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The
# Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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## THE POOR "PECULIARS."

ANOTHER member of the Peculiar People has been found guilty of manslaughter for trusting to the Lord instead of calling in a doctor. Henry James Arthur Marsh, a clerk (not in holy orders), had an infant child named Hilda, who was taken ill of pneumonia on May 3, and died some six days later. The parents did all they could for the little sufferer up to the point of summoning medical aid. That they refused to do on religious grounds. They called in an elder of their Church, who anointed her with oil and, in the mother's words, asked "the Lord to remember the poor child and undertake for it." The Lord, however, did not answer this prayer. But the Peculiar People don't mind that. They say with Jesus Christ "Not my will but thine be done." Other Christians assert that God always hears and answers prayer, whether he does so in the particular way desired by the petitioner or not; but these Peculiar People really believe what other Christians only assert. That indeed is their peculiarity. They do what the Bible orders and trust implicitly to God. If he spares their loved ones they are glad; if not, they piously exclaim: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The medical testimony at the Old Bailey trial was not altogether satisfactory. Dr. Percy Rose said that little Hilda Marsh succumbed to double pneumonia, for which there was a recognised treatment. Of course there is, and the same may be said of every other malady; yet people do die somehow, even under the doctor's hands. This gentleman was not prepared to say that medical aid would have saved the child's life, but "it certainly would have prolonged it"—as though there were any sense, use, or kindness in *that*. Dr. James Webster was not so punctilious. He expressed the belief that "had medical aid been called in when the child was taken ill life might have been saved." But one "might" is no stronger than another "might." The child might have been saved; yes, and the child might have died. Doctors cannot foresee the event, and it is ridiculous to be so wise afterwards.

After all, this medical testimony was needless. The law says that parents must call in medical aid for sick children, and all this talk of "might have beens" is, to say the least of it, superfluous.

Mr. Justice Darling had a little theological spar with the principal witness. Mrs. Marsh, the prisoner's wife, when the judge said "And no medical man was called in?" replied, "No; all our trust is in the Lord, and we don't think of that." His lordship asked what they would do in the case of a broken arm, and she answered: "We never have a broken arm." "Well, then, another limb?" he queried, and the reply came pat: "We never have them broken." "I have never," she added, "known a case of a broken arm among the Peculiar People." Her conviction was that those who live faithfully to God don't come to harm—which is not exactly borne out by the fact that one of the Peculiar People was drowned at Blackwall during the launch of the *Albion*, his father being a leading elder of their Church.

Mr. Biron, who prosecuted for the Treasury, told the jury that the Peculiar People founded their prayer-without-medicine theory upon the Epistle of St. James. This is but partially true, as we shall see presently. But even if it were the whole truth, the natural reply is that there is no theory in the case. These people obey the very letter of the Scripture. What are the words of St. James?

> "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up."

Now, in the face of this plain, unmistakable language, which a child can understand and a sophist could not pervert, it is idle for Mr. Biron, or anyone else, to talk about the "theories," the "tenets," or the "beliefs" of the Peculiar People. Those who declare the Bible to be the Word of God are hypocrites to prosecute, denounce, or even sneer at the few who not only profess this belief, but honestly act upon it. *Hypocrites*, we say; yes, and *scoundrels* too—although, perhaps, that word may be thought somewhat too harsh, considering the muddiness of most people's minds, and the capacity they have for the most astonishing inconsistency.

Not only is this clear injunction of St. James a part of the law-established word of God, but it was written by one who was peculiarly qualified to teach the gospel according to Jesus Christ. When Paul, after his conversion, went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, with whom he stayed fifteen days, the only other apostle he took the trouble to see was "James, the Lord's brother," and this very James was (the Christians themselves say) the writer of the epistle bearing his name in the New Testament. He was, therefore, very specially conversant with what Dr. Watson calls "the mind of the Master." He had been with Jesus from boyhood, while the other apostles had only been with him during the three years of his public ministry; and if *he* was mistaken as to what Jesus believed and meant and taught, it is useless to look to any other apostle for accuracy. Whatever is contained in the epistle of James should—if there are any such degrees in the Word of God—be of the highest possible authority.

