhausted him, so that there was now another awkward pause, during which Mr. Chamwell's mind resuscitated sufficiently to render him conscious that it was his duty to say something. He began in a halting, sheepish way: "Do—I—understand that—you are—glad—to—die?"

The invalid's eyes opened wide and gazed wonderingly at the visitor. Then, in a tone of pained reproach, the former said: "Are you serious? Glad to die! Glad to leave my wife and children to tread the hard road of life without me,

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and without the support, the help, the sympathy, which it has been my great happiness to render for so many years. Glad! when I think of the sorrow-laden eyes, the throbbing hearts, the heaving bosoms of my nearest and dearest, can you imagine me glad?"

Mr. Chamwell looked contrite, and tried, with only partial success, to apologise. He had not meant what he said. He was full of grief and sympathy. He realised and entered into the feelings of the family, and he wished only that he might be permitted to render any help or solace to anyone concerned.

Mrs. Frankman went to her husband's side and asked him not to tire himself. She laid a small, cold compress on his forehead, and he looked longingly and gratefully in her face and said, "Bless you."

The son and daughter had left the room when their father commenced to speak to Mr. Chamwell. They now returned, each bringing a little nosegay, which they laid on the coverlet with gentle words and loving smiles. Again the patient's eyes were raised—a look of intense yearning shone in them, and then the pale lips whispered, "My darlings!" while a tear stole down his cheek.

The situation was too much for Mr. Chamwell, who rose diffidently and still rather dazed, and uncertain about the propriety of producing the tracts and the exhortations.

The invalid turned to him with a smile and said: "There, there, Mr. Chamwell, I ought to apologise for troubling you to come here; but I am very glad to see you, and really grateful to you for coming. I may never see you again. Good bye, good bye."

In a few moments Mr. Chamwell found himself stumbling back down the hill towards his own home, and vaguely wondering whether this was all a perverse and horrid dream.

Mrs. Chamwell, with perturbed countenance, met him on the doorstep. "Is he gone? Is he saved? Has he prayed?" were the first questions which the warm-hearted, well-meaning little woman addressed to her lord, who sank into a chair and exclaimed for the second time that day, "God bless me!" And then, observing that his wife was becoming dangerously agitated with curiosity, he hastened to relate to her, point by point and word for word, the result of his mission. At the same time he rather ruefully deposited on the table the disregarded tracts and the supererogatory "exhortations."

"Well, I never did," ejaculated Mrs. Chamwell.

"No more did I," answered her spouse.

And there they sat and gazed at each other, and shook their heads and shaded their eyes and smoothed their brows, and tried to accustom themselves to the radiance of this new Great Light that had burst upon them with its unsuspected brilliance.

And this Great Light that so overpowered these worthy creatures, living in habitual obscuration, was, after all, only the farthing rushlight of elementary common sense, which alone is needful to render luminous the simple fact that the honest convictions of a man's life in health are all-sufficient to sustain him when he surrenders himself back into the arms of the great mother, Nature, whose gift his individuality was and is.

. . . . . .

A few days later Mr. and Mrs. Chamwell joined the little procession assembled to perform the last offices for Ernest Frankman; and it may safely be said that what they saw and heard on that occasion assisted still further to throw light on their obfuscation. C. D.

Obituary.

We have to record the death of Mr. N. B. Billany, of Hull, one of the vice-presidents of the National Secular Society. For some time he had been seriously ill, and death was perhaps a merciful release from much suffering. We may say of him, in the words of Shakespeare, *This was a man.* His sturdy, indomitable spirit was an inspiration to all around him. He loved to fight forlorn hopes, and to champion unpopular causes. Truth and right were to him the most sovereign realities, and he gave them his undivided allegiance. Persecuted and misunderstood at first, he lived down the bigotry of his fellow citizens, and his high courage and personal integrity at length commanded universal respect. The Freethinkers and the working classes of Hull have lost a staunch friend, and the world has lost the presence of a most heroic figure.—G. W. F.

If there is one lesson which history forces upon us in every page, it is this: Keep your children away from the priest, or he will make them the enemies of mankind.—*W. K. Clifford.*

Each person has two educations—one which he receives from others, and one, more important, which he gives himself.—*E. Gibbon.*

BOOK CHAT.

It appears from a notice of *The Great Rift Valley*, in the *Daily News*, that the author, Dr. Gregory, holds that, as Archbishop Magee remarked, the world could not last a day if it tried to regulate itself in accordance with the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount; so no missionary could live an hour among such savages as the Massai, for example, if, when struck, he turned the other cheek. He must give tit for tat. For which reason the Methodist mission house at Golbanti is a nice little Christian arsenal, with a stand of arms ever ready.

* * *

Frost and snow were miracles to Dr. Gregory's Zanzibari companions. "They came to tell me that the water they had left in their cooking-pots was all bewitched. They said it was white, and would not shake; the adventurous Fundi had even hit with a stick, which would not go in. They begged me to look at it, and I told them to bring it to me. They declined, however, to touch it, and implored me to go to it." When melted, they joyfully exclaimed that the demon was expelled.

* * *

Miss Harriet Martineau's translation and condensation of the great work of Comte, originally published in 1853, is now re-issued by G. Bell & Sons in three volumes, with an Introduction by Frederic Harrison. It should help to make a new generation better acquainted with the thoughts of a profound philosopher, whose influence is by no means yet exhausted.

* * *

Messrs. Chapman & Hall have published a volume entitled *The Veil Lifted: A New Light on the World's History.* The scope of the work appears from the announcement to be very similar to that of *The Philistines and Hebrews*, by H. M. Kennard. It is contended that the principal Bible characters were great king-gods, some of them to be identified with the Egyptian Pharaohs. The most peculiar view is, that the claim to universal dominion, made on behalf of the Christ, was originally set up for Phraataces, the offspring of Cleopatra. The prospectus is enough to take one's breath away, but we reserve our judgment until we see the volume.

* * *

The Irreligion de l'Avenir, by the late M. Guyau, to which we have before called attention, has been translated, and is published under the milder title of *Agnosticism of the Future*, by Messrs. Heinemann & Co.

PROFANE JOKES.

"Reeling again, Janet!" "Well, ye see, minister, ane canna be aye spinnin'." "An' do you know where you are going?" "Brawly; I aye gang where I get it best and cheapest." "I fear, Janet, if you don't mend your ways, you will go where there is nothing but wailing and gnashing of teeth." "Let them gnash awa' that hae them, for feint a stump hae I had for the last twenty year."

"I see," said the earnest boarder, "that they are again petitioning Congress to recognise the deity in the Constitution." "But," asked the Cheerful Idiot, "won't that involve the recognition of—er—the adversary as a belligerent?"

The X-rays, so says the *Boston Traveller*, have destroyed one valuable theological argument employed in the illustration of the quality of "faith." "Have you a brain?" asks the theologian. "Yes." "How do you know; have you ever seen it?" That used to be a poser, but now the interrogated one can refer the whole matter to cathode investigations.

"You ought to have gone to church this morning, Billiger," said Mrs. McSwat, removing her wraps. "It was such a beautiful sermon. The preacher showed that everything has its place in the plan of creation. Even the snakes, mice, lizards, caterpillars, fleas, and things of that kind, that we consider nuisances, fill some important and useful mission in life, he says, if we could only know what it is." "Did he say anything about that freckle-faced Stapleford boy next door?" asked Mr. McSwat. "Don't scoff, Billiger. It was such an uplifting discourse. It reconciled one to the—O, look! look!" "What's the matter, Lobelia?" "That nasty cockroach! Ooh! Kill it quick!"

"What did they do with Joseph's coat of many colors?" asked the Sunday-school teacher. "Cut it down, and made it over to Benjamin," said a pensive little boy at the end of the seat.

Little girl—"Do you say your prayers every night?" Little boy—"Yes." Little girl—"And does your mammy say hers?" Little boy—"Yes." Little girl—"And does your daddy?" Little boy—"No, he doesn't need to. It's almost daylight when he gets to bed."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Mr. Gladstone's Letter to the Pope."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.15, T. Thurlow, "Secularism and Socialism."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Scepticism: its Meaning and Value."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, G. Spiller, "A Simple Life."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Tuesday, at 8.30, Half-yearly general meeting.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Good and God."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Mr. Rowney will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Mr Keen will lecture.

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Branch: 11.30, A lecture; 3.15, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Charles Bradlaugh."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, S. E. Easton, "Is the Bible Man's Highest Guide to Morality?" Thursday, at 8, S. E. Easton, "What Must I Do to be Saved?"

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Martyrs of Progress"; 3.30, A. B. Moss, "Paganism and the Sign of the Cross." Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones, "Christianity in History."

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 10.45, C. Cohen, "The Rise of Christianity."

KILBURN (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "The Conversion of the Devil."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, T. J. Thurlow, "So-called Christian Evidences."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Recollections of Charles Bradlaugh."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate)—N.W. Branch: 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Mr. Ramsey will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BLACKBURN: 7, Fortnightly meeting at 18 Peter-street.

BARNSLEY (Black-a-moor Head Hotel): 6.30, A paper will be read by a new member. 8, Monthly meeting of members.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL, Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, W. Heaford, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Small, "For God or Mary." Committee meeting after lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Charles Watts—11, "Dangers Ahead"; 8, "The Bible: its True Use"; 6.30, "Why People do not Go to Church."

ROCHDALE (Board Room Co-operative, No. 2, Building, Toad-lane): 6.30, Business meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street); 7, J. Axe, "Six Hours in a Remarkably Wonderful Derbyshire Cavern."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Annual meeting; election of officers.

STOCKTON-ON-TEES (32 Dovecote-street): 6.30, Important business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): 11, Current events. 6.30, W. Dyson, "Brahmanism."

CHATHAM (corner of Lines): 11.15, W. B. Thompson, M.G.S.B., "The Bible in Board Schools."

NORTHAMPTON (Cow Meadow): J. Fagan—11, "The Apostles' Creed"; 6.30, "Is there any Efficacy in Prayer?"

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): S. R. Thompson—3, "Total Abstinence and the Bible."

Lecturer's Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—June 7, m., Islington; a., Regent's Park; e., Camberwell. 14, m., Finsbury Park; a., Victoria Park; e., Deptford. 11, Chester-le-Street. 21, Newcastle-on-Tyne. 25, Hyde Park. 28, m., Clerkenwell-green; a., Victoria Park; e., Deptford.

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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—No. 24. SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MR. GLADSTONE'S LETTER TO THE POPE.

CHRISTIAN Reunion has of late years been the theme of much windy eloquence. Every clerical notoriety-hunter has a special recipe for bringing about this desirable consummation. Dr. Lunn, who quarrelled with the Wesleyan Church, tried to give a practical turn to the idea. He organised religious picnics in Switzerland, which were patronised by scores of pleasure-hunting clericals, who took a holiday—often at the expense of their congregations—on the pretence of discussing measures for uniting the household of faith. Churchmen and Nonconformists hob-nobbed together, and indulged in the harmless dream of unanimity. But, alas, all is changed now. The Education Bill has set the dear friends in deadly opposition. They grind their teeth at each other; one set accusing the other of "priestcraft," and being in turn accused of supporting "godless education."

There is only one way to secure Christian Reunion. When the lion of Roman Catholicism lies down with the lambs of all the other sects there will be peace; but, as the Yankee said, we rather guess the lambs will be inside.

Lord Halifax, the president of the English Church Union, has long been laboring in this direction. He has paid many visits to Rome, and interviewed the Pope and his cardinals. His primary object is to bring about a reconciliation between the Church of England and the Church of Rome; and the first step on this road is to get the latter Church to pronounce in favor of the validity of Anglican orders.

Jesus Christ gave his apostles the Holy Ghost; they imparted it to others, and those again to others, right down to the present day. Ordination—that is, the gift of the Holy Ghost—comes down by Apostolic Succession. A bad man who gets it is a good priest; a good man who does not get it is no priest at all. Now, the Catholics have held that the Elizabethan bishops, who started the ordination of Church of England priests, had no Holy Ghost to give. It was a sham transaction to gull the mob, and consequently every priest of the Church of England is no better than a layman. Such is the contention of Catholic controversialists, but the Church of Rome has never made any official declaration on the subject. It is therefore still open for a definite pronouncement; and the Pope has submitted the point to the consideration of the Sacred College. Of course, the members of that institution will decide it according to the tip they receive from headquarters. It reminds us of the election of a bishop in the Church of England. The dean and chapter of the cathedral receive a paper from London containing the name of the gentleman who is the nominee of the Crown. They then consult the Holy Ghost about it, and they invariably find that the Holy Ghost and the Crown are in perfect agreement.

While the Sacred College is deciding on the validity of Anglican orders, Mr. Gladstone takes the opportunity to address an open letter to the Pope. It has been transmitted to Cardinal Rampolla, the Pope's Secretary of State, and it reaches the English newspapers through the Archbishop of York. Mr. Gladstone is getting as roundabout as God Almighty in making a revelation.

The Recluse of Hawarden, who pens a long and laudatory letter to the poor Prisoner of the Vatican, has always had a taste for theology. He began with a book on Church and State, which was mercilessly dissected by Macaulay. Every now and then, during his enforced political vacations, he has fired off a pamphlet or an article on his favourite topic. Many years ago he startled the world with a gratuitous pamphlet on the Vatican Decrees, which was answered arrogantly by Cardinal Manning, and with most subtle eloquence and dignity by Cardinal Newman. Later on he engaged in the superfluous task of defending the Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture. Then he crossed swords with Huxley over the Mosaic Cosmogony and the beautiful and edifying miracle of the Gadarean Swine. Subsequently he rushed (in spirit) across the Atlantic, and crossed swords with Colonel Ingersoll over the Christian Religion. His friends removed him from the arena, sadly mauled, and in a bad state of exhaustion; and his opponent has been waiting for him ever since.

No one who has followed Mr. Gladstone's career will be surprised at his open letter to the Pope. Some suspicious fanatics say he is a Jesuit in disguise. But that is all nonsense. Mr. Gladstone has a curious twist in his mind, and a great capacity for demonstrating that God Almighty shares his changes of opinion; but he is incapable of telling deliberate lies. Besides, it is ridiculous, not to say wicked, to fling about accusations for which there is not a shred of actual evidence; and Mr. Gladstone is too old a public servant to have his character damned by a mere conjecture. He has always been a High Churchman, and the High Church has steadily drifted towards Rome. Mr. Gladstone has only shared in a general movement. He coquetted with the Nonconformists as a politician, not as a Christian. They thought they were using *him*, but the pawky old statesman was really using *them*. And they know it now.

Mr. Gladstone admits that the Latin Church, from its "magnitude" and the "close texture of its organisation, overshadows all Western Christendom." Still, he points out that the clergy of the Anglican Communion number between thirty and forty thousand; and this communion "is extended through the large and fast-increasing range of the English-speaking races." It is further pointed out that "the great work of restoration," which has been going on for half a century,

> "has brought the Church of England from a state externally of halcyon calm, but inwardly of deep stagnation, to one in which, while buffeted more or less by external storms, subjected to some peculiar and searching forms of trial, and even now by no means exempt from internal dissensions, she sees her clergy transformed (for this is the word which may advisedly be used), her vital energies enlarged and still growing in every direction, and a store of bright hopes accumulated that she may be able to contribute her share, and even possibly no mean share, towards the consummation of the work of the gospel in the world."

This is a plain hint to the Pope of the largeness of the problem he has to deal with, while there is a broad hint as to the only safe decision in the statement that "the whole subject" of the validity of Anglican orders is to the Church of England "one of settled solidity." In short, it is for the Pope to take the first practical step towards reconciliation.

Mr. Gladstone urges that Christians have "a common cause." Ninety-nine out of every hundred of them accept "the central doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation"; that is to say, they believe in an unintelligible mystery and a flat absurdity in physiology. Further, three-fourths of them believe in "the historical transmission of the truth by a visible Church with an ordained constitution," and the Anglican Church is included in that majority. In the name of this common cause Christians should unite. And there is another common cause which should unite them still

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more. "The one controversy," Mr. Gladstone says, "which, according to my deep conviction, overshadows and in the last resort aborbs all others, is the controversy between Faith and Unbelief."

This plain declaration does credit to Mr. Gladstone's sagacity. He knows something of the great controversy between Faith and Unbelief, and he knows with what difficulty the champions of Faith hold their own in a free and open encounter. Differences in the camp of Theology are, after all, but domestic squabbles; the real enemy of every denomination is that Positivism which seeks to give human life a purely secular basis, and which is gradually supplanting supernaturalism in every civilised country. And as Positivism, of which Freethought is the militant aspect, presses onwards to its final triumph, it is inevitable that all who are stubbornly opposed to it, either from social fear or mental inaptitude, will find shelter in the Catholic Church, which is the great historical organ of Christianity. In that Church the spirit of Faith is fully embodied. It makes no concession to Reason; it stands firmly on the principle of Authority; and it speaks with that commanding certitude which is so reassuring to its timid or slothful devotees.

Macaulay, in his essay on Ranke's *History of the Popes*, pointed out that the Protestant schism spent itself during the Reformation. Not a single nation has accepted Protestantism since. The Catholic Church weathered storm after storm, and Macaulay remarked that "she may still exist in undiminished vigor when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's." This is a fanciful picture, yet it contains an element of truth. There can be little doubt that the Catholic Church will outlive every Protestant sect, and have ample leisure to compose the epitaphs of all its religious rivals.

Mr. Gladstone's letter is really an important sign of the times. The hatefulness of the word "Popery" is now confined to the Nonconformists and a few Evangelicals in the Church of England. The main body of the Established Church is drifting or sailing straight for Rome.

In these circumstances it behoves Freethinkers to contemplate seriously the probable results of this movement.

When the great Voltaire came to England, in the early part of last century, he found a people who had twenty religions and only one sauce—which was annoying to one who believed that the good things of life were meant to be appreciated. Presently, however, he found a compensation for this deficiency. There were many sauces in France, but only one religion. The Catholic Church reigned supreme, and every now and then it grew ravenous and gorged itself with the flesh and blood of a batch of heretics. But the twenty religions in England kept each other in check, and the result was a very large measure of toleration. English freedom of thought and speech was not due to any inherent love of toleration in the people, but to historical causes, chiefly connected with the state policies of the Tudors and Stuarts.

Now, it is evident that if the Church of England becomes practically absorbed in the Church of Rome (and the two are working amicably together over the new Education Bill) we shall lose one of the principal guarantees for the measure of liberty which we now enjoy. As the Christian forces approach to unity, so in proportion will it grow warmer for Rationalists; and all the more if the wielding of those forces is mainly, if not entirely, decided by the Church of Rome. Those who believe the fine pretences of that Church, where it happens to be weak, are poor credulous fools. It prates of liberty only where it cannot tyrannise. Where it is strong it laughs liberty to scorn. It fought tooth and nail against the Civil Marriages Bill in Hungary; it demands the suppression of Protestant places of worship at Madrid; it procured a sentence of five years' imprisonment, not long ago, on a Barcelona journalist who penned a rather temperate article on the martyrdom of Giordano Bruno; at Malta, which is a British dependency, it compels the civil power to deny the legality of mixed marriages between Protestants and Catholics; and even in Germany, the land of Luther, it has journalists sent to prison for ridiculing the Holy Coat at Trèves. English Freethinkers should ponder these things, and prepare for the great fight with the Catholic Church.

G. W. FOOTE.

OTHER-WORLDLINESS.

"Thy future fate, while thou makest it the chief question, seems to me extremely questionable; I do not think it can be good."—CARLYLE, *Past and Present*, iii. 15.

IT is customary to represent Christianity as a system of pure unselfishness. No warrant for this can be found in the Gospels, where future rewards and punishments are everywhere held out as the motives to conduct. Give up your goods here, and you shall have treasures in heaven, is the teaching of Scripture. It appeals to selfishness carried over to another life. When Peter, on behalf of the other disciples, says: "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Jesus, instead of reproving their cupidity, answers: "Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." The terms offered by the Christian religion make it a good investment, and the only wonder is that Christians fail to follow out the monkish injunctions of the Gospels. Surely it must be because they distrust the security. If they really believed, they would subordinate the interests of this little life to those of eternity.

No one has expressed more strongly than Jesus the necessity of hating the world and everything in it—father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yea, and one's own life also—if you would be his disciple (Luke xiv. 26). "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him," says the apostle John (1 Ep. ii. 15). In the story of Lazarus, Abraham reminds the rich man that in his lifetime he had his good things, and Lazarus evil things; "but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented"; implying that the next world is fitted with an adjustible compensating balance, sinking the exalted while elevating the lowly.

A fortunate provision of secular common sense prevents Christians from carrying out their principles into practice, or universal monkery would have long since stamped out all true believers. If the postulates of eternal bliss or everlasting blisters were really believed, the concerns of this life would be so dwarfed that society would be turned upside down. We might see the Bishop of London in one garment exhorting the Duke of Westminster to sell all he had to give to the poor; Mr. Justice Hawkins might address Bill Sykes: "Go thy way in peace, William; thy sins are forgiven thee"; and Archbishop Benson might offer his only innocent son, the author of *Dodo*, as a substitute to expiate the crimes of Fowler, Millsom, Seaman, and Dyer on the gallows.

Once admit that conduct is to be regulated by considerations of another life, and its control becomes chaotic, or is placed in the hands of designing impostors. We are told to resist not evil here, that great may be our reward hereafter. What doctrine that was ever taught smacks more of priestcraft than this? And then, to make the matter worse, we are informed that God prefers one repentant sinner to ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. Can it be wondered that such other-worldliness is inoperative against crime? Christianity has been called a doctrine for sinners, and its teaching of the atonement of the innocent for the guilty, of forgiveness of sins, and of salvation by a death-bed repentance, fully entitle it to the designation. Such doctrines are premiums on sin, and stand in the way of a recognition of the true law of consequences.

The truth is that other-worldliness, wherever imported, is to the detriment of this-worldism. Calvin would never have had Servetus burnt but that he deemed the sacrifice demanded in the interests of another life. The men who have forwarded this world's progress have been those who have attended to its interests first. Archdeacon Paley, who, though a special pleader, was a clear-headed one, expressly lays it down that Christianity depends upon its systems of rewards and punishment. He says in his *Principles of Moral Philosophy*, book ii., chapter ii.: "As we should not be obliged to obey the laws, or the magistrate, unless rewards or punishments, pleasure or pain, somehow or other, depended upon our obedience; so neither should we, without the same reason, be obliged to do what is

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light, to practise virtue, or to obey the commands of God." In his next chapter he identifies acts of duty with acts of prudence, saying: "The difference, and the only difference, is this—that in the one case we consider what we shall gain or lose in the present world; in the other case, we consider, also, what we shall gain or lose in the world to come." Religion is thus represented as an extended system of prudence.

While I regard Paley as essentially right as to the character of Christianity, I regard him as totally wrong in regard to the nature of duty. Duty is what we owe to our fellows, not to any imaginary god or after-existence. The Christian doctrine of save your soul alive simply perpetuates selfishness. It is, as Carlyle said, at bottom "but a new phase of Egoism stretched out into the Infinite, not always the heavenlier for its infinitude."

How different is Hindu morality. The central teaching of Chrishna in the Bhagvat Gita is: "Let the motive be in the deed, and not in the event. Be not one whose motive for action is the hope of reward." So the hero of the Ramayana says:—

> "Virtue is a service man owes *himself*, and, though there were no heaven, nor any God to rule the world, it were not less the binding law of life. It is man's privilege to know the Right, and follow it. Betray and persecute me, Brother Man! Pour out your rage on me, O malignant Devils! Smile, or watch my agony with cold disdain, ye blissful Gods! Earth, Hell, and Heaven, combine your might to crush me; I will still hold fast by this inheritance! My strength is nothing—time can shake and cripple it; my youth is transient—already grief has withered up my days; my heart, alas! it seems well-nigh broken now! Anguish may crush it utterly, and life may fail; but even so, my Soul, that has not tripped, shall triumph; and, dying, give the lie to soulless Destiny, that dares to boast itself Man's Master!"*

The barbarous character of Christianity is exhibited in its system of rewards and punishment. It is the parent without any true idea of education that frightens his children with old Bogey, or promises them that they shall go to the land of sweetstuff. The substitution of false inducements to right conduct impairs the value of true ones. Reliance upon God tends to weaken and destroy self-reliance. To make morality consist in obedience to an irresponsible person, for the exclusive benefit of our own personality in another state of existence, is to destroy it. To inculcate as the motive of right conduct fancies which make this life seem petty and uninteresting, and pamper the morbid appetite for the inscrutable, is to impair the natural stimuli to exertion for the improvement of this world. Other-worldliness is the enemy of true Secular morality.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER XVI.

ETHICAL CERTITUDE.

"You can tell more about a man's character by trading horses with him once than you can by hearing him talk for a year in prayer-meeting."—*American Maxim.*

A FORM of thought which has no certitude can command no intelligent trust. Unless capable of verification, no opinion can claim attention, nor retain attention, if it obtains it.

If a sum in arithmetic be wrong, it can be discovered by a new way of working; if a medical recipe is wrong, the effect is manifest in the health; if a political law is wrong, it is sooner or later apparent in the mischief it produces; if a theorem in navigation is erroneous, delay or disaster warns the mariner of his mistake; if an insane moralist teaches that adherence to truth is wrong, men can try the effects of lying, when distrust and disgrace soon undeceive them. But if a theological belief is wrong, we must die to find it out. Secularism, therefore, is safer. It is best to follow the double lights of reason and experience than the dark lantern of faith. "In all but religion," exclaims a famous preacher,† "men know their true interests and use their own understanding. Nobody takes anything on trust at market, nor would anybody do so at church if there were but a hundredth part the care for truth which there is for money."

Mr. Rathbone Greg has shown, in a memorable passage, that "the lot of man—not perhaps altogether of the individual, but certainly of the race—is in his own hands, from his being surrounded by *fixed laws*, on knowledge of which, and conformity to which, his well-being depends. The study of these and obedience to them form, therefore, the great aim of public instruction. Men must be taught:—

"1. The *physical laws* on which *health* depends.
"2. The *moral laws* on which *happiness* depends.
"3. The *intellectual laws* on which *knowledge* depends.
"4. The *social* and *political laws* on which *national prosperity* and *advancement* depend.
"5. The *economic laws* on which *wealth* depends."

Mr. Spurgeon had flashes of secularistic inspiration, as when engaging a servant, who professed to have taken religion, he asked "whether she swept under the mats." It was judging piety by a material test.

There is no trust surer than the conclusions of reason and science. What is incapable of proof is usually decided by desire, and is without the conditions of uniformity or certitude.

Duty consists in doing the right because it is just to others, and because we must set the example of doing right to others, or we have no claim that others shall do right to us. Certitude is best obtained by the employment of material means, because we can better calculate them, and because they are less likely to *evade* us, or *betray* us, than any other means available to us.

Orthodox religions are pale in the face now. They still keep the word of material promise to the ear, and break it to the heart; and a great number of people now know it, and many of the clergy know that they know it. The poor need material aid, and prayer is the way *not* to get it; while science, more provident than faith, has brought the people generous gifts, and inspired them with just expectations. What men need is a guide which stands on a business footing. The Churches administer a system of foreign affairs in a very loose way, quite inconsistent with sound commercial principles. For instance, a firm giving cheques on a bank in some distant country—not to be found in any Gazetteer of ascertained places, nor laid down in any chart, and from which no persons who ever set out in search of it were ever known to return—would do very little business among prudent men. Yet this is precisely the nature of the business engaged in by orthodox firms.

On the other hand, Secularism proposes to transact the business of life on purely mercantile principles. It engages only in that class of transactions the issue of which can be tested by the experience of this life. Its cheques, if I may so speak, are drawn upon duty, good sense, and material effort, and are to be cashed from proceeds arising in our midst—under our own eyes—subject to ordinary commercial tests. Nature is the banker who pays all notes held by those who observe its laws. To use the words of Macbeth, it is here, "on this bank and shoal of time" upon which we are cast, that nature pays its cheques, and not elsewhere; which are honored now, and not in an unknown world, in some unknown time, and in an entirely unknown way. By lack of judgment, or sense, the Secularist may transact bad business; but he gives good security. His surety is experience. His references are to the facts of the present time. He puts all who have dealings with him on their guard. Secularism tells men that they must look out for themselves, think for themselves, act for themselves, within the limits of neither injuring nor harming others. Secularism does not profess to be infallible, but it acts on honest principles. It seeks to put progress on the business footing of good faith.* Adherents who accept the theory of this life for this life dwell in a land of their own—the land of certitude. Science and utilitarian morality are kings in that country, and rule there by right of conquest over error and superstition. In the kingdom of Thought there is no conquest over men, but over foolishness only. Outside the world of science and morality lies the great Debateable Ground of the existence of Deity and a Future State. The Ruler of the Debateable Ground is named Probability, and his two ministers are Curiosity and Speculation. Over that mighty plain, which is as wide as

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* *The Iliad of the East*, chap. ix., p. 149, translated by Frederika Macdonald, *née* Richardson.
† W. J. Fox.

* See *Secularism a Religion which Gives Heaven no Trouble.*

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the universe and as old as time, no voice of the gods has ever been heard, and no footsteps of theirs have ever been traced. Philosophers have explored the field with telescopes of a longer range than the eyes of a thousand saints, and have recognised nothing save the silent and distant horizon. Priests have denounced them for not perceiving what was invisible. Sectaries have clamored, and the most ignorant have howled—as the most ignorant always do—that there is something there, because they want to see it. All the while the white mystery is still unpenetrated in this life.

But a future being undisclosed is no proof that there is no future. Those who reason through their desires will believe there is; those who reason through their understanding may yet *hope* that there is. In the meantime, all stand before the portals of the untrodden world in equal unknowingness. If faith can be piety, work is more so. To bring new beauty out of common life—is not that piety? To change blank stupidity into intelligent admiration of any work of nature—is not that piety? If our towns and streets be made to give gladness and cheerfulness to all who live or walk therein—is not that piety? If the prayer of innocence ascend to heaven through a pure atmosphere, instead of through the noisome and polluted air of uncleanness common in the purlieus of towns and of churches, and even cathedrals—is not that piety? Can we, in these days, conceive of religious persons being ignorant and dirty? Yet they abound. If, therefore, we send to heaven clean, intelligent, bright-minded saints—is not that piety? Is is no bad religion—as religions go—to believe in the good God of Knowledge and Cleanliness and Cheerfulness and Beauty, and offer at his altar the daily sacrifice of intelligent sincerity and material service.

We leave to others their own way of faith and worship. We ask only leave to take our own. Carlyle has told us that only two men are to be honored, and no third—the mechanic and the thinker: he who works with honest hand, making the world habitable; and he who works with his brain, making thought artistic and true. "All the rest," he adds with noble scorn, "are chaff, which the wind may blow whither it listeth." The certainty of heaven is for the useful alone. Mere belief is the easiest, the poorest, the shabbiest device by which conscientious men ever attempted to scale the walls of Paradise.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(*To be continued.*)

THE MAKING OF ENGLAND.

PATRIOTISM is a commendable virtue when rationally entertained and judiciously manifested; but where these two qualifications are ignored, love for country is apt to degenerate into egotism and jingo fanaticism. The same principle will apply to religion. No one can reasonably object to individuals accepting those religious teachings which seem to them to be true and useful. When, however, such teachings are claimed as being superior to all others, and at the same time as being the source of the true greatness of a nation, those who urge such claims "protest too much, methinks." The greatness of a country cannot truthfully be ascribed to any one agency, but rather to a combination of factors, which have had a direct bearing upon the mundane requirements of society in general. Theology may satisfy the emotions of its devotees, but it can never enhance the material well-being of a nation. It is worthy of note that, so far as England has achieved greatness, that condition has been reached through acting up to principles which are not to be found in Christian theology. Moreover, it is equally true that, when theological teachings were accepted and acted upon far more than they are to-day, little or no national progress was observed. It is during the nineteenth century—the pre-eminently sceptical period of our history—that the most rapid strides have been made in this country towards greatness. And is it not, at the present time, clerical audacity and theological pretensions that are checking educational advancement? Theologians are monopolising, with their religious squabbles, those opportunities that should be devoted to the consideration of much-needed reforms.

In spite of these facts, we find that the "making of England" is ascribed by a section of the Christian party to the fact that many of its members had protested against the faith of the Roman Church, and had vindicated the Protestant interpretation of Christianity. The *Methodist Times*, dated May 23, had the following self-satisfied request: "May we not once more stand shoulder to shoulder in opposition to the principles which have degraded Spain, and in defence of the principles which have made England?" This is truly a fine specimen of Protestant conceit, and of the kind of love which one Christian Church exhibits towards another. The members of both Churches profess to be followers of the same Jesus, and to be influenced by the same "spirit of Christ"; and yet, if they had the power, they would extirpate each other. Christ is reported to have said: "Ye shall know them by their fruits"; "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit" (Matthew vii. 16–18). If these words be true, the nature of some Christians is anything but enviable, and the Christian tree must be corrupt indeed. To-day, as in former times, these followers of "a meek and lowly Jesus" are not content only with persecuting Freethinkers and depriving them of their legal rights, but they also seek to injure members of their own faith. Well might Jesus exclaim: "I came not to send peace, but a sword," and "A man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matthew x. 34–36).

But what are the principles referred to by the *Methodist Times*? Why, of course, those of Christianity, as interpreted by the Roman and the Protestant Churches. Those principles have dominated the intellect and feelings of the inhabitants of Spain, and it is admitted that the degradation of their country has been the result; but it is alleged that the same principles, when expounded by Protestants in this country, have tended to the "making of England." Such is the position held to-day by one branch of the Christian Church, which is called "the party of Protestantism." To the Rationalistic mind, the cause of the different influences of the principles in the two countries appears to be this. In Spain they were, as far as possible, consistently carried out, while in England they have, to a large extent, been modified and qualified by the partial rule of reason. That is, Roman Catholics endeavored to practise the genuine article, and lamentable consequences followed; but Protestants, not adhering strictly to the faith, and putting a more lax interpretation upon its meaning, deprived it of some of its most injurious tendencies. Let us, however, see if the Protestant view of Christianity is calculated to assist in the "making of England."

This Methodistic proposal appears to have been called forth by the fact that the Irish members of Parliament voted for the second reading of the Education Bill, upon the grounds that they were in favor of religion being taught in our public schools. Now, however much we, as Freethinkers, may regret their action, it is only fair to acknowledge that, in the course they took, they acted consistently as thorough-going believers in Christianity. They profess to be firm adherents of Bible teachings, which say: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy" (Col. ii. 8); "Knowledge puffeth up" (1 Cor. viii. 1); "Thy wisdom and thy knowledge it hath perverted thee" (Isaiah xlvii. 10); "Bodily exercise profiteth little" (1 Timothy iv. 8); "Be not righteous overmuch" (Eccl. vii. 16); "In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (Eccl. i. 18); "We are fools for Christ's sake" (1 Cor. iv. 10); "Be ye therefore wise as serpents" (Matthew x. 16); "If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (1 Cor. xiv. 38). Even Christ did not organise any educational institution, and Christendom remained for more than a thousand years without the general masses having an opportunity of acquiring any practical secular knowledge.

The "making of England" requires something more than Protestant protest against the errors of Rome. The advancement that has been made in this and in other countries is due to the activity of the intellect in fields of investigation where theology was not to be found. If social progress had been the result of Protestant opposition to the Roman Catholic religion, that progress would have been visible at least two centuries ago; and if the zeal for religion had been a civilising agency, Spain would, ere this, have furnished a grand example of a progressive nation. But neither Church Protestantism *per se* in England, nor Roman Catholicism in Spain, had the elevating effects which are claimed for both forms of the Christian religion. In our own country the social con-

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dition of the people was most deplorable until the middle of the present century; and it is a very significant fact that the principal efforts which have been made to improve that condition met with the determined opposition of the clergy of the Church of England. The same non-progressive spirit was manifested in Spain; for, while other nations occasionally declared war on behalf of the Christian faith, the Spaniards aimed for many generations to extort the confession from other religionists that their faiths were heretical. They not only sought to protect their country, but they made desperate efforts to propagate Christianity and to extirpate all heresies, whether they were "Atheistic," Jewish, or Gentile. They heartily supported their king, who held that it was better not to reign at all than to reign over heretics.