But even this is not the end of the matter. There is nothing about poultices, hot flannels, medicine, or doctors in the New Testament. Its whole atmosphere is supernatural. Jesus, on one occasion, cured a patient who had suffered much from many physicians—which is a terrible sarcasm on the medical profession; and he cured her, not by rival specifics, but by miraculous agency. Again and again he declared that God would answer every prayer of the believer. "*Whatsoever* ye ask, believing," he said, "that ye shall receive." And in his last address to his disciples before his ascension, according to Mark, he enumerated some of the "signs" which should "follow them that believe," one of them being this: "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." It is not merely James, therefore, but Jesus also, who misdirects the Peculiar People, and brings them into collision with the law of England.

What we maintain, then, is this. It may or it may not be a good secular law that parents must call in medical aid for their sick children. We do not propose to argue that point at present. But while this is a Christian country, while we have an established Christian Church, while the Bible is used as a Holy Scripture in our public schools, while any citizen is liable to twelve months' imprisonment for bringing it into disbelief and contempt, and while judges, juries, and witnesses are sworn upon it to administer justice, deliver true verdicts, and tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; while all this obtains, we say, it is perfectly monstrous to prosecute



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simple, honest, sincere Christians, who do precisely what the Bible orders them to do, and practically believe what the Bible tells them, that it is "better to obey God than man." When a man is taxed to support Christianity, and prosecuted for being a Christian, it is high time for someone to raise an indignant protest; and it is shameful that the protest is left to a Freethinker.

We have a word to say in conclusion about the judgment and sentence. Mr. Justice Darling made a sad exhibition of himself. He referred to the "vanity and ignorance" of the Peculiar People—which is all stuff and nonsense. He referred to their "want of skill in argument," but he made no attempt to refute them. He told the prisoner that he was "solely responsible" for his little daughter's death—which is a wild exaggeration of the facts, and even of the interested medical evidence. He said he was not "going to make a martyr" of the man—as though the poor fellow had sought the prosecution. And then he bound him over in the sum of £10 to come up for judgment when called upon. Practically, the man was insulted—and discharged. Thus the law was made a laughing-stock, and thus ended the farce of faith.

G. W. FOOTE.

## PROTESTANT FANATICISM.

THE recent riots in Belfast, and the debate in the House of Commons last month upon the Benefices Bill, afforded another instance of the fanatical spirit which dominates the minds of certain Protestants. In reference to Belfast, we may say at once that we fail to see any utility in the periodical processions which take place in Ireland either by the Roman Catholics or the Orangemen. They are simply displays of party feeling—and the most bitter partisans of all are religious ones—which are calculated to provoke bad blood and hostility between citizens. Such processions are regarded as an open defiance to the opposite party, and it is no wonder that they lead to a conflict inimical to the welfare of society. In England, fortunately, such religious demonstrations as take place in Ireland have been largely abandoned, the result of which has been beneficial to the peace of the community; and it is quite time that such a course was adopted in Ireland, where priestcraft, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, overcome reason and common sense. Whatever tends to convert public gatherings into scenes of bloodshed and brutality should be condemned. All classes of the community have a perfect right to meet in public to advocate their respective views, but they have no right to make such occasions an opportunity for violent exhibitions of religious hatred. The world is no longer to be ruled by fanatical processions, but rather by personal thought and enlightened statesmanship.

The cause of the recent outbreak of Protestant fanaticism in Belfast appears to be this. The Irish Nationalists were celebrating the battle of Antrim, which took place in connection with the insurrection of 1798, the object of which was to destroy the supremacy of English government in Ireland, and to secure national independence for the Irish people. The rebellion, however, was not successful. Still, the Nationalists are proud to celebrate the event as one of the many brave efforts the Irish have made to obtain their national freedom. When doing so on June 6 in, we are told, "an orderly and peaceful way," the "pious" Orangemen made a brutal attack upon them, injuring hundreds of their "Christian brethren." We refer to this incident because it is another illustration of the fearful influence that theological fanaticism has upon its devotees. It may be well for the editor of the *Rock* newspaper to study the details of the Protestant outrage which took place in Belfast, before hurling any more of his fierce tirades against Roman Catholics. The following words from the New Testament should have some weight with fanatical Protestants: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite; cast first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."