It should be obvious to the impartial observer that the Nonconformists' cry about the domination by the clericals, of which we are now hearing so much, is only an expression of jealousy at the recent success of the clerical party. Most of the Nonconformists would be, if they had the power, as despotic in their methods as are their religious rivals. The present conflict between the Church party and the Dissenters is simply a fight as to which shall be master of the political situation. It is a family quarrel, and, whichever side wins, little or nothing will be gained towards the promotion of the moral and intellectual status of the nation. Bearing in mind the inconsistent conduct of the majority of Nonconformists in reference to secular education in our public schools, we are inclined to say to both sections of the Protestant Churches: "A plague o' both your houses."

It must not be supposed that we desire in any way to defend the Roman Catholic Church. We should be much concerned if we thought it probable that Catholicism would ever again darken the history of our country. To us it would also be extremely regrettable if there were grounds for believing that the Protestant Church would hold absolute sway. Our contention here is that Christianity, as taught in the New Testament, and as interpreted by both Churches, has not made England what it is. Those who doubt the accuracy of our conclusion need only remember that the principal precepts ascribed to Christ are not acted upon, and that when either Church had undisputed power civilisation was an unknown quantity. This is one of the clearest facts recorded in the annals of history.

We allege that the causes which have impelled men towards liberty and general improvement, that have secured for them political and social advancement, have been independent of all theology. As Buckle points out in his *History of Civilisation*, the changes in our way of life are dependent on three things: (1) The amount of knowledge possessed by our ablest men; (2) on the direction it takes, and the sort of subjects to which it refers; (3) on the extent to which it is diffused among all classes in society. These are the permanent causes of the world's progress, which, as Buckle says, "contain those eternal truths which survive the shock of empires, outlive the struggles of rival creeds, and witness the decay of successive religions."

CHARLES WATTS.

SHAM CHRISTIANS.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe.....If they *drink* any *deadly* thing, it shall *not hurt* them."—JESUS CHRIST.

REGARD not the words, but behavior,
Of those that profess Christianity,
And ask for the "signs" which their "Savior"
Has promised as proofs to humanity.

He says, if a Christian takes whisky—
No matter the quantum and quality—
'Twill ne'er make him dizzy nor frisky,
Nor hurt in the least his vitality.

The person whom "drink" could make frisky—
Though taking as much as you please of it—
Is not a believer, for whisky
Is harmless to Christians—ev'n seas of it.

Drink's "*deadly*" that makes us excited;
It "*hurts*" us, unless we are muddle-proof;
But parsons—those "sepulchres whited"—
Say Christ says that Christians are fuddle-proof.

The test is so simple and handy
That *genuine* Christians would go for it,
And prove, by their pow'r over brandy,
They'd faith, and had something to show for it.

The Christian who thinks it too risky
To trust to his Savior's veracity
Has faith that is weaker than whisky,
And "cheek" that's as strong as mendacity.

Believers, be truthful and candid!
You know you would question the sanity
Of those who would do as the "Man" did
Whom *you* call the Guide of Humanity!

Now, Christians! do try to be honest,
Nor longer coquet with morality!
To claim to possess what is *non est*
Is "parlously" near to rascality!

Your faith is a sham, and you know it—
Unless you are minus mentality.
Admit it! be honest, and shew it
By aiming at higher morality!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

ACID DROPS.

SPAIN is the classic land of persecution. Christianity has slain myriads of heretics there, and would do so again if it had the opportunity. It is not surprising, therefore, that some Spanish Anarchists have taken a leaf out of a very bad book; although it is surprising that the Christians, who have murdered so many of their opponents, should look so intensely horrified when a few of their own number are served with the same sauce. For our part, however, we deplore and denounce the throwing of a bomb into a religious procession at Barcelona on Sunday last. Six persons were killed and fifty injured, and probably not one of them had committed any crime beyond being stupid. Such acts of violence are as foolish as they are wicked. They only throw society into the arms of reaction. Let us trust to reason and persuasion. These are our only legitimate weapons, and it is only with these that we can win.

In the year 1858 the officers of the Inquisition dragged from his home, in a respectable Jewish family at Bologna, a child seven years of age, under the plea that he had been secretly baptised by a servant girl, and so belonged to the Church. Edgar Mortara was never given up, although his abduction was noised all over Europe, exciting the greatest indignation in Liberal circles. The priests at Rome even added insult to injury. They told Edgar Mortara's parents that they could easily regain their child by becoming Christians.

Once more the world hears of Edgar Mortara. He has just been appointed by the Pope as Superior of the Hospital of St. Bernard. What a tribute to the power of education! What a proof that nearly every man's religion is determined by the accident of his training!

Pastor Thomas Spurgeon, who fills the place of the great Spurgeon at the Tabernacle, is in some respects a true chip of the old block. In a sermon on Wednesday evening, May 27, on behalf of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society, he related the following story: "Beware lest God take you at your word, lest he damn you when you pray him to do so. A week ago I heard of a terrible instance of how God takes us at our word. A poor girl, very proud and haughty, had been taken to a place of worship. In her anger and excitement, she said it was a shame that she was taken there, and that she would never enter such doors again. She never did, because God struck her dead the next day."

Thomas Spurgeon "heard" this story. What splendid evidence! We also have "heard" it—from Thomas Spurgeon, and we don't believe it. Evangelical sermons abound in such concoctions.

What a God, to strike a poor girl dead for not liking a church or chapel! Would any Secular lecturer kill a poor girl for not liking his discourse, or the place in which it was delivered? Any brutality seems justified by religion.

The Free Churches, as they facetiously call themselves, have held a special Conference at the Memorial Hall, London, on the Educational Bill. Dr. Clifford called it "that damnable Bill," which is as near swearing as a minister can get—in public. So hot was the meeting that

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Mr. Gladstone's name was actually hissed. Dr. Rogers pitched into the "priests"—that is, the ministers of the Church of England, just as though every minister of every denomination were not a priest to the full extent of his opportunities. Of course a strong resolution was carried against the Bill as "involving grievous injustice to Nonconformists and other large classes of the population." It was not stated who these other classes of the population were. Dr. Clifford, Dr. Rogers, and Mr. Price Hughes are surely not trying to speak for Secularists, Agnostics, Atheists, and all sorts of Freethinkers. To do that would be the height of impertinence.

Dr. Parker did not move his amendment at the Nonconformist Conference on the Educational Bill in London. He seconded the regulation resolution in the interest of harmony. Nevertheless, he expounded his principles, and the *Methodist Times* admits that "he had a strong minority in sympathy with him among the audience." Were the other leaders as sound as he is on the matter, it would probably be easy to draw the whole Nonconformist body in favor of Secular Education in the public schools.

The Nonconformist conscience, not recovered from the desertion of the Irish on the Education Bill and the shock of Mr. Gladstone's letter on the validity of Anglican orders, had a fresh blow in learning that the Prince of Wales, after spending Sunday steam-launching on the Thames, won the Derby. To enter "Persimmon" for a horse race might, perhaps, have been overlooked, but to actually win and call everybody's attention to it is a theme for much prayer and many sermons. The Nonconformist conscience is a very elastic article, and its friends need not despair of its recovery from these successive shocks.

Wales has a Roman Catholic bishop, and his name is Mostyn. This sky-pilot has a mitre, of which the following description is taken from the *Westminster Gazette*:—"Of white-embroidered silk, richly ornamented with gold, it is studded with 500 precious stones. The mitre, which is Gothic in design, bears on its front a dove, symbolic of the Holy Spirit, in gold *répoussé* work, encircled by garnets, and a heart formed of a single carbuncle of large size, with jewelled rays. The whole is surmounted by a cross, composed of thirty-three gems. On the back are the figures of the Welsh patronal saints (St. David and St. Winefride), beautifully wrought in the Welsh colours, and surrounded by rubies, emeralds, and pearls. At the apex appears the national emblem—the Welsh harp—encircled by topazes and aquamarines, which is an exact copy of the ancient 'Ariandlws,' which tradition declares to have remained in the possession of the Mostyn family from early centuries."

Fancy a grown-up man holding such a plaything! But is a priest a man? There are three sexes—men, women, and clergymen; and the priest belongs to the last category. That is, he belongs to it in character. Physically speaking, he is so little a female that, in spite of his vow, he "scatters his maker's image through the land."

Of all the humbugs in the world Theosophists are about the biggest. Advanced people generally are in favor of cremation, of course on rational grounds; and the Theosophists want to appear advanced, only they don't want to assign a rational ground for anything. Countess Wachtmeister states as a Theosophical reason in favor of cremation that, "until the gross material body had disintegrated, the astral form hovered about the place of interment in the shape of a bluish mist." Madame Blavatsky was cremated, otherwise her grave would have been haunted with a large supply of bluish mist, for the gross material body of this spiritually-minded lady must have weighed some twenty stone.

The Church never objected to burning people alive, and condemning them to eternal fire after death; but it strongly objects to cremation. The Pope has told all who have their bodies burnt here that their souls will be burnt hereafter, and the bishops of the Province of York refuse to adapt the burial service to the needs of the crematorium. The secret is that the Church is bound in its creeds to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and the palpable consumption of the body by fire would make the absurdity of that article of the creed palpable to the commonest intelligence.

The vast catacombs of Rome remain to prove that the early Christian practice was burial, in opposition to the Pagan sanitary custom of cremation. But the catacombs also show that Jews, and the followers of Mithras and Sabazius, who probably taught the doctrine of the resurrection in their mysteries, also used burial, which was originally derived from Egypt.

The American General Assembly has been meeting at Saratoga. Six years ago at the same place a committee was appointed to revise the Westminster Confession of Faith. Meantime heresy has spread. Dr. Briggs openly teaches the errancy of the Bible, and, although the majority of Presbyterians cling to the infallibility of the Jew books, the minority who accept "the new criticism" as a proof of their fallibility and human authorship is a growing one. Dr. Briggs has been suspended from the ministry, but he remains the foremost instructor in a theological college whence are derived recruits for the Presbyterian ministry. The New York *Sun* says: "So far, the advantage is wholly with the unbelievers."

At the afternoon sitting of the Southport Evangelical Conference a paper on Sunday Observance, by the Rev. J. H. Townsend, D.P., of Tunbridge Wells, produced a prolonged howl. The sky-pilots see with alarm that their monopoly of the day of leisure is encroached upon on every hand. The opener exhorted the Conference to "take up an attitude of undying hostility to Sunday desecration." Those who followed spoke against Sunday cycling and Sunday golf, and the State was appealed to "to enforce the public observance of the Lord's Day." As the tide of public opinion recedes from them, the ministers of the Gospel are ever more ready to appeal to the law.

In connection with this subject several ministers at the Conference expressed the opinion that the "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Movement was spoiling the other services and lowering the tone of religion."

The inconsistency of the Sabbatarians is seen in nearly every item of their superstition. They refuse Sunday papers produced by week-day labor, and have their Monday papers produced by Sunday labor. They refuse, in some places, to receive Sunday letters, and entail double labor on the postmen. Under pretence of concern for the Sabbath rest of attendants, they got the British Museum open on week-day evenings, when it was not required, thereby entailing over twenty hours' labor per week instead of a quarter of that time on Sunday.

Here is an advertisement which appeared the other day in the *Morning Post*:—"Would some pneumatically-minded lover of Church work give curate's wife cushion-tyred lady's bicycle?—For details apply ——, Strand W.C." It is a pity that the beggar is a wife. Had she been unmarried, there might have been an affinity between that "pneumatically-minded lover of Church work" and the "cushion-tyred lady," which would have been productive of happy matrimony. This style of advertisement will probably be popular, and one of these days we will hear of a "bald-headed lover of truth" inviting some "soft-felt hearted" person to send him a three-and-ninepenny hat; or a "philabeg-sick victim of the Celtic renaissance" mentioning that he would thank a man with a "Galashiels tweed conscience" to forward a pair of breeks.—*Glasgow Weekly Herald.*

The *Free Church of Scotland Monthly* says:—"Some ministers seem to make special efforts to avoid all forms of direct prayer, and indulge in rambling reflections, introspections, and disquisitions on Providence and mankind in general, giving the Lord minute information on the moral state of the world, and suggestions as to the methods He shall employ to put things in proper order." But what is "direct prayer" but an assertion that the minister knows better than the Almighty?

The Rev. Jacob Primmer, of Dumfermline, claims that "it is one of the jolliest things imaginable to be a minister in these days." No other profession is so well paid for doing so little.

Mr. Birrell's lecture on John Wesley has inspired a curious article in the *Methodist Times*. Wesley was certainly a great man, though he was far from possessing a great intellect. But the organ of Mr. Price Hughes lauds him most extravagantly. It calls his *Journal* the key to the eighteenth century, and declares that "It was the magnificent vigor and tremendous force of Wesley that saved England from a revolution as sanguinary and disastrous as that which desolated, and still desolates, France." If this means anything at all, which is rather doubtful, it means that Wesley, by his religious revival, staved off the political and social changes that were necessary in England, and gave at least fifty years' longer life to the oppression and plunder of the people by the upper classes. Is that a thing for which posterity should be grateful?

The French Revolution was the opening of a new epoch in the history of modern Europe. All the changes that have taken place since, and which are called by the general name of "progress," have sprung from the ideas and sentiments let loose upon the Western world in that great upheaval—not from the Christianity of shallow and pretentious Nonconformists.

"England," the *Methodist Times* says, "was as much

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influenced by Wesley as France was influenced by Voltaire. In the life and work of these two men we have a key to the divergent histories of the two countries." We venture to doubt the first statement. Wesley's influence in England was not as wide as Voltaire's in France. Voltaire touched the life of his time at almost all points; Wesley's efforts were far less comprehensive. As to the "divergent histories" of the two countries, a Voltairean Frenchman would naturally differ from a Wesleyan Englishman, and it does not at all follow that the latter is right. The average Frenchman is quite as moral—to say the least of it—as the average Englishman; he is probably happier, and perhaps a trifle more intelligent.

Dr. Momerie says that the doctrine of salvation by faith is "the most vile doctrine with which the world was ever cursed." Considering the number and extent of religious dogmas of all kinds, this is pretty strong language.

Why doesn't the working man go to church? is a question still troubling the sky-pilots. A working man seeks to throw some light thereon by saying that, in his experience, when you are invited the tune is "Come to Jesus," but if you fail to shell out it is "Go to the Devil."

Francis Earles, a Clissold-park constable, drowned himself in Duckett's Canal, Bow. In a letter to his wife he said: "Thank God, I am sober." The jury found he was insane, so he hadn't much to thank God for, after all.

W. R. Bradlaugh boasts of having converted "two prominent infidels" in the Deptford district, one of them of thirty years' standing. Any story of this kind is swallowed by Christian credulity. W. R. Bradlaugh is invited to give the names and addresses of his two converts.

On Derby Day the *Daily News* came out with the following story of the ruling spirit strong in death:—"Just before the Epsom Summer Meeting of 1801, Sir Charles Bunbury's training-groom, one Cox, fell ill, and, as it was expected that he would not recover, a clergyman was sent for to administer religious consolation. When he arrived poor Cox was speechless; but he had evidently something on his mind, for he tried again and again to address his visitor. At last he succeeded. With a terrible effort he rose up in his bed, and, with the dews of death upon his forehead, said: 'Depend upon it, sir, Eleanor is a fine mare.' Cox then fell back and died comfortably."

The Castletownroche Roman Catholic Church has been burned to the ground shortly after divine service was performed. The great wonder-worker of the Bible loses all his chances of putting in a miracle now-a-days.

The ravages of the rinderpest in South Africa are said to have been worse than any cattle plague which has affected the region within living memory. The Christian King Khama, who was over here recently, has lost from his private herds alone 8,000 head of cattle. It is likely that within a few weeks not a single cow will be left in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. It is estimated that, at a low valuation, the cost of the plague will prove to be over five millions sterling. To the South African native cattle are at one and the same time savings bank, medium of exchange, and staple diet.

The cholera in Egypt is another blessing from above. In Cairo, since last September, 3,030 cases have occurred, of which 2,523 resulted fatally.

It appears from the *New York World* that the damage by the cyclone at St. Louis was still more disastrous than at first reported. One thousand five hundred persons are estimated to have been killed, and far more injured; while thousands were rendered homeless. The surrounding districts have also felt the scourge, and small townships add their quota to the amount of lives lost and property destroyed.

A Southern Methodist paper exults over the fact that one "Schrader, the divine healer," has been driven out of Nashville by the police for practising medicine without a licence. Does the Methodist paper understand that Jesus Christ carried a diploma in his pocket? The fact seems to be that Schrader did not practise medicine in a manner contrary to law; he did not administer drugs, nor charge a fee. Like his Galilean predecessor, he laid hands upon the sick, and they recovered, or imagined that they did, and, like Christ, he received their free-will offerings. And, yet again like Christ, he had to depart out of the country. The Methodist paper says that "Schrader and his like serve one useful purpose: they gauge the depths of public stupidity." Perhaps so; but is it any stupider to patronise one of "his like" who is living than to worship one of them who is dead?—*Truthseeker.*

The success of these American faith-healers, Messiahs, and other cranks, affords a good object-lesson, enabling us to understand how in yet more distant places and unenlightened times human credulity could exaggerate the wonder-working powers of a healer, and elevate an itinerant preacher into a God.

The ex-monk Widdows, who on May 1, 1888, was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude for an abominable crime, is again minister of a congregation at Hackney, and goes about the country pretending to expose Roman Catholicism, which he doubtless finds a paying game. *Truth* asks: "What sort of religionists must they be who accept the ministrations of a man of this stamp?"

A Great Yarmouth correspondent of the *Church Times* is alarmed at the twenty-seventh clause of the Education Bill, since he discovers that it will give Agnostics, Secularists, and Freethinkers the same right to have their religious principles taught in elementary schools, as well as those of any other class of parents; and he declares that to provide legal facilities for such persons to enter schools would be a miscreant thing to do. No doubt he is unnecessarily alarmed; but it is evident the clause is distasteful to a considerable number of Churchmen.

The Rev. W. W. Hazen, of Marshalltown, Iowa, has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for swindling his neighbors.

After attending a revival for several evenings, Fred Bergerson, of Portland, Oregon, became insane on the subject of religion, and was locked up as a lunatic. Religion is like rum—you must not take too much of it.

A revival with pyrotechnic accessories is going on in Gallipolis, Ohio. The Rev. Syndicate Wilson is conducting it, and every time a sinner comes to Jesus a sky-rocket is let off as an intimation to the angels that another mansion is required. The merchants of the town have increased their stock of fireworks in view of Wilson's threat to convert everybody in the place.

The veracious Exodus vii. 16-25 describes how "Moses stretched out his rod, and all the waters in Egypt were turned into blood." The *Fireside* finds a corroboration or an explanation of this in the blood-red appearance of the Nile at certain times, owing to the presence of infusoria and minute cryptogamous plants of a red color. But this work of explaining Bible miracles is like showing how a conjurer's tricks are done.

A writer in *Public Opinion* points out that the numerical letters in the name of the Czar Alexandrovitch count up to exactly 666, the number of the beast referred to in Revelation xiii. 17. Perhaps Prophet Baxter will note this and make it the occasion of new prophecies, his finding the mysterious number in Louis Napoleon and E. Boulanger having turned out such ridiculous failures.

According to the *Jewish Chronicle*, a petition from the Jewish community that their synagogue in Moscow, which was compulsorily closed three years ago and the entrances barricaded, might be re-opened was curtly refused with the intimation that, if any further petitions on the same subject were sent, the authors of them would be punished. Such is toleration under the most Christian Czar.

The income of the Additional Curates' Society has considerably fallen off, and the Low Church *English Churchman* is not sorry, since a large portion of its funds goes, and has gone for many years, to Ritualism more or less extreme.

According to the Catholic *Weekly Register*, some English nuns prayed, "not to Our Lady or to the Saints, but to Cardinal Manning himself." Their prayer was answered, and, now miracles are being wrought in his name, there may be a movement for the canonisation of the late Cardinal, despite the proofs of his dissimulation which the Devil's advocate might adduce from the pages of his chosen biographer, Mr. Purcell.

Despite its forward movement, Unitarianism is not increasing. The report by the Rev. R. Spears at the last Conference was that, while in 1888 there were 378 churches in this country, there were at present only 354. Mr. Spears, who is of the old school, attributed the decline of Unitarianism to its whittling away the value of the Bible. We attribute it to its love of respectability and lack of independence.

According to statistics from Christian sources, the world contains 493,000,000 of Christians, against 1,006,000,000 non-Christians. The figures are given in order to stimulate missionary zeal. They reckon every inhabitant of a "Chris-

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tian" country as a Christian, while the difficulty is to find a single one who answers the description.

The late Bishop Thorold, of Winchester, whose biography has just been published, claims to have induced Matthew Arnold to drop his illustration of the Trinity as three Lord Shaftesbury's. This is what the Bishop says in his diary:—"April 17, 1883.—I saw Matthew Arnold at the club. He asked me to read his paper on Isaiah. I asked him, if he had a chance, to leave out in his *S. Paul and Protestantism* that illustration of God by Lord Shaftesbury. He took it so nicely, thanked me, and said Lord Derby had once advised him 'never answer, never apologise.' On May 29 'he told me that he is leaving out that objectionable passage in a new edition.'"

This is very pretty, but we doubt its accuracy. The Bishop is clearly wrong, demonstrably wrong, on one point. The illustration of the three Lord Shaftesbury's does not occur in Arnold's book on St. Paul, but in the larger volume entitled *Literature and Dogma*. Then, again, something had happened to prepare Arnold for the change suggested by the Bishop. Mr. Foote, during his second trial for Blasphemy in April, 1883, had read out in court several strong passages from living writers—passages which Lord Coleridge said he had often difficulty in discriminating from the "blasphemy" for which Mr. Foote was indicted. One of those passages was the Lord Shaftesbury illustration in *Literature and Dogma*. Soon afterwards Arnold brought out a People's Edition of that book at half-a-crown, in which the passage was omitted. It was Mr. Foote, therefore, rather than Bishop Thorold, who was the real cause of this alteration.

Mr. Booth-Tucker, successor of Ballington Booth, came to this country [United States] with the prestige of having saved countless souls in India. In England he reported that he had left behind in the Indian field 10,000 genuine converts and 75,000 adherents of the Salvation Army; but this claim is being strongly controverted by a Mr. Gillespie, an Irish missionary in the part of India where Booth-Tucker labored. Gillespie says that if the commissioner can produce 100 real converts won by the Army in twelve years, he will subscribe a rupee a head for the whole lot.—*Springfield Republican.*

It may be hoped that the Salvationists of both camps will be permitted to a certain extent to drop out of the newspapers and go about their business. If they can do any good anywhere, every right-minded person will wish them Godspeed; but their vulgar notoriety, and self-seeking, and bickerings, and jealousies, and family suspicions, and absurd exaggerations, and mutual accusations of falsehood and of mean motives, have done their cause an amount of harm which years of the most devoted and unselfish effort can hardly undo.—*New York Tribune.*

Irene A. Stafford writes in the *Open Court* in favor of greater openness of social intercourse between men and women than exists even in America. She says: "One of the difficult things to understand in connection with the story of Adam and Eve is, how they fell so suddenly into that state of blushing self-consciousness which made them run and hide themselves in the garden. But if a whole line of ancestors had been instilling into each preceding Adam and Eve ideas of self-concealment and artificiality, it would not seem so strange that they wanted that fig-leaf panoply to fling over themselves. When Christian fathers could pronounce woman in her relations to man 'a natural temptation,' 'a domestic peril,' 'a deadly fascination,' and 'a painted ill,' it is not strange that the conception of any primeval sweetness or innocency of intercourse between man and woman should have been lost. But a new need is making itself felt—the need of a better understanding of one another on the part of men and women, and, by consequence, a better, happier intercourse."

Madame Juliette Adam tells a funny tale of a friend to illustrate the ignorance of some French juries: "Being impanelled upon a jury, and being aware, owing to circumstances which he could not reveal, of the entire innocence of the prisoner whose fate he and his colleagues were called upon to decide, he strove in vain to persuade them to bring in a verdict of 'not guilty,' but despaired of ever doing so. Luckily the prisoner's name was Mary. Struck by a sudden inspiration, he exclaimed: 'A descendant of the Virgin Mary cannot be guilty. Come, what do you say?' All voted for an acquittal!"

The New Woman is going it with a vengeance. Robina Barton has applied to the Marine Board at Melbourne for a second mate's certificate. Fancy a woman treading the deck and ordering about the crew. How her petticoats would flutter in a gale of wind! But perhaps she would wear bloomers or knickers. Seriously, it doesn't seem a workable arrangement. When women become sailors, there appears to be only once thing left for them to achieve. They should then demand to be fathers of families.

Bishop Barry was one of the speakers at the recent annual meeting of the Anti-Vivisectionist Society. Naturally there was plenty of religion in his address, and frequent references to Mr. Benjamin Kidd's book, as though it were a work of wonderful originality. Bishop Barry was very discreet in referring to old ecclesiastical cruelties, most of which he fathered on the Inquisition, which was a Roman Catholic institution. His lordship conveniently forgot the cruelties practised by the Protestants, who burnt Roman Catholics, and even heretics within their own pale. Branding, burning, ear-chopping, and nose-slitting were common cruelties on the part of the Church of England. And how the Nonconformists, in New England and elsewhere, tormented and murdered inoffensive Quakers is written red in the history of the seventeenth century.

It seems impossible to keep religious cant out of these movements. So many people enter them, not as citizens, but as Christians, and talk as though theirs were the universal religion of this planet. How they would cry out if Freethinkers were to talk "shop" in the same fashion!

Piety has fallen on evil days. There is a man, or something in the shape of a man, called Isadore Dondormer, at Elizabeth, New Jersey, who thinks he is the son of God, and spends much time in holding imaginary conversations with his father. His wife, however, has her own view of the matter, and has obtained a judge's order committing her husband to Morris Plains asylum. Isadore Dondormer is two thousand years too late. The poor fellow forgets that the situation he aspires to is already occupied.

At a meeting of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, Dr. Scott, the Moderator, gave a long address, in which he stated his views on scepticism. "When, yielding to the impulses of their lower nature, men cast off the restraints of religion," he said, "they will always be ready to palliate their action by ingenious scepticism." We are much obliged to Dr. Scott for this explanation. It enables us to understand the Glasgow Bank directors, who ruined thousands and built churches with part of the plunder. It also enables us to understand Jabez Balfour, and the other heroes of the Liberator Society. Yes, it is sun-clear now.

Dr. Scott thinks that scepticism is occasionally honest, but then "it more frequently indicates weakness than strength." Yes, that's it. The late Charles Bradlaugh was an honest sceptic. All the clergy say so now he is dead. This explains his notorious weakness. Dr. Scott is a Daniel come to judgment; yea, we say, a Daniel.

Brother Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, has a knack of knocking down the stilts on which many vaunted heroes are placed. Thus he describes the Christian idol as "running around through the fields of Palestine getting dog-fennel between his toes." Dog-fennel and blue grass are among the noted products of Kentucky, the State from which Brother Moore hails.

Those who fancy that there is perfect equality between negroes and white people in Christian America will be surprised to learn that the Supreme Court, the highest legal authority in the States, has affirmed the law of Louisiana compelling every railroad in the State to provide separate cars for white and colored passengers.

The New York *Sun* (May 19) recalls the story of a parson who, at the time of the Civil War, called on Andrew Johnson, the vice-president, and proposed that he should get down on his knees and pray with him that the Union cause might triumph. They prayed and prayed, and when both became very much worked up Andrew Johnson jumped to his feet and exclaimed: "Damn it, parson, after the prayers you have offered and the consoling words you have uttered, I am of the opinion that we will knock hell out of the damned rebels, and ultimately preserve this great and glorious Union. Let us have a drink."

The Virgin Mary is said to have died at Mount Sion, and the body was laid in a sepulchre in the Garden of Gethsemane. A few days afterwards the Apostles rolled away the stone, probably to interview the corpse, and lo it was gone. Her ladyship's body had been translated to heaven. At the time of her decease she was on a visit to the Holy Land. For some time previously she had been living at Ephesus. The house she resided in was quite unknown till recently. It is now settled to the satisfaction of the Vatican, and a cathedral will probably be built on the spot. Such are the barefaced arts of imposture by which the Catholic Church trades on the credulity of its devotees. Pilgrimages to the imaginary spot where the imaginary Mother of God once resided will be another source of revenue to the priesthood.

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, June 14, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, "Thomas Hardy's Novels, and Why the Bishop of Wakefield Burns Them."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 14, Northampton; 21 and 28, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

R. W. TRENAMAN.—Many thanks for the American cuttings. Are you a relative of Captain Trenaman, who was such a sturdy supporter of Charles Bradlaugh many years ago at Plymouth?

W. FRANCIS.—If you want to study Comte's teaching, we advise you to begin with *A General View of Positivism*, translated by Dr. Bridges; then read the *Catechism of Positive Religion*, translated by Dr. Congreve. Afterwards, if you have time, and access to the books, read Harriet Martineau's admirable summary of Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, now published in Bohn's Library, and the *Positive Polity*, in four volumes, translated by Congreve, Bridges, and Harrison. The last work is expensive.

JOSEPH SEDDON.—We hope the Manchester friends will have a good time at the picnic.

SARAH A. THOMPSON, Ashton-on-Mersey, writes that her husband—one of the newly-elected vice-presidents of the N.S.S.—is suffering from eye trouble. The doctor orders him complete rest from reading and lecturing. Local Branches will please note. We earnestly hope that Mr. Thompson will speedily be restored to health, and that he will husband his energies more carefully in the future.

A. J. MARRIOT.—It is not to be expected that any two men can agree in all points. It is enough if you were "delighted" with Mr. Foote's lecture on the whole. Mr. Foote's view of Parnell has been stated before. When you call him selfish, you appear to forget that the £40,000 presented to him was all spent on the Irish movement. Surely, too, you exaggerate when you call Julius Cæsar "a wretch." Modern historical criticism has shown that the real wretches (if the word must be used) were the mob of greedy aristocrats who assassinated him.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges a parcel of useful clothing from Mrs. Mann. Further gifts will be received with much gratitude from gentlemen friends.

BRANCH secretaries and others who have up to the present omitted to return or account for the gallery tickets issued at the Children's Party are requested to forward them to Miss Vance immediately. The balance-sheet cannot be completed until this has been done.

J. WATTS, treasurer of the Bristol Branch N.S.S., writes that he is to be prosecuted for addressing an open-air meeting on behalf of the Socialist Society at Bath. The police, he says, took him to the station, for the purpose of obtaining his name and address. Mr. Watts does not give us sufficient details on which to form a judgment; his letter, indeed, is rather enigmatic. Speaking in the open-air is not a crime under English law; the prosecution must be for obstruction or provoking a breach of the peace. We advise Mr. Watts to be very sure of his ground before engaging in a conflict with the police.

E. H.—Mr. Watts and Dr. Jamieson have not yet debated the subject of the appendix you refer to. We do not think any of the other debates you mention are now in print, but Mr. Fordor may be able to supply you with copies nevertheless. Apply to him direct, at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

E. G. TAYLOR.—We have not seen your article yet. The *Westminster* is not sent to us by the publishers. Dr. Parker's first letter to the *Times* appeared during the London School Board elections in November, 1894; we do not recollect the precise date. His second letter appeared nearly three weeks ago. You will have little difficulty in hunting them out, if the *Times* file is kept in the Manchester Free Library.

D. FORMAN.—The Old-street Hall is still advertised to let for business purposes. It appears, therefore, that the Salvation Army paragraph, which was circulated through the whole press of this country, was substantially a falsehood. What the Booths said was that they *had* taken the hall; what they meant was that they would *like* to take it. On the strength of the one, represented as the other, they asked for at least £1,000. Probably there was a poor response to the appeal. Of course it is idle to ask the newspapers to publish a contradiction. The Booth fable is being circulated in America. The Boston *Evening Record* says that Bradlaugh's hall has been "transferred to the Salvation Army," and that "organised Atheists do not now own a single hall in London." This is false; they own two. The Hall of Science was never *owned* by the Freethought party in Bradlaugh's time. They only used it, paying rent like other occupants.

W. WRIGHT (Newcastle-on-Tyne) says he attended the opening of a Presbyterian church in that city on June 3, and one of the speakers—the Rev. J. B. Meharry, of Crouch Hill, London—boasted that a member of his Bible Class, who had earned a medal for punctual attendance for three years, was the son of a Secularist lecturer in Finsbury Park. We are asked to say whether this is true. Our answer is, We don't know. Let the reverend gentleman give the boy's name; then we will make inquiries.

HARRY DINES.—The *Sunday Companion* is easily taken in. If that article did appear in the *Journal des Débats*, which is a sceptical organ, the writer must have been poking fun at the orthodox believers. The sailor swallowed by the whale belonged to a British ship, the "Star of the East." That explains why the story comes from Paris. It is quite idle to discuss a fiction. People who believe that a nameless English sailor spent thirty-six hours in a whale's intestines last year are past praying for. Christianity, when it catches on, is a great softener of the brain

J. M. R.—Thanks for cuttings.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—George Anderson, £10; Hematite, 2s.; H. Dines, 1s.

R. KILLICK.—Much pleased to hear from you. See paragraph.

E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks for cuttings.

E. T.—Received with thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—New York Sun—Kokstad Advertiser—Post—De Dagsraad—Philadelphia Inquirer—Progressive Thinker—Evening Item—Twentieth Century—Federalist—New York Public Opinion—Echo—Isle of Man Times—Liberty—Torch of Anarchy—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Humanity—Fur Unsere Jugend—Vegetarian Messenger—Homœopathic World—Daylight—New York World—Dominion Review—Banner of Light.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had another good audience at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening, when he lectured on Mr. Gladstone's Letter to the Pope. On the chairman's invitation of questions or discussion, a white-haired gentleman rose and spoke for several minutes. After referring to his experience in the House of Commons during the Bradlaugh troubles, and to the "inscrutable" character of Mr. Gladstone, he went on to deal with Cardinal Vaughan, who, he said, was always ready to make capital for his Church out of every public incident. Finally, the speaker said he had heard a great deal about Mr. Foote, but had never heard him lecture before. On the whole he was delighted with the lecture, which was one of great eloquence; every sentence being properly constructed and in its proper place in the paragraph, and every paragraph being in its proper place in the discourse. He hoped the great Church of Humanity would beat the Roman Catholic Church in the immediate future. On resuming his seat, this gentleman handed up his name, and there was much cheering when it was announced that he was Mr. J. Passmore Edwards, the proprietor of the London *Echo*, who has given so many princely gifts to the people, chiefly in the shape of Free Libraries.

Dr. Walsham How, Bishop of Wakefield, writes to the *Yorkshire Post*, June 9:—"Will you allow me publicly to thank you for your outspoken leader in your to-day's issue denouncing the intolerable grossness and hateful sneering at all that one most reveres in such writers as Thomas Hardy? On the authority of one of those reviews which you justly condemn for their reticence I bought a copy of one of Mr. Hardy's novels, but was so disgusted with its insolence and indecency that I threw it into the fire. It is a disgrace to our great public libraries to admit such garbage, clever though it may be, to their shelves."

This will form a capital subject for Mr. Foote's lecture at the Athenæum Hall this evening (June 14). His subject is worded—"Thomas Hardy's Novels, and Why the Bishop of Wakefield Burns Them."

Mr. Charles Watts lectures at the Athenæum Hall on the following two Sundays. Persons who complain that they cannot find the hall are again reminded that it is No. 73 Tottenham Court-road, on the west side, nearly opposite Store-street.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Manchester. The morning audience was an average one, but a heavy downpour of rain interfered with the afternoon

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meeting. In the evening there was, of course, a good gathering. Each lecture was enthusiastically received. In the evening Mr. Taylor, as chairman, spoke very highly of the success of the late Conference of the N.S.S. at Glasgow.

To-day, Sunday, June 14, Mr. Watts lectures, afternoon and evening, at Northampton, under Mr. Foote's scheme. We hope friends will muster in force from the surrounding districts.