Granted that the Church of Rome is bigoted, intolerant, and fanatical, and that in its hands our liberties would not be safe. We in no way deny this. On the contrary, having regard for historical accuracy, we are compelled to admit that the Roman Catholic Church has been the foe of freedom wherever its hydra head has been raised. It has trampled under foot the liberties of peoples, and crushed with the iron heel of its despotic power all nobility and independence out of human nature, wherever it has held undisputed sway. It has strangled thought, persecuted science, obstructed progress, fettered literature, and blasted all that is lofty in man. All this, unfortunately, we are bound to concede; but are the Orangemen any better in this respect? It may be that they learned their intolerance from the Catholics; but, wherever they got it, and from whatever source it came, it is most certainly there, and a more narrow-minded and intolerant set of fanatics does not exist than these same Orangemen. Their intelligence is nowhere of a very exalted character, and their zeal is as rabid as the proselytising craze of a Jesuit priest. We would almost as soon trust ourselves in the power of the Pope himself as to a party of Orange fanatics. The Romanist fights for his Church, which is a great and very ancient institution; the Orangeman fights for a shadow which he calls Protestantism, but which has neither form nor consistency. He swaggers about private judgment, but he dare not follow it; he says he is an advocate of liberty, but it is only liberty to agree with him. His creed is a mere negation. He is a Protestant, nothing more, and that with him simply means that he does not believe in Rome; but what he does believe in would puzzle the seven sages of Greece to find out.

In spite of the extreme fanaticism of Protestants, of which we have seen so much of late, they openly confess that their Church is "in a very dangerous position," and that it is the hotbed of "notorious practices," to use the words of the Bishop of Liverpool. This dignitary of the Church of England is reported by the *Rock* as saying: "The increasing evils within the Church ought to be regarded with very great alarm. The injury done, and the harm created, by the increase of these things was endless. It was doing harm in connection with the Nonconformists. There were many of them whom it was desired to bring back into the Church of England, and reunion had been spoken of again and again. But the more they heard of what was going on in the Church of England, the less likelihood there appeared to be of any reunion between themselves and the Protestant Nonconformists. Churchmen all over the land were angry. Some wished to leave the Church of England altogether; in many places they went to no church at all. He knew districts where men were never found in church; in some places he believed ladies went, but men would not go on any account." This is the usual result of any association that is controlled by fanaticism instead of by reason and common sense. We have long been assured that our supposed National Church depended for its support more upon women and emotional men than upon the masculine intelligence of the age.

The evils to which the Bishop of Liverpool referred were those mentioned by Sir W. Harcourt in the House of Commons during the debate on June 16 upon the Benefices Bill, when he said: "There is at present in the Church of England a conspiracy to overthrow the principles of the English Reformation. That conspiracy is widely spread and deeply rooted. That it exists you have only to read the statements which were made in Convocation the other day. I think one of the Bishops used the expression that he was aware that there were secret societies in the Church of England for the purpose of overthrowing the Protestant principles of the English Reformation." The leader of the Opposition then made a bold attack upon what he termed the "perjury" that is being committed by the clergy, pointing out that these are the men who are seeking to have control of the education of the rising generation. We perfectly agree with Sir William that, "if these men conscientiously do not hold the opinions of the Church of England, let them leave it.....But to remain in secret societies, of which I have heard a good deal, and which I believe to be well founded, and to which Bishops have borne testimony, and in the name of the Church of England to have the control of the education of children in the parishes of England, is a thing which, in my opinion, Parliament ought not to

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tolerate." Oh, what receptacles theological institutions are for falsehood, deception, and systematised hypocrisy!

It may be thought by some that we are using strong terms against the Protestant Church; but it should be remembered that the theology which it teaches constitutes a State-supported religion; that it has the authority and protection of the Government of the country; that its churches and cathedrals, its pompous bishops and archbishops, are to a large extent maintained at the public expense; and that this very Church has been a foe to mental freedom and national progress. When we recollect these facts, it is necessary to write plainly in condemnation of a system based upon absurdity and intellectual fraud.

CHARLES WATTS.