The Annual Excursion has now been definitely fixed for Sunday, July 19, to Margate and Ramsgate by special train. Tickets, 4s.; children under fourteen, 2s. Our generous friend, Mr. S. Munns, of the Terrace Hotel, Margate, will provide a good tea at 9d. per head. Messrs. Foote, Watts, and others, will be present. Some have requested that Broadstairs might be included in the excursion, and this has been done; but special tickets are issued for this, although the fares are identical. Tickets can now be obtained from all Branch Secretaries, and from Mr. Forder or Miss Vance, at 28, Stonecutter-street, E.C. Particulars of the time of train from the various stations will be duly announced, the time of departure being later than upon the last occasion, in order to meet the convenience of friends living in the East and North of London.

The annual procession of the scholars and friends of the Failsworth Secular Sunday School took place on Whit-Friday, May 29. About 260 people walked in the procession, and, after parading the township, headed by the Sowerby Bridge Friendly Brass Band, they returned to the school, where the scholars were supplied with oranges, buns, coffee, etc. After a short rest all adjourned to a field lent by Mr. Barlow, where games, dancing, and sports were indulged in, returning to the school at five o'clock, where a party was held.

Public Opinion, a high-class New York paper, sometimes gives an extract from the *Freethinker*. The last number to hand reprints the passage on "Blasphemy" from one of Mr. Foote's articles on *The Sign of the Cross*.

The *Zoophilist* for June contains some interesting reports of the progress of the anti-vivisection movement. The supplement gives a full report of the annual meeting of the Anti-Vivisection Society, at which an excellent speech was delivered by Lord Coleridge.

The forty-sixth annual report of the London Homœopathic Hospital is sent to us. We read, with pleasure, that the children's ward of the new building is so pleasant that the children don't like to go home again, and that the lady visitors take violins and guitars to play to the patients. It is a reflection on the wisdom of the wealthy that, while millions are wasted on foreign missions, all our London hospitals are in want of funds.

The June number of *De Dageraad* (Daybreak), the Dutch organ of Freethought, now in its seventeenth year, is an exceptionally good one. The first article is by Dr. B .J. Smidt, on "Spinoza and his Circle," reviewing the new book, *Spinoza en zien Kring*, by K. O. Meinsma, just published by Martinus Nijhoff, at the Hague. Herr Meinsma has given much attention to the history of Freethought in Holland, and his work, which we hope to see, is doubtless an important accession to the increasing volume of Spinoza literature. H. J. Uijldert writes on "Atheism against Agnosticism," Dr. Ten Bokkel writes with erudition on "Immortality in the Old Testament," A. H. Gerard reviews Tolstoi's recent utterances on "Christianity and Patriotism," and W. L. Pullenberg has a slashing article on the iniquities perpetrated "To the Greater Glory of God"; and there is an editorial on the progress of Darwinism, entitled "*Magna est Veritas et Prevalebit.*"

The Manchester Branch has its Annual Picnic to Chester to-day (June 14). Members and friends will please assemble at the station at 9 a.m., and purchase their tickets from the Committee, who will be in attendance.

A few friends at Liverpool have signified their intention of joining a "Reading Circle," under the guidance of Mr. L. Small, B.Sc., the Branch secretary. Messrs. Foote and Wheeler's *Crimes of Christianity* will be taken as the first Text-book, each member to be apportioned reading work for the purpose of explaining fully to the class the contents of the works of authorities therein referred to. The circle will meet in the Oddfellows' Hall at eleven on the first Sunday of each month, commencing July 5.

The Humanitarian League's Fifth Annual Report shows increased activity on the part of this praiseworthy organisation, without any part of the subscriptions having been spent on salaries.

There are Freethinking members of the N.S.S. at East Grinqualand, South Africa, and we read in the *Kokstad Advertiser* that one of them, Mr. Horton, refused to take the oath as a juryman, on the ground of having no religious belief, and was at once permitted to affirm.

The *Staffordshire Sentinel* publishes correspondence on the Education Bill, in which good letters appear on the Secular side of the controversy. Freethinkers should everywhere try to ventilate their views and grievances in the local newspapers.

DEAD MATTER!

THE case of orthodoxy, whether we begin at one end or the other, needs but to be stated in plain words to be refuted. Not willing to ascribe any inherent power to what is known and familiar to everybody, Theists credulously credit some totally unknown substance with all possible power, and assign to it the task of imparting to matter all its attributes and its qualities. It is impossible, say they, that "blind," "dead" matter should move itself, and assume all the beautiful and wonderful forms which we see. The world could not have made itself; there are to be seen in it beauty, splendour, intelligence; these could not have originated in *mere* matter; they must have been bestowed by a being who himself possesses them. All this is specious, but hollow; prime faith, but not logic.

Is matter so "dead" and so "blind" a thing as they represent it to be? Do not divines discredit matter to enhance the greatness of their fictitious deity? Those who divest their minds of prejudice find in matter food for ceaseless wonder; and it is quite gratuitous to tell us that matter cannot think, feel, etc. How do you know? Matter has shown such marvellous properties, single and combined, that he must be reckless who will venture to say that he knows all its attributes. The facts of nature—the glowing of suns, the ceaseless revolutions of planets, the endless currents in the air and the sea, the ever-changing face of the sky, the resurrection in spring, the marvels of vegetable and animal life—all proclaim the power of matter, and rebuke the ignorance of those who call it "blind" and "dead." What! a thing that is in eternal flux, ever changing into shapes and motions more enchanting than all romances—this thing "dead" and "blind"! Because its *mode* of life is different from yours, dare you say that it does not live at all? Because it sees not, as you do, through lenses, does it, therefore, not see at all? In sooth, you are fine judges of such profound mysteries!

We see the magnet attract steel; we see chemical action day by day; we observe the mutual attraction of the earth and the bodies near its surface. This experience is our sole reason for supposing that the magnet and the earth do attract, that elements possess chemical cohesion. In organised bodies, on the other hand, we see all the phenomena of what we are pleased to call "life," and in the higher ones of intelligence. Why ascribe magnetism to that piece of soft iron, if you will not ascribe life to the tree or to the man? Magnetism is an essential attribute of the magnet; life is such of the man. Why suppose there is a living being who bestows the life, unless you also assume a magnetic being to bestow the magnetism? Really orthodox talk on this subject is mere trifling. These people say that a being cannot bestow an attribute which itself does not possess. Very well; if that be so, their God must be a curiosity.

Let us suppose that they are correct. Then their God must have had, in his own person, all the qualities now possessed by all matter—weight, size, color, shape, taste, odor, extension; he must be solid, liquid, and gaseous, freezing, boiling, burning. He must be magnetic and non-magnetic, gravitating, attracting, repelling. He must be both resting and moving, living and dead, blind and seeing, intelligent and foolish, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, rough and smooth, etc. These are but a few of the qualities which we observe around us. They must be native or imported, belonging essentially to matter, or else imparted by some other substance which possessed them all before. The Deist may charge me with trifling and flippancy; but I am merely stating his own doctrines, and trying as best I can to show their real absurdity.

J. SYMES.

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THE COLONEL WILLING TO MEET HIM.

THE following unique challenge received by the *World* was shown to Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll :—

"I, the undersigned, challenge Robert G. Ingersoll in a joint debate before three judges and two timekeepers, ten minutes each, in points on his (Ingersoll's) Bible lecture, in any hall in New York, or any large city, but New York preferred. The one gaining the most points must receive 65 per cent. of the net receipts after paying expenses.

"The judges to be chosen by the *New York World*.

"THOMAS KENYON.

"400 Westminster (Room 4), Providence, R.I."

Colonel Ingersoll pondered gravely over the communication, and appeared to be considerably perplexed.

"On reading and re-reading this note," he said, at length, "I am not quite sure whether the gentleman means a verbal debate (in which I could not hope to cope with him), a contest with small gloves, or both.

"If he is challenging me to a glove contest, there are certain conditions on which I feel bound to insist. I claim the right to choose the referee, and if I have the choice it would be for a gentleman who, I am told, has frequently officiated in that capacity, and who, I understand, is known to the sporting fraternity under the affectionate cognomen of 'Honest' John Kelly.

"I am content to leave the selection of timekeepers to the sporting editor of the *World*, in whose judgment I have implicit confidence.

"Mr. Kenyon's proposed contract is, however, rather loosely drawn up. He does not specify the amount of the purse, nor does he say whether the contest shall be a fixed number of rounds, or whether we shall fight to a finish. He does not fix the weight at which we shall enter the ring, or say whether we meet under Queensberry or London prize ring rules. He fails also to furnish any guarantee against police interference.

"I must insist on Queensberry rules; that the whole purse shall go to the winner; that 50 per cent of the gate receipts be allowed to the loser for training expenses.

"If the fight cannot be successfully brought off on American soil, I shall be glad to meet him in Mexico, or under the auspices of the National Sporting Club of London. Only on these conditions will I consent to meet Mr. Kenyon."

—*New York World.*

Evolution and Time.

The great length of time required for the production of species by the evolutionary process is supposed by Lord Salisbury to furnish a reason for disbelief. In support of his argument he cites Lord Kelvin's conclusion, that life cannot have existed on the earth more than a hundred million years. Suppressing criticism, let us accept in full the hundred million years, and see what comes of it. Lord Salisbury invites us to reflect on "the prodigious change" required to transform his hypothetical jelly-fish into a man. He appears never to have reflected upon "the prodigious change" which in a few months transforms the human ovum into an infant.

The nine months of human gestation, more exactly stated, is 280 days—that is, 6,720 hours, or 403,200 minutes. Thus, then, the total change from the nucleated cell constituting the human ovum to the developed structure of the infant just born is divisible into 403,200 changes, each occupying a minute. No one of these changes is appreciable by the naked eye, or even by a micrometer. Turn now to the other member of the comparison. To compare the two sets of changes, we divide 100,000,000 years by 403,200. What is the result? We get nearly 250 years as the interval available for an amount of change equal to that which the fœtus undergoes in a minute. Another way of presenting the facts yields results still more striking. We may fitly, contemplating the whole series, take a year as the equivalent for a generation. If so, it follows that, to achieve the transformation of the *Protozoon* into man, it requires only that in the space of 250 generations the change shall be as great as that which the human fœtus undergoes in a minute; or, otherwise stating the fact, it requires that each generation shall differ from the last by as much as the fœtus differs from itself after an interval of a fourth of a second.—*Herbert Spencer.*

RAMSEY-KEMP TESTIMONIAL FUND.—J. Umpleby, 10s. 6d.; J. Dobson, 2s.; J. Hayes, 2s.; Charles Smith, 1s.; H. B., 2s.6d.; A. Lewis, 2s.. Per W. H. Spivey (Huddersfield): William Priestly, 1s.; Thomas Stead, 1s.; Samuel Phillips, 1s.; Thomas Whiteley, 1s.; T. Lodge, 1s.; T. Olenshaw, 1s.; J. Whiteley, 1s.; E. Moorhouse, 1s.; W. H. Spivey, 1s. Per A. Tripp (Brighton): G. J. Holyoake, 5s.; Alfred Gill, 2s. 6d.; G. Halls, 2s.; F. Harmer, 1s.; J. H. Early, 1s.; H. Hickmore, 1s.; Mr. Stevens, 1s.; Mr. Butt, 1s.; Mr. Plumbly, 1s.—G. WARD, *Hon. Treasurer.*

THE ZEITGEIST.*

THE Zeitgeist strides upon his way, oblivious to fears,
Down Fate's great turnpike thoroughfare that stretches through the years.

Beside this turnpike thoroughfare that stretches through the years
Lived Charles Erastus Gontoseed with numerous compeers.

And Charles Erastus Gontoseed with terror stood aghast,
The Zeitgeist travelled at a gait so reckless and so fast.

So Charles Erastus Gontoseed stood in his onward track
To wrestle with the Zeitgeist and persuade him to hold back.

But Zeitgeist saw not Gontoseed, his look was far away,
But left behind his trampled form mixed with the miry clay.

And then the Zeitgeist still strode on, oblivious to fears,
Down Fate's great turnpike thoroughfare that stretches through the years.

Beside this turnpike thoroughfare that stretches through the years
Lived William Henry Schlamahead with numerous compeers.

And his impulsive temperament chafed in a restive woe,
The Zeitgeist travelled at a gait so lumberly and slow.

So William Henry Schlamahead, the boldest of his race,
Stole in behind the Zeitgeist to accelerate his pace.

Stole in behind the Zeitgeist to accelerate his flight,
And lunged against the Zeitgeist's back and pushed with all his might.

The Zeitgeist travelled on his way, wrapped in eternal peace,
And no one saw his rate of speed perceptibly increase.

But Schlamahead he pushed so hard his nervous system broke,
And he lay stretched a victim to an apoplectic stroke.

And then the Zeitgeist still strode on, oblivious to fears,
Down Fate's great turnpike thoroughfare that stretches through the years.

And down this turnpike thoroughfare the sons of thunder throng;
The Zeitgeist hears their strife of tongues, and still he strides along.

"Turn to the right," a loud one cries, "and quickly bend about,
For just ahead there stretch afar the bridgeless Bogs of Doubt."

But boldly through the bogs he strides; the mists that wrap the place
Are melted at the coming of the smile upon his face.

"Turn to the left," the voices shout, "the Moonshine Mounts are there
Transfigured with a lunar grace and rainbow visions fair."

"Turn to the left!" the Zeitgeist still keeps on his endless way,
The Moonshine Mountains have no grace to tempt his feet to stray.

He glances at them with his eye, no more do they exist:
They lift and roll away as fog, and float away in mist.

But still the Zeitgeist travels on, oblivious to fears,
Down fate's great turnpike thoroughfare that stretches through the years.

The Zeitgeist times his marching over mountains and ravines
To the music of an orchestra that plays behind the scenes.

Though we hear not that high, far strain, we march, with all our peers,
To the music of the footfalls of the Zeitgeist through the years.

And the music of those footfalls, though we know not what it means,
Is the music of the orchestra that plays behind the scenes.

So with the Zeitgeist let us march, oblivious to fears,
Down Fate's great turnpike thoroughfare that stretches through the years.

—*Sun* (N.Y.). SAM WALTER FOSS.

* The Spirit of the Age.

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A PIOUS SCOUNDREL.

THE New York *Herald* publishes the following telegram from Salt Lake City, Utah, dated May 23: "A horrible tragedy, in many respects similar to the murders said to have been committed by Durrant, of San Francisco, has been unearthed in this city. In this case, as in the other, a church was the scene of the crimes, and the victims two women.

"The pastor of the church, Rev. Francis Hermann, is accused of the murders.

"The scene of the crimes was the First Scandinavian Church, No. 158 Second East-street.

"Last year the pastor's wife died, and he engaged Miss Clawson, an attractive young woman, twenty-five years old, to look after his apartments in the church building. In September last Miss Clawson suddenly disappeared, and has not been seen alive since. Immediately after her disappearance the pastor, although the weather was hot at that season, ordered a big fire to be built in the furnace in the basement of the church. He sent everybody away, and, lighting the fire himself, kept it going for hours.

"Persons residing in the neighborhood detected exceedingly bad odors at the time, and remonstrated with Hermann; but he said he wanted to give the flues a thorough test before the cold weather came.

"It was in this furnace a few days ago that the body of Miss Clawson, together with blackened razors, a butcher knife, and part of a woman's garter buckles were found.

"The other victim is Miss Annie Samson. She was engaged to be married to the preacher, but mysteriously disappeared in February last, and it is supposed her remains are concealed somewhere about the church.

"The police, who have been secretly working on the case for several weeks, found a barrel, the head of which is covered with human blood; and their theory is that the murderer, after killing his victims, carved them up on the barrel head. Blood stains were also found on the furnace door and floor.

"The Rev. Mr. Hermann, for whose arrest a warrant has been issued on the charge of murder, left Salt Lake City on May 7 for Kansas City, thence went to Decorah, Iowa, on a missionary tour. Since his departure he has not been heard of, and telegrams sent to both Kansas City and Decorah, Iowa, have failed to bring any tidings of him.

"Among his effects here, which are in the hands of the police, are letters, articles of jewelry, and clothing belonging to both the dead girls.

"Hermann is of Scandinavian descent, but was born in England. He is about forty years of age, and exceedingly well educated. He has been married three times, and it is said that all his wives have died under suspicious circumstances.

"In his study were found a large collection of poisons and drugs of various kinds.

"The detectives believe the girls were assaulted and then murdered by the preacher."

The Will.

We speak of the Will as something apart from the feeling or feelings which, for the moment, prevail over others; whereas it is nothing but the general name given to the special feeling that gains supremacy and determines action. Take away all sensations and emotions, and there remains no Will. Excite some of these, and Will, becoming possible, becomes actual only when one of them, or a group of them, gains predominance. Until there is a motive, there is no Will. That is to say, Will is no more an existence separate from the predominant feeling than a king is an existence separate from the man occupying the throne.—*Herbert Spencer*, "*Principles of Psychology*."

Obituary.

ON Monday, June 1, the funeral of Mrs. Collinson, Mill-lane, Failsworth, took place at the Failsworth Cemetery, where the Secular funeral service was conducted by Mr. Henry Clough, one of the committee of the Secular Schools, in a very impressive manner. A large number of people were present, both in the chapel and at the graveside, to witness the service. Much sympathy is felt with Mr. Collinson and the other members of the family of the deceased. Mrs. Collinson had attended the Secular Sunday School all the days of her life, and a very handsome wreath has been subscribed by the members of the school.

WE have to record the death at Saginaw, Michigan, of Mr. J. H. Burnham, a well-known American Freethinker, and writer in the *Truthseeker* and *Boston Investigator*. He was seventy years of age, and his death on May 18 resulted from injuries received from being knocked down by a careless bicycle-rider.

THE CRUCIFIX.

DR. J. B. WILSON, of Cincinnati, writes in the *Blue Grass Blade* on the ghastly influence of the sign of the Cross. He says: "Religion is based on fear, the meanest of emotions. It has its revenge of hell, and never-ending torture of mind and body. It began with disobedience and crime, which God himself permitted. As a consequence, its whole history has been that of crime and the punishment of crime. On account of its crimes against man and nature, the great God-led nation of the Jews fell headlong to its ruin. Christianity followed. Ever since it has done its utmost to keep the crime of the Cross before the public. It glories in picturing the death of its founder. In sculpture and painting it is constantly before the eye. Art has been exhausted in picturing the agonies of the Crucifixion. This horrible picture of death and crime became engraven upon the brains of the human race. It has done more to sow the seeds of criminal viciousness and destructiveness than any object or sentiment that ever existed. Wherever it advanced, war, massacre, and torture followed. It was planted in Greece and Rome, and, as by magic, their glory departed; column and arch tumbled, the arts lay dead, and moral degradation and intellectual darkness followed, such as civilisation had never known before.

"The crucifix is a frightful object, and should be suppressed. The naked and bloody image of Christ, most generally of shocking anatomy, is exhibited in show-windows all over the world. What is more revolting? Such pictures and images should not be publicly exhibited where sensitive women can look upon them.

"If Christ himself were here in Cincinnati, he would be shocked to see such exhibition of his body, and to know that an advertisement is made of his murder in order to awaken sympathy and belief. Michael Servetus and Giordano Bruno suffered a much more horrible death than he. Suppose the Freethinkers would picture their naked, blackened, and half-roasted bodies, and exhibit them in art galleries and shop windows as their patron saints, and thus appeal to the world to accept and believe their doctrines just because Christians burned them at the stake. The Christian world would at once raise a cry of holy horror, not only because such would be an object-lesson of their own evil deeds, but because it would be revolting to every refined sense of taste. Yet they would have the world reverence and tolerate the sickening and disgusting spectacle of the crucifix. Well, we heathen have stood it so long; we can stand it a few centuries longer."

PROFANE JOKES.

Little Trissie went to church the other Sunday, and heard the parson preach on "Creation." Said he: "We are all made from dust." Little Trissie remembered this, and, on arriving home, she asked her mother if it was true what the parson said, "that she was made from dust"? "Yes, my child," responded the mother. "Well," said little Trissie, "you told me, mother, that the snow was on the ground very thick when I was born; where did the dust come from, then?" (Collapse of mother.)

Clerical Visitor (to pew-opener showing church)—"Do you have Matins?" P.-O.—"No, sir; but we have linoleum."

Scruples and Drams.—Weary Traveller—"Threepenny-worth of whisky, please." Scotch Landlady—"That'll be saxpence, sir." W.T.—"What! sixpence for threepenny-worth!" S. L.—"Yes, sir. Ye ken it's the Sawbath, and we charge double to discountenance drinking and dealing on the Lord's day."

"What does R.I.P. on the tombstones mean, Jim?" "Return Im-Possible."

Clerical Passenger—"Have you attended any of the May or June meetings?" Sporting Ditto—"Well, I went to Lincoln and the Derby, and I mean to go to Ascot."

Teacher—"Why did Joshua cause the sun to stand still?" Tommy—"I guess it didn't agree with his watch."

Be to the best thou knowest ever true,
Is all the creed.
Then, be thy talisman of rosy hue,
Or fenced with thorns that wearing thou must bleed,
Or gentle pledge of love's prophetic view,
Thy faithful steps it will securely lead.

—*Margaret Fuller.*

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BOOK CHAT.

It is a striking fact that wherever the Jews are persecuted they are bigoted, and whenever given the full rights of citizens they are enlightened in their religion. The American Jew is often a Freethinking Jew. Their rabbis, in several cases, have become heads of ethical societies. In some synagogues little beyond duties founded on Deism is taught. A *brochure*, entitled *Judaism: An Exposition*, by the Rev. Barnett A. Elzas, Rabbi of K. K., Beth Elohim, Charleston, has been forwarded to us by a friend in that city. Judaism, as described by Rabbi Elzas, is a creed to which Thomas Paine could have subscribed. It regards character as the main thing, and creeds and ceremonies as non-essential.

* * *

The exposition of Judaism is given in the form of a catechism. Here is a specimen :—

Q. 5. What are the characteristics of Judaism?

A. (1) Its liberality towards those both within and without its pale. To its own members it allows the widest difference of opinion; and, as for others, it proclaims that, no matter what a man's creed is, so long as his conduct is right it will be well with him in the great Hereafter.

(2) Its absolute reasonableness. There is nothing in it that demands credulity or blind faith. It has scarcely anything in it that may be called dogma. It is simple, exalted, and well-fitted for acceptance by all mankind.

* * *

Of the Bible Rabbi Elzas says: "Some claim that the Bible is God's revelation of his will to man. We cannot agree with this. We look upon the Bible simply as a collection of the Hebrew literature up to a certain date. It is composed of many books of varying value, and of a most miscellaneous character. In those books we find history, poetry, philosophy, prophecy, moral teaching, maxims for guidance in life, and even legends. Such a miscellany can scarcely be regarded as *the* Revelation of God's will to man. The Bible contains much that will help us to carry out God's will. Conscience, if properly developed, will contribute its share, but for the final and absolute record of that Revelation we must look elsewhere"—viz., to "the Book of Nature."

* * *

What, then, are the distinguishing tenets of Judaism? Rabbi Elzas admits the Jews are not alone in teaching one God and a future life, but he regards these as being the principles of a world-religion, which it is the mission of Israel to establish until error and superstition shall be no more, and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. It is needless to say we do not regard this as the upshot of evolution. But Rabbi Elza's exposition is both interesting and able, though it rather suggests that liberal Judaism, by broad spreading, is dispersing almost to nothing.

* * *

The Wonders of the Microscope and Design in Creation, by Edward Poulson (preacher of the Gospel and Christian Evidence Lecturer), is a fourpenny pamphlet designed to display the being of a God, and to advertise the writer's microscopes, which prove it, especially the compound ones with 1½ inch objective, stand condenser, diaphragm, double mirror, etc. The Atheist who is not convinced by the sight of wriggling animalculæ contained in every drop of water may stand a chance of remaining so until the end of the chapter.

* * *

L' Idée de Dieu, by Emile Couret (Paris: 4 Rue de Saintonge), is the first of a series of *brochures* on "*Les Plaies Sociales*" (Social Plagues). M. Couret holds that "*le grand horloger de l'univers*" is as much a myth as Jupiter. As to the design argument, he holds that design betrays imperfection. He combats the belief in God, since it is the support of all pretence of authority, the justification for the world as it is standing in the way of the world as it might be. He holds that the world without the vain service of God will be a brighter and better dwelling-place for man. The price is 15 centimes.

* * *

Mr. H. S. Salt writes as follows in a reply to the *New Age*, which, in a review of his book on Shelley, insists that a distinction must be drawn between the man and the artist :—"Your reviewer has merely burlesqued my contention that Shelley the man must be appreciated by those who would (fully) appreciate Shelley the poet. My position is this, that if we wish thoroughly to understand a great writer like Shelley, we must study him as a whole, and not dissociate the character of the man from the achievement of the artist. It is childish to ask, as your reviewer does, whether those who hear Sarasate 'care a jot what the great violinist's domestic relations may be.' Of course they don't, for the simple reason that they are not studying his life-work, but seeking an immediate pleasure from hearing him play the violin, just as thousands of readers have delighted in Shelley's lyrics, without a further thought as to the personality of the poet. But if we are trying to take a deeper view than this, and not looking at isolated artistic efforts, but at the whole fabric of a man's art, then it becomes important to the biographer or critic to know, in other respects, what manner of man he is studying: for, impossible though it may be to perceive an exact relation between all the various forms in which a great personality expresses itself, we must surely feel that they are in some manner related."

* * *

Two Scotch kail-yard novelists, "Ian Maclaren" (the Rev. J. Watson) and the Rev. S. R. Crockett, and one Manxman, Mr. Hall Caine, are said to be engaged on Lives of Jesus. We always thought this was a theme for romance. Neither Renan nor Farrar could make anything else out of it; and the sooner the subject is left to professional novelists the better. The old romancers padded out their stories with miracles, but the new variety will probably see the advantage of substituting love episodes in deference to modern taste.

* * *

The denunciations of the Woman's Bible, edited by Mrs. Stanton, have only increased its circulation. The entire first edition has been sold out, and a second has been issued by the European Publishing Co., 35 Wall-street, New York. No copy has been sent to us as yet.

CORRESPONDENCE.

IN A "CHRISTIAN" COMMUNITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—A poor muffin man at Portsmouth was recently prosecuted for ringing a bell in the streets on the "Sawbath" to announce his approach to his customers, and the law compelled him to desist. Yet, on the same day of the week, the air is rendered horrisonous in every town and village in Christendom with tinkling bells, etc., which these self-same Christians cause to be rung in order that a parson's customers may know when to be ready in their "go-to-meetings" for the purpose of worshipping God, and of listening to the drawl, not of a muffin man, 'tis true, but of a *muff in man's* image.

H. N.

THE MYSTERY OF PAIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Your interesting paper of June 7 contains an article by Mr. J. M. Wheeler, "On Pain," and his own personal suffering seems to have inspired it. I hope his pangs may not be of long duration. Mr. Wheeler mentions the fact that anæsthetics, on their introduction, were denounced as attempts to thwart the divine decree, and in an interesting note your readers are informed of the fact that Sir James Y. Simpson was accused of antagonising the curse of God, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children."

Nearly forty years ago, when I was attending Sir James Simpson's lectures, I well remember the Professor quoting the above passage from Genesis, and informing his class that he had been blamed for giving chloroform in midwifery cases, and that it was wrong to thus enable women to evade the pain ordained by God. Professor Simpson's answer was inimitable and very amusing, as he simply quoted a part of the curse which the Hebrew legend makes God to have uttered against the ground—"thorns, also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field"—and informed those who said he was wrong to assuage the pain of child-birth, that they also were wrong to cultivate the soil and prevent it bringing forth thorns and thistles according to divine decree.

W. R. Horniblow, M.D.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

The Athenæum Hall (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.15, G. W. Foote, "Thomas Hardy's Novels, and Why the Bishop of Wakefield Burns Them."

Bradlaugh Club and Institute (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.15, Stanley Jones, "The Church and Science." Saturday, June 21, at 8 30, a concert.

Camberwell (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, F. J. Gould, "Freethought and the Child."

East London Ethical Society (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, Miss E. J. Troup will lecture.

East London Branch (Swaby's Coffee House, 108 Mile End-road): T. J. Thurlow, "An Hour with a Famous Convert to Christianity."

Islington Branch: 8.30, Special general meeting at the Bradlaugh Club.

West London Ethical Society (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Prayer."

Open-Air Propaganda.

Camberwell (Station-road) 11.30, E. Pack, "Wait till You are on your Death-bed."

Camberwell Branch (Peckham Rye): 3.15, C. James, "Christianity the Foe of Liberty and Progress."

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery?"

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, Mr. Easton will lecture.

Finsbury Park (near band-stand)—Finsbury Branch: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Woman"; 3.15, A. B. Moss, "Dead Gods."

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 7, F. Haslam, "Who Was Jesus, and What did he Teach?" Thursday, at 8, a lecture.

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. Rosetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?" 3.30, R. Rosetti, "The Russian Gods." Wednesday, at 8, a lecture.

Islington (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 10.45, Lucretius Keen will lecture.

Kilburn (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, S. E. Easton, "Is the Bible Man's Highest Guide to Morality?"

Kingsland (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "A Better Creed than Christianity."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "How to Revise the Bible."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Some Bible Stories."

Regent's Park (near Gloucester Gate)—N.W. Branch: 3, C. Cohen will lecture.

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

Wood Green (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Barnsley (Black-a-moor Head Hotel): 6.30, W. Dyson, "The History of Theism."

Heckmondwike (Lumbard's Coffee Palace, Market-place): 2.30, a meeting.

Leeds (Vulcan Club, Vulcan-street, Benson-street): 7, A discussion on "Christianity Man's Only Salvation."

Liverpool (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, A Theosophist, "Theosophy and Wagner's Music."

Manchester Secular Hall (Rusholme-road, All Saints): Annual Picnic by 9.20 train to Chester. Assemble at station at 9 o'clock.

Newcastle-on-Tyne (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 7, Annual meeting; election of officers.

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): E. Evans—3, "The Dust we Tread On was once Alive"; 7, "Modern Science the Glory of the Age." Tea at 5.

South Shields (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): Picnic at Holywell Dene; brakes leave North Shields at 1 p.m.

Open-Air Propaganda.

Barnsley (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "The Man who Conquered England."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—June 14, m., Finsbury Park; a., Victoria Park; e., Deptford. 11, Chester-le-Street. 21, Newcastle-on-Tyne. 25, Hyde Park. 28, m., Clerkenwell-green; a., Victoria Park; e., Deptford.

A. B. Moss, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—June 14, m., Mile End; a., Finsbury Park. 21, m., Camberwell; a., Victoria Park; 28, m. Wood Green; e. Edmonton. July 5, m., Westminster; a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn. 12, Northampton.

POSITIVISM.

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The Freethinker

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

VOL. XVI.—No. 25. SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 1896. PRICE TWOPENCE.

MORE CONVERTED INFIDELS.

CONVERTING infidels is a remarkably easy work—on paper. Stories of such conversions are generally got up tastily for the Christian market. They rarely bear a close inspection. Our readers remember what a small residuum of truth there was in the Atheist Shoemaker story. The Shoemaker was a fact, but the Atheist was a fiction. If that makes the story true, then the story of the Flood is true, for there is certainly a mountain called Ararat. Another story which turned out to be a fable was the Glasgow conversion related in the *Joyful News*. Mr. Gilmour and other Glasgow friends got on the track of the writer of this circumstantial falsehood. Of course he declined to give any further information. He stood upon his dignity—like the gentlemen in the prisoners' dock, who nearly all plead Not Guilty with an air of insulted innocence. But he had already given himself away, for his converted Freethinker was conspicuously mutilated, having only one hand and a stump; and the one-hand-and-a-stump Freethought orator cannot be found in Glasgow, nor is there any recollection of him in the mind of the oldest inhabitant.

But in spite of exposure there is a perennial vitality in these edifying fables. They serve their turn. They impose on the credulous Christians. They stimulate a flagging zeal, and quicken the flow of dilatory subscriptions.

We are not surprised, therefore, to meet with another of these pious yarns in the *Sunday Companion*. A grand Whitsuntide number of this godly periodical contains the seventh of a series of "Stories from the Diary of a Chaplain," by J. Harwood Panting. It is entitled "How I Met the Infidel." We have read it carefully, and we should like to see the other side of the picture; that is to say, we should like to have the Infidel's story of "How I Met the Chaplain."

We have no knowledge of Mr. Panting. Whether he is still panting, or whether he has panted his last pant, is beyond the scope of our information. There is, apparently, a picture of him accompanying the story, with his hand on a boy's head, while his eyes stare into infinitude. The reverend gentleman is supposed to be "praying aloud," though his mouth is closed. He is sending an open letter to God Almighty, and publishing it to the crowd. On the other side of the boy is the boy's father, the bold bad Atheist, perched on a little platform, from which he has been haranguing the said crowd. The bold bad Atheist wears a startled, discomforted look. Evidently the parson praying aloud is one (if not a dozen) too many for him.

The bold bad Atheist is called Brigden. His real name is Henry Ware. He has done two years for thieving. He hails from Leicester, where he fell under the dreadful influence of "a rabid Freethinker, one Pincott." Freethinkers in these stories are generally rabid. It is wonderful that they are not included in the muzzling order. Of course the rabid Pincott makes Ware as rabid as himself. In this state (presumably) they get married, both on the same day, and at the registrar's office, for they scoff at the religious ceremonial. Then they set up in business together. But the rabid Pincott soon pays the penalty for teaching Ware "his pernicious doctrines," for the latter takes to a life of immorality and runs away with a hundred pounds of the former's money, for which Atheistic performance he enjoys a good spell of Her Majesty's hospitality. It was natural that he should change his name afterwards, and just as natural that he should spout Atheism from street corners—and the nearer to a church the better.

Atheists in these stories are nearly always tailors or shoemakers. Sedentary occupations lead to thinking, and thinking leads to infidelity. Henry Ware was a tailor. He is now supposed to be in heaven, probably making wing-cases for the angels, or bathing suits for those who take a morning dip in the River of Life, before basking in the Sun of Righteousness.

The reverend Panting has heard of this ex-convict apostle of infidelity, and goes out one summer evening to see and hear him. He finds the Atheist on a stool, spouting blasphemy to fifty or sixty persons. "He was a thin, pale-faced man, with high cheek-bones, and prominent, restless eyes." His reading had been confined to the "shallow, flippant cynicisms" of Voltaire and Tom Paine, with which he "dared to interpret the profound truths of Holy Writ." Shocked at the Atheist's profane dedication of his boy to the service of the Devil, the reverend Panting steps forward in the spirit of the Lord, places his hand on the boy's head (the boy takes to it kindly), and implores God's protection of the dear youth. And this is what follows:—

> "I prayed with earnestness. The scoffer's voice was silent, and a hush had fallen on the throng [fifty or sixty persons]. When I had finished, the man tried to speak again; but the people would not listen to him, and called upon me.
>
> "And so I spoke to them—I know not for how long. Yet when I had finished the night had deepened, the crowd had grown immensely, and there was scarce a dry eye among them."

Evidently the reverend Panting's besetting sin is not modesty.

Some time afterwards the man of God visits the Atheist at "a flat in Borough-road." The Atheist locks the door, so as to have a nice private conversation. The fact is, he suspects the reverend Panting of getting him dismissed from his employment, and in the course of conversation he pulls out a revolver. After telling the man of God to prepare for emigration to glory, he pulls the trigger, but the bullet misses its mark, and the Atheist cannot fire again, for, in answer to the man of God's prayer, the Atheist is stricken with paralysis. The wretched creature is taken to the hospital, where he eventually dies, not, however, without fully realising that the man of God was his friend, and that "he had a still greater Friend above."

"Still" is good. It is so modest. God Almighty is even greater than the Rev. Panting. We congratulate him on this magnanimous admission. At the same time, we beg him to continue his confidences. Will he tell us the exact position of the flat in the Borough-road? Will he also tell us the precise time when it was occupied by Henry Ware, alias Brigden, the Atheist lecturer? Our object in desiring this information is perfectly legitimate. We wish to prove the truthfulness (or otherwise) of the reverend gentleman's story. And as he knows it will bear the closest investigation—unless he knows the contrary—he should be anxious to assist us in our inquiries.

Mark, the Atheist's boy, was suffering, at the time of the attempted murder, from an acute attack of bronchitis. Of course he recovered. He was reserved for better things. What became of him "I must leave to another story," says the reverend Panting. This is followed by the announcement of "*Another grand story next week.*"

We are always glad to read grand stories. Still, we

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prefer history to fiction—at least in such matters. We therefore invite the reverend gentleman to give us an introduction to "little Mark Brigden." Meanwhile we beg to state that we never so much as heard of his oratorical father. Brigden or Ware is not the name of any Atheist lecturer known to the Freethinkers of London. In this respect there is a strong affinity between the "Brigden" of the reverend Panting and the "Herbert" of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes.

Seriously, we must express our disgust at these "penny plain and twopence colored" stories of converted infidels. They show what a depth of credulity still exists in Christian circles. They also show what a height of imposture still exists in Christian ministers. They are "thin" to the verge of transparency. It is really wonderful that they find such patronage at the end of the nineteenth century.

Christianity has always been largely supported by lying for the glory of God, and now that it is perishing we see its ruling passion strong in death. There is really no room for the Protestants to rail at the Catholics in this respect. Both sides have been, and still are, ready with the convenient falsehood and the profitable invention. The end sanctifies the means. All is honorable that tends to edification. The doctrine of economy—that is, making a little truth go a very long way—is common to all Churches. Between them, they have flooded Europe with fables; and one is tempted to quote the last line of one of Browning's poems—"Lies, lies again, and still they lie!"

G. W. FOOTE.

ORTHODOX IMMORALITY.

We have no quarrel with Christianity when it teaches peace and goodwill to men. We only claim that it has no monopoly of virtue. All the duties which it inculcates were taught by heathens before it came into the world. There is nothing distinctive in its morality. Jews, Buddhists, Moslems, Hindus, and Confucians alike teach the same principles of the behavior necessary to civilised society. What alone is distinctive of Christianity is its dogmas, and these, in our opinion, are in no way conducive to morality, but in some cases decidedly unfavorable thereto.

Take first its central doctrine of the Atonement. The idea of making the just suffer for the unjust is radically immoral. It makes God worse than a Shylock, for He not only will have His pound of flesh, but takes it from the wrong party. A doctrine which transfers guilt from the criminal to the innocent is contrary to justice. Beyond the barbarity of ascribing efficacy to blood, to rest on salvation by another is to weaken self-reliance and injure the moral fibre. The sinner's consolation is, "Jesus pays for all." The unbeliever has no such excuse. He knows that all the blood of all the gods ever spawned from the fertile imagination of man cannot loosen the inexorable bonds of cause and effect.

Then take the doctrine of Salvation by Faith. Luther inveighed against the Romish doctrine of indulgences as procuring immunity to the sinner on a system of cash payments, while he himself taught a doctrine of immunity on yet easier terms. True he had Pauline authority (Galatians ii. 16), and is backed up by the eighteenth article of the Church of England, which proclaims: "They also are to be held accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the Law or Sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law, and the Light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved." But what doctrine ever taught is more immoral? If the thief on the cross, after, perhaps, a life-long course of villainy, goes straight to Paradise; if there is more rejoicing in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance; if saving grace may be obtained at the eleventh hour by the cry, "I do believe," where is the incentive to a life of honest devotion to principle? The doctrines, that Jesus has made an atonement for sin, and that true faith and repentance at the last moment, even *in articulo mortis*, are sufficient to blot out a life of sin, serve to place a premium on crime. Orthodox Christianity makes faith and penitence of more consequence than right conduct. The murderer, washed in the blood of the Lamb, goes straight to glory; while the victim, "cut off even in the blossom of his sin, no reckoning made, but sent to his account with all his imperfections on his head," is doomed to eternal perdition because unrepentant. Could any Pagan doctrine more discourage morality? Past sins—nay, a whole life of selfish disregard for others, if repented of before death—are a far less obstacle to entrance into Paradise than the most exemplary life, if unaccompanied by true faith in the Christian Savior. What is this but to discountenance righteousness, making it but the "filthy rags" of which the prophet speaks?

Take the doctrine of Divine Omniscience. Its tendency is to rob men of the sense of responsibility, and to throw the blame of all their vices and miseries on God. If all is foredecreed, what is the use of human endeavor? Calvinism is the only logical form of Theism; but it is open to the objection against all forms of fatalism, that it diminishes self-reliance.

Take the doctrine of total natural depravity. Its tendency is to make believers despair of being good, and to dispose them to excuse themselves when they do wrong. If they are corrupt trees, how can they do otherwise than bear bad fruit? If a man believes there is nothing good in him, how can he be expected to try and bring good out? If he believes that he is full of all evil, small wonder if he allows much evil to appear. How convenient a scapegoat, too, is the orthodox Christian Devil. If Satan can transform himself into an angel of light (1 Cor. xi. 14), how can a weak man be expected to withstand his temptations? Can it tend to humanity or common justice to believe that "he that believeth not shall be damned" (Matthew xvi. 16), that God "sends strong delusions that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. ii. 11), and that he hath "mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (Romans ix. 18)?

What advantage can any human being derive from the belief that the whole of the Bible is the word of God; that he inspired all its barbarous and brutal laws, ordered the wholesale slaughter of the Canaanites, and sanctioned and shared in the abominations perpetrated on the daughters of Midian; that he wants us to believe, or to say we believe, all its absurd stories and its often contradictory teachings?

What value to any mortal is the belief in the Trinity? In what way can it promote justice, temperance, kindness, or truth? Children, juggled with the words that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost are not three Gods, but one God, are not likely to be made any more straightforward by such teaching. Indeed, the wriggling subterfuges by which absurdities are explained as mysteries tend towards dishonesty and hypocrisy.

What benefit can be derived from the doctrine of the Incarnation? Does it give any encouragement to philanthropy or purity? On the contrary, it may easily be construed into a reflection on marriage, and a libel on true fatherhood and motherhood. What benefit can anyone derive from such a story of a fatherless, but not motherless, child? Is anyone really made the better by believing that the Jews crossed the Red Sea dry shod, or that Jesus walked on the water and ascended through the clouds? No; the safety of morality, as Huxley said, does not lie in the adoption of this or that philosophical speculation, or this or that theological creed, but in a real and living belief in the fixed order of nature, which sends social disintegration upon the track of immorality as surely as it sends physical disease after physical trespass.

Let it, then, be distinctly understood that Freethinkers do not reject the moral teachings of Christianity, though they reject the supernatural foundations upon which its ethics are based. They accept good, "wherever found, on sceptic, heathen, or on Christian ground." What they reject is the distinctive dogmas of Christianity, which they hold to be immoral. Their objection to Christianity is that it is not good enough. Their hearts as well as their heads have outgrown it.

J. M. Wheeler.

The greater the knowledge, the greater the doubt.—*Goethe.*

If we are born for heaven, we are lost for earth.—*L. Feuerbach.*

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THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

Chapter XVII.

THE ETHICAL METHOD OF CONTROVERSY.

"It was one of the secrets of my craft in the old days, when I wanted to weld iron or work steel to a fine purpose, to begin gently. If I began, as all learners do, to strike my heaviest blows at the start, the iron would crumble instead of welding, or the steel would suffer under my hammer, so that when it came to be tempered it would 'fly,' as we used to say, and rob the thing I had made of its finest quality."—Robert Collyer, D.D.

"They who believe that they have Truth ask no favor, save that of being heard; they dare the judgment of mankind; refused co-operation, they invoke opposition, for opposition is their opportunity." This was the maxim I wrote at the beginning of the Secularistic movement, to show that we were willing to accept ourselves the controversy, which we contended was the sole means of establishing truth. No proposition, as Samuel Bailey showed, is to be trusted until it has been tested by very wide discussion. We soon found that the free and open field of Milton was not sufficient. It needed a "fair" as well as a "free and open encounter." Disputants require to be equally matched in debate as in arms.

The Secularist policy is to accept the purely moral teaching of the Bible, and to controvert its theology, in such respects as it contradicts and discourages ethical effort. Yet theological questions are always sought to be forced upon us. The Rev. Henry Townley followed me to the *Leader* office (1853–4) to induce me to discuss the question of the "existence of God." I never had done so, and objected that it would give the impression that Secularism was Atheistic. He was so insistent and importunate that I consented to discuss the question with him. Never after did I do so with anyone. The Rev. Brewin Grant endeavored to get my acceptance of propositions which pledged me to a wild opposition to Christianity. Mr. Samuel Morley, honorable in all things, admitted I had objected to it, but in the end I assented to it, that the discussion might not be broken off. Thomas Cooper was persistent that I should discuss with him the authenticity of the Scriptures. What I proposed was the proposition that the authenticity of the Scripture, its miracles, and prophecies are quite apart from moral truth.

The discussion took place in the city of York, lasting five nights. Canon Robinson and Canon Hey presided alternately. Mr. Cooper was an able man in dealing with the stock propositions of Christianity; but their relevance as tests of morality was an entirely new subject to him. He protested rather than reasoned, and declared he would never discuss the question of the ethical test of the truth of Scriptures; nor have I ever found any responsible minister willing to do so down to this day. Thus Christians should condemn with reservation the tendency in Secularists to debate theology, seeing how reluctant they are to do otherwise themselves. Christians seem incapable of understanding how much the objection to their cause arises in the revolt of the moral sense against it.

On first meeting Richard Carlile in 1842, some years before Secularism took a distinctive form, he invited me to hear him lecture upon the principles of the *Christian Warrior*,* of which he was editor, and to give my opinion thereon. In doing so I explained the ideas from which I have never departed—namely, that no theologic, astronomic, or miraculous mode of proving Scriptural doctrine could ever be made even intelligible, except to students of very considerable research. Such theories, I contended, must rest, more or less, on critical and conjectural interpretation, and could never enable a working man to dare the understanding of others in argument. Scientific interpretation laid entirely outside Christian acquirements, and seemed to Christians disingenuous evasion of what they took to be obvious truths. My contention was that the people have no historic or critical knowledge enabling them to determine the divine origin of Christianity.

On the platform he who has most knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin will always be able to silence any dissentient who has not equal information. If by accident a controversialist happen to possess this knowledge, it goes for nothing unless he has credit for classical competency. In controversy of this nature it is not enough for a man to know; he must be known to know before his conclusions can command attention. To myself it was not of moment whether the Scriptures were authentic or inspired. My sole inquiry was, Did they contain clear moral guidance? If they did, I accepted that guidance with gratitude. If I found maxims obviously useful and true, judged by human experience, I adopted them, whether given by inspiration or not. If precepts did not answer to this test, they were not acceptable, though all the apostles in session had signed them. To miracles I did not object, nor did I see any sense in endeavoring to explain them away. We all have reason to regret that no one performs them now. It was our misfortune that the power, delegated with so much pomp of promise to the saints, had not descended to these days. If any preacher or deacon could, in our day, feed five thousand men on a few loaves and a few small fishes, and leave as many baskets of fragments as would run a workhouse for a month, the Poor Law Commissioners would make a king of that saint. But if a precept enjoined me to believe what was not true, it would be a base precept, and all the miracles in the Scriptures could not alter its character; while, if a precept be honest and just, no miracle is wanted to attest it; indeed, a miracle to allure credence in it would only cast suspicion on its genuineness. The moral test of the Scriptures was sufficient, since it had the commanding advantage of appealing to the common sense of all sorts and conditions of men, of Christian or of Pagan persuasion. Ethical criticism has this further merit, that on the platform of discussion the miner, the weaver, or farm laborer is on the same level as the priest. A man goes to heaven upon his own judgment; whereas, if his belief is based on the learning of others, he goes to heaven second-hand.

When Mr. J. A. Froude wrote for John Henry Newman the Life of St. Belletin, he ended with the words: "And this is all that is known, *and more than all*, of the life of a servant of God." In the Bible there appears to be a great deal more than was ever known. This does not concern the Secularist, though it does the scholar. If there be moral maxims in the Scripture, what does it matter how they got there?

* The last periodical Mr. Carlile edited.

Chapter XVIII.

ITS DISCRIMINATION.

"There is nothing so terrible as activity without insight."—Goethe.

In 1847 I commenced in the *Reasoner* what I entitled "The Moral Remains of the Bible"—a selection of some splendid moral stories, incidents, and sentences having ethical characteristics such as I doubted not would "remain" when the Bible came to be regarded as a human book. I wrote a "Logic of Life."* My *Trial of Theism* was only "as accused of obstructing secular life," as stated on the title-page. The object was to show how much useful criticism could be entered upon without touching the questions of authenticity, or miracles, or the existence of deity. Thus it was left to opponents to declare that things morally incredible were inspired by God. In this case it was not I, but *they*, who blasphemed.

Take the case of Samson's famous engagement with the Philistines at Ramath—Lehi surrounded by a band of warlike Philistines (though, as the text implies, 3,000 of his own armed countrymen were at hand). Samson, who had no weapon, was not given one by them, but had to look about for a "new jawbone of an ass." With this singular instrument he killed, one after the other, a thousand Philistine soldiers, who were big, strong men, and, unless every blow was fatal, it must have taken several blows to kill some of them.

Are there three places in the human body where a single blow will be sure to kill a man? Did Samson know those places? and was he always able to direct his blow with unerring precision to one or other of those particular spots? If the thousand Philistines "surrounded" him, how did he keep the others off while he struggled with the one he was killing? It is not conceivable that the Philistines stood there to be killed, and meekly submitted to ignoble blows,

* Companion to the "Logic of Death," both contained in the *Trial of Theism*.

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death, and degradation. The jawbone must have been of strange texture to have crashed through armor, and have turned aside spears and swords of stalwart warriors without chipping, splitting, or breaking in two. What time it must have taken Samson to pursue each man, beat off his comrades, drag him from their midst, give him the asinine *coup de grâce*, drag and cast his dead body upon the "heaps" of slain he was piling up! What struggling, scuffling, and turmoil of blood and blows Samson must have gone through! Spurted all over with blood, Barnum would have bought him for a Dime Museum as the deepest-colored Red Indian known. No Deerfoot could have been nimbler than Samson must have been on this mighty day. When this Herculean fight was over, which, with the utmost expedition, must have occupied Samson six days—which would give 166 killed single handed per day—the only effect produced upon Samson appears to have been that he was "sore athirst." Even after this extraordinary use of the jawbone it was in such good condition that, a hollow place being "clave" in it, a fount of water gushed forth for refreshing this remarkable warrior. Were it not recorded in the Bible, it would be said that the writer intended to imply that the jawbone of the ass is to be found only in the mouth of the reader.

Can it need miracle or prophecy, authenticity or inspiration, to attest this story of the Jewish Jack-the-Giant-killer? What moral good can arise from a narration which it is reverence to reject? By leaving it to the Christian to say it is given by "inspiration" of God, it is he who blasphemes. But if the question of authenticity were raised, the character of the narrative would be lost sight of, and would not come into question; while the test of moral probability decides the invalidity of the story within the compass of the knowledge of an ordinary audience.

In the same manner, keeping to the policy of affirmation, he who maintains the self-existence, the self-action and eternity of the universe can be met only by those who defame nature as a second-hand tool of God. Such are Atheists towards Nature, the author of their existence, and God must so regard them.

A single precept of Christ's, "Take no thought for the morrow," has bred swarms of mendicants in every age since his day; but a far more dangerous precept is "Resist not evil," which has made Christianity welcome to so many tyrants. Christ, whatever other sentiments he had, had a slave heart. Every friend of freedom knows that "resistance is the backbone of the world." The patriot poet* exclaims :—

> Land of our Fathers—in their hour of need
> God help them, guarded by the passive creed.

No miracle could make these precepts true, and he who proved their authenticity would be the enemy of mankind.

Whether Christ existed or not affected in no way what excellence and inimitableness there was in his delineated character. His offer of palpable materialistic evidence to Thomas showed that he recognised the right of scepticism to relevant satisfaction. His concession of proof in this case needed no supernatural testimony to render it admirable.

The reader will now see what the policy of Secularist advocacy is—mainly to test theology by its ethical import. To many all policy is restraint; they cry down policy, and erect blundering into a virtue. Whereas policy is guidance to a chosen end. Mathematics is but policy of measurement; grammar but the policy of speech; logic but the policy of reason; arithmetic but the policy of calculation; temperance but the policy of health; trigonometry but the policy of navigation; roads but the policy of transit; music but the policy of controlling sound; art but the policy of beauty; law but the policy of protection; discipline but the policy of strength; love but the policy of affection. An enemy may object to an adversary having a policy, because he is futile without one. The policy adopted may be bad, but no policy at all is idiocy, and commits a cause to the providence of Bedlam.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

The system of morals propounded in the New Testament contained no maxim which had not been previously enunciated.—*H. T. Buckle.*

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* Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes.

FREETHOUGHT REQUIREMENTS.

THE progress of Freethought during the last few years has been marvellous. Its advancement has not been confined to one section of society, but it has penetrated into every domain, both of public and private life. In science, politics, ethics, works of fiction, and the domestic circle, theology has lost the sway it once held. A broader and more liberal tone of thought prevails in all departments of human existence. The limited freedom which a quarter of a century ago satisfied the aspirations of mankind is now found quite inadequate to meet the enlarged demands created by the ever-growing desire for increased mental liberty.

By Freethought we mean an intellectual condition unfettered by theological considerations. A true Freethinker is one who acts independently of all supernatural beliefs, and whose actions are regulated purely by a concern as to their influence upon mundane affairs. No thought can be free if it is hampered by hopes of heaven or fears of hell. Neither can intellectual freedom co-exist with the anxiety to please God, to gratify the priest, and to adhere to the fashion of popular religious worship. All such considerations must necessarily tend to cramp the mental faculties and bind thought by the narrow traditions of the past. Herein Secular Freethought manifests its potency and indicates its onward march. The human mind has become so developed through modern culture that it rebels against the restraint imposed by creeds and dogmas.

This progress and freedom are the result of a persistent and rational warfare against the encroachments of the Church and the influence of the priests. The conflict has been a long and severe one. Freethinkers have had arrayed against them wealth, power, and deep-rooted prejudice; but through a determined and never-ceasing struggle those obstacles have been, to a large extent, overcome, and to-day we stand upon the vantage ground of a glorious victory. Further triumphs, however, have to be won, and it behoves us, as Secularists, to consider the best plan to adopt, in order that additional successes may be achieved. So far as we remember, a better opportunity never existed in the Freethought movement to obtain decisive progress than at the present time. The most intellectual portions of society have grown weary of theological shams and priestly interference; the yearnings for personal liberty and independent thought are stronger than ever; the exposition of our principles is listened to with respectful attention; an active propaganda is being carried on every Sunday in London and the provinces, both in the open air and in halls; our literature commands an extensive sale; our lecturers, young and old, are ever ready and willing to do their duty in expounding our views; and one and all of the workers in the good cause are inspired with the consciousness that they have truth on their side. Surely, with these advantages in our favor, it is our duty to find out all that can be done to enhance the value and usefulness of Secular philosophy; and, having discovered what to do, to do it with all our might. Our readers know already what has recently been accomplished through the aid of Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme; how the banner of Freethought has been carried into the theological camp, and a knowledge of our aims and objects imparted therein. More of this work is required; the good results that have hitherto followed the working of this scheme bid us hope for even greater results in the future. It must be remembered that under Mr. Foote's plan lectures are given to the public free, and upon our ability to extend this feature in our advocacy will depend much of the success which we hope to ensure.

There is no doubt that all the sections of the Freethought party are more desirous than ever of seeing our propagandist efforts consolidated, and we have been asked by several friends to state our views as to the best means of bringing this about. Of course, there is no question with any of us as to the truth and value of the principles we hold dear, any more than there is in reference to the marked progress, during the last decade, that those principles have made. The point we are concerned about at present is to discover, if possible, an improved method of action, whereby the greatest good of the greatest number may become an accomplished fact. In other words, what is required so that Freethought may be placed in that position before the public which its merits deserve? In our opinion, such requirements are as follows :—

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(1) A judicious blending of the destructive and constructive mode of advocacy. In the face of the present conduct of the clerical party upon the education question it is a mistake to suppose that the time is passed for destructive work. Theology is still our active enemy, and one that we must fight with all the energy at our command. Let, however, such work be done with discretion; while we seek to destroy error we should be careful to show that we have truth to replace it.

(2) Every Freethinker should deem it a personal duty to assist in propagandist work. The labor of conducting the operations of a Branch of the National Secular Society is too often left to a few individuals. This is unfair and unjust; it deprives our principles of much of their legitimate influence. Those who have escaped from the snares of theology should not forget that there are many who are still unemancipated. The enjoyment of the advantages of Freethought has been obtained through the dauntless efforts of the fighters in our movement; and surely gratitude should prompt that assistance ought to be given to the toilers who are now engaged in perpetuating the struggle for mental liberty. Each member of the National Secular Society can do *something* towards extending its usefulness, either by active work, advice, or his or her presence at its meetings. To do whichever of these services is possible to the individual member is a secular duty, and if it were performed encouragement would be thereby given to all concerned in the welfare and progress of the Society. We have to contend against fearful odds, and the assistance of all friends of Freethought is required. We earnestly appeal for that assistance in order that the noble work of the brave pioneers of the past may produce its fullest beneficial results.

(3) It is useless to ignore a self-evident fact, that no movement can be successfully conducted without financial support. The various religious denominations have discovered this to be true. Without money they could do but little. So it is with us; our labors are limited through the want of the "sinews of war." A few friends are ever generous, but it ought not to be confined to the few. All who can should help financially in the present struggle. It is proposed to carry on a discriminate propaganda in London, and in all the large provincial towns, against the aggressive policy of the Church, and the priestly attempt to dominate the education of the rising generation. This is one of the principal requirements of Freethought, and we sincerely hope that the effort will receive the support its importance demands.

We have written plainly because we feel earnestly upon the subject. The Freethought movement has played an important part in the reforms of the past, and it ought to be equally potent in the present crisis. We want to see practical work done, and we ask the co-operation of all who are willing to aid in accomplishing it.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE CHOICE.

WHETHER wilt thou choose to praise
Him who fears to turn aside
From the smoothly-beaten ways
Which the crowd have trampled wide,
But goes thoughtless all his days,
Soulless, slave, but sanctified?

Or the man of men who hath,
With undaunted heart and might,
Trampled out a newer path
Through the storm-winds of the night,
Whilst red shapes of rage and wrath
Glared at him from left and right?

Whether wilt thou rather choose
To applaud in his snug place
Him who, when bad men abuse
Fellow men, with shameless face
Says: "The sacredness of use
Takes away this thing's disgrace"?

Or the man with might to spurn
The oppressor from the way,
Crying, with proud lip and stern:—
"Dog! if all dogs have their day,
Thine is over; go, return
To the hell that gave thee sway!"

PYRITES.

THOU SHALT NOT SUFFER A WITCH TO LIVE.

(Exodus xxii. 18.)

WITCH prosecution, with its terrors of torture and the fagot, was only the main result of the belief in a personal devil. There are other consequences which, though less important, are sometimes bad enough in themselves. We mention a few of them: (1) There were persons who actually tried to make contracts with the Devil; (2) people possessed of a lively imagination began to dream that they stood in all kinds of relation to the Evil One—there are cases in which imaginary witches surrendered themselves voluntarily to the Inquisition; (3) soldiers entertained the hope of rendering themselves bullet-proof; and (4) there were plenty of fools who tried to become rich by magic.

The inquisitors and witch prosecutors were by no means scoundrels pure and simple. Most assuredly there were scoundrels among them, but there is no doubt that the movement of the Inquisition and witch prosecution took its origin from purer motives. It was to the popes and grand inquisitors, and to many princes and other people who promoted the policy, a matter of conscience; they simply attended to it as a religious duty, sometimes even with a heavy heart, and not without great pain.

Torquemada, the grand inquisitor of Spain, was, in his private life, one of the purest and most conscientious of men, and he was so tender-hearted that he was obliged to leave the inquisitorial tribunal, and quit the room as soon as the torture of a heretic began. He would cry about the obstinacy of those who had given themselves over to Satan; but, though his heart was bleeding, he condemned thousands and thousands to the cruelest tortures and the most dreadful death, for the sake of salvation and the glory of God—of that monster-god in whom he believed, that abominable idol which was worse than the Moloch of ancient Phœnicia.

When complaints reached Pope Innocent III. about the cruelty of Conrad of Marburg, the first Inquisitor-General of Germany, he said: "The Germans were always furious, and therefore needed furious judges." Pope Leo X., referring to cases of witchcraft that happened in Brixen and Bergamo, grieves, in a brief of 1521, at "the obstinacy of the culprits, who would rather die than confess their crimes." In the same document the Holy Father complains about the impiety of the Venetian Senate, who prevented the inquisitors from performing their duties. And similar expressions are not unfrequent in later papal bulls and briefs, all of which prove that the horrors of the Inquisition are ultimately due, not to ill-will or even to the desire for power, but to error, which had assumed the shape of a deep-seated religious conviction.

Among the Protestants, the Calvinists come nearest in zeal to the Roman Catholic inquisitors. In Geneva, Switzerland, the home of Calvin, five hundred persons were, within three months, executed for heresy and witchcraft. The protocols of the city in the year 1545 declare that the labor of torture and execution exceeded the strength of the hangman; and the complaint is made that, "whatever torture be applied, the malefactors still refuse to confess."

—*Open Court.*

THE TRINITY.

IT seems likely that the dogma of the Trinity has held such sway in religious thought because it falls in with a definite stage in the evolution of the human mind. There are savages, it is known, who can count only to three. Many civilised people naturally class things in three divisions. The persons who see the affirmative and negative alone are behind those who see also a middle path between them.

Man's early intelligence discovered that it takes three lines to enclose a space. The triangle thus became the symbol of completeness, and hence of deity. The conception of time, too, as past, present, and future fell into a threefold category. In observing the moon as time-measurer, it was noticed that it had a waxing phase, a full one, and a waning one, and these three were one. In its waxing it was symbolised by the virile male, in its fulness by the female, and in its waning by the impubescent child. In Egypt, from which so much of Christianity comes, the

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triads usually represent this natural division of father, mother, and offspring, as with Osiris, Isis, and Horus; and as in Hebrew the Holy Spirit, or Ruach, is feminine, it is possible that the Christian Father, Ghost, and Son were originally of a similar character. The *rôle* of the Holy Ghost in the Christian Trinity has always been of a rather nebulous character.

In India the triads assumed a more philosophical character as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. But, as the basis of religious worship is fear, Siva, the destroyer, has had more votaries than Vishnu, the preserver, or Brahma, the creator.

It is probable that the doctrine of the Trinity also served as a passage from Polytheism to Monotheism. It bridged the path for the Polytheist, and led him towards a conception of the unity of things.

Having said thus much for the belief, it should be added that, when the conception of unity is attained, the belief in the Trinity becomes either a Tritheistic survival of Polytheistic idolatry, or a mere jumble of words without meaning. The doctrine of a Son co-eternal with his Father, and a Ghost proceeding from Father to Son, yet co-eternal with both, takes the cake among all the absurdities of religion.

LUCIANUS.

ACID DROPS.

WHAT a century this is! Science and superstition rub shoulders together in every civilised country; indeed, the fanatics of new superstitions affect to be most excessively scientific in their arguments, illustrations, and language. Such are the Theosophists in England and America. And after the success of this charlatanism we need not be astonished at the enormous success of Mlle. Couédon at Paris—the lady who enjoys the special intimacy of the Angel Gabriel. Two thousand letters a day are delivered at this lady's door. All sorts and conditions of people send to her for "tips," and she consults Gabriel on these matters when he visits her.

The visit of Gabriel to Mary of Nazareth resulted in the birth of Jesus, and a Parisian journalist ventured to suggest that there might be danger in his intimacy with Mlle. Couédon. The journalist was prosecuted for libel, and the Court inflicted a small fine.

The cult of Joan of Arc, which has been promoted by French clericals as favorable to the cause of reaction, seems to have been responsible for many hysterical females, who proclaim, and really believe, that they hear the voices of angels. In most cases they are properly held to be subjects for medical treatment.

The Pope has been entertaining a number of Catholic sailors belonging to the English fleet. He gave them a good dinner with good drink, and strawberries and cream, and first-rate cigars; and of course the Jack Tars cheered the Pope (after the feed) to the very echo. Far more significant cheers, however, were heard elsewhere in Rome. A lot of other Jack Tars, who were seeing the sights, came to the great statue of Garibaldi, and they tossed their hats in the air and gave hearty cheers for the Liberator of Italy. Few of them, probably, knew that the noble Garibaldi was an Atheist. Had they known it, perhaps it would not have abated their enthusiasm.

Mr. R. A. Cruikshank, a trustee and manager of Kilmun Parish Church, has resigned his office and severed his connection with the Church of Scotland, on account of "the disgraceful treatment the Rev. Mr. Robinson has received from the Dunoon Presbytery and the General Assembly." It is difficult, however, to see how the Assembly could have acted otherwise. The Church of Scotland upholds certain doctrines, and, if ministers cannot preach them, how can they expect to eat the Church's bread?

The Bishop of Chichester is this month chaplain to the House of Lords, while his brother, Canon Basil Wilberforce, is chaplain to the House of Commons. The Wilberforces, like the Bickersteths and other leading Church families, have long been known for getting as many good berths as possible for their own kin.

The movement for Christian reunion at Shrewsbury has taken the shape of an Evangelical Free Church Council. An Evangelical was defined as designating those who accept the deity of Christ, with the object of excluding Unitarians from the happy family of Evangelical reunionists.

American missionaries in the Timpary districts have forwarded to Freetown, Liberia, reports of shocking barbarities arising from the superstitions of natives. Some eleven cases of burning alive on the score of alleged witchcraft had taken place. The missionaries were using their utmost endeavors to prevent the continuance of such doings, though their own book has the injunction, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," which sanctions these barbarities, and under which, it has been computed, nine million of women have been put to death in Christian Europe.

An alleged swindler, O. E. Miller, is in jail in Denver for wrecking the Commercial National Bank. He was prominent in religious circles, an officer of the Young Men's Christian Association, and a teacher of the young women's Bible class. At the time of his arrest, in Chicago, he was writing a speech for the Y.M.C.A. of that city. In jail he carries himself insolently, and says that earthly tribulations cannot disturb him, as he gets his happiness from above.

The *Daily News*, noticing a new experiment to get youths to Sunday-school, says: "The young are most susceptible to religious influences of any; but who would dream of seriously regarding the present Sunday-school system as a factor of any great importance in their lives? They go when they are little because their parents insist upon it; but no sooner do they begin to escape from parental control than they cease attending." This indicates how naturally youths take to religion. Indeed, it is found that some secular bribe—such as picnics, music, cricket, or gymnastic classes—has now to be introduced to obtain attendance at religious teaching.

The *Methodist Times* actually notices the published Debate on Theism and Atheism between Mr. W. T. Lee and Mr. G W. Foote—probably because one of the debaters is a Christian. Brief as the notice is—extending to just ten lines—it contains some remarkable passages.

Here is the first: "We cannot say that either combatant pleases us quite. Certainly Mr. Foote does not." Could anything be more ridiculous? Did any two men in the world's history speak for an hour each and please a third person absolutely? Again, if Mr. Foote had "quite" pleased his Christian reviewer, would his speeches have been of any real service to Atheism? "Certainly not Mr. Foote" is too rich as it stands. It would only be spoiled by the finest criticism.

Now for number two. The reviewer admits that Mr. Foote is "a keen debater." Something had to be said to show he was not exactly a fool. Then follows the inevitable "but": "But when he comes to giving his objections to Theism, they are of a very hackneyed kind—objections which have been answered a hundred times." It does not occur to the reviewer that the Theistic arguments are at least as hackneyed as the Atheistic objections. Nor does he see that an objection stands until it is refuted. Nothing is more stupid than to say an argument or an objection is "hackneyed"—which is what Bentham called a question-begging epithet. Whether the argument or objection is valid is the only point at issue, and the only point worth a moment's consideration. A hoary falsehood does not become a truth by calling its adversary antiquated.

"Hackneyed"! What an ineffably absurd word in this connection! Theism has been discussed for at least three thousand years, and by this time it is impossible to raise a new argument or a new objection. All the most brilliant writer can do is to present the old points in a fresh and forcible manner. He may aspire to vividness, but not to invention. And it is in the light of this fact that a reviewer who knew the subject and his own business would pronounce a judgment.

Now for number three: "Mr. Lee makes some good points, but limits the scope of his argument unnecessarily." What on earth is the meaning of this oracular deliverance? Mr. Lee's argument was intended to prove the existence of an infinite God, of infinite power, wisdom, justice, and benevolence. How much farther could he carry it?

Now for number four: "His [Mr. Lee's] courage and ability, however, are great." What does "however" refer to? Is it natural to suppose that a man who "makes some good points" is *unlikely* to possess "ability"? Then again, we should like to know where the "courage" comes in. That Mr. Lee possesses courage as well as great ability we are very far from disputing, but he was not much in need of it in this particular debate. Three out of every four persons in the audience were on his side—a fact to which the chairman drew attention. Any "courage" in the encounter had to be displayed by the Atheist, who pleaded his case before a mainly hostile assembly.

Compare this sort of critical trash with what Mr. Watts wrote about the Debate in the *Freethinker*, and Mr. Putnam

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in the New York *Truthseeker*, and see how the Atheists are superior to the Christian in sagacity and generosity.

Dr. Robertson Nicoll, editor of the *British Weekly*, joins Dr. Parker in advocating secular education, and writes "A Reply to Mr. Price Hughes." The last gentleman replies with the same old bad logic, and the same old ostrich tactics in respect to facts. Mr. Hughes is so incredibly foolish as to imagine that Disestablishment will be brought about by the Nonconformists putting it before the electors as a *religious* question. The State is bound to obey Jesus Christ, yet Christians must see that a State Church is against the will of Jesus Christ. Such is Mr. Hughes's ridiculous new program, and it is enough to convulse the very gods, yea, the very devils, with laughter.

Mr. Hughes holds that Christian teaching is quite wrong in State churches, but entirely right in State schools. "Of course infidels may object," he says, "but they must take the consequences of living in a country which has accepted Christianity." This is precisely what the Pagans told the early Christians, and the successors of the early Christians have been howling about it ever since.

Personally, we would as soon trust the lives and liberties of Freethinkers to Cardinal Vaughan as to Mr. Price Hughes. The latter is quite capable of arguing in any way that suits his policy, he is a dreadfully self-righteous bigot, and the principles he is now advocating are just those which crowded dungeons and lit the fires of stakes in the good old days when this beautiful Christianity was supreme.

The practical Scot emerges in the following anecdote from Pollokshaws, the burgh where the queer folks come from The fiscal, conducting a trifling court case, asked the prisoner if he had any witnesses. "None but Almighty God," said he. "Well, you can't cite him in this court," was the sharp reply, and the business was proceeded with.

The return of Hospital Sunday reminds us that the British public provides only £316,000 for its hospitals, while it spends £1,375,571 a year on foreign missions. It may be said that the public has not sufficient confidence in hospital management; but the mismanagement of missions has frequently been exposed, yet the deluded religious people continue to subscribe, under the belief that they thus make their salvation sure.

It appears from the Return with regard to Religious Instruction in the School Boards for England and Wales that eight Board schools anticipated the Church move by teaching the whole of the Church Catechism, in defiance of section 14 of the Education Act. They thought it a sufficient defence to say that the parents had not objected. This illustrates what the parsons are prepared to do when they have the opportunity.

"'It's false; it's a lie'—such were the expressions that flew about at the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church Ministers at Belfast. I often wonder why we continue to call the ministers of the various 'religious' organisations 'reverend.' How do we know that they are 'reverend'? We do know—by reading the police reports—that many of them are criminals. And we are aware from personal knowledge that many of these fellows are the meanest and most despicable of mankind. It is about time we gave up aiding them in their hypocrisy and imposition on the public by calling them 'reverend.'"

After the above from *Reynolds's Newspaper* of last Sunday comes the *Progressive Thinker*, of Chicago, the editor of which says: "An aged and learned friend, formerly a college professor and president, wrote us a few days ago: 'I beg my friends not to put Rev. before my name. I would as soon be called a horse-thief. The title is odious to me, as it seems synonymous with bigotry, superstition, hypocrisy, salacity, and lechery.' His is an extreme case, but he is not alone in his dislike of the craft."

The Benefices Bill has capsized for this session, and the sale of "the cure of souls" can go on as merrily as ever. The Church fancies itself so secure that it need not set its house in order. Time will show.