## BUDDHA AND HIS TEACHINGS.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

DR. JOHNSON, who, with all his bigotry, was a very good example of the cultured Englishman of last century, remarked: "There are two objects of curiosity—the Christian world and the Mohammedan world; all the rest may be considered as barbarous." Since the days of the great lexicographer, however, new worlds of religious thought have been opened up. We have become considerably acquainted with the religions of ancient Egypt, Assyria, Persia, India, and China, all of which countries had attained a high civilisation long ere Europe emerged from barbarism.

Of Buddhism Dr. Johnson could only have heard as of one of the many gross pagan idolatries. Yet Buddhism, as taught by its founder, was the absolute negation of all idolatry; indeed, of all worship, in the sense in which worship is usually understood. It is only within the past fifty years that materials have been accumulated enabling us to rightly judge of a faith which includes within its pale a third of the earth's inhabitants; which anticipated Christianity in many of its doctrines and practices, and in declaring universal brotherhood and inculcating the mild and unobtrusive virtues of purity, humility, loving-kindness, and forgiveness of injuries; and which, in its philosophy, has anticipated many of the latest phases of European thought. It is only, indeed, within the past dozen years or so, and especially since the publication of translations of various portions of the Buddhist canon of sacred literature among the sacred books of the East, that the merely English reader is enabled to comprehend a faith which can only be classed among religions by enlarging ordinary conceptions of what religion really is. For Buddhism is a religion without a supreme personal Creator, and without any other worship than self-discipline and reverence for holy men. Mr. T. W. Rhys Davids, who has done much to popularise a correct knowledge of Buddha's teachings, says in the General Introduction to his Translation of the Buddhist Suttas (p. 142):—

> "Never in the history of the world had a scheme of salvation been put forth so simple in its nature, so free from any superhuman agency, so independent of, so even antagonistic to, the belief in a soul, the belief in God, and the hope for a future life. And we must not allow our estimate of the importance of the event to be influenced by our disagreement from the opinions set forth. Whether these be right or wrong, it was a turning point in the religious history of man when a reformer full of the most honest moral purpose, and trained in all the intellectual culture of his time, put forward deliberately, and with a knowledge of the opposing views, the doctrine of a salvation to be found here, in this life, in an inward change of heart, to be brought about by perseverance in a mere system of self-culture and of self-control."

Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, was born, probably, about the middle of the sixth century B.C., at Kapilavatthu, in what is now the province of Oude. He was thus nearly the contemporary of Pythagoras, Confucius, and Lao-tse. Various legends are told of him as of other great teachers. According to the common Buddhist view, he was one of a succession of Buddhas who have descended from the Tuchita heavens and become incarnate for the redemption of men. Wondrous prodigies are said to have attended his birth and infancy, some of them surprisingly similar to those related of the founder of Christianity. Dismissing these, there is no reason to doubt that Gautama was an historical character. Dr. Oldenburg, while doubting the story of Gautama's princely truth, completely overthrows the theory of M. Senart that he is merely a Sun-hero.

India, at the time when Gautama lived, was already a civilised country. Its religion, Brahmanism, from which Buddhism is as essentially sprung as Christianity from Judaism, had advanced far beyond the personified nature-worship of the Rig-veda. The Brahmans, while conceding to the people a crowd of tutelary deities, had formulated an inner doctrine of spiritual Pantheism, summed up in the phrase, *ekum eva advitiyam*—"There is but one Being, no second"; and had instituted a system of caste which proved the most powerful social engine ever devised. Among themselves, however, considerable freedom of discussion was allowed. Sixty-three different schools of philosophy are mentioned as existing in the time of Gautama—most of these were concerned with the great religious problem of the Hindus, how to attain *Moksha*—emancipation from the round of transmigrating births. This problem also it was which engaged the attention of Buddhism, although its solution was different from the Brahmanic one of attaining absorption in Brahm, by identification of the Self with the Supreme.