The adoption of the secular system of education in South Australia, which has been triumphantly endorsed by the direct voice of the electors, was due there, as elsewhere, to the wrangles of the contending sects. From this point of view the measure of our Government may be a blessing in disguise, since, whatever else it does, it is sure to increase the acerbity between church and chapel

Athelstan Riley, writing in the *Church Times*, is very frank about the Education Bill. He says: "The Voluntary system is disappearing, and a State system is taking its place. Now we must look for another principle on which to rest our demand for denominational teaching. We find it in clause 27." "If it be withdrawn," he says, "we could not accept, without the greatest risk, the clauses which further endow our schools from public sources, and extend to them further public control." No; what the clericals want, and Mr. Riley as good as says so, is public endowment, and to teach just what the clericals please without public control.

Peter Lombard tells in the *Church Times* (June 12) a story of two good Christians who were discussing the date of King Charles' Day, one insisting upon the 9th, and the other upon the 29th, of May. The former, unconvinced, closed the argument by saying, "Let us refer to the Bible; we shall find it there."

Cute old President Kruger told the South African deputation that he shaped his clement policy on the Bible. We shouldn't have thought it if he hadn't said so. Anyhow, we reproduce the comment of the *Westminster Gazette*: "Mr. Kruger relies on his Bible, and we are asked to contrast him in this respect with his opponents, the financiers. But we have noted at other times that devotion to the Bible is compatible with the very smartest finance. Names will readily occur of distinguished financiers who are as eminent in religious circles as in the region of finance."

They were having a special sermon at Leytonstone Congregational Church, and while it was on some burglars broke into the vestry and stole the minister's clothes, besides other articles of value. According to the teaching of Jesus Christ, the minister should advertise for the thieves and make them a present from his remaining wardrobe. It is more probable, however, that he will give them six months if he can.

The Rev. Dr. Gibson, vicar of Leeds, is reported as saying that at the rebuilding of Chichester Cathedral choir one of the workmen, who was a professed Atheist, had his eye constantly on one man, the venerable Dean Hook, whom he saw in his study at work morning and night. He felt there must be something in the faith of the Dean, and the result was that the Atheist became a Christian. As usual, there are no names and dates in authentication of the story, which, however, may be as true as Gospel.

The Rev. Robert Law, Wesleyan minister and superintendent of the Retford Circuit, was found in the River Idle under circumstances which indicate suicide. He left a note intimating the spot where his body might be found.

A circular of the "Thirteenth Annual Conference for the Study of Prophetic Scripture," to be held in the Conference Hall, Clapham-road, from June 23 to 25, has found its way to us. It tells the old yarn of the belated Jesus who said, "Behold, I come quickly." Tickets of admission to the Conference are 2s. 6d. Refreshments will be provided in Room No. 3. "It is hoped that none will apply for tickets for the Lord's Supper who are not living in fellowship with the Lord, and in separation from the world." Ten reverend sky-pilots sign this precious circular.

God, we are told in the veracious book of Genesis, made Adam and Eve coats of skin, and he afterwards made sartorial arrangements for the clothing of his priests. He has, it appears, not altogether retired from the business. The Rev. W. Huntingdon, S.S.—*i.e.*, Sinner Saved—relates in his *Bank of Faith* that he prayed for a pair of new breeches, and at once received a pair exactly his fit.

We now read in the *Progressive Thinker* that the Rev. W. H. Moore, of the Methodist Church at Stevensville, Mich., says he prayed for a new suit of clothes, and next day received a nice Prince Albert suit from a friend in Dakota, which he believes was in answer to his prayer. The clothes must have been two to three days on the road when the petition was received at the throne of grace. The presumption is, God anticipated the prayer, and started the clothes on their journey in advance of it. It was kind of him to remember his servant so promptly.

The *P. T.* adds: "The Governor of North Carolina is reported to have said to the Governor of South Carolina: 'It is a good while between drinks.' There was a period of several thousand years between the replenishing of the widow's meal-tub and the supplying of this suit of clothes to a praying preacher, during which prayers have not brought food, nor clothes, nor arrested the raging elements. But it is a pleasure to know there is one person in the wide world who has gained a kindly hearing, for which reason the Doxology should be sung by every manly heart."

The *Christian Advocate* says Christianity is the only jubilant religion that the world has ever known. Well, in condemning the mass of mankind to everlasting torture, and proclaiming there is no salvation save in the name of

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Jesus, it has rare cause to be jubilant. As a matter of fact, Pagan nature worship and Japanese Shintoism are of a far more joyous character than Christianity.

The Baptist *Standard*, of Chicago, referring to the discovery by Mr. Flinders Petrie of an inscription of Merenptah, declaring "the people of Ysiraal is spoiled; it hath no seed," says disingenuously it "gives us little help in fixing the date of the exodus." As a matter of fact, as "Chilperic" showed in our issue for May 17, the inscription is quite incompatible with the date usually assigned for that event, and indicates that the Bible account of the people of Israel suppresses facts of the first importance.

In the *Expositor* for June, Professor W. M. Ramsay writes on "The Sixth Hour," and shows that the discrepancy between Mark and John, with regard to the time of the Crucifixion, cannot be got over by any pretence that different reckonings were employed. He says: "No modern scholar who investigates the subject apart from the passage in St. John finds any evidence to suggest such a view. All are clear that the hours were reckoned in one way alone."

If one witness to a murder said it took place at three o'clock, and another that it was at nine, we fancy the judge would discredit either one or both if the corpse could not be produced, but was alleged to have disappeared through the clouds. At any rate, he would never think of declaring that both of them were equally inspired by the Holy Ghost.

The successor of W. Quan Judge, Mrs. Kate Tingley, the President of the American Theosophical Society, Mr. Ernest T. Hargrove, and the secretary, Mr. Claude Falls Wright, with the bride whom he kept waiting eleven thousand years for him, are coming on a crusade to Europe to preach Theosophy to the backward old world, and enjoy a holiday. An interviewer from the New York *Sun* asked Mr. Hargrove: "If the mahatmas can influence whole nations by thinking one of these catapult thoughts, why not let them do the missionary work instead of your going all over Europe laboriously lecturing to people who don't understand you?" This was evidently regarded by the Theosophist as too frivolous a question to be answered. He looked at his watch, remembered an engagement, and dejectedly murmured: "You don't understand."

Here is a hint for Christians. Why should they spend worldly lucre on missions when they have God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, who will surely convert the world as soon as ever they desire? No: the Theosophists and the Christians alike are really influenced by secular considerations, though they are not frank enough to say so.

The Rev. William E. Hinshaw, convicted of the murder of his wife at Belleville, Indiana, and sentenced to penal servitude for life in the penitentiary, preaches to his fellow-prisoners every Sunday. He is posing as a model Christian. "And of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Mr. A. B. Richmond points out in the *Progressive Thinker* that John Wesley believed in ghosts, spirits, and witches, belief in which he declared to be bound up with the Bible. "The truth is," says Mr. Richmond, "that the Spiritualists of to-day are more entitled to the name of the followers of John Wesley than the Methodists"; and further: "If John Wesley lived to-day, he would be a fearless advocate of Spiritualism, and doubtless would occupy our platforms regardless of the sneers and enmity of the great Church which has purloined his reputation for sanctity, and his great name, to propagate a doctrine he denounced in all his writings and sermons."

Brother C. C. Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, who is farmer as well as editor, and has lost by his hogs through hog cholera, says that the miracle of the Gardarean swine is the only one in the Bible that he fully believes. "Any man," he says, "who has ever had anything to do with hogs knows that the average hog to this day has a devil in him as big as a bull." Thus even the heathen have to testify to the blessed Gospel.

Referring to the Talmagian claim, that Jesus Christ shall be sovereign of America, the editor of the *Blue Grass Blade* thus gives his opinion of the Christian idol: "I have but little admiration for any man who never said a word against slavery or the liquor traffic or tobacco (that he should have anticipated), and who never spoke a word, or wrote a line, in favor of education or marriage, but who said much to discourage industry and to encourage tramps, and to put a man who never said a word against royalty or in favor of republicanism to be the 'sovereign' of this country would be as great a farce and mockery as we can easily conceive."

Hilderic Friend, writing on "Curiosities of the Church" in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* for June, says (p. 426), speaking of the Swastika cross and Thor's hammer: "The sign of the hammer was employed in blessing, just as the cross was used by the Romanist—a point of special interest, as we shall often find the cross taking the place of the hammer."

There are said to be 335,000 non-kirk goers in Glasgow, where, in the guid auld times, attendance at the kirk on Sabbath was an indispensable item of respectability. "Stands Scotland where it did?"

Talmage has been preaching on "America for God." He means America for the men of God, with the Bible as the supreme law—the priests, as its interpreters, everything, and the people nothing. America for God means a return to Sunday laws and blasphemy prosecutions, a step backwards toward the Dark Ages.

A traveller recently said that the States were ruled by the petticoats and the parsons, and it almost looks like it. In New York a man cannot offer wine to a friend who dines with him on Sunday; and in Philadelphia, under a law over a hundred years old, they can even stop the sale of milk on Sunday.

Some time ago, when the Pilgrim Fathers' business was raging in the United States, a Yankee humorist said it was perhaps a good thing that the Pilgrim Fathers landed on Plymouth Rock, but some people thought it would have been a better thing if Plymouth Rock had landed on the Pilgrim Fathers.

We are reminded of this by the visit to England of a special committee representing the Congregational Churches of the United States. These gentlemen began their pleasant picnic at Plymouth, where the eating and drinking and sightseeing were varied by an harangue from the Rev. Samuel Vincent, who made immense capital out of the fact that a Plymouth preacher, the Rev. Abraham Cheare, was imprisoned on Drake's Island in the reign of Charles II. Of course he indulged in the usual Nonconformist gush over the "Mayflower," and its "heroic band of emigrants." One would think, if he did not know better, that all the millions of people in the United States had descended from that shipload of minority bigots who fled from the majority bigots of their native land. It is well to remind gentlemen like the Rev. Samuel Vincent that the Nonconformist settlers in America had not an elementary notion of religious freedom. Puritans persecuted Churchmen and Catholics when they had the chance in England, and over in America they were the bloodiest persecutors of all who differed from them. It is enough to make one's blood boil, even now, to read how they tortured and murdered the mild and inoffensive Quakers, sparing neither age nor sex in the frenzy of their intolerance.

The *Christian Life* declares that in a parochial magazine lately a lady put an abstruse case of conscience. "Is it lawful," she asked, "to kiss unbaptised babies?" A clergyman, with some sense of humor, replied that, for his own part, it was his practice to kiss all clean babies without further inquiries. Another, with a fitting sense of the solemnity of the issue, replied that it was a conscientious principle with him not to kiss even his own babies until they were baptised!

At Pelican House, where sporting gents do congregate, they have the electrophone connected both with the opera-house and certain fashionable churches. You can take your sermon and your soda and brandy at the same time sitting in an armchair, and if the platitudes of Canon Barker are unsatisfactory, you can put him down and switch on a little of the gush of the Rev. W. J. Dawson, or the rhodomontade of H. P. Hughes. After this the Pelicans say there is no use going to church, as you can always tell inquirers the text. All that now is wanted is direct communication with heaven to dispense with the sky-pilots.

The Rev. John Vallancey, vicar of Rosliston, Burton-on-Trent, is a little God Almighty in his own parish. Anyone who wishes to visit the grave of a relation or friend must first obtain the written permission of his reverence. Recently a permit to Arthur Trimmings to visit and attend to his father's grave was withdrawn in two days, it being discovered that Mr. Trimmings had voted for the wrong man.

One newspaper gravely tells us that Dr. Tanner has become a Roman Catholic. Another newspaper corrects the announcement as premature. Dr. Tanner has not yet joined the Romish Church, but arrangements are being made for his reception. What a dearth of copy there must be when English newspapers fill up blank space with such information? How can it matter a straw to any sane man what particular religion has the benefit of Dr. Tanner's patronage?

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

July 5 and 12, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 21, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W.; 28, (morning), North Brixton Gladstone Club; (evening), Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W. July 12 and 19, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

A. J. M.—Quite true, but the "selfishness" which prompts a man to stand foremost in maintaining a great cause is not without its advantages to the world.

LOUIS LEVINE (Charleston).—No London paper, so far as we are aware, gave a good report of Max Müller's lecture, in which he showed the priority of Buddhist maxims to the similar ones of Christianity. We hope the lecture will be published. More than once we have noticed fuller information of home events in American papers than in our own. Many thanks to you for the journals sent.

B. H.—The confession of Kate Fox-Kane, that she with her sisters produced the spirit raps by cracking the joints of their toes, was published in the *New York Herald*—we believe in September, 1889. The Seybert Commission, which was appointed by the will of a wealthy spiritist, in 1888 issued a report to the effect that the manifestations were fraudulent. Kate Fox and Slade were among the mediums examined.

J. SHARP.—Thanks. Imitation is the sincerest flattery. The world is wide. Let them do what they can.

R. H. TRENAMAN.—Very much pleased to hear from you. It is like a voice from the tomb. We were under the impression that Captain Trenaman, who so loyally supported Charles Bradlaugh at Plymouth, had gone to America and died there. It is pleasant to know you are still in the land of the living.

E. SMEDLEY.—We do not think that Nonconformist ministers have ever represented it as a "sin" to attend Church of England places of worship.

W. THORP.—It is really amusing to hear these few discontented Socialists within the N.S.S. calling on the name of Charles Bradlaugh, as though *he* would sympathise with their open or veiled desire to turn the N.S.S. into a mere wing of the Socialist movement. Why, it was Charles Bradlaugh who said (as we think, hastily) that the English Socialists included a few poets and a few idiots.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURE SCHEME.—Collected at Mr. Watts's lectures (under the scheme) at Northampton, Sunday, June 14, £1 3s. 3½d.

S. W.—Thanks. See paragraph.

FREE RELIGION.—We see no use in inserting your letter. It cannot possibly appeal to our readers. Religious arguments for a future life are wasted on those who have discarded religion. An argument on natural grounds is a different matter.

T. PARSONS.—Thanks for your account of the cabmen's missionary who went smelling for that apocryphal burnt Bible. Pleased to hear from so young a Freethinker.

T. S. SAUNDERS.—The slaughter of the Matabele has been referred to several times already in the *Freethinker*. Perhaps you are not aware of this.

TOILER (Glasgow).—Not without merit, but scarcely up to the mark for publication.

ANTI-GRUMBLER.—(1) It is not true that the vast majority of the N.S.S. members are Socialists, and the statement that no Socialist is allowed to be a member of the Executive is perfectly silly. Mr. William Heaford is a Socialist, and we could mention others. The N.S.S. does not ask whether its members are Socialists or Individualists; the common bond is the Society's principles and objects. (2) It is not our intention to notice the scurrilous attacks of persons who dare not disclose their identity—although *we* know it well enough; and we can have very little respect for the intelligence of those who allow themselves to be influenced by irresponsible malignity. Every toiling horse in this weather is pestered with flies. He may give them a flick with his tail now and then, but if he stops to settle them he will never get to the end of his journey.

G. DICKENSON.—Glad to hear the reorganised Battersea Branch means business.

LE DIABLE.—Thanks. To what fund is the £1 to be applied? See paragraph.

G. DIXON.—We have passed on your letter to Mr. Forder, who attends to such matters of business.

C. T. BROOKS.—Pleased to hear you derive so much satisfaction from reading the *Freethinker*. The W. G. Cox, of Tottenham, who advertises his conversion to Christianity, is not personally known to us. He represents himself as having been "chairman of the Tottenham Branch" of the N.S.S. We do not believe, however, that the Branch ever had a chairman. In the 1895 Almanack the name of W. G. Cox figures as corresponding member. If this is the person who now advertises his conversion, we should say, on reading his announcement, that the Secular party is well rid of him. He accuses himself of swearing, ill temper, lying, and drunkenness. We did not know our Society had such a member, and now that we do know it we are glad to find that he has transferred his allegiance to a more accommodating system.

G. KERSLEY.—An announcement will be made later on. At present the Museum is well attended on Sunday afternoons.

J. M. R. (Glasgow).—Thanks for cuttings.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Wellington Journal—Shrewsbury News—Daylight—Sunday Companion—Crescent—Freethought Ideal—Boston Investigator—Truthseeker—Isle of Man Times—Echo—Burnley Advertiser—Dominion Review—Two Worlds—New York Public Opinion—Progressive Thinker—New York World—Reynolds's Newspaper—Weekly Times and Echo—Glasgow Herald—Der Arme Teufel—De Dageraad—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—Blue Grass Blade.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

SUNDAY'S tropical weather was very unfavorable to indoor meetings, yet a capital audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "Thomas Hardy's Novels, and Why the Bishop of Wakefield Burns Them." A good number of strangers were present, and the hall was brightened by the presence of many ladies in summer costume. Mr. Foote's lecture was followed with profound attention, and frequently applauded. The chair was taken by Mr. William Heaford, who had spoken twice in the open air, and was more inclined to listen than to speak again.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures at the Athenæum Hall this evening (June 21), his subject being "Dangers Ahead." We understand that this is quite a new lecture, and we hope there will be a large attendance. Mr. Watts lectures there again on June 28, and Mr. C. Cohen on July 5.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured twice in Exeter-road Hall, Northampton, under Mr. Foote's scheme, to good and appreciative audiences. Friends were present from Wolverton and other surrounding districts. Mr. Watts received many pressing invitations to visit Northampton again as soon as possible.

"American Freethinkers," says the New York *Truthseeker*, "who have been disturbed by the reports regarding the Hall of Science in London, where the great Bradlaugh held forth, will recover their equanimity on reading the article from the *Freethinker* by G. W. Foote, which we reproduce. All previous information on the subject has been from religious sources, and, as usual when such is the case, the greater part of it is untrue."

Our New York contemporary also reproduces, with perfect good humor, under the heading of "Rebuked Again," our paragraphs on George Macdonald's "pitch into" George Meredith. It is really magnanimous on the part of George Macdonald to make our answer accessible in this way to the American public.

The adjourned Conference on the Education Bill, convened by the London Trades Council, took place on Friday evening, June 12, in the large hall of the Club and Institute Union. A considerable number of advanced political and social organisations in the metropolis were represented. Some of the resolutions carried were rather declarations of ultimate working-class desire than of immediate practical importance. Advanced opinion in London sadly wants organising, with a view to achieving something definite in the field of legislation, and this cannot be done without some sort of leadership and discipline. Anarchic and guerilla warfare never made much impression on a well-organised army like the forces of ecclesiasticism and privilege. However, some of the resolutions carried at the Conference are significant. Mr. Foote, on behalf of the National Secular Society, moved a strong, terse resolution in favor of secular education, which was seconded by Mr. Charles Watts; and this resolution was, after all, the only one that met with instantaneous and unanimous support. It was carried with great enthusiasm. Mr. Foote's observation, that the introduction of religion in the public schools was the real cause of all the

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obstacles to the thorough improvement of National Education in the interest of the masses, was very warmly applauded.

During the last School Board elections in London it was asserted by Mr. John Burns that the working classes of the metropolis were in favor of the "Compromise" of 1870. Mr. Foote offered to address a *bonâ fide* meeting of the working classes with Mr. John Burns, and undertook to carry a resolution against him in favor of secular education. That offer is now repeated, and there can be little doubt as to the issue.

At the recent General Election in South Australia the clericals raised the question of religious education. The question, "Are you in favor of the introduction of scriptural instruction in State schools during school hours?" received 10,025 replies in the affirmative, and 18,978 in the negative. For a capitation grant to denominational schools for secular subjects but 6,791 persons voted, while 23,606 were against it. 29,432 voted for the continuance of the present secular system, and 9,260 against. As the clericals brought all their influence to bear, the result is very satisfactory

M. Yves Guyot says in the *Westminster Review*: "To open museums on Sundays is such a matter of course in France that to find arguments for it would be like seeking reasons to justify the right of the citizen to labor on Monday."

In the same number of the *Westminster* Mr. E. G. Taylor has a careful article on "The Education Crisis," urging that the whole problem would be solved if only a purely secular education were given in schools, and if the religious side were strictly relegated to the churches and chapels.

The New York *Times* says that on Decoration Day (May 30) no soldier's tomb was more lavishly decorated than was the monument of Thomas Paine, that stands where his farm was at New Rochelle. An annual celebration is held there under the auspices of the Brooklyn Philosophical Society. Henry Bird, of Newark, N.J., presided. Among the speakers were Edwin C. Walker, of New York; Henry Rowley, President of the Brooklyn Philosophical Society; Captain George W. Loyd, of New Rochelle; Wilson Macdonald, of New York; D. T. Ames, of Elizabeth, N.J.; Mrs. Florence Johnson, of Milford, Mass.; and Dr. E. B. Foote, junr., of New York. Paine was lauded both as Freethinker and as patriot. Banners bearing quotations from his works hung in every available place, combined with garlands and flags. One banner, larger than the rest, bore the words, "Thomas Paine, Author of the American Revolution."

The skull, two teeth, and thigh-bone found by Dr. Dubois over a year ago in Java have now been certified, on the highest scientific authority, to be parts of either (*a*) the most ape-like of men, or (*b*) the most man-like of apes. In fact, this *Pithecanthropus erectus*, as its discoverer has named it, is perilously like our long-looked-for friend, the Missing Link. The creature is declared to be of the Pleiocene age, and to be of a form intermediate between man and the higher apes. The capacity of the skull is about two-thirds the average of that of man, while the thigh-bone is adapted for walking in an erect position—the latter being an important difference from the ordinary structure of the ape. We notice that it is stated—somewhat sadly—that "perhaps in some quarters the new-comer may be unwelcome." There always was an off-chance that the link would always continue to remain missing; but the *Pithecanthropus* certainly seems to connect very closely man and monkey.—*Westminster Gazette.*

An effort is being made by the Clerkenwell Branch of the Social Democratic Federation, in conjunction with the local Branch of the I. L. P., to secure the admission of the following advanced publications into the official list of the Clerkenwell Public Library:—*Clarion*, *Freethinker*, *Free Review*, *Justice*, and the *Labour Leader*. Secularists in the neighborhood should at once sign the necessary requisition forms, which are provided at the library. If sufficient signatures can be got, there is a good chance of success.

It is Race Sunday to-day (June 21) at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and crowds of people will assemble as usual on the Town Moor. The local N.S.S. Branch has secured the services of Mr. C. Cohen for the occasion. In the morning he will deliver an open-air lecture on the Quayside, and in the evening the Town Moor will be the scene of his missionary enterprise. We hope the local Freethinkers will rally in strong force around Mr. Cohen, whose platform should be thoroughly well supported.

The series of sketches by Uncle Benjamin of 'Types of Religionists," begun in this number with "The Jesuit," will be continued in succeeding numbers with papers on "The Spiritualist," "The Methodist," "The Baptist," "The Salvationist," and even descending to "The Christian-Evidence Man."

In the *Dominion Review* for June (67 Adelaide-street, Toronto) Mr. J. S. Ellis has a good paper on "Professor Romanes' Return to Christianity." This, he contends, was neither so full nor settled as made out by Canon Gore. Romanes seems always to have had an unsettled mind, anxious and struggling to believe in despite of his reason. Captain R. C. Adams has a plain and thoughtful paper on the money question, entitled "Swapping." He holds that since the real value of the metals has dropped, instead of remonetising silver, the thing to do is to demonetise gold, and have a paper currency based on secured values, and managed so as to secure confidence at home and abroad. Dr. Woods Hutchinson writes on "Life Eternal," and B. F. Underwood tells "How John Hooker Became a D.D." This was by purchasing a slave who held that title.

Mr. James Neate informs us that he has called a special members' meeting of the Bethnal Green Branch to consider the open-air work in Victoria Park. Mr. Neate complains that he is not adequately supported by the local Secularists; even the "passive" members are far *too* passive in this matter. We hope the burden will not be left to one to bear in future. Victoria Park is a most important open-air station, and must be maintained. Local friends willing to help—above all financially—should communicate with Mr. Neate, at 385, Bethnal Green-road.

It is proposed to raise some suitable memorial of the late N. B. Billany, of Hull. We have received a preliminary circular from Mr. G. T. Hall, and shall be glad to make a definite announcement if we are favored with further information.

Mr. Joseph McCabe, for twelve years a priest, has left the Catholic Church, and is now lecturing as a Rationalist for the Ethical Society.

The Camberwell friends wish to arrange a debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. A. J. Waldron. Mr. Foote has not much faith in the value of a debate with Mr. Waldron, but he has placed himself at the disposal of the Branch. Mr. Foote will probably debate during the summer at Plymouth, Cardiff, and Swansea. Another debate with Mr. W. T. Lee will also be arranged for in London early in September.

There are many Freethinkers in Battersea, but the local N.S.S. Branch has not been very prosperous. The management of it fell into bad hands; it dwindled gradually, and, in spite of pecuniary assistance from Mr. Foote, it finally expired. The person most responsible for this state of things used to favor the Executive from time to time with large schemes of reform. He is now lecturing the National Secular Society and its President under an assumed name. Still, he is out of the way. He no longer blocks the road of progress with his large-minded incapacity, and the Battersea Branch is now reorganising. Three very successful out-door meetings have been addressed by Mr. C. Cohen and Mr. Shaw. The latter lectures again this evening (June 21) on "Christian Evidences." Mr. G. Dickenson is the new secretary, and the committee meet every Thursday at 8.30 at Mr. Martin's, 17 Pearson-street, Clapham Junction.

Absurdity of a Book Revelation.

There are many objections to a book as the medium of communication from God to man, with very few advantages in such a method, while there are other known means which would admirably serve the purpose of such a communication; and still it is conceivable that God might have used other and still more efficient means, which have not occurred to us, chiefly because we have had but little occasion to give the matter thought. An initial objection to a book, as the means of such an expression, is the fact that it is our judgment and our experience that, if men should attempt to impose upon us in this matter, they would use, and do use, books as the means of such imposition, simply because it seems to be the easiest, or the only, way in which a man would be liable, fraudulently, to attempt to make other men believe that God had communicated them. An objection to a book, then, as a means of such expression, would be our continued liability to suspicion of its being a fraud, and not the will of God.—*Charles C. Moore, in "The Rational View."*

Abu Rafe says he will be witness for the fact, but who will be witness for Abu Rafe?—*Gibbon.*

It is better to get rid of an old delusion than to discover a new truth.—*Ludwig Boerne.*

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INGERSOLL ON THE CZAR.

BEFORE the news of the horrible immolation of victims at Moscow, Ingersoll had his say upon the coronation. His remarks, which his admirers in this country may like to see, were put by the *New York World* of May 31 in larger type than it uses for any of its own articles :—

"While reading the accounts of the coronation of the Czar, of the pageants, processions, and feasts, of the pomp and parade, of the barbaric splendor, of cloth of gold and glittering gems, I could not help thinking of the poor and melancholy peasants, of the toiling, half-fed millions, of the sad and ignorant multitudes who belong body and soul to this Czar.

"I thought of the backs that have been scarred by the knout, of the thousands in prisons for having dared to say a whispered word for freedom, of the great multitude who had been driven like cattle along the weary roads that lead to the hell of Siberia.

"The cannon at Moscow were not loud enough, nor the clang of the bells, nor the blare of the trumpets, to drown the groans of the captives.

"I thought of the fathers that had been torn from wives and children for the crime of speaking like men.

"And when the priests spoke of the Czar as the 'God-selected man,' the 'God-adorned man,' my blood grew warm.

"When I read of the coronation of the Czarina I thought of Siberia. I thought of girls working in the mines, hauling ore from the pits with chains about their waists; young girls, almost naked, at the mercy of brutal officials; young girls weeping and moaning their lives away because between their pure lips the word 'liberty' had burst into blossom.

"Yet law neglects, forgets them, and crowns the Czarina. The injustice, the agony and horror in this poor world are enough to make mankind insane.

"Ignorance and superstition crown impudence and tyranny. Millions of money squandered for the humiliation of man, to dishonor the people.

"Back of the coronation, back of all the ceremonies, back of all the hypocrisy, there is nothing but a lie.

"It is not true that God 'selected' this Czar to rule and rob a hundred millions of human beings.

"It is all an ignorant, barbaric, superstitious lie—a lie that pomp and pageant, and flaunting flags, and robed priests, and swinging censers cannot change to truth.

"Those who are not blinded by the glare and glitter at Moscow see millions of homes on which the shadows fall; see millions of weeping mothers, whose children have been stolen by the Czar; see thousands of villages without schools, millions of houses without books, millions and millions of men, women, and children in whose future there is no star, and whose only friend is death.

"The coronation is an insult to the nineteenth century.

"Long live the people of Russia!

"R. G. INGERSOLL."

JOY IN HEAVEN.

HEAVEN is populating at an unprecedented rate with murderers, if all whom priestly hands and prayers fit for that abode wing their way thither. Holmes, the multi-murderer, who went up on a rope from Philadelphia; Taylor, who murdered the Meeks family in Missouri; and Fields, the colored boy, who murdered Mrs. Randolph in this city, and was executed on the 15th inst., begging officers and witnesses to meet him in a better world, all had "made their peace with God," as did Nic Marzen, who was temporarily reprieved by executive interference. Of course, all these vile wretches, unworthy to live, mount to glory, and spend an eternity shouting praises to their Redeemer.

A very large majority of those who suffer on the gallows are Catholics. That Church seems to have a special affinity for cut-throats; but all the orthodox Churches contribute largely of their numbers to swell the heavenly host.

Mosheim, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (century 2, part 2, chap. 5, sec. 14), tells of the good Christian Father, Carpocraties, who flourished in the second century, that he "not only allowed his disciples full liberty to sin, but recommended to them a vicious course of life, as a matter both of obligation and necessity; asserting that eternal salvation was only attainable by those who had committed all sorts of crimes, and had daringly filled up the measure of iniquity."

Is not this position the logical outcome of Luke xv. 7, wherein Jesus told the Pharisees and scribes: "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance"?

—*Progressive Thinker.*

The more things are incredible, the more man imagines it meritorious to believe them.—*D'Holbach.*

TYPES OF RELIGIONISTS.

I.—THE JESUIT.

THE Jesuit, as I know him, in the person of the Rev. Aloysius Brand, S.J., is not one of those Macchiavellian beings of extraordinary intellect and no conscience, of whom we sometimes read as typical of the great secret society. Nor is he a hypocrite intent on serving his own political ends under the cloak of religion. On the contrary, he is a person of little intellect, though some culture, and of extraordinary conscience. He is deeply religious, and only cares for politics, or aught else, in so far as it may subserve the interests of what he holds to be religion. He prides himself not only on being a disciple of Ignatius Loyola, but a follower of Jesus Christ, and there is not an evasion, not an atrocity, ever perpetrated by his Church but he will defend it with the word or the works of his Divine Savior.

My Jesuit is a genuine believer. He could be an Inquisitor, but he could also be a martyr for his order and his Church. He enables us to understand both Torquemada and St. Simeon Stylites. He is an ascetic, dead to the things of the world, save so far as they may advance the interests of his order, and fully alive to them in this respect. He will consider the question of Home Rule, or of the divided skirt, equally with regard to its bearings on "the greater glory of God." He never thinks of questioning his faith, his Church, or his order, and he can find a deal to say for the *credo quia impossibile* of Tertullian.

The Jesuit is drilled to an expression of complacent composure. Nothing disturbs him. He is not of this world, or of this world only as a *point d'appui* to move towards another and a better one. But his gait is shuffling, and he cannot look you in the eyes. He never laughs, but has an inner snigger at the world's follies. He cannot walk straight. He cannot answer a direct question frankly. He knows the value of silence, and is not hasty in forming conclusions. He has sunk his individuality in his order, and feels great with its greatness. He believes himself a true disciple of Jesus, and one of the salt of the earth. He is part of the power behind the Pope, and he looks forward to the day when his order, which defied and survived Cromwell, Gustavus, Pascal, Pombal, Bismarck, and Bert, shall triumph and spread the name of Jesus and his company all over the world.

For this purpose he is ready, like St. Paul, to become all things to all men—and women, if haply he may save some, and does not think he will be judged as a sinner if the truth of God hath more abounded through his "Jesuitism." His personality is lost in that of his corporation. This is at once the secret of his weakness and of his strength. He is the logical religionist in that in everything he places God before man, and the interests of religion before everything else in the world. For what is there to be exchanged for the soul? If, then, you object to the unscrupulous laxity and versatility in the choice of means of his order, he is well assured that those means, whatever they are, are fully warranted to his superiors by the magnitude of the object they have in view. He has himself put aside, in accordance with the words of the captain of his salvation, father, mother, wife, child, houses, and lands, and taken up his cross to follow Jesus. Shall he, then, scruple if God commands equal, or even greater, sacrifices on the part of others?

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

Obituary.

MARK MILLS POMEROY, who died at Brooklyn on May 30, and whose body, in accordance with his will, has been cremated, was a well-known advanced American politician. He was editor of a paper entitled *Advanced Thought*, and which, although chiefly political, went in a Freethought direction, and merged with the *Twentieth Century*. He was a 33° Mason, and his cremation was attended with Masonic honors.

CHARLES ANDREW DENHOLME, aged forty-five, residing in Barnsley, has, for the last twelve months, been a member of our Branch. He was an unqualified medical practitioner, with an extensive practice. About 10 p.m., on the 10th inst., he was returning home from Hoyland, and, in passing a level-crossing near Barrow Colliery, he was knocked down by a passenger train and killed on the spot. This makes the fifth fatal accident that has taken place here. The "doctor," as everybody called him, will be much missed; for, as was said of Oliver Goldsmith, "he was more sinned against than sinning." People took advantage of his "disqualification," and, while accepting his skill, refused to pay, causing, of course, straightened circumstances. The Barnsley Branch respectfully murmurs: "Peace to his ashes."—W. DYSON.

Modern societies are advancing towards morality and, proportionately, receding from religion.—*Paul Bert.*

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JERKED TO JESUS.

A MURDEROUS-LOOKING scoundrel on the scaffold stands elate,
Within a prison's dark and gloomy walls.
The prison bell, with mournful tones, proclaims the hour of eight—
The bolt is drawn, and down the murd'rer falls.
But he has squared the "Savior," so with sure and certain hope
Of everlasting bliss—the villain dies.
Yes, though his body 'neath the scaffold's dangling on a rope,
His "soul" is jerked to Jesus in the skies!

Now, ever since the break of morn, a motley, morbid mob
Of women, men, and kids have waited there;
And, when the clock strikes eight, they know the hangman's done the job,
That the murderer is swinging in the air.
For then is hoisted up above a banner, colored black;
They scan the gloomy thing with eager eyes;
It tells them that the murd'rer from this earth has had the sack,
And is jerked to gentle Jesus in the skies!

For he believed the Bible, and their blessèd Savior said
Belief will wash black souls as white as snow;
And so they think he's "saved," whilst he, whose blood the murd'rer shed,
Is doomed, through unbelief, to burn below.
To think that they believe such wretched rot makes sceptics sick,
And fills all men of reason with surprise;
They wonder why the deuce the one is nabbed by ancient "Nick,"
And the other jerked to Jesus in the skies!

Although the victim thought the Holy Bible food for mirth,
And said its God was anything but good;
Yet those who knew him say a better man ne'er walked the earth,
That he helped his fellow creatures all he could.
The mists of sin and sorrow he endeavored to dispel,
And with the poor did always sympathise.
But, if the Christian creed is true, he's hurled headlong to hell,
And his slayer's jerked to Jesus in the skies!

ESS JAY BEE.

The Dunkards.

A singular exodus is that of the Dunkards to the new lands opened for settlement in the Red River Valley of North Dakota. Fifteen hundred of these people passed through Chicago recently in special trains of passenger and freight cars, carrying the household possessions and farm implements of all along with the owners. They will form quite twenty colonies in the new country, and 2,500 more Dunkarks at least are soon to follow them. They come from Dunkard communities in the Virginias, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana, the last-named State supplying the larger number. They have not been driven by stress of circumstances from their old homes, but are simply seeking more generous holdings of land. The Dunkards are a simple people, generally of German origin, who are much attached to their Church, and observe the ordinance of feet-washing, and adhere to the Quaker principles of peace, non-resistance, and simplicity of dress. A Chicago *Tribune* reporter thus describes the people as they appeared to him: "The people, as a whole, seemed lacking in knowledge of men and affairs of the world. Even the elders are not in touch with the events of the day outside their own Church. They seem to move in, and be satisfied with, their own colonies, their churches, and themselves. Large families are the rule, and the women have a pinched, hardened look early in life."

Bible Additions.

Everyone knows that the italicised words in the Bible do not represent the original "as God wrote it with his own fingers." Most people, however, think that the words so given are put to supplement the little deficiencies of the Holy Ghost as to sense or grammar. This is so usually, but occasionally man has popped in something which entirely perverts the divine purpose. A well-known case in point is where Paul is made to say, All scripture *is* given by inspiration, where he merely says All inspired scripture. So when the Psalmist, in the true spirit of religion, says, "I hate thoughts," the translator modifies it into "I hate *vain* thoughts" (Psalm cxix. 113); and when Paul says, "That ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written" (1 Cor. iv. 6), his universal proposition is made into a particular one. A striking instance of a supplement is found in the Song of Songs, which is not Solomon's (v. 4).

AN EXPURGATED EDITION.

IT appears the Christian sisters who want the Bible read in the schools have prepared an expurgated edition, wherein much objectionable inspired matter is dropped out of the holy record. Wonder if they omitted an account of the drink-offering of "the fourth part of a hin," mentioned in Numbers xxviii. 7, which was to be made day by day to the Lord? The command is unconditional: "The fourth part of a hin of strong wine" was to be poured unto the Lord for a drink-offering. A hin was a Hebrew measure of six quarts. One-fourth of this—three pints—was to be given the Lord each evening. With this fact in mind we turn to Jeremiah xiii. 13, 14, and read: "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness; and I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the Lord: I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them." If a man should make such awful threats, knowing he was drinking three pints of strong wine daily, a zealous effort would be made to induce him to sign a temperance pledge. The preachers will tell us this wine-bibbling and these terrible threats of producing drunkenness have a spiritual significance; but all these passages which represent God as a brutal character were reflections of the vileness of the writers, and it is simply shameful to impose them on the world as the "Word of God." Though emasculated in the interest of a higher civilisation, what remains will be inferior to modern thought.
—*Progressive Thinker.*

Guardian Angel's Narrow Escape.

Father O'Hagan made a pastoral call at the O'Rafferty mansion on Cherry Hill a few days ago. Mrs. O'Rafferty was in, and received the reverend gentleman very pleasantly. To his horror, he saw one of the little O'Raffertys playing at the head of the stairs with a razor in his hand.

"Merciful Moses!" ejaculated the startled priest, "if the little bye were to tumble down the stairs, he would cut himself in two entoirely. How can you be so careless, Missus O'Rafferty?"

"Indade, Father, I'm not careless; I rely on the child's guardian angel. What else has the bye's guardian angel to do but to take care of the bye, and catch him before he gets to the bottom of the stairs, be jabers, with the razor?"

"Ah, but, Missus O'Rafferty," responded Father O'Hagan, gravely, "ain't yez afraid of the guardian angel himself being cut with the razor in his efforts to save the child from falling? Who is there to purteck the guardian angel?"

"I niver thought of that," responded Mrs. O'Rafferty, and she removed the child from the razor and put it away in the bureau drawer.—*Texas Siftings.*

Chance.

One of the most common Christian objections brought against Freethinkers is that they believe in chance. A religious paper before us contains the following sentence: "What can be more foolish than to think that all the rare fabric of heaven and earth could have come by chance, when all the skill of art is not able to make an oyster?"

"What can be more foolish than to think that" anyone ever *did* say that "all this rare fabric of heaven and earth *could* have come by chance"? Materialists (whom, we suppose, are meant to be hit by the above fling) maintain that the universe is eternal, and that every effect has an adequate cause. The only "chance" results which we ever heard of are of the character of those mentioned in Genesis and Matthew, where we are given to understand that "in the beginning" the world was created out of nothing, and that a child having no natural father was born out of a virgin! Here are effects without adequate causes, or, we might perhaps say, operations of "chance," if that statement means anything.—*Boston Investigator.*

Worse Off than His Dog.

A newcomer from Norway was pulling weeds by the roadside in South Dacotah on Sunday, when a preacher drove up to him and said, "Good morning."

"How you do?" said the newcomer.

"Do you know, my friend," said the preacher, "that this is a day of rest and worship?"

"Oh, yes," said the newcomer; "Ay t'ink gud many time bot it; Ay was yust t'inking bot dat. Ay ged up in de morning, go in de feel, work lak hell. My dog he lay in de shade. Ay go und ged ma dinner. Ma dog he geed hees dinner doo. Ay go after dinner; work lak hell. My dog he lay in de shade. I go und ged ma supper. Ma dog he ged hees supper doo. One day ma dog he die; dat's all ov heem, and me got to go to hell yet."

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BOOK CHAT.

THE last issue of the brown paper-covered publications of the Humanitarian League is by Joseph Collinson, and is entitled *What it Costs to be Vaccinated*. Such grave doubts now exist as to whether the possible cost of vaccination in ruined health does not outweigh any tangible benefit that its compulsory enforcement against dissentients is nothing less than an iniquity. Mr. Ernest Bell asks in the preface: "Is there any reason against allowing those who like vaccination to be vaccinated, those who like re-vaccination to be carefully 'protected' annually, and those who do not like either to be left alone? If any little casualties should happen in either party, they would be pleased to bear them for the sake of their principles, and the opposing party would, in either case, find consolation in the thought that there were a few foolish people less in the world." The case against vaccination is very well presented by Mr. Collinson, and those who wish to see what a strong case it is will do well to spend twopence on this little pamphlet.

* * *

This is how the late John Addington Symonds, the historian of *The Renaissance in Italy* and *The Predecessors of Shakespeare*, describes his religious evolution in his *Biography* (ii. 132): "Having rejected dogmatic Christianity in all its forms—Broad Church, Anglicanism, the Gospel of Comte, Hegel's superb identification of human thought with essential Being, etc.—I came to fraternise with Goethe, Cleanthes, Whitman, Bruno, and Darwin."

* * *

The *Windsor Magazine* for June has an article on "Socialist Leaders of To-day," with portraits of H. M. Hyndman, G. B. Shaw, William Morris, Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Webb, and others.

* * *

The *Echo*, noticing "Ian Maclaren's" book on J. C., entitled *The Mind of the Master*, says: "As we should expect from a novelist turned theologian, these discourses, notwithstanding their charming and popular style, are rather a kind of fiction based on manipulated facts than a solid contribution to Christology." Our trouble is that we find the most solid Christology but a kind of fiction. The facts are wanting, and all writers alike have to manipulate the old fictions. The *Echo* reviewer thinks that "Ian Maclaren" "unawares is dealing a deadly blow at dogma." This merely means that he substitutes indefinite nonsense for definite ditto.

* * *

In the story, entitled *A.D. 2345*, by George E. Boxall which is now appearing in the *Weekly Times and Echo*, the blonde races are supposed to have got rid of Christianity—"the most artificial of all the great religions, and, consequently, the most opposed to the laws of nature." The only worship is that of the goddess Hygeia, explained as "strict attention to the laws of health."

* * *

There are two famous accounts of Coleridge—one in Carlyle's most saturnine vein of the old philosopher as he saw him at Highgate maundering on om-ject and sum-ject; the other by Wordsworth of his poet friend when "gamesome as a boy." Needless to say, we prefer the poetic Coleridge to the prosy one, and in the volume of selections by Stopford A. Brooke, entitled *The Golden Book of Coleridge*, we have the best of his poems, which in musical simplicity rival Shelley, and Wordsworth in meditation, while in quality of imagination they are unique. The book is a choice one, and will be valued by its possessors.

* * *

Mr. John Samson, who is a member of the N.S.S. Executive, has just published through Messrs. Simpkin a little shilling volume on *Inventions and their Commercial Development*, showing how to invent, what to invent, how to patent, and how to make money by inventions. We do not pretend to be able to judge the contents of this volume, but it appears to us to be carefully written as well as interesting, and we believe it will be valuable to the particular public for which it is intended. Advance copies have been submitted to some of the leading inventors, patent agents, engineers, and scientists of this country, some of whom have favored the author with flattering testimony as to its practical merit.

The Consolations of Christianity.

The Rev. Thomas Mirtle was not satisfied with the everlasting torture of the human body in hell-fire. He ends his discourses on the Beatitudes by the blissful suggestion that sinners may hereafter "experience a change which will render them more susceptible of pain and anguish than what can be now felt when the most delicate parts of the present texture are suffering from the most excruciating disorders or defects." What a lovely faith!

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. LEE ON THE SCIENTISTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Quite recently I have read the published debate between yourself and Mr. Lee at Derby. Mr. Lee makes reference to a number of leading scientists, which references are nearly all incorrect. Darwin was an Agnostic, which he avows twice in his published letters, while his arguments against design are full and unanswerable. Huxley tells us that he invented the term "Agnostic" as being suitable to his own case. I cannot say what Mr. Herbert Spencer would call himself, but Lewes speaks of him as "one of the latest and most important Agnostics." Professor Tyndall says: "The order and energy of the universe I hold to be inherent, and not imposed, from without, the expression of fixed law, and not of arbitrary will, exercised by what Carlyle would call an Almighty Clockmaker." Clerk Maxwell tells us that "the formation of the molecule is an event not belonging to that order of nature under which we live," and he goes on to argue that it belongs to an epoch anterior to the beginning of the present system of the universe. Helmholtz and Ferrier seem to me to conflict with Mr. Lee's version of what they teach. S.

PROFANE JOKES.

An English clergyman was preaching in a country church in Scotland. He had as his subject "The Prodigal Son." "And the Prodigal Son went away from his old father, and remained in a far country for years and years. But after years and years he came back to his poor father, and his poor old father said unto his servants, 'Bring forth the fatted calf which has been kept for my son these years and years.'" An old farmer in the audience could contain himself no longer. "Yer a leear: it wud hae bin a coo," he exclaimed.

Parson (to youngster fishing on Sunday)—"Boy, I'm surprised to find you here." Youngster (innocently)—"Do you know some other place where they bite better?"

Napoleon having entered one of the cities of Italy, the churchwardens recommended to him the reliques of their church. "Sire, will you deign to take our apostles under your protection?" "Your apostles! are they of wood?" "No, sire." "Of what are they, then?" "Of silver, sire." "Of solid silver?" replied Napoleon, quickly. "Yes, I will help them to fulfil their mission. It has been ordained that they should go throughout the world, and they shall." Having said so, the Emperor sent the twelve apostles to the mint at Paris.

Pedlar—"Can I sell you a nice motto to hang on the wall? Here's one: 'God Bless our Home'" Houser—"Man alive, my wife has skipped with the coachman." Pedlar—"Oh! if that's the case, buy this one: 'There are Others.'"

"Did you ever see anything like this?" said a young lady to her escort at a church bazaar. "Only once when I was out West on a train when it was robbed."

A Scotch divine announced one Sabbath that in the following week he should go his pastoral round in Strathbogie, "*embracing* all the servant girls in the district."

A ministerial convention composed of delegates from the various denominations of the Christian Church was held in New England, to determine, among other things, their attitude to Christian endeavor. A resident brother who always entertained the shepherds, having to be absent from home, left the following directions to his wife: "When the Presbyterian comes, show him to his room, and keep your eye on the servant girl. When the Baptist shows up, lock her in her room, and keep the key; but when the Methodist parson arrives, let the maid sleep at a neighbor's, lock your own door, and send for me."

My heart ferments not with the bigot's leaven;
All creeds I view with toleration thorough,
And have a horror of regarding heaven
As anybody's rotten borough.
—*Tom Hood*, "*Ode to Rae Wilson, Esq.*"

Side by side across the open Bible lie the sword and the fagot.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely, according to conscience, above all other liberties.—*Milton.*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

The Athenæum Hall (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "Dangers Ahead."

Bradlaugh Club and Institute (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.15, G. Standring will lecture.

Camberwell (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, E. Pack, "Christian Evidences."

East London Ethical Society (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, J. McCabe (ex-Franciscan), "Rationalism and Ethics."

Penton Hall (81 Pentonville-road—Humanitarian Society): 7, Joachim Kaspary, "Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*."

West London Ethical Society (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Prayer."

Open-Air Propaganda.

Camberwell (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Crumbling Creeds."

Camberwell Branch (Peckham Rye): 3.15, E. Pack, "The Confidence Trick."

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. Heaford will lecture.

Finsbury Park (near band-stand)—Finsbury Branch: 11.15, R. Rosetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?" 3.15, R. Rosetti, "The Russian Gods."

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 7, A lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, J. Fagan, "The Efficacy of Prayer"; 3.30, E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery?" Wednesday, at 8, a lecture.

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, C. James, "Science *v.* Creeds."

Kilburn (High-road, corner of Victoria-road): 7, J. Fagan, "Is there a God?"

Kingsland (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Where Angels Dwell."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, R. Forder, "The Devil."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Voltaire."

Regent's Park (near Gloucester Gate)—N.W. Branch: 3, a lecture.

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, J. Rowney will lecture; 3.15, A. B. Moss will lecture.

Wood Green (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. Heaford will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Barnsley (Black-a-moor Head Hotel): 6.30, W. Dyson, "The History of Theism."

Blackburn: 7, Fortnightly meeting at 18 St. Peter-street.

Liverpool (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Millar, "Woman under the Bible and Christianity."

Sheffield Secular Society (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Vocal and instrumental music, recitations, etc.

South Shields (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting.

Open-Air Propaganda.

Barnsley (May Day Green): 11, W. Dyson, "Charles Bradlaugh."

Chatham (corner of Lines): Stanley Jones—11.15, "Jesus Christ"; 7, "The Christian Religion."

Newcastle Branch (Town Moor): 7.30, C. Cohen will lecture. June 22 (Felling-square): 7, C. Cohen June 23 (Town Moor): 7, C. Cohen.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—June 21, Newcastle-on-Tyne. 25, Hyde Park. 28, m., Clerkenwell-green; a., Victoria Park; e., Deptford.

A. B. Moss, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—June 21, m. Camberwell; a., Victoria Park. 28, m. Wood Green; e. Edmonton. July 5, m., Westminster; a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn. 12, Northampton.

POSITIVISM.

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The Freethinker

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

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GOD'S WAYS.

SUPERNATURALISTS are usually strong in appeals to sentiment, and prefer abstract arguments to the common ground of hard facts. This is no wonder, for it is difficult to reconcile the facts with their theories. Every day the newspapers contain records of accidents and atrocities, the very existence of which seems incompatible with the divine government of all things as postulated by theologians. Optimists, who believe that everything is for the best, and who hold that all things work together for good to those who love God, usually shut their eyes to these aspects. Always evident to those who choose to look, such untoward events have crowded upon our attention within the last few weeks as should compel the most thoughtless to ask themselves if they are indeed in a world where all has been designed with a view to human good. The destruction of St. Louis and the horrors at the Czar's coronation have been followed by a fresh earthquake in Japan, destroying many towns and taking over ten thousand lives; and, since a small disaster near affects us more than a large one among a remote people, I must mention also the terrible shipwreck of the "Drummond Castle" off Ushant.

If you call the attention of the ordinary Christian to such disasters as these, he stands aghast, or, perhaps, utters some unsatisfying form of words such as Cowper's well-known verse:—

> God moves in a mysterious way
> His wonders to perform;
> He plants his footsteps on the sea,
> And rides upon the storm.

Or he may indulge in some amiable imbecility about its being for the best if we knew all, which is poor consolation to fallible beings who cannot attain omniscience; or may advert to the few "providentially saved" as an offset to the number providentially slaughtered. I can envy neither the head nor the heart of those who are so wrapt up in saving souls as to be oblivious of the misery and suffering of this life that we actually know; and, since the doctrine of God's providence often makes people feel hardly towards those upon whom his judgments are supposed to have fallen, and stands in the way of self-reliant endeavor to remedy evils, it is the duty of those who do not believe in this providence, but do earnestly believe in human endeavor and mutual human helpfulness, to frankly say so.

God does indeed move in a mysterious way, if the recent disasters are samples of his movements. His ways are by no means ways of pleasantness, and if his paths are peace it is the peace of death. It may be said the Japanese are heathens, to whom God gave a warning to become Christians by his previous earthquake. But this cannot be said of the people of St. Louis, of the crowds trampled to death at Moscow, or of the passengers of the Cape liner. God can hardly have had any special anger against these. Nor is it easy to see why he should send most diseases and the heaviest mortality to little children. But, then, we are told that God is Love, and these are but his mysterious ways of manifesting his fatherly care. "The Lord loveth whom he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." This but tempts me to say that I hope this God will not get enamored of those I care for, and I shall try to avoid receiving any marks of his affection. Do not ask me to worship or pretend to love a being who has such very mysterious ways of displaying his love. When he is out for a ride on a storm it is a caution to others to be out of his way. His ways should certainly not be our ways.

Some may say, "God does not send cyclones and earthquakes. They come in the ordinary course of nature." Does not, then, nature come from God? If we are to thank him for what we consider good, is he not responsible for that which we consider evil? Others may fall back upon the Devil; and, in truth, if what is advantageous to man is to be ascribed to a personal, good God, what is disastrous may as justly be ascribed to a devil, who shows himself not merely wickedly cruel and brutal, but utterly mad and senseless. But Christians may be reminded that it is their God who is said to have declared: "I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" (Proverbs i. 26); who says in the New Testament that he will come "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i. 8); and who is said to have made an eternal hell, and proclaimed "he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16).

No man—not the veriest Nero, or any monster of iniquity ever imagined—would do what is ascribed to God, nor, indeed, what are nature's everyday performances. For, from the human point of view, these disasters are purposeless. No man would suddenly gulf others in despair and death, wreaking most injury on the weak and helpless, on women and children. If a cyclone, sweeping through the States, were to leave untouched all the houses and churches, only rooting up the Paine Memorial Hall at Boston, and then passing to New York to blow down the *Truthseeker* office, and carry up Colonel Ingersoll and friend Putnam and land them on St. Helena; or if, when indulging in earthquakes and shipwrecks, God sank the synagogue wherein the infidels assembled in conference at Glasgow, or the boat on which they sailed up Loch Lomond, we might forgive Christians for finding something providential in the judgment. Since he does none of these things, we may be tempted to go on in our wicked ways, disregarding the threats of an eternal hell which he is said to have in store for us hereafter.

The recent disasters strikingly display the impotence of prayer. Thousands of prayers and cries of agony ascended to the throne of heaven, with no response. Is there a human being who would not have done his uttermost to save? Even when man takes life he does it with some discrimination. But what discrimination is shown in wholesale slaughter of men, women, and children? If God could select in Bible times, why not now? If he could destroy blasphemers in the days of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, why not to-day? If he could multiply one widow's cruse, why should any starve? If he answered the prayers of the prophets for rain, why should not people have the weather they desire now? It may be said it is lack of faith, but this means really increase of knowledge, that the meteorological conditions cannot be altered by human will.

Some Christians say that calamities are sent as "warnings." God kills so many people to warn others to repent of their sins. Would any man or woman act in this way? A lesson may indeed be derived from such events, and it is for this reason that we allude to them. That lesson is that it does not do to trust to any heavenly eye to pity, or to any celestial arm to save. Only in human thought and human endeavor is there salvation from the ills which afflict humanity. Shipwrecks, diseases, cyclones, and earthquakes are natural. Prayers and curses are alike

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vain. But human study, science, forethought, and sympathy are of some avail. The natural state of things, the condition of mankind and of our surroundings as left by God, is simply horrible. It is human thought and human care that alone make life worth living, and separate civilisation from barbarism. The rough Breton fisher folk who aided the living and tended the dead washed up from the wreck of the ocean liner are more worthy of our reverence and regard than any fabled God.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE ORIGIN AND NATURE OF SECULARISM.

CHAPTER XIX.

APART FROM CHRISTIANISM.

"What is written by Moses can only be read by God."—*Bihar Proverb.*

SECULARISM differs from Christianism in so far as it accepts only the teachings which pertain to man, and which are consonant with reason and experience.

Parts of the Bible have moral splendor in them, but no Christian will allow anyone to take the parts he deems true, and reject as untrue those he deems false. He who ventured to be thus eclectic would be defamed as Paine was. Thus Christians compel those who would stand by reason to stand apart from them.

To accept a part, and put that forward as the whole—to pretend or even to assume it to be the whole—is dishonest. To retain a portion, and reject what you leave, and not say so, is deceiving. To contend that what you accept as the spirit of Christianity is in accordance with all that contradicts it is to spend your days in harmonising opposite statements—a pursuit demoralising to the understanding. The Secularist has, therefore, to choose between dishonesty, the deception of others and deception of himself, or ethical principles independent of Christianity—and this is what he does :—

The Bible being a bundle of Hebrew tracts on tribal life and tribal spite, its assumed infallibility is a burden, contradicting and misleading to all who accept it as a divine handbook of duty.

In papers issued by religious societies upon the Bible it is declared to be "so complete a system that nothing can be added to it, or taken from it," and that "it contains everything needful to be known or done." This is so false that no one, perceiving it, could be honest and not protest against it in the interest of others. Recently the Bishop of Worcester said : "It was of no use resisting the Higher Criticism. God had not been pleased to give us what might be called a perfect Bible."* Then it is prudence to seek a more trustworthy guide.

If money were bequeathed to maintain the eclectic criticism of the Scripture, it would be confiscated by Christian law. So to stand apart is indispensable self-defence. Individual Christians, as I well know, devote themselves with a noble earnestness to the service of man, as they understand his interests ; but so long as Christianity retains the power of fraud, and uses it, Christianism as a system, or as a cause, remains outside the pale of respect. Prayer, in which the oppressed and poor are taught to trust, is of no avail for protection or food, and the poor ought to know it. The Bishop of Manchester declared, in my hearing, that the Lord's Prayer will not bring us "daily bread," but that "it is an exercise of faith to ask for what we shall not receive." But if prayer will not bring "daily bread," it is a dangerous deception to keep up the belief that it will. The eyes of forethought are closed by trust in such aid, thrift is an affront to the generosity of heaven, and labor is foolishness. But, alas! aid does not come by supplication. The prayer-maker dies in mendicancy. It is not reverence to pour into the ears of God praise for protection never accorded. Dean Stanley, admirable as a man as well as a saint, was killed in the Deanery, Westminster, by a bad drain, in spite of all his Collects. Dean Farrar has been driven from St. Margaret's Rectory, in Dean's Yard, by another drain, which poisons in spite of the Thirty-nine Articles ; and Canon Eyton refuses to take up his residence until the sanitary engineers have overhauled† the place, which, notwithstanding the invocations of the Church, Providence does not see to. To keep silence on the non-intervention of Providence would be to connive at the fate of those who come to destruction by such dependence.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor! While thy head is bowed,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave!

True respect would treat God as though at the least he is a gentleman. Christianity does not do this. No gentleman would accept thanks for benefits he had not conferred, nor would he exact thanks daily and hourly for gifts he had really made, nor have the vanity to covet perpetual thanksgivings. He who would respect God, or respect himself, must seek a faith apart from such Christianity.

A divine, who excelled in good sense, said : "Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High. Our soundest knowledge is, to know that we know him not ; *and our safest eloquence concerning Him is our silence ;* therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few."‡

Mrs. Barbauld may have borrowed from Richard Hooker her fine line :—

Silence is our least injurious praise.‡

An earnest Christian, not a religious man (for all Christians are not religious), assuming the professional familiarity with the mind of God, said to me : "Should the Lord call you to-day, are you prepared to meet Him?" I answered : Certainly ; for the service of man in some form is seldom absent from my thoughts, and must be consonant with his will. Were I to pray, I should pray God to spare me from the presumption of expecting to meet him, and from the vanity and conceit of thinking that the God of the universe will take an opportunity of meeting me.

Who can have moral longing for a religion which represents God as hanging over York Castle to receive the soul of Dove, the debauchee, who slowly poisoned his wife, and whose final spiritual progress was posted day by day on the Castle gates until the hour of the hangman came? Dove's confession was as appalling as instructive. It ran thus :—

I know that the Eternal One,
Upon his throne divine,
Gorged with the blood of his own Son,
No longer thirsts for mine.

Many a man has passed his life
In doing nought but good,
Who has not half the confidence I have
In Jesus Christ, his blood.§

By quoting these lines, which Burns might have written, the writer is sorry to portray, in their naked form, principles which so many cherish. But the anatomy of creeds can no more be explained, with the garments of tradition and sentiment upon them, than a surgeon can demonstrate the structure of the body with the clothes on. Divine perdition is an ethical impossibility.

Christianism is too often but a sour influence on life. It tolerates nature, but does not enjoy it. Instead of giving men two Sundays, as it might—one for recreation and one for contemplation—it converts the only day of the poor into a penal infliction. It is always more or less against art, parks, clubs, sanitation, equity to labor, freedom, and many other things. If any Christians eventually accept these material ideas, they mostly dislike them. Art takes attention from the gospel. In parks many delight to walk, when they might be at chapel or church. Clubs teach men toleration, and toleration is thought to beget indifference. Sanitation is a form of blasphemy. Every Christian sings :—

Diseases are thy servants, Lord ;
They come at Thy command.

But sanitation assassinates these "servants of the Lord." In every hospital they are tried, condemned, and executed as the enemies of mankind. If Labor had justice, it would

* *Midland Evening News*, 1893.

* See *Westminster Gazette* London Letter, November 19, 1895.

† Ecclesiastical Polity, book i., § 2.

‡ Charles Lamb was of this opinion when he remarked : "Had I to say grace, I would rather say it over a good book than over a mutton chop." Christians say grace over an indigestible meal. But perhaps they are right, since they need supernatural aid to assimilate it.

§ From a volume of verse privately circulated in Liverpool at the time, by W. H. Rathbone.

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be independent, and no longer hopeless, as the poor always are. Freedom renders men defiant of subjection, which all priests are prone to exercise. Secularism has none of this distrust and fear. It elects to be on the side of human progress, and takes that side, withstand it who may. Thus those who care for the improvement of mankind must act on principles dissociated from doctrines repellent to humanity and deterrent of ameliorative enterprise.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE.

(To be continued.)

THE VOICE OF THE MAJORITY.

IN our opinion, too much importance is attached, by the general masses, to the Voice—that is to say, the decision—of the majority. It is often assumed that what almost "everybody believes" must be right, whereas in many cases the very opposite is the fact, as the progress of human thought amply testifies. Much that at one period was regarded by the majority as being true is now acknowledged by the same Voice to be entirely erroneous. Take, for instance, the belief in witchcraft, and the opinion that the earth was flat. Not only did the general multitude accept these errors as realities, but men of profound learning endorsed them, and frequently the few who dissented from the popular view were persecuted, and some put to death. At the present day, however, with the exception of certain ignorant and fanatical enthusiasts, these exploded errors have no defenders. Thus, with the increase of knowledge and the spread of scientific investigation, the faith of the majority has had to yield to the good sense of the minority. Now, as history repeats itself, it is more than probable that what has occurred in reference to false ideas of the past will happen to the false beliefs which exist at the present time.

Granted that the voice of the majority is the acknowledged method of deciding the validity, or otherwise, of the many varied theories which are now set forth, it does not necessarily follow that the conclusions arrived at by this test are accurate. In fact, the history of the last quarter of a century affords many striking instances to the contrary. In the realms of politics, during the past two decades, the decisions of the majority have been of a most contradictory character. The present parliamentary majority give a very different verdict as to political duties to that arrived at by the previous Liberal Government, and there are thousands of electors who dispute the soundness of the judgment given in both instances. It is the same in regard to religious questions, for we find that the majority in one country decide in favor of Protestantism, while the majority in another country pronounce in favor of Roman Catholicism; but the decision in either case does not prove the truth of the claims advanced. It is never argued by Protestants that all Christians should subscribe to the Roman Catholic faith, although its exponents allege that all true believers ought to bow to its authority. Christians in general will not admit that Buddhism is true, because, as Rhys Davids says, "the living Buddhists far outnumber the followers of the Roman Church, the Greek Church, and all other Christian Churches put together." There was a time when the members of the Church of England were in a majority of the Protestant worshippers; then they would not permit Dissenters to peacefully advocate their views, because they were not in harmony with the doctrines and methods of the "National Church." If it is contended that what the majority do is right, then we are quite justified in absenting ourselves from church, inasmuch as the majority of the people, we believe, belong to no Church at all.

If we are charged with presumption in disputing the conclusions of the whole Christian world, we reply that, in this particular, we do no more than the members of the various Christian sects are constantly doing, in reference to the claim of each sect, that it has *the* truth upon its side. If it be true that any one particular denomination is the sole depository of "divine truth," then logically it must follow that all other denominations, where opposite teachings are enjoined, must be in the wrong. It would not be deemed reasonable upon our part if we urged that the members of the Christian sects, which are in the minority, should join the congregations which comprise a majority, simply on account of the superiority in numbers of the latter. We repeat that the most degraded beliefs in the worst forms of superstition have, in all ages, been those of the majority, while it has been the few only who have been brave and independent enough to adhere to what to them appeared to be true, irrespective of fashion and the opinions of others. It is manifest to many minds of the present day that the deification of fables, in which the majority delight, can in no way make fiction truth. The most favorable indication we could have of intellectual discrimination and mental honesty would be that our public teachers would cease to inculcate the notion that opinions upon religious and social questions should be based upon the necessarily imperfect conclusions of an ill-informed past; and, moreover, when such teachers shall no longer endeavor to enforce beliefs, as being true and useful, which they themselves have abandoned. Unfortunately, in theological circles it has been the habit hitherto of the majority to seek to fetter modern thought by ancient limitations; the intellect, however, of the nineteenth century has proclaimed that such a course is false and degrading.

In England we no longer establish religions by law, nor among intelligent thinkers is the truth of any faith estimated by the number of its adherents. True, nonconformity is recognised, in theory at least, as being one of the rights of citizenship, and therefore we urge that the extension of the principle of Freethought to its utmost limits is thoroughly justifiable. If there be any real value in the demand for "Christian liberty," any well-thought-out and sincere conviction, whatever its nature may be, is entitled to fair play and no favor. The whole question of the rule of the majority in this country, in matters of religious opinion, is settled; and the Secularist's claim to dissent from all religious teachings of an alleged supernatural kind is just as reasonable and equitable, although, through the bigotry of the Church, that claim is *not* settled. As Freethinkers, we owe no one an apology for maintaining the right to hold and to give expression to what we believe to be true. The interference with personal opinions has never been legitimate, whether it came from kings, priests, laymen, or governments. It was the exercise of a power which was the outgrowth of an age of oppression and arrogance, and was a gross violation of all progressive requirements. Still, it is a lamentable truth that ignorance of the laws of thought, and of individual rights, exists extensively to-day, which often renders difficult the performance of Freethought duties. The ready admission that all opinions deserve equal freedom is not yet so general as it ought to be.

Majorities, however useful they may prove under certain circumstances, do not necessarily afford any criterion of truth and falsehood, of right and of wrong. Numbers cannot affect the accuracy of science, any more than it can the correctness of our commonly-adopted system of arithmetic. Intelligent men would not think of putting the problems of Euclid to the vote, nor would they attempt to decide the truths of astronomy by a show of hands. It may be that a majority of persons, in arriving at conclusions upon given subjects, would be influenced by the opinions of scientists; but that would in no way affect the truth of what these scientists taught. Moreover, there is a vast difference between the man of science and the ordinary theologian. The former does not ask us to believe except when his statements have been verified by observation or experiment, or by both; neither does he ask us to regard the earth as being stationary because the majority once thought that the sun moved around it. Probably the majority of the world's inhabitants still adhere to theological teachings for which science can find no reasonable justification.

But it may be asked, Are the opinions of an insignificant minority to be allowed the same opportunity as those of a large majority? We answer undoubtedly, Yes; for all opinions resulting from honest investigation and calm reasoning deserve the same freedom of expression, whether they be those of one man or of a million men. No doubt the individual who holds views that are not sanctioned by mankind in general may be expected to support his conclusions by very strong arguments; but that does not touch his right either to entertain or to express what he deems to be right. That the affairs of life are conducted upon the laws of probability, rather than on demonstration, is now the opinion of the majority of thinking men and women. Hence we claim the right, whether in agreement

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with the many or the few, to accept those conclusions which appear to us to be of the highest thought, and to be based on the most probable certainties.

The following story, told in the New Testament, will illustrate our eclectic method of inquiry: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast in the sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away" (Matthew xiii). In casting our net into the turbulent sea of theological opinions we adopt the method of the gospel fisherman—namely, we gather the good, and we cast away the bad. Whatever consequences may result from adopting this cause, we have the consolation of knowing that in following it we are true to ourselves, and just to those who differ from us, inasmuch as we willingly grant to them the same freedom as we claim. We thoroughly admire those who

Dare to be in the right
With two or three.

CHARLES WATTS.

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION.

THE trouble is that each Christian sect believes that it is doing the will of God, consequently those who embrace different ideas are living in violation of some of God's commands; and, as God will punish such violations, the Christian insanely believes that he can do God a great favor by taking a hand in the punishment himself. Once a Christian believes that a man is pursuing a course which God will punish, and he is seized with the idea that God will regard him with favor if he administers the punishment in God's place. This seems to be the philosophy of all religious persecutions. The fact that the peaceable Quakers were whipped, banished, mutilated, hanged, and persecuted in every imaginable way which Christian ingenuity could invent goes far to show that there is an inherent tendency in the Christian religion to fly the black flag of persecution, and to give no quarter to any sentiment, creed, or sect which differs from it.

From the very nature of the case, those whose minds have been dwarfed by the Christian religion must be vindictive and cruel in their methods of opposition to those who differ from them.

Every sincere Christian must be intolerant—his sensibilities have been dulled, he has been put through the hardening process, and is dangerously insane.

In the first place, he believes in a being above the skies, who has no existence; that if he pleases this being he will be rewarded with eternal bliss, and if he displeases him he will receive everlasting punishment.

And, further, that this being has caused a book to be written from which he can learn the will of this great heavenly king, whom he fears and dreads; and that this great autocrat of the skies takes cognisance not only of his actions, but of his very thoughts. In this book he reads of cruel wars which he believes God commanded to be waged for no other reason but disobeying his will.

He believes that those who waged these inhuman wars were blessed of God, because they were doing his will by punishing his enemies. Hence, when the Christian believes that a man, or class of men, is acting contrary to what he believes to be the will of God, he feels called upon to administer such punishment upon him or them as he imagines his God would inflict, without any regard to justice or human rights. The Christian regards those who waged the wars in Bible times as instruments in the hands of God to carry out his will and punish his enemies. And he thinks that he can gain heavenly favor by doing the same. In a later edition of God's book he reads that an agent was sent down to transact business on earth for the principal who has his headquarters in heaven, and that this general agent deputised certain individuals to transact his business by proxy. And when they found a people who did not receive them and accept their doctrine, they were commanded to shake the dust from their feet and pronounce a curse upon that people. And the general agent commanded those who would not accept him as teacher to be brought before him and slain before his face. And he further said that if a man would not hate his wife and father and mother (I quote from memory), and raise "I" with the whole household, he could not be his disciple.

When a man is taught from youth that his conduct must be governed by such teaching, he will manifest all the instincts of a tyrant to those who differ from him. He cannot exercise his judgment; he cannot respect the rights of others, and is ready to engage in a crusade against those who entertain different views. He can never understand or appreciate that the principles of true democracy will prove a dangerous element in a free government, and the willing tool of ecclesiastics.

Christians are so much given to domineering and bullying that the different sects frequently worry and afflict each when they cannot unite upon a common foe. They proclaim peace on earth and goodwill to men; but this is only for those that think as they do. It is banishment and imprisonment, war and flame, hell and halters, for all who differ.

If proof of the truth of these statements were required, it is furnished by the fact that the Quakers were persecuted. They are a peculiar people. They do not believe in contention, litigation, or war. They are the only Christian sect I know of who never have persecuted. They are plain, peaceable, quiet, and unassuming; honest in deal and modest in behavior. Quaker measure is said to be more than just—it is generous. And if there is a people on earth with whom Christians could live in peace, the Quakers are such a people. Though they are advocates of peace and never persecute, they have been persecuted by other Christian sects in the most brutal manner.

In England their dwellings and churches were torn down or burnt, and other property confiscated or destroyed to the amount of over a million pounds sterling. At their meetings they were shot down and beaten to death with the butt-end of the soldiers' muskets. Many were confined for years in damp and loathsome dungeons with just stale food enough to keep them alive. The lowest and most brutal were never called to account, but often rewarded for insulting and beating and otherwise maltreating them.