The story of how Gautama, by meditating upon the impermanency of life and the manifold miseries of sentient existence, was led to quit his home in the endeavor to find deliverance for himself and his fellows, is one that has often been told, and which is as familiar to Buddhists as the story of Jesus is among Christians. Mr. Edwin Arnold, in his *Light of Asia*, has, in choice Tennysonian blank verse, treated the subject with a tender, sentimental grace, though scarcely with the majesty of which the theme is susceptible:—

> My chariot shall not roll with bloody wheels
> From victory to victory, till earth
> Wears the red record of my name. I choose
> To tread its paths with patient, stainless feet,
> Making its dust my bed, its loneliest wastes
> My dwelling, and its meanest things my mates;
> Clad in no prouder garb than outcasts wear,
> Fed with no meat save what the charitable
> Give of their will, sheltered by no more pomp
> Than the dim cave lends or the jungle bush.
> This will I do because the woeful cry
> Of life and all flesh living cometh up
> Into my ears, and all my soul is full
> Of pity for the sickness of this world;
> Which I will heal, if healing may be found
> By uttermost renouncing and strong strife
> For which of all the great and lesser Gods
> Have power or pity? Who hath seen them—who?
> What have they wrought to help their worshippers?
> How hath it steadied men to pray, and pay
> Tithes of the corn and oil, to chant the charms,
> To slay the shrieking sacrifice, to rear
> The stately vane, to feed the priests, and call
> On Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, who save
> None—not the worthiest—from the griefs that teach
> Those litanies of flattery and fear
> Ascending day by day, like wasted smoke.

An easily read legend, which, curiously enough, has been transferred to a Christian saint, tells how Gautama was determined to what is called "the great renunciation" by the sight of a blear-eyed, hollow-cheeked old man, tottering on crutches; next of one fever-stricken, his whole body foul with disease; and then of a putrid corpse with dogs and vultures praying on its entrails. Filled with horror and anguish, he lastly saw a serene recluse, dead to all the desires of the world. Happy the lot of a Bhikkhu, he thought, and resolved to retire from the world until, freed from all desire and passion, he could return to reform it. He left his home when aged twenty-nine. He repaired to various noted teachers of philosophy, but none could give him peace. He had a hunger of the heart, no more to be appeased by the phrases of philosophy than by the formulas of priestcraft. He retired to solitude, subjecting himself to the severest discipline of asceticism. For six years he practised the most rigorous austerities, enduring hunger, thirst, heat, rain, and cold, inwardly meditating how to bring about deliverance, and doubtless maturing the system which he eventually preached. Here, at least, he discovered that mortification of the body for the sake of the mind was a mistake, that asceticism was only a discipline, and, if considered of having merit in itself, was a delusion and a snare. Five disciples then deserted him. They had been attracted by his reputation for sanctity, for in the

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Hindu superstition self-torture was esteemed so worthy that by it even the wicked could obtain power over the good. He silently wandered away and sat down under a Bodhi, or sacred fig-tree at Uruvelâ, on the bank of the Lilayan, or Phalgu, river in Behar. Here he vowed never to leave until he had received enlightenment; and, it is said, after temptations by Mara, the Evil One—the details of which, says Mr. Davids (*Hibbert Lecture*, p. 127), are curiously similar to those of the temptation in the wilderness—he here had his inner eye opened. He became awakened, enlightened—a Buddha. In a conception of the power of the human mind to rise above fate by self-control, and by love to others, he had found inward peace. Henceforth his life was an unceasing apostolate. He made his way to Benares, then, as now, the seat of piety and pride, sacred to the Hindu as Mecca to the Mussulman or Jerusalem to the Jew, and preached his first discourse, "The *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*," which Mr. Davids translates the Sûtra of the Foundations of the Kingdom of Righteousness. In this he explained that his doctrine was a middle path between the extremes of sensuality and asceticism, which are alike profitless and ignoble. It consisted of the attainment of Right Views; free from superstition or delusion. Right Aspirations; high and worthy of the intelligent earnest man. Right Speech; kindly, open, truthful. Right Conduct; peaceful, honest, pure. Right Livelihood; working without hurt or danger to any living thing. Right Effort; in self-training and self-control. Right Mindfulness; watchful and active. Right Contemplation; earnest thought on the deep mysteries of life. This was the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to insight, wisdom, Buddhahood, and Nirvana. The necessity of following this path arose from what are called the Four Noble Truths. These affirm (1) The fact of suffering. Birth is suffering; illness, decay, and death are suffering; to be united with the unloved, to be separated from the loved, not to obtain what we desire—in short, suffering is involved in the existence of conscious individuality. (2) The cause of suffering, described as Taṇhâ, the thirst, desire, or lust for externals which act on the senses. This Taṇhâ is usually stated in its threefold form of lust for pleasure, for existence, and prosperity.* (3) The cessation of suffering, to be attained by destroying this lust. (4) The method, being the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddha. As this also forms the subject of his last words in the Para-nibbânam Sutta (or discourse of the Great Decease), there can be little doubt about its forming the essential part of his teaching.

*(To be concluded.)*

## GAMBETTA.

[This article on the great French Atheist, orator, and statesman was written fourteen years ago. It has not appeared before in the *Freethinker*.]

"We shall hear no longer that heroic song which was the poetry of our struggles for nearly fifteen years, rendering triumph more joyous and ennobling defeat." These words were spoken by M. Brisson, the President of the French Chamber of Deputies, over Gambetta's bier at Père La Chaise. They form perhaps the finest tribute to his memory, and worthily celebrate the genius of the great patriot who was carried to his grave by a million of men. M. Brisson struck the keynote of Gambetta's history. He was a sagacious and virile politician, a statesman of the first order, a born leader of men. But he was something more. He was the voice of France, grand as her strength, rich as her greatness, and proud as her glory. From the moment when his eloquence withered the pride of an empire to the moment when he yielded to the universal victor Death, his voice rang out like a clarion over all the tumult and strife of France. Sometimes, indeed, it was like a thunder-peal, stilling all other voices as a lion's roar might drown the barking of dogs. Then he was terrible. Woe to those who crossed his path! The levin-brand accompanied the thunder, the lion's roar heralded the claws and fangs.

Mirabeau, too, was the voice of France in one tremendous crisis. There is much resemblance between these two. Both were of Italian descent, both had strong commanding figures, both had the same stormy mane of black hair, both were supreme orators, both were at home in the whirlwind, both possessed that peculiar mingling of meridional fervor and *finesse*, and both died in the prime of life, too early for their country, but not for the splendor of their renown. The latter man, however, had the happier fortune. Mirabeau left the Revolution without a captain, to drift over shoals and into whirlpools, and to dash on rocks; but Gambetta saw the Republic firmly established, and left it powerful and secure.

Léon Michel Gambetta was born on October 30, 1838, at Cahors, a small Gascon town, which has also the distinction of being the birthplace of Clement Marot. His father, Joseph Gambetta, came from Genoa in the early part of the century. He set up a small grocery business, prospered, and in 1837 married Mdlle. M. Massabie, daughter of a Cahors druggist, by whom he had two children, Léon, and a daughter, Benedette, now Mdme. Leris. Joseph Gambetta still survives, a hale old man; he walked bareheaded two miles after his son's coffin at Nice, despite the rain; and although the loss of his wife and son in one year has told heavily on him, many years may elapse before he sleeps by their side. Like his great son, he possesses a natural eloquence, and some thought him the better talker of the two.

Gambetta was fortunate in his name. It was unique and separated him from the multitude of politicians when he entered the arena. There were any number of respectable Jules—Jules Favre, Jules Grévy, Jules Simon; but he was a Léon, and in the days when he was the idol of the Paris workmen they used to roll out his sonorous name with real pride. Léon Gambetta! There was an amplitude in it that agreed with his face and figure and the style of his eloquence.

Mdlle. Massabie, Gambetta's aunt, devoted herself to him from his infancy. She taught him his letters by means of chocolate tablets, which he was allowed to eat when he could read them. She was perfectly sure he would become a great man, and all her little income was spent on his education. She was his guardian angel until her own death. When he came to Paris to seek his fortune, she accompanied him, and acted as his housekeeper. *Tatan*, as she was familiarly called, brought with her to Paris her plain country ways and Gascon speech. She never praised him to his face, but behind his back she let people know what she thought of "*notre* Léon." Sometimes she stretched forth a prophetic finger and exclaimed "*mais il arrivera.*" She closely scrutinised all his acquaintances, and described them in strong Gascon. This one, she would say, loves you; that one looks like a Jesuit. Gambetta once said that she could tell from the ring of the bell whether any visitor was a friend or an enemy. Mr. Grenville Murray, in the *Daily News* of July 4, 1874, gave a most amusing account of her maternal vigilance:—

> "There is no household in Paris conducted with more genuine simplicity and order. The excellent lady exercising authority therein does nearly everything, sees to everything; lays hold on Gambetta's purse whenever the dividends of the *République Française* swell it; invests the money she economises for him; takes notes of bales of letters—letters from constituents, from patriots, male and female, from foes, from political friends, from spies, from false brethren, from lunatics, which are to be thrown into the fire or answered. Her most arduous task is acting as a buffer between her nephew and visitors innumerable, she making herself as agreeable as one so perpetually cumbered can be to those of whose common sense and sincerity she feels certain, and showing herself dry and curt to importunate lion-hunters. Mdlle. Massabie sticks to her plain provincial ways, dressing on week-days, no matter what high political flyers she has to usher in, in black stuff skirt, loose jacket, and clear starched muslin cap; and on Sundays in plain black silk, guiltless of flounce or frill.....The door is opened by the cousin, a private secretary of Gambetta—a young man of thirty—also brought up by the maiden aunt, already at the Palais de Justice noted for his ability in dealing with crotchety law cases. The visitor passes from the narrow passage into a small, uncarpeted, meagrely-furnished but very neat dining-room, where he finds the lady of the house *on guard*. She ushers him, according to the degree of confidence he inspires or the intimacy he enjoys, into the study."

*Tatan* remained with him until she was struck with paralysis in 1876. After Gambetta had routed the

* Taṇhâ, however, is sometimes led back to avigga (ignorance) as its deepest root. Again, taṇhâ is said to be the mother, and avigga the father of all.

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reactionaries in the electoral campaign of 1877, he went straight to Nice and soothed her last hours. The attachment was honorable to both. Gambetta had a faculty for inspiring affection. The faithful valet, François, who attended him to the last, was a poor mobile whom he picked up in 1870. Wages or no wages, he would not be parted from his master. All Gambetta's friends loved him deeply, and he deserved their love. Nothing could be more touching than the scenes witnessed at Villa d'Avray directly after his death. Men of high intellect and position wept aloud, eyes were swollen with grief, and many sat still and speechless, stunned by the dreadful blow. It was hard to realise that the great warm heart was for ever cold, and that splendid exuberance for ever quenched.

Gambetta's uncle was a priest, and his father wished him to enter that profession. Accordingly he was sent to a clerical seminary. He was ardently religious, and at the age of ten he wrote an ode dedicated to "his patron, St. Léon, and to all the Popes called Léon." As an illustration of the virulence with which he was attacked by certain sections of the press in the height of his popularity, it may be mentioned that this juvenile production was actually cited to prove him a renegade. But he only laughed heartily at it, unlike Rochefort, who raved with passion when a Bonapartist journal found and reprinted an ode to the Virgin, which he had published at the age of seventeen.

Notwithstanding his precocious piety, Gambetta did not remain long at this seminary. He lacked several religious virtues, and especially humility. He would not take blows without returning them, he was disputatious, he was headstrong. His ecclesiastical masters reported him as *un esprit rebelle, turbulent*, and advised his removal to another school. He was then sent to the lay public school at Cahors, where he soon won golden opinions. He became the best Latin scholar in the establishment, and the most proficient in French composition. But the most remarkable fact is that his superiors gave him an excellent character. They described him as "passionate without being vindictive, and proud without arrogance." No doubt the secret of the different estimate formed by his religious tutors may be found in their own words. They foretold that he would make a great figure in life, "but never," they regretfully added, "as a Churchman."

Even at this early age Gambetta showed a bent for politics. He read the parliamentary debates in some old volumes of the *Constitutionel*, and was delighted with the speeches of Thiers. On one occasion, in his seventeenth year, he had to deliver an address in Latin to M. Fourtoul, Minister of Public Instruction, who visited the town. The address was revised by the head master, but in declaiming it Gambetta inserted some reflections of his own upon the reign of Tiberius, by whom he meant Napoleon III. M. Fourtoul did not scent the mischief, and when the head scholar had finished