In New Hampshire, October 27, 1659, two of the Quakers whom Thomas Macy had harbored were led to execution. They were attended by "two hundred armed footmen, besides many horsemen." When near the gallows a coarse, brutal priest tauntingly cried out: "Should such jacks as you come before authority with hats on?" The Quakers made no reply. The prisoners then ascended the ladder and embraced each other, and one of them said to the spectators: "I die not as an evil-doer." Again the priest cried out: "Hold thy tongue—be silent; thou wilt die with a lie in thy mouth." Their names were Robinson and Stephenson.

William Ledra was another who was executed for the crime of being a Quaker. He made a speech which is said to have wrought a great "tenderness" among the people. One Allen, an officious priest, whose business it was to render the doomed man odious, cried out: "I would not have you think it strange to see a man so willing to die; he is hardened in his sins." He commanded the hangman to make haste with Ledra and finish his days. But the friends gathered around the body and bathed it in their tears. And, after the hangman had stripped the body of its clothing, they laid it quietly away in a coffin.

Oh, the rarity of Christian charity! Now, in the name of all that is human, I ask what crimes these unoffending Quakers were guilty of? Will the time ever come when the freedom of thought will not be strangled by Christian cruelty? In the name of an imaginary being, whose existence never has been, and never can be, proved, these crimes have been committed. Should not every lover of human rights duly consider the danger of putting power into the hands of men who seek the blood of those who differ from them?

JOHN PECK.

—*Truthseeker.*

(*To be concluded.*)

The Three Professions.

The doctors live by our diseases. These are real, though often avoidable, and better cured by being left to nature than to the druggist's pharmacopeia. The lawyers live by our quarrels. These, too, are real, but usually avoidable, and better remedied by straightforwardness and arbitration than by law. The parsons live by our sins. These are usually imaginary, and, when real, are beyond the efficacy of the parson's remedies, which are all of a post-mortem character.—*Celsus.*

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WITCHCRAFT IN AMERICA.

THE belief in witchcraft bore no less terrible fruit on the free soil of Protestant America than in Europe. Death sentences for witchcraft now and then occurred after the foundation of the New England colonies; but the last and most terrible outbreak took place in Salem, Massachusetts, as recorded in Upham's *History of Salem Witchcraft*, and in Drake's *Witchcraft Delusion in New England*. Under the baneful influence of the religious teachings of Increase Mather and his son, Cotton Mather, two Boston clergymen, the Rev. Samuel Parris, minister of the church in Salem, began to have a case of witchcraft investigated, which, as says President Andrew Dickson White, "would have been the richest of farces had they not led to events so tragical." The possessed behaved like maniacs in court, and charged a poor old Indian woman with having bewitched them Her husband, an ignorant fool, was induced to testify against her. This easy success emboldened the believers in witchcraft, among whom the Putnam family played a prominent part. They began to prosecute some of the foremost people of New England; several men and women were executed, many fled for their lives, and a reign of terror ensued. Any person once suspected and accused was doomed. As an instance we quote the case of Mr. Burroughs, a clergyman who, on account of petty parish quarrels with the Putnam family, had been dismissed from the ministry. President White says:—

> "Mr. Burroughs had led a blameless life, the only thing ever charged against him by the Putnams being that he insisted strenuously that his wife should not go about the parish talking of her own family matters. He was charged with afflicting the children, convicted, and executed. At the last moment he repeated the Lord's Prayer solemnly and fully, which it was supposed no sorcerer could do; and this, together with his straightforward Christian utterances at the execution, shook the faith of many in the reality of diabolical possession."

President White continues:—

> "Ere long it was known that one of the girls had acknowledged that she had belied some persons who had been executed, and especially Mr. Burroughs, and that she had begged forgiveness; but this for a time availed nothing. Persons who would not confess were tied up and put to a sort of torture which was effective in securing new revelations.
>
> "In the case of Giles Cory the horrors of the persecution culminated. Seeing that his doom was certain, and wishing to preserve his family from attainder and their property from confiscation, he refused to plead. He was therefore pressed to death, and, when in his last agonies his tongue was pressed out of his mouth, the sheriff with his walking-stick thrust it back again.

Increase and Cotton Mather were the last defenders of diabolical possession and witchcraft on American soil; the latter saw in his later years a new era dawning upon his country. Vigorously and successfully censured by Robert Calef, a courageous Boston merchant, he bemoaned the decay of the religious spirit among the growing generation, and even to his dying hour regarded the mere unbelief in witchcraft as an attack upon the glory of the Lord.

—*The Open Court.*

THE EARTHQUAKE AT LISBON.

THE destruction of St. Louis by a tornado, and the just recent destructive earthquake in Japan, have recalled the still more alarming earthquake of Lisbon on November 1, 1755, which was attended by circumstances well calculated to strike the religious mind, and which did in Voltaire shatter all seeds of optimism. The first shock of the earthquake came without any warning. It shook the city to its foundations. The houses waved to and fro with such violence that the upper stories immediately fell, and crushed their occupants and the passengers in the streets to death. The motion of the earth was so vehement that it was impossible to stand upright, and the effects of so unexpected and frightful a concussion were rendered doubly terrible by a thick gloom which overspread the light of day. Thousands rushed into the street to escape being buried in the ruins of their dwellings, and made their way over heaps of rubbish to the great square in front of St. Paul's Church, to be out of the reach of falling stones.

The great church of St. Paul's itself had fallen, and involved an immense multitude in destruction. The 1st of November was the festival of All Saints, and from an early hour the churches had been crowded with devotees and ecclesiastics. Most of these, in the act of religious worship, were at once killed or miserably mangled. Such of their congregations as escaped, including many of the dignitaries of the Church in their episcopal and purple garments, rushed to the side of the river as to a place of comparative safety. Priests in their sacerdotal vestments, ladies half-dressed, and an immense concourse of people of all ranks and ages, were here assembled, supplicating Heaven upon their knees, and with agonising shouts repeating their *Miseracordia meu Dios*. In the midst of their anguish and their devotions the second great shock came on, nearly as violent as the first, completing the work of destruction. The general consternation was at its height, and the shrieks and cries of Miseracordia resounded from one end of the town to the other. The church on the top of St. Catherine's Hill, after rocking to and fro, fell with a tremendous crash, and killed great numbers who had sought protection on that eminence. But the most terrible consequence of the second shock fell on those at the water-side, where the river, suddenly rising, swept the multitude into its vortex. The horror of the scene was enhanced by the fires which burst out in many parts of the city. As is usual in Catholic countries on days of high festival, every altar in every church and chapel was illuminated with wax-tapers and lamps; and these, falling with the curtains and timber-work during the convulsion, soon gave a beginning to the fire. The neighboring buildings caught the flames already kindled by kitchen and other fires in private dwellings, and spread them throughout the city. The destruction of life and property during the conflagration was almost equal to that caused by the earthquake, since it was six days before it was finally arrested and extinguished. The total loss of life in these several disasters is estimated variously at from 30,000 to 60,000 persons. In all the disaster religion, instead of being an aid, was an ever-present hindrance. Fanatics and pretended prophets rushed about the city and the neighboring parts, crying out that the end of all things had arrived, and that the earth itself was to be enveloped in destruction. It required a courageous mind to grapple with all these difficulties, since the fanaticism of a multitude, depressed by misfortune, is easily excited, and is especially to be feared. The Freethinking Marquis Pombal, who suppressed the Jesuits, caused many of these false prophets to be seized and led to exemplary punishment, soothing the superstitious horror of the people by declaring that they were robbers in disguise, who were anxious only to perpetuate the public disorder.

SWEET JESUS.

> How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
> In a believer's ear.

MY uncle, Benjamin, in his sketch of the Jesuit (*Freethinker*, p. 395), reminds us that the Society of Jesus derives not only its name, but its authority, from the Christian idol. This is worth remembering. It was he who said that he had come not to bring peace, but a sword—to set a man against his own family. It was he who declared, "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26). It was he who, while saying "he that believeth not shall be damned," yet Jesuitically charged those on whom he worked miracles to tell no man (Matthew viii. 4). It was he who Jesuitically dealt in parables "that seeing they may see and not perceive, and hearing they may hear and not understand." It was he who Jesuitically pretended to his brethren that he was not going up to the feast, when he followed them, "as it were in secret" (John vii. 2-10). It was he who requisitioned a donkey and a colt on the ground that the Lord had need of them (Matthew xxi. 5). It was he who, knowing Judas would betray him, yet accosted him—"Friend, wherefore art thou come?" (Matthew xxvi. 46-50), and who pretended to be another person to his disciples on the road to Emmaus, and "made as though he would have gone further" (Luke xxiv.). It was he who, when asked the plain question, Who art thou? Jesuitically replied, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning" (John viii. 19-25).

It is a curious thing that the Hindus, from whom we have taken a few words to enlarge our vocabulary, as well a good deal else to swell our treasury, have taken one word from us. It is the word "Jesus." With them it means a spy, a sneak—one who is trying to gain his own ends by dissimulation. Those who know how the followers of Jesus act towards the heathen will recognise how appositely the word is used in Hindustani.

E. P. MEREDITH.

The wise man looks to himself, the fool to others.—*J. P. Richter.*

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DIVINE BODY-SNATCHING; OR, WHEN GABRIEL BLOWS THE TRUMPET.

THAT precious volume, called "God's Word," by people who are green—
But which, to scoffing infidels, such food for mirth has been—
Announces the performance of a body-snatching scene—
When Gabriel blows the trumpet by-and-bye.
Jehovah will skedaddle from his mansion in the sky,
And come to *terra firma* in the twinkling of an eye;
And from the tombs he'll snatch
Every "body" with dispatch—
When Gabriel blows the trumpet by-and-bye.

Now, if the body-snatcher finds you "ready" when he comes,
He'll say to you, "Well done, old pal," and give you "sugar plums";
But otherwise, with "acid drops," he'll irritate your gums—
When Gabriel blows the trumpet by-and-bye.
All those who've "found salvation" will be able to defy
The law of gravitation, and ascend into the sky;
The rest will have to go
To the bonfire down below—
When Gabriel blows the trumpet by-and-bye.

To snakes 'twill be a "caution," when the graves give up their dead,
To see a man, whose blood was on the field of battle shed,
Rise up with neither legs nor arms, and minus of a head—
When Gabriel blows the trumpet by-and-bye.
Perhaps that soldier's head and limbs far from his body lie,
And he will collar other men's, which happen to be nigh;
If so, that "mother's son"
Will be three, or more, in one—
When Gabriel blows the trumpet by-and-bye.

And if the "Resurrection" married people reunites,
Some folks will find themselves in strange predicaments and plights;
Oh! won't there be some squabbles, and some bickerings and fights—
When Gabriel blows the trumpet by-and-bye.

Of "better halves" a man, perhaps, has had a large supply;
When one has "kicked the bucket" he has formed another tie.
He'll catch it rather hot
If he meets the blessed lot—
When Gabriel blows the trumpet by-and-bye.

There's no one on this mundane sphere who's able to aver
The date on which this body-snatching's likely to occur;
But from the facts of nature wicked infidels infer—
'Twill happen "when the pigs begin to fly."

They say there is no angel with a trumpet in the sky,
For since the reign of Science he has had to "do a guy";
They see no cause for funk
That in hell they will be sunk;
They think that "Resurrection's" all my eye.

ESS JAY BEE.

ACID DROPS.

THE Government has dropped the Education Bill, and the parsons will have to wait for their sops. No doubt they will get what they want next year. It is the money they are after, and all the rest of the Bill is of no vital importance to them. On the whole, the fate of the Education Bill is an illustration of the truth that big parliamentary majorities are powerless against public opinion.

It is reported that the Czar has stopped the inquiry into the Moscow disaster, as a number of high-placed persons were being implicated; and that the accident will be attributed to "the act of God." God seems to be a very useful friend to the ruling classes.

Down goes the "Drummond Castle" with all her crew and passengers, including several women and children. Only three persons were saved out of two hundred and fifty. Amongst the dead bodies recovered was that of a woman, clasping the corpse of her child to her breast. Even in death they were not divided. The clutch of love was stronger than the swirl of the ravening sea.

"God's in his heaven, All's right with the world." So sings the girl in one of Browning's poems. The first line may be true, for all we know—or care; the second line is a grotesque falsehood. "God's *not* in his heaven, All's *wrong* with the world," would be nearer the mark.

Mohammed Wad Bishara, Emir of Dongola, wrote a letter which fell into the hands of the British. Referring to the advance of the Egyptian forces, he counsels the Dervish leaders to exercise the utmost caution, adding: "For they are cunning, God curse them!" Good old Mohammed Wad Bishara! He is just like a Christian. "God curse them!" says the son of Islam. "God damn them!" says the disciple of Jesus. God Almighty is always expected to hate our enemies. What's the use of a God who won't do that?

The East does not alter rapidly, and among the Semites we still find the modes of expression current among the Bible prophets. Thus, preaching in the Mosque at Suakim recently, the Khalifa is reported to have addressed the faithful in the following terms: "Go to Dongola and fight, that you may win Paradise. I am inspired, and know that the end of the infidels is come. In Egypt they perish from cholera. Their troops will fall by your swords." All these prophecies are intended to bring about their own fulfilment.

"Go to Dongola" says the Khalifa to his followers, "and fight, that you may win Paradise." The Khalifa is not in a hurry to win Paradise himself. Like our own men of God, he will keep out of it as long as possible.

In the *Pall Mall Gazette* is a letter on M'limo, the Matabele God. The writer says: "There is not, I believe, any such person as the M'limo. It is merely a swindle, run by a circle of men who wear their hair long and call themselves his sons. No one, white or black, has ever seen the M'limo. The method of procedure is that the sons go round the people and drum up presents for the god to ensure good crops, etc." This, no doubt, would be considered horrible blasphemy in Matabeleland. It is surprising how rational people can be in regard to other people's religion, without ever thinking of applying reason to their own.

According to the last census, the population of India is 287,223,431, which is about one-sixth of the whole population of the world. Of these, 207 millions are classified as Hindus, 57 millions as Mohammedans, 7 millions as Buddhists, and 2 millions as Christains. Considering the length and cost of missionary enterprise in India, the character of the converts, and the fact that Christianity is the religion of the British rulers, it must be admitted that the Holy Ghost is a very slow proselytiser.

The Nation, the leading American economic and literary paper, says: "Interesting from an ethical point of view are the recently-published statistics of India, which show one convicted criminal out of every 274 Europeans, one to 569 Asiaatics, one to 769 native Christians, one to 1,361 Brahmans, and one to 3,787 Buddhists." Judged by the ethical test, the only one a sensible person would think of applying to rival religions each claiming divine origin, Christianity is a complete failure.

The Prince of Wales, who may reasonably expect soon to become head of the Church of England, went into the lobby of the House of Peers and voted for the legalisation of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. The Archbishop of Canterbury and eighteen bishops, all who voted, went into the other lobby with Lord Salisbury, but the measure passed by a majority of 29. It has previously been passed in the Commons, but not in the present Parliament, and it remains to be seen if in this matter the Government will follow the Church, which so far has only led it to disaster.

Thanks to our clericals, England remains almost the only country where such marriages are illegal. And the clerical law does little to prevent such unions. The poor "live tally," which does not promote respect for the legal tie, and the rich take a journey to the colonies, where the marriage becomes legal. The present state of the law, which restrains nobody, is only a part of our national hypocrisy, out of deference to the vested interests of the Church.

Truth reminds those in authority that the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, and the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act of 1894, admit the unsworn evidence of any child who does not understand the nature of an oath, "if in the opinion of the Court the child is possessed of sufficient intelligence to justify the reception of the evidence and understands the duty of speaking the truth." "To my mind," says the writer, "it is an absurd and anomalous state of things that children cannot similarly be accepted as witnesses without the theological test in all cases. As the late Mr. Justice Stephen pointed out, the practice (still sometimes adopted by wooden-headed Recorders and magistrates) of insisting on a child's belief in punishment in a future state for lying, as a condition for the admissibility of its evidence, 'leads to scenes little calculated to increase respect either for religion or the administration of justice."

Jesus said, "Take no thought what ye shall eat or what

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ye shall drink," but at the missionary dinners they have the best of everything. The teacher added, "nor wherewithal ye shall be clothed," yet the garden parties at Lambeth and at Fulham Palace are said to be the most stylishly-dressed assemblies of the season, throwing the Hyde Park "Church Parade" into the shade.

The Buddhist community are very indignant that the Bengal Government appears to sanction the claim of the Hindus to the land at Bodh-Gaya, the sacred spot where Buddha is said to have obtained "enlightenment." It is said that the Collector of Gaya last month ordered the Maha-Bodhi Society to remove the sacred image of Buddha from Bodh-Gaya, intimating that unless this was done "the Government will take possession of the image, and will deposit it in the Indian Museum in Calcutta.' This last threat is about as gross an affront as could be offered to the religious feelings of the Buddhists. To their minds the seizure of the image, the object of their worship, would be the most sacrilegious act imaginable.

The sessions of the Republican Convention opened with prayer. The Convention met at St. Louis, where "Providence" recently destroyed hundreds of people by a cyclone. It was a good place for praying to the Lord. The result is the election of McKinley as the Republican candidate for the Presidency. Of course it was all settled beforehand, so the malcontents needn't think the Lord had anything to do with it, after all.

The American Presbyterian General Assembly has solemnly declared that the Scriptures deny to women the right to preach. There can be no doubt that this is as truly Scriptural as it is senseless. Women are natural preachers. Probably the sky-pilots feel that when the petticoats get into the pulpit the males may get crowded out. Religion has always told woman to suffer and be silent. It is woman's proud prerogative to support the Church, and man's humble and arduous task to live on her contributions.

Dr. Agar Beet is gone on a visit to America on behalf of the Anglo-Armenian Association. His object is to arouse public feeling over there in favor of the ill-treated Armenians. But what does he expect they will gain by *that?* Dr. Beet should go to Russia instead of America. He knows very well—for he says so—that it is Russia that stands in the way of effective pressure being put upon the Sultan. Dr. Beet evidently prefers to take the easiest road as a missionary of humanity.

Japan seems very much favored by "Providence." An earthquake there has just slaughtered a thousand people, and it is since reported from Yokohama that the tidal wave which accompanied the earthquake was far more destructive to life. The wave extended over seventy miles of the north-east coast, destroying several towns, and drowning ten thousand people.

The *Joyful News* of June 18 chronicles another infidel conversion. The statement, which comes from W. A., of Tottenham, is that Brother M—— was acquainted "with a German lady of great literary abilities. This lady challenged Mr. M—— about the truths of the Christian religion, saying she did not believe in the God of the Bible, and that she had met so many professors of Christianity whose life was the opposite of their profession that she was inclined to question if there was such a thing as a *real* Christian, and asked our brother, pointedly, if he had ever seen one."

We are not told what Brother M—— said to this. Can the Rev. Josiah Mee, of Tottenham, tell us? But it seems the lady shortly after went to Frankfort, Brother M—— obtaining an introduction for her to the minister at that place. W. A. says: "He read to us a portion of a letter he had received from her, saying that, though she had been ill, she was now quite well in body and soul, having found peace in believing in Christ as her Savior, had joined the Church, and was now very happy." We should like the real names of these modest anonymous people, and also of the minister at Frankfort. The conversion of "this gifted lady" ought not to remain in the same category of the great unknown with that of the mutilated infidel who preached at Glasgow Cross.

The Rev. Henry Shrimpton, vicar of All Saints, Stoke Newington, was, if we mistake not, very active in seeking to exclude Freethought works from the local library. No wonder. It appears from a report of his Trinity Sunday sermon in the local *Gazette* that he is one of those who persist in defamatory lies concerning Voltaire, whom, he says, "gradually sank from Deism to Atheism till he worshipped the will of his sacred majesty—Chance." We challenge Mr. Shrimpton to give proof of this assertion.

The vicar went on: "In health and the vigor of life he spoke of death as a 'mere nothing'; but, when this despicable nothing approached, the man who thought he had steeled himself and half Europe by his writings against the fear of another world said to his physician (Bungener): 'Had I followed your advice, I should not be in the horrible condition in which I am. I have swallowed nothing but smoke! I have intoxicated myself with the incense that turned my head! You can do nothing more for me! Send me mad, doctor. Have compassion on me, I am mad; I cannot think of death without shuddering.' Madness took possession of his soul because death was upon him." We ask Mr. Shrimpton also for his authority for this statement.

Cardinal Vaughan has expressed his views as to public meetings in the parks. He is reported as saying: "Although it is true that many people regularly go to Hyde Park who never enter a church, it is difficult to see how it would be possible to frame regulations which, while permitting religious services to be held, prevented other meetings of a less desirable character taking place, and, therefore, I, for one, should not be at all sorry to see the regulations as to Hyde Park so altered as to prevent any meeting—beyond, perhaps, the collection of a few persons—being held there at all." The utterance of the powerless Cardinal is but a mild hint of what might be expected under Rome rule.

Instead of interfering with free speech on religion in public parks, the authorities should try to check the rowdyism of our Sunday-schooled and Bible-dosed mob. A correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* complains of the rude and rough treatment of young gentlemen belonging to the Chinese Legation in London. Just because they wear their own clothes in their own way, they are frequently molested, and sometimes pelted with stones, while occasionally they have to defend themselves against still more brutal attacks. Such behavior would be impossible in "infidel" Paris, whose inhabitants, though they may not be too pious, are at least courteous to strangers.

Cardinal Vaughan is reported to have arranged for open-air preaching by Catholic laymen in the parks and other open spaces in London. Among the preachers is said to be a well-known Queen's Counsel. We guess he will need all his professional wits if he is tackled by a Secular lecturer.

Rev. Richard Henry Cottar is not sound on the subject of infant baptism, and has been deprived of his benefice at Ardcanny, County Limerick, by the General Synod of the Church of Ireland. Fortunately the infants, whose baptism is the cause of the trouble, are not interested in the dispute. They don't care a straw which way it goes.

Lady Burton's religion gave her singular ideas of her duty towards her husband. She handed his works over to the editorship of the Secretary of the National Vigilance Society, whose threatened prosecution of his translation of the *Arabian Nights* made him say he would fight the Society in the Law Courts with a Bible under one arm and Shakespeare under the other; and to atone for this she leaves a franc a day to pay some priest for muttering a mass for the repose of his soul. Lady Burton was said to believe in spirits. We suppose she thought her husband too fast bound in Purgatory to appear to her. If she could have imagined his return and natural reproach, it surely might have overcome her subservience to the priests.

In the *Church Times* (June 19) appears the following: "Sir, will you allow me to draw the attention of Continental chaplains to the fact that the wife whom Archdeacon Butcher divorced is still living?—William Black." The meaning, apparently, is that Archdeacon Butcher is seeking to console himself for a bad experiment by making a fresh one, and Father Black is seeking to prevent him. How far Father Black may be responsible for Archdeacon Butcher living in concubinage or adultery might be a nice point for Christian casuistry.

Scotland prides itself on its superior piety, but a Scotsman, Mr. Daniel Rankin Stewart, giving evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, said "they could see in Broxburn, with its 5,000 or 6,000 inhabitants, more drunken people in a day than could be seen in London in a week, even if they did nothing else than look for drunken people." Mr. Stewart is connected with the Broxburn Oil Works, and should know.

The London correspondent of the *Liverpool Courier* writes: "At four London churches, nominally belonging to the Church of England, masses were said one day last week. At St. Alban's, Holborn, the English Prayer Book was not used. The dead language of the Italian Church was poured into the ears of the Holborn working man in preference to the living eloquence and the grand simplicity of the English Prayer Book." The correspondent is evidently strongly evangelical, but there is no mistaking the fact that Evangelicalism is declining before Ritualism.

The Rev. Edward H. Sankey believes in aged pensions—

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for the clergy. He says: "At sixty-five every clergyman ought to be sure of a pension of £200 for life." Of course, they are unable to save anything out of their beggarly stipends.

The Bishop of Marlborough, who appears to have been in receipt of £3,000 a year already, has been inducted to the fat living of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, which is worth about the same figure. This lucky priest is sixty-eight years of age—hardly young enough to take on a fresh job. Some of the parishioners objected and left the church when the institution was proceeding, but the Bishop of London went on with the farce, and charged the people to receive the aged pluralist as "a messenger sent by God's providence." Whatever these clerical creatures do God Almighty has to ratify and bless. They don't allow him a will of his own. After all, what is God but the figure-head of a vile conspiracy against the people?

The living of St. Botolph is worth another £3,000 a year, and the Bishop of Marlborough, in addition to his episcopal stipend, already has the incumbency of St. Michael's, Cornhill, a church without a congregation, for which he receives £2,000 a year. In the case of St. Botolph it had been promised that the £3,000 income was to be utilised for the augmentation of poor benefices in East London, on the death of the late Rev. Hang Theology Rogers.

At the last International Congress of Orientalists, held at Geneva, Professor Angelo de Gubernatis expressed his opinion that the Satan of Dante, and hence, too, of Milton and the Christian world, was mainly derived from Yama, the Indian God of Death. In fact, the last book of the Mahâbhârata affords some close parallels between the Hindo-Buddhist Hell and the Inferno.

Dr. Karapet has been writing on an Armenian sect of dissenters, which he thinks has descended from the Thoudrakians of the Middle Ages. They hold that, as Jesus was baptised at thirty, no one should baptise before that age. Those who do so only make the baptised person a child of Satan.

The Christian Endeavor people, over in the United States, were all praying for Ingersoll's conversion a few months ago. They are soon going to have a Convention at Washington. But a cloud has arisen on the glory of the movement. One of the Christian Endeavorers, Mr. Burchard, of Brooklyn, kept some letters by him, and they have fallen into the hands of his wife. They were written to this lady's husband by another Christian Endeavorer, Miss Boyd, of Ashby Park, New Jersey. Here is a sample from the bulk:—"My precious, how much I love you! I shall be waiting ready to be received into my lover's arms. Trust in God. Don't forget the Christian Endeavor Convention at Washington. One more big kiss like those at Walbrook Sunday afternoon." The recipient of this pious and amorous epistle will need all his "Trust in God" now that his wife holds the original manuscript.

Cardinal Gibbons has issued a letter on American politics, in which he hints that, if Mr. McKinley or any other candidate accepts the plank of the American Protective Association, the weight of the Catholic Church will be thrown on the other side. The Catholics may be expected, as usual, to vote the Democratic ticket.

At Stalham churchyard, Norwich, when a new grave was being dug out of a hole 4½ feet deep, bones sufficient to fill a half-bushel basket were thrown, some with the flesh barely decomposed, presenting a sickening spectacle. The churchyard is frightfully overcrowded, but it seems to be nobody's business to insist upon its being closed, or to put a stop to the revolting state of things which arises every time a fresh interment takes place; and the church taboos cremation.

The New York *Outlook* (non-sectarian) says that "if every minister, Protestant and Roman Catholic, Christian and Jew, orthodox and heterodox, should preach an annual sermon" upon the duty of putting honest men in office, "the clarifying effect would be as sudden as it would be surprising." The *Sun* very properly says that no such effect would follow, and adds: "In spite of all their preaching, the preachers have not yet produced agreement as to the application of religious principles to other matters than politics. They have not yet succeeded in bringing about unity of opinion among the Churches. How, then, can Dr. Abbott expect that they will accomplish that surprising result in a field where the difference of sentiment is sharper and bitterer than anywhere else, save in the special sphere of religion itself?" The *Sun* is right. There is much humbug talked about what the Church could do for morals. t has had a long innings, and what has it effected?

The Presbyterians, in assembly at Saratoga last week, passed a resolution praying for the "speedy extinction of the Islam Empire." The men who voted for the resolution honor the memory of John Calvin, who burnt a man alive for a difference of opinion on the subject of religion—a crime so far unsurpassed by any subject of the "Empire of Islam." Strange that no Christian minister ever prayed for the extinction of the kingdom of the Devil.—*Truthseeker.*

The Rev. R. C. Fillingham, vicar of Hinton-Beds, has pointed out that the disendowment of the Church would solve the problem of providing pensions for the aged poor. A pension of 5s. a week after they reached the aged of 65 would require £1,500,000 a year; but the Church endowments amounted to £1,900,000, so that a substantial balance would still remain. Thereupon the vicar, in whose parish he lectured at Selston, denounces him as an ill bird, who takes the Church's money and fouls his own nest.

Mr. Labouchere has been showing up the doings of the Kilburn Sisters, who go about London collecting for the Church Extension Association, and philanthropic efforts connected therewith. The Charity Organisation Society some time ago made allegations as to alleged cruelty to children in the orphanages, and Mr. Labouchere was invited to look into the administration. He found the accountant denied responsibility for the books before June, 1895. The C. O. S. alleged that the children were restrained in bed by mechanical cont ivances, which, Mr. Labouchere adds, constitute a serious danger in the event of fire, and in some instances were severely punished to make them confess charges of indecency. Other points of Mr. Labouchere's criticism deal with the practice of taking illegitimate children off the hands of their parents ("without inquiry") for a lump sum of money; the unfair competition of the Society's depôts for the sale of second-hand goods (contributed by charitable people); and the secession of several Sisters from the community in 1894, on the ground of their dissatisfaction with its administration and certain of its practices.

At the Derby Conference of the Young Men's Christian Association, Mr. R. Souttar, M.P., said: "Few Christians studied the Bible with care; many could hardly be said to study it at all. How few of them had more than a superficial acquaintance with its teachings." He thought increased study of the Bible would make better Christians. But this depends whether studied in the light of faith or of reason.

Mr. H. B. Wilson, who is hon. sec. of the Y.M.C.A.'s Bible-reading Union, confirmed the views of Mr. Souttar as to how little the Bible was now read. Among the vast multitudes of young men acquainted with the Bible, he asked what proportion even spent fifteen minutes a day in prayerfully reading the book itself? Without being a pessimist, he should dread the declaration of the result of a poll on this point. The Bible, he went on to say, must be read devotionally—that is, in an unquestioning spirit. Why, of course!

The *Twentieth Century*, of New York, says: "The English clergymen have made a very touching appeal to Americans generally, for aid in restoring the somewhat faded glories of Canterbury Cathedral. The sum needed is about $20,000. It is certainly very odd that these Englishmen should be forced to beg such a sum over here."

The *Light of Truth*, which is now a sixteen-page Spiritist magazine, to which Mr. W. E. Coleman and Mrs. M. T. Longley contribute, states that Mrs. Kate Tingley, the new Mahatma, and successor to Blavatsky and Judge, who is now on her way to evangelise Europe, was for years a New York medium, and enjoyed the patronage of a large class of worthy people. But since the death of Newton, the millionaire, the cause of Spiritualism is not what it was, and it is no wonder that Mrs. Tingley wends her way Thibetward.

The *Sunday Chronicle* records the arrest, at Darwen, of a man charged with complicity in a big safe robbery at Leigh. In his possession was found a guide to religious faith, a number of religious publications, a temperance pledge card, and a well-thumbed pocket Bible. It was an outfit for a saint.

Seventeen churches were destroyed or injured by the devastation at St. Louis, and the damage to church property amounted to some 348,000 dollars. The destroying angel was no respecter of creeds; Catholic and Protestant churches went down together.

During the visit of "General" Booth to Melbourne (Australia) one of the reporters for an evening paper rose to leave the hall with his copy. "Brother," cried the "General," "you will be d—— if you go now." "I shall be d—— by the sub-editor if I don't go," was the reply. "But the Lord is greater than the sub-editor," said the "General," warningly. "The sub-editor does not think so," was the retort.—*Printer's Ink.*

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Mr. Foote's Engagements.

July 5 and 12, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Lecturing Engagements.—June 28, (morning), North Brixton Gladstone Club; (evening), Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W. July 12, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

J. M. R.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. Hill (Chatham).—Mr. John Samson's book on *Inventions* (1s.) is published by Simpkin & Marshall, 4 Stationers' Hall Court, London, E.C. Mr. Samson's address is Dashwood House, 9 New Broad-street, E.C.

Money'sworth.—We did not know that the proprietor of the *Sunday Companion* is also the proprietor of *Paddock Life*, running one in the interest of piety and the other in the interest of gambling. Whether he goes to heaven or hell, he means to have friends in both places—and the cash here to go on with.

E. Smedley.—(1) The average of efficiency in Board schools is considerably higher than in Voluntary schools. This is proved by the efficiency grant. (2) Luther's views on polygamy were pretty much what you imagine.

Communicant (Northampton).—We regret to hear of Mr. Stimpson's death; we believe he attained a very ripe old age. He was a Secularist, though he took no active part in the movement, at least during late years. He was one of the oldest supporters of Charles Bradlaugh, whom he often entertained at his house.

W. C.—There is a Reader's Bible, edited by Professor Moulton, that might meet your requirement. But it will not include *all* the books of the Bible, we believe; and collectively it would be rather expensive for working-class pockets.

W. Calder.—Our best regards to you and yours.

P. Harwood.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Heaford had such a large audience at Edmonton, and that your meetings constantly improve.

W. B. Thompson, 61 College Avenue, New Brompton, Kent (Chatham Branch), would be glad to receive practical suggestions from any of our readers who have them to give, as to the best means of retaining the interest and attendance of the older scholars (boys and girls) in a Secular Sunday School. Mr. Thompson has an idea of forming reading circles, and to take some good work of fiction first. He asks us what book we would suggest. Well, one of these:—George Eliot's *Adam Bede* and *Mill on the Floss*, Dickens's *David Copperfield* and *Nicholas Nickleby*, Thackeray's *Pendennis* and *Vanity Fair*.

H. Jones.—Sorry we cannot refer you to such statistics in England.

Delta.—You are probably right about the paragraph. Mrs. Macdonald's "Iliad of the East" is a condensation, and a good one, of the Ramayana, which has been translated completely, and published, we believe, at Calcutta. Mrs. Macdonald's book is published by Longmans. We think the price is 7s. 6d. Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *The Sign of the Cross*, of which you speak so highly, is selling fairly well; it cost a good deal of labor.

John Walker.—Thanks. See acknowledgment of subscription to Lecture Scheme. The rest will be acknowledged by the respective secretaries.

Thomas Dunbar.—Thanks for your encouraging letter.

D. Kay.—Obliged. See "Acid Drops."

Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme.—Collected by W. Calder, 2s. 6d.; Lux, £2 2s.; John Walker, 10s.; Thomas Dunbar, 2s. 6d.

Papers Received.—Wellington Journal—Daylight—Open Court—Hackney and Kingsland Gazette—Light of Truth—Derby Daily Telegraph—Two Worlds—Clarion—Nya Sanningar—New York Public Opinion—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Boston Investigator—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker—Post—Isle of Man Times—Reynolds's Newspaper—Twentieth Century—Free Review—Daily Mail.

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

Scale of Advertisements.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

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

Ramsey-Kemp Testimonial Fund.—D. Colville, 10s.; R. Gibbon, 2s.; J. Pearson, 6d. Per J. Knowles (Blackburn)—N. Ashworth, 1s.; L. Whitehead, 1s.; J. Howarth, 1s.; J. Titherington, 1s.; Mr. Ainsworth, 1s.; J. Leach, 1s.; S. Hampson, 1s.; Mrs. Knowles, 1s.; H. Jones, 1s.; R. Ashworth, 1s.; Mr. Harley, 6d.—G. Ward, *Hon. Treasurer.*

SUGAR PLUMS.

Owing to Mr. Watts's indisposition, which we are happy to say is not serious, Mr. Foote lectured at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening. Mr. Watts will lecture there this evening (June 28), and on the following Sunday the platform will be occupied by Mr. Cohen.

Mr. Watts will take for his subject this evening (June 28) at the Athenæum Hall: "Why the Government Dropped the Education Bill." The subject should attract a good meeting.

The New York *Journal* of June 3 gives on its front page an illustration entitled "Miss Ingersoll Refuses the Bible." The account, which has the first place in the paper, tells how Miss Maud R. Ingersoll, when riding in a Broadway car, noticed a team of horses being driven alongside, one of which had three raw sores on its neck just where the collar encircles it. She at once signalled her car to stop, and called the driver of the team to draw up and notice the condition of his horse. He attempted to drive on. A crowd and a policeman came, and the case was brought before a magistrate When the young lady was asked to take the oath, she at once demurred, and explained that she did not believe in the Bible; she preferred to assert her intention of telling the truth in some other form. So the magistrate permitted her to make a simple affirmation. The prisoner was held on bail for trial. Miss Maud's pluck and humanity evince her stock. No wonder the Colonel is proud of his daughters, as they are of their father.

The Rev. Mr. Myers (Unitarian), of Shrewsbury, is one of the few ministers who think of the rights of others as well as those of their own body. At a meeting to consider the Education Bill, he reminded the audience that there were others besides Catholics, Churchmen, and Nonconformists whose rights should be protected. He said: "What is wanted, should this 27th clause of the new bill remain, is a declaratory clause making it clear that any parent objecting to the religious instruction given in a public elementary school shall not be required to send his child to such school till the time marked for calling the register, just prior to the commencement of secular work." This statement was received with applause.

The Humanitarian League is publishing through Bell & Son the addresses given under its auspices last winter at the Memorial Hall on the Rights of Men and Animals. One of these addresses, entitled "A Secularist View," was given by Mr. Foote. The volume will be on sale in a week or two.

The Annual Excursion of the West London Branch takes place to-day (June 28), by the Great Western Railway, to Taplow. The train leaves Paddington at 9.45 a.m., and the return journey can be made by any train. The river scenery is most charming, and just now is at its best. The fares are, for adults, 2s. 9d.; children half-price. Friends wishing to join in this trip should make immediate application for tickets to F. Todd, 21 Abdale-road, W.

Our Liverpool friends take their Annual Picnic on Sunday, July 12. This year they go to a beautiful spot, Burton, in Cheshire, by wagonettes, which start from Birkenhead Ferry entrance at 2.15. The tickets are 3s. 6d. each, which includes wagonette fare and knife-and-fork tea at Burton. Members and friends who wish to join this delightful trip should give their names to the secretary at the hall, or by post to J. Roberts, 99 Saxony-road, not later than July 5, after which date no places can be guaranteed.

The *Star of the East*, a Hindu monthly published at Calcutta, notices the Humanitarian League's edition of Mr. Foote's *Shadow of the Sword*.

The *Journal of Education* offered a prize for the best list of twenty men to form the nucleus of an English Academy. Here are the names in the order of selection:—Ruskin, Swinburne, Lecky, G. Meredith, H. Spencer, J. Morley, T. Hardy, Andrew Lang, W. Morris, W. E. Gladstone, Leslie Stephen, R. Kipling, F. Harrison, W. Watson, S. R. Gardiner, Sir E. Arnold, Max Müller, Barrie, Besant, Stubbs. The reader will note the high percentage of avowed Freethinkers.

Mr. S. P. Putnam is on a long lecture tour in the Western States. One place he has visited is called Owatonna. The soil is rich there, and the scenery superb. "If I owned one hundred acres here," says Putnam, "I think I should be a happy man. I wouldn't exchange it for the Garden of Eden."

George Macdonald replies in the New York *Truthseeker* to our recent strictures on his depreciation of George Meredith. "It is immediately apparent," he says, "that Mr. Foote and myself would never reach a theoretical agreement, for the

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writing of which he speaks slightingly—namely, that 'which the reader can follow with his mind as rapidly as his eye glances along the lines'—is, in my estimation, the only kind worthy to be aimed at, and I know of no better exponent of that style than Mr. Foote himself." Well, we think we had better let the matter stand as it is. After all, controversy is useless on a question of taste. All of us cannot see alike, nor feel alike; and this truth need involve no invidious reflections. But we beg to assure George Macdonald that our recognition of George Meredith's genius is based upon more than twenty years' close acquaintance with his writings. What we have found in them is not to be annihilated by argument. We must rely upon our own perceptions.

Mexico is not the priest-ridden country it used to be. According to the New York *Independent*, all church property in that country now belongs to the government, convents and monasteries have been suppressed, and Church and State are totally separated. Peculiarity in dress is forbidden to the priests, and sectarian schools depend entirely upon their own resources for support.

Secularists on Vestries should note that Mr. Denman decided that the owners of the Baptist Chapel, Arodene-road, Brixton Hill, were liable to the Vestry under Section 105 of the Metropolis Local Management Act, 1855, for their contribution towards the cost of paving the thoroughfare, and made an order for payment of £113 17s. 11d., with £2 5s. costs.

Dr. Joseph Parker writes to the *Times* (June 22): "I am not a secularist in education. I am a separatist. I would have the State teach literature, and the churches teach religion." He gives the voting at the referendum on the subject in South Australia.

The Melbourne *Spectator*, a Wesleyan organ, says the people will not have State and denominational schools. "They have said no with much emphasis in South Australia, and they will say no in Victoria quite as emphatically when their turn comes." English Nonconformists ought to learn something from this, but they will not when they allow themselves to be led by men like H. P. Hughes.

The *Free Review* for July opens with a scathing criticism of the metaphysical evolution of Professors Drummond and Calderwood, entitled "Biology with a Snuffle." Geoffrey Mortimer follows with an appreciative notice of M. Zola's *Rome*. Mr. J. M. Robertson begins a paper on "Shakespeare and Montaigne," giving many instances of the use of Florio's translation of Montaigne by our great dramatist. Mrs. Walter Grove writes on "What Children should be Told," dividing her subject into two branches—on Religion and on Physiology. In each case she advocates candor with discretion. On Religion she says emphatically truth is the first consideration, above expediency and above respectability. Why, she asks, should it be considered wise or expedient to teach the young to reverence what the parents do not believe? Mrs. Grove urges upon those who have attained the atmosphere of Freethought: "Do not hesitate to afford your children, through fear of the world's uncomprehending disapproval, the same liberty which you yourselves enjoy."

The *Literary Guide* (Watts & Co.) is enlarged this month (July), and the price is raised to twopence. It reaches us almost as we are going to press, and we have not been able to scrutinise its contents. But we can see at a glance that it is a very interesting number, and we believe it will attract a large number of new readers.

Mr. A. B. Moss is booked to lecture shortly at Blackburn, Rochdale, Todmorden, and probably Bolton, under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme. Other places in the vicinity that would like a visit from Mr. Moss should write to him at once at 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Excursion, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, takes place on Sunday, July 19. A special train will convey the excursionists to Margate, Broadstairs, and Ramsgate. Tea for the whole party will be provided at Munn's Hotel, on the Margate front, at 5 o'clock. Mr. Foote, Mr. Watts, Mr. Forder, and other well-known Freethinkers, will join the party. The tickets are 4s.—children half price, and obtainable at 28 Stonecutter-street, or from any London Branch secretary.

Every religion founded on the fear of an invisible power is a tale that, avowed by a nation, bears the name of religion; and, disavowed by the same nation, bears the name of superstition.—*Hobbes.*

Truth is a thing to be shouted from the house-tops, not to be whispered over rose-water after dinner, when the ladies are gone away.—*Clifford.*

LITTLE SAVIORS.

ALL parties have their little saviors; at least all parties that I have ever been acquainted with, or that I have ever read of in history. They are generally persons of a certain ability, of which they are sufficiently conscious, but they cannot get themselves recognized as leaders. Somehow or other they are not taken at their own valuation. They never wield the influence to which they fancy they are entitled. Others are basely or stupidly preferred before them. The result is that they view everything with jaundiced eyes. They perceive the rottenness of affairs in the party they belong to, and they proceed to tender what they regard as very judicious advice. If they are listened to, the party may be saved; if not, it is certainly doomed. And they particularly wish it to be observed, and afterwards remembered, that the responsibility for whatever misfortunes or disasters may happen must be laid at other doors than theirs. Having mentioned this with grave emphasis, they resign themselves cheerfully to witness the realisation of their predictions.

There is another and still worse class of little saviors; men who are animated by personal pique and ingrained contentiousness. Effeminately sensitive, and easily offended, they are capable of harboring malice for twenty years, or for a whole lifetime. They have no particular ability or force of character, but they find a way of asserting themselves. They can do nothing, or very little, themselves; but they obstruct those who can, and that is something, especially when it is done on grounds of "principle." They bear a resemblance to the man who burnt down the famous temple of Ephesus, and thus gained a certain immortality. A lighted torch and a bad temper were equal to that achievement. It takes very little capacity to spoil or hinder the work of others. A dead jackass can stop the whole traffic in Cheapside. He can do nothing else, but he can do that.

During my presidency of the National Secular Society I have had occasion to study several of these little saviors. They have often made me the subject of their reflections, but I have rarely condescended to notice them. In the long run it is best to leave them to the law of gravitation. Besides, it is a natural penalty of my position to be misrepresented, and even to be maligned; and it is a waste of time and energy to be too sensitive to what is inevitable. William Cobbett used to say, "If a flea bite me, I will kill it if I can"; but he nearly ruined his temper by too much flea-killing. There was that in his writings which would outlast the memory of his enemies and detractors.

Occasionally, however, it is advisable to break silence, even at the risk of giving the enemy a fresh opportunity to blaspheme.

Several friends have sent me copies of a circular headed "A Word to Secularists." The writer deals pretty freely with me, but it did not occur to him to send me one himself. "It is not intended for broadcast distribution," though I hear that hundreds have been circulated; but "copies will be sent post free on application to G. Standring, 7 and 9 Finsbury-street, London, E.C." Well, I will save my readers trouble, and Mr. Standring his postage; and show at the same time how little I fear his criticism. What follows is the whole of the circular, except a closing prophecy about the future success of the writer's proposal, and a plaintive protestation that "it is better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all"—which is hardly controvertible:—

> "In view of the lamentable condition to which the organised propaganda of Freethought in this country has fallen, I issue this leaflet in the hope that something may be done, upon independent lines, to infuse new vigor into the work.
>
> "When our great leader passed away, in the early days of 1891, there seemed little or no reason to despair of the future of the Secular party. A few of Mr. Bradlaugh's most active helpers (the group somewhat fantastically described as 'The Old Guard') stood around the President who had succeeded Mr. Bradlaugh as the elected head of the National Secular Society. Branches were numerous and in fairly good working order. For a year or two the propaganda of Freethought was carried on with vigor and resolution; but, one by one, the 'Old Guard' retired from an association which became intolerable to them; and for a considerable time the Society has practically been a private adventure carried on with a few picturesque adjuncts of a representative character. A motion on the Agenda-paper of

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the last Conference, in the name of one of the Vice-Presidents, openly proposed to formally abolish the direct representation of Branches on the Executive. The fact that, 'in the interest of harmony,' the motion was (*pro tem*) abandoned shows that there still remains a healthy instinctive love of democracy among Secularists. This, indeed, is one of the few features of the situation which inspire a tepid hope for the future.

"A glance at the actual position of affairs in the Secular party demonstrates the urgent necessity for a new departure. For the first time in nearly thirty years the party is homeless. Under Mr. Foote's leadership the Hall of Science has been lost to us, and our historic meeting-place may become a factory or warehouse, even if no worse fate befal it. In his 'Report' to the recent Conference, Mr. Foote airily dismissed this disaster as a mere incident of small import. 'A change of address,' he declared, 'is not a funeral.' But a funeral is a change of address; and when a man's address is changed (say) from Tottenham Court-road to Finchley Cemetery we are apt to regard him for all practical purposes as *dead*. The loss of the Hall of Science is the most serious blow that the Secular party has sustained since the death of its one real leader, five years ago.

"It is not alone at the centre that this disintegrating process has gone on. A policy of ignoring unpleasant or discreditable facts may for a time succeed in concealing the truth; but the facts remain, and their consequences cannot be stifled. It is known, in spite of careful suppression, that certain Branches of the National Secular Society have seceded; but probably no one outside a very small circle knows *how many* have gone, or are about to go. When the fact that the Nottingham Branch had withdrawn could no longer be concealed, its action was reported to the Executive with an 'explanation' that had no appreciable relation to the facts. When the whole of the vital element in the Finsbury Branch seceded, it was represented in the *Freethinker* that a knot of traitorous malcontents had happily left the Branch. There are other cases, but of these I have not sufficiently full or accurate knowledge to warrant me in making specific reference to them.

"The few sentences which I have devoted to this subject seem to me to establish a case for independent action in organising the work of Secular propaganda. I will now describe, as briefly as possible, my own position, and indicate the line along which a revival of our movement appears possible.

"I am no longer a member of the National Secular Society. Five years ago I deemed it wildly improbable that I should ever live to write those words. But the course of events forced me to sever, one by one, the links that bound me to the Society: and in November, 1894, I resigned a highly-prized position, that of a vice-president, which I had held for sixteen years. The resignation was personally tendered to the Executive, and my stated ground was dissatisfaction with the general conduct of affairs. The Executive did not feel sufficiently interested to ask me a single question; my resignation was formally accepted; and the august body then proceeded to 'next business.' No report of that meeting has ever been published, and probably many Secularists have not noticed the omission of my name from the list of officers. When a large majority of the Finsbury Branch, which I subsequently joined, elected to withdraw from the Society, I withdrew with them, in January last.

"I do not propose, either here or elsewhere, to discuss at length the causes which led to my separation from the N.S.S., or to criticise the affairs of a Society of which I am not a member. The story, to be complete, or even intelligible, would be a long one, crowded with a thousand details which would be wearisome, yet essential to full understanding. The important thing is that many persons desire to work for Freethought who cannot and will not associate themselves with the existing agency. For myself, I can conscientiously say that my enthusiasm for the Secular cause is as keen to-day as it was twenty-three years ago.

"What, then, can be done to bring these isolated and wasted forces into fruitful co-operation? My suggestion is that a Secular Propagandist Committee be formed; and to that end I invite every Freethinker willing to associate himself or herself with such a body to communicate with me at the address given below. When fifty names are enrolled I will convene a meeting."

Some of my readers will doubtless think I am attaching too much importance to this circular in reproducing it in this fashion. But there are certain statements in it which I may be expected to contradict, and, while doing so, I will make some statements *per contra*. This, indeed, is my chief reason for noticing it at all; and, on the whole, one may as well print the thing in full, so that it may not be said that I have merely taken extracts to suit my convenience.

I will number my comments and make them as brief as possible:—

(1) The "lamentable condition" of organised Freethought propaganda is a morbid dream of the writer's sick imagination. But if the Secular party is going to the dogs, I do not believe Mr. Standring is able to save it. When the Duke of York told Charles II. that he was in danger of assassination, the witty monarch replied: "Have no fear, brother James; they will never kill me to make you king." I think the National Secular Society is safe enough, if the only alternative is Mr. Standring and his committee.

(2) "One by one" the "Old Guard" retired from the Executive. Those who retired did so one by one. I admit it. But they were only two altogether—Mr. Standring and Mr. Reynolds. I am not aware of a third.

(3) Mr. Watts's proposal for strengthening the Executive only concerns members of the National Secular Society It will not be discussed with outsiders.

(4) Mr. Standring says "the party is homeless." It is an insular statement, made by a Cockney. Do the Secularists of Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, etc., find the "party"—of which they are surely important sections—in this "homeless" condition?

(5) The loss of the Hall of Science was not "airily dismissed" at the last Conference. It was stated in the Report that the matter had been sufficiently explained to the Secular party, and the Conference endorsed the statement.

(6) The loss of the Hall of Science is said to be a very "serious blow." Assuming it to be so, what did Mr. Standring do to avert it? He was president of the Club, which was to be the principal source of revenue. Under his fostering care, instead of paying £400 a year, it paid £175 the first year, £125 the second year, and £50 the third year. And when the final troubles commenced Mr. Standring and his friends on the Committee played right into the hands of Mr. Smith, instead of trying to help the party. I had to set the solicitors in motion to prevent their handing Mr. Smith the keys, over the heads of the Directors.

(7) There was no "concealment" about the secession of the Nottingham Branch. The secretary's letter announcing the fact was read by Miss Vance in the usual way to the Executive. That other Branches have seceded, and that the fact is concealed from the Executive and the party, is a statement too ridiculous for confutation. The case of the Finsbury Branch has been published in the *Freethinker*. Whether the "vital element" is in the Branch, or amongst those who left it, time will show. But no one doubts that Mr. Standring joined the Finsbury Branch for the purpose of creating mischief.

(8) Mr. Standring appears to think the Executive has been slighted by the President, yet he sneers at it as that "august body" when it affronts his self-esteem. He complains (he has complained *before*; it seems to weigh on his mind) that the Executive asked him no questions when he tendered his resignation. Well, let us look at the date. It was November, 1894. At that time the Club Committee, led by Mr. Standring, was defying the Directors and the Executive, who unanimously protested against the hall being let for a scandalous and disgusting exhibition, which was politely called "a boxing contest." Mr. Standring's resignation was tendered in the midst of that trouble, and it is not surprising that the Executive "did not feel sufficiently interested" to ask him "a single question."

I have now to say that I am quite indifferent to any outsider's opinion of the National Secular Society. The Glasgow Conference was free and open. Branches and individual members were at liberty to place whatever they desired upon the agenda. Had the Finsbury malcontents not cut themselves off, they might have been represented at the Conference, with a view to ventilating any legitimate grievance. I was re-elected President without a dissentient voice or vote, and I can afford to smile at the statement that the Society is "a private adventure." I have certainly undertaken, with the Society's approval, to continue the Lecture Scheme, which has given a fresh impetus to Secular propaganda in all parts of the country, and I believe it will be fairly supported. If others choose to attempt schemes of their own, let them do so. They will not engage me in any further controversy. Let them go their own way; and perhaps they will be sobered by facing their own responsibilities.

G. W. FOOTE

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TYPES OF RELIGIONISTS.

II.—The Ritualist.

The Rev. Vavasour Verisoph prides himself on being of good family. A maternal ancestor was mistress to Charles II., whose dictum, that "the Church of England is the religion for gentlemen," is quoted approvingly by the Rev. Vavasour Verisoph, with the proviso that the High Church alone represents the Anglican branch of the Catholic faith in its integrity. The Low Church is to be classed with those miscreants of the "Deformation," the Protestants, and are scarcely a grade above his *bête noir*, "the dissidence of Dissent." The Low Church is, he says, not only low, but vulgar—and vulgarity is the worst of sins. The six points of Ritualism he holds to be as necessary to the religion of a gentleman as the Chartists held the six points of the Charter essential to the true political faith. Altar lights and incense are the two items which call out all the profundity of his nature.

The Broad Church, he holds, is nothing but disguised infidelity. Let the Church make its own laws in Convocation, and it would soon rid itself of these vipers now nourished at its bosom. He hates Erastianism even more than Evangelicalism. The function of the State is to see that the Church is properly respected. Beyond this, any pretence to authority is an usurpation. He refuses to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Privy Council, and holds among his heroes the Rev. Mr. Green, the Rev. Bell Cox, and others who have gone to prison in defiance of the law. His favorite virtue for the "lower orders" is being law-abiding. He looks back with the greatest admiration to Archbishop Laud as the type of the true Churchman. Like Laud, he hates all Nonconformity—would suppress it if he could—speaks much of the beauty of holiness, and holds there is no holiness save of the Catholic type.

He cants much of beauty and art, and of how the Church has elevated the tastes of the people. Stained-glass windows constitute his ideal. They must be of æsthetic colors, and depict saints of unearthly hue and lantern-jawed expression. He does not permit lay interference with Church affairs. Apostolical succession creates a difference between clergy and laity, which is one, not of degree, but kind. The laity are all very well in their way as supports of the Church, but they must never pretend to any share in its rule. Their main duties are to attend the services as early and often as possible, to take fasting communion regularly, and to provide the offertory. After failure to shell out the funds, there is no greater sin on the part of a congregation than to take evening communion, or to have anything in their stomachs to mingle with the holy bread and wine into which the blessing of the priest has imparted the Real Presence.

The Ritualist is great among women. He is eloquent on their work in the Church—viz., to provide it with flowers and embroidery, and himself with fine vestments. The "service of the altar" is often on his lips with the injunction to give God of our best, and the duty of casting our riches into the treasury of God. He approves of confession, nay, insists on it in the case of young girls, at the delicate age when they ripen into womanhood. Only thus can they be confirmed in the ways of grace. For the rest he is neither rigid nor Puritanical. Puritanism, indeed, he hates; not so much for its intolerance as for its earnest opposition to sacerdotalism.

Is he sincere in his religion? Well, like Mustapha, he believes that he believes. He thinks religion is a good thing, and he knows it brings him a comfortable living. He has opinions on altar-lights, birettas, and chasubles; but it is almost absurd to speak of the Rev. V. Varisoph's thoughts upon any subject of importance. He has little brains to speak of, and had he not been born of good family, with a silver spoon in his mouth, would have found it difficult to get his living as a bus-conductor. You might fancy that, like so many charlatans who live by pumping the east wind into the bellies of their patients, or parishioners, he laughs in secret at their credulity. You would give him credit for too much discernment. No doubt he would have been a considerable knave had not an inscrutable Providence ordained that he should be a consummate fool. He has been brought up in such a way as never to have any perception of the falsity and folly of his faith. The works of the late E. B. Pusey and the leaders of the *Church Times* are his idea of literature. Darwin and Huxley are only names of dire import—heretics who have led many from the true Church, but whose writings he would no more think of reading than of perusing those of Socinus or John Knox. He sincerely regards the Church as the bulwark against Secularism, Socialism, and Anarchy, and thinks the main thing necessary to the welfare of the country is that the whole of the bishops shall reflect the views of the Rev. Vavasour Verisoph.

Uncle Benjamin.

A freeman thinks of nothing so little as of death, and his wisdom is a mediator, not of death, but of life.—*Spinoza.*

BOOK CHAT.

Mr. Malcolm Quin, director of the Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has published through Mawson, Swan, & Morgan a pamphlet (2d.) on *The State and Education*. It is an appeal to the ministers and representatives of all denominations. As a Positivist, Mr. Quin believes in religion, and also in a Church; and he calls upon the ministers of the theological Churches to free religion from all State patronage or control. The family first, and afterwards the Church, are the proper schools of religious training. The State has no business to extemporise a religion for the public schools; and, on the other hand, to recognise *all* religions in the public schools is to sanction indifference. This is the core of Mr. Quin's argument, and *practically*, of course, we thoroughly agree with him. But calling two different things by the same name does not necessarily lead to a recognition of identity, or even of similarity; and we suspect that the ministers of the theological systems—Christians, Jews, and Deists—will regard Mr. Quin's advice as the Trojans should have regarded the gift of the Greeks. Still, we desire to acknowledge the force with which Mr. Quin's appeal is written. "Let us not," he says, "disestablish the belief of centuries only to establish the dogmas of a day"; "there can be no true progress or religion without liberty."

* * *

Most of our readers know about *La Bible Comique*, a French publication ridiculing the Bible stories, chiefly by illustrations, to which a little text is attached. It is not so well known that there is a burlesque of the Koran written in Arabic by one Moseylemah, and appreciated for its coarse humor in many parts of the Moslem world, in which intercommunication is rapidly spreading the seeds of Freethought.

* * *

That able writer, Mr. I. Zangwill, is now bringing out in the *Illustrated London News* a serial entitled "Uriel Acosta." The story is founded on fact. Uriel Acosta was, like Mr. Zangwill, a Freethinking Jew. He was born in Portugal in 1597. His father had been nominally Christianized, and Uriel was brought up as a Christian. Like Heine, he came to regret that he had ever given adhesion to the patched faith which had persecuted his ancestors. He had a Christian benefice at Oporto, but for having reconverted his mother and brethren he had to fly the country. He went to Holland and joined the synagogue, but issued a work in which he adopted the opinions of the Sadducees, and was stigmatised as an Atheist, and, like Spinoza, excommunicated. He was, moreover, denounced to the magistrates, fined, imprisoned, and his work suppressed. A marriage he had contracted was broken off; insults and persecutions were heaped upon him. He was scourged in the synagogue, and at length blew out his own brains in despair. Gutzkow has written a tragedy on Uriel Acosta, but the bare facts are found in Bayle, and are condensed in Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers.*

* * *

Emile Zola has at last been accused of plagiarism, and of having taken much of the material for his *Rome* from a work entitled *Le Vatican, les Papes et la Civilisation*. M. Zola admits having carefully read, and, as we should say, utilised, it among others. M. Zola's method of work is well known. He seeks from books, as well as from living witnesses and by travel, all the documents necessary for a right understanding of the case. For each new romance he surrounds himself with a new library, selecting what suits his purpose. To accuse him of plagiarism is absurd. He never gives any one to understand, and no one should be absurd enough to suppose, that all his characters and incidents are sprung from his own brain. He swallows, assimilates, and recreates what he has taken from others; and this he holds to be the true function of a romancer who seeks to give an epitome of his age.

* * *

In the number of *La Figaro* in which M. Zola writes on "Les Droits du Romancier" he gives many interesting details of the works to which he is indebted. The account of the death of Coupeau from *delirium tremens*, for instance, in *l'Assommoir*, was the textual reproduction of the observations of a physician at an hospital. For his *Rome* he used many works beyond those mentioned. He instances M. Nitti's *Le Socialisme Catholique*, *Le Cardinal Manning*, by the abbé Lemire, and a crowd of others. M. Zola, in short, reads so much for the production of his works that it is ridiculous to specify any one book to which he is indebted. He holds that he is fully within his rights. His own progeny is sufficiently large to preclude the idea that he wishes to steal the children of others.

* * *

The *Literary World*, noticing Miss Martineau's condensation of the *Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, says of the French philosopher: "No one can read him without a sense of his magnificent gifts, and of his absolute devotion to what

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he believed to be the truth. No modern student, whatever his school, can afford to ignore Comte."

* * *

The late Mr. Froude, in his last *Lectures on the Council of Trent*, recently published, remarks: "The history of Europe for a hundred years was the history of the efforts of the Church, with open face or secret conspiracy, with all the energy, base or noble, which passion or passionate enthusiasm could inspire, to crush or annihilate its foes. No means came amiss to it, sword or stake, torture-chamber or assassin's dagger."

* * *

Mr. W. T. Stead has a hysterical article in this month's *Review of Reviews* upon "The People's Bible History," published by Sampson Low & Co. The review is illustrated by a *facsimile* of the Siloam inscription placed upside down; Mr. Stead's Hebrew being probably a bit rusty. Mr. Stead gives a summary of the views of the different writers, from which it appears that they all contradict one another. Professor Sayce proves conclusively that the book of Daniel is a forgery; Dr. Moore is just as conclusive that it is genuine. Dean Farrar's views are all denied by Mr. Gladstone in another part of the same book; and the "People's Bible History" seems only likely to show that no two theologians can agree upon anything. Mr. Gladstone talks largely about Christianity being the dominant religion, and says that 500,000,000 of the earth's inhabitants are "professing Christians"; although the Grand Old Man's statistics are not likely to be swallowed by anyone having the least acquaintance with the subject. Mr. W. T. Stead comforts himself with the thought that, although the Higher Criticism has proved the Bible to be a comparatively late collection of Jewish books, fabricated by unscrupulous priests for their own purposes, yet it is still possible to believe in the volume as a record of Divine revelation!!

* * *

Le Magazine International (Paris: 91, Avenue Niel) gives as frontispiece a portrait of Edward Carpenter. A translation from his *brochure* on Marriage follows. There is also a translation of one of Shelley's most ethereal poems, "Epipsychidion" by Mme. Tola Dorian, who has already rendered "Queen Mab," "Hellas," "Prometheus Unbound," and "The Cenci" familiar to French readers. It also gives a portrait of Magalhaes Lima, the leading Portuguese Freethinker, editor of the *Seculo* and author of *O Papa perante o Seculo* (the Pope before the Age), *Padres e Reis* (Priests and Kings), and *O Livro da Paz* (the Book of Peace).

* * *

From the Antipodes we receive *Lyrics: Religious and Irreligious* (Korumburra: E. C. Oliphant, Radovick-street). It has as its motto the following lines:—

In the name of the God of Love,
Who regneth not above;
In the name of the mind of man,
By priests put under ban;
And in scorn of the worshipped God
Who doth good with a whip and a rod;
And in scorn of His church's curse
I bid thee forth, my verse.

After this we are not surprised to find that the lyrics are of a decidedly irreligious character, though the author has evidently had a very religious training. He takes up such subjects as God's Curse, the Hope of Immortality, Christ, Heresy, Prayers, etc. The following, though the least refined in the book, is one of the most quotable:—

THE IDIOT.

Look at 'im sittin' there, worse 'an a babby, sir—
That's what he is: he's just a God-damned silly 'un—
Why, I dunno—: not 'alf the brains o' tabby, sir.
I'm told it's wrong to say that God's a villyan
For makin' a poor devil of a manikin,
Such as this 'ere 'un—wicked and undootiful
To arst why, when in His infernal pannikin
God messed up men, He made some on 'em bootiful,
Some on 'em rich, some on 'em big, some plucky 'uns,
Some 'appy on nex' to nothin'—an' that's curious!
And some on 'em He seems t' have made real lucky 'uns,
While some He's curst with everythin's injurious.
His best-made fools suffer from Christianity;
The cusséd things praise Him, th' Creator of insanity.

* * *

The *Young Man* is a very goody Christian journal, and we are not surprised to find that in its July number it treats Max Nordau as a Jew, though he is as decided a Freethinker as ever was Uriel Acosta or Benedict Spinoza. It, however, says: "Nordau has lived for years in Paris, where he has cured the ailments of the poor with a devotion beyond all praise. Decidedly, if he has no religion, he can at any rate say with Abou Ben Adhem, 'Write me as one who loves his fellow-men.'"

A mind uninformed is better than a mind misinformed.—*Brougham.*

ODIUM THEOLOGICUM.

THEY met and they talked where the cross-roads meet,
Four men from the four winds come;
And they talked of the horse, for they loved the them,
And never a man was dumb.
And the man from the North loved the strength of the horse,
And the man from the East his pace,
And the man from the South loved the speed of the horse,
The man from the West his grace.

So these four men from the four winds came,
Each paused a space in his course,
And smiled in the face of his fellow man,
And lovingly talked of the horse.
Then each man parted and went his way
As their different courses ran;
And each man journeyed with peace in his heart,
And loving his fellow man.

They met the next year where the cross-roads meet,
Four men from the four winds come;
And it chanced as they met that they talked of God,
And never a man was dumb.
One imaged God in the shape of man;
A spirit did one insist;
One said that Nature itself was God;
One said that he didn't exist.

But they lashed each other with tongues that stung,
That smote as with a rod;
Each glared in the face of his fellow man,
And wrathfully talked of God.
Then each man parted and went his way,
As their different courses ran;
And each man journeyed with war in his heart,
And hating his fellow man.

S. W. Foss

PROFANE JOKES.

At a suburban church the pastor, after giving out a long list of banns of marriage, exclaimed—"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do. Hymn 115."

Boston is said to be a poor place for revivals, because the inhabitants are afraid that if they are born again it may be in somewhere else than in the Athens of America.

"Is this hot enough for you?" asked Satan. "Purty warm," admitted the newly-arrived oldest inhabitant, "but I remember some fifty years ago, when it was so durn hot that——" The attendant imps, at signal, seized him and shoved him down seven stories nearer the bottom which isn't there.

An old man, who had been dreadfully henpecked all his life, was visited on his death-bed by a clergyman. The old man appeared very indifferent, and the parson tried to arouse him by talking of the King of Terrors. "Hout, tout, man, I'm no scar't. The King o' Terrors! I've been living sax and thirty years with the Queen o' them, and the King canna be muckle waur."

The church in a little New Hampshire town was struck by lightning and burned to the ground, and arrangements were made for holding services in the Town Hall on the following Sunday. Deacon K—— led in prayer at a meeting held before the preaching service. He was a shrewd, close-fisted old man, and in his prayer he said: "We feel to be thankful, O Lord, even though it was thy lightning that destroyed our house of worship, or, rather, thy house of worship. Make us to bow humbly to thy will in this matter, recollecting with gratitude, as we do, that it was insured to its full value, if not a little more."

Some years ago the clergyman of the parish, accompanied by his staunch ally, the clerk, called on a Quaker on clerical business. They found him about to sit down to dinner, and presented their demand. "Oh, I see it is for the Easter offering, as thee terms it. Well, wilt thee walk in, friends, and take a bit of dinner?" The invitation was gladly accepted. After dinner they partook of a glass of genuine home-brewed, and a pipe of excellent returns; but when all was over, and they were about to separate, the gentleman of the black robe reminded their kind entertainer once more of the Easter offering. To which Obadiah somewhat drily replied: "Friends, I have given thee a meat offering, a drink offering, and a burnt offering; and if thou art not speedily gone, I will verily be tempted to give thee a heave offering."

An old toothless clergyman used to be much bothered by the lesson in which the names Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego so often occur. At last he adopted the expedient of calling them "these three gentlemen," reading thus: "So the king commanded these three gentlemen to be cast into the fiery furnace."

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, C. Watts, "Why did the Government Drop the Education Bill?"

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond): 7.15, R. Forder, "Bradlaugh and the Bigots."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, W. Heaford, "The Uncertainties of Christianity."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Libra-road, Old Ford): 7.30, G. Lansbury, "Children under the Poor Law."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Westminster Town Hall, Caxton-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Ethical Culture as a Religion."

WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Sun in Splendor," Portobello-road, Notting Hill Gate): Annual excursion by G. W. R. to Taplow. Train leaves Paddington at 9.45.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James, "What has Unbelief Done for the World?"

CAMBERWELL BRANCH (Peckham Rye): 3.15, C. James, "The Church Protestant."

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, C. Cohen will lecture.

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, C. Cohen will lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, A. B. Moss, "Crumbling Creeds."

FINSBURY PARK (near band-stand)—Finsbury Branch: 11.15, E. Calvert, "The Old Testament"; 3.15, W. Heaford. "Immortality."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 8, Stanley Jones will lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Wednesday, July 1, at 8, S. E. Easton will lecture.

ISLINGTON (Highbury Fields, Highbury Corner): 10.45, Mr. Blanchard, "The New Secularism."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Church and Science."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Miracles of the Bible."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Christ and Socialism."

REGENT'S PARK (near Gloucester Gate)—N.W. Branch: 3, T. Thurloe, "Christianity and Secularism."

VICTORIA PARK (near the fountain): 11.15, a lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, A. B. Moss will lecture.

COUNTRY.

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, S. Ackroyd, "The Naturalism of Scepticism"—a reply to the Rev. F. Ballard's "Miracles of Unbelief."

LEEDS (Vulcan Club, Vulcan-street, Benson-street): Excursion to Shipley Glen. Leave Midland Station at 2.10 p.m. Return fare, 1s.

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, F. Wollett, "Robert Browning."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints).—Closed for alterations and repairs until August 16.

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple street): 7, Business meeting.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Members' and friends' excursion to Bradwell, Derbyshire. Meet at 10.45 corner of Arundel and Norfolk-streets. Carriages to leave at 11 prompt. Applications must be made to Secretary at once. Return fare 2s. 6d.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, King-street): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, A reading.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSLEY (May Day Green): W. Dyson—11, "The Age of Miracles"; 6.30, "Fifty Years of Free Trade."

NORTHAMPTON (Cow Meadow): Lucretius Keen—11, "Christianity and Secularism"; 6.30, "My Position as Atheist."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—June 28, m, Clerkenwell-green; a., Victoria Park; e., Deptford.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—June 28, m., Wood Green; e. Edmonton. July 5, m., Westminster; a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn. 12, Northampton.

POSITIVISM.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Church of Humanity, St. Mary's-place. Service and Discourse every Sunday evening at 7.

SUNDERLAND.—Conversational meetings, open to all, at Mr. Coates's, 13 Derby-street, every Sunday, at 7.

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D to E—Half Width of Back	
D to F—Centre of Back to Elbow	
D to G—Centre of Back to Full Length of Sleeve	
H—Round Chest, close to armpits, over vest, NOT COAT	
J—Round Waist, over vest	

TROUSERS.	INCHES
A—Round Waist over Trousers	
B—Round Seat	
E to D—Inside Leg Seam	
F to G—Full Length of Trousers	
H—Round Thigh	
I—Round Knee	
J—Round Bottom	
Please say Lined or Unlined	
Side or Cross Pockets	
Fly or Full Fall	

VEST.	INCHES
A to B—Centre of Back to Opening	
A to C—Centre of Back to Full Length	
D—Round Chest over vest	
E—Round Waist over vest	
Please say if vest is to have Collar or not	

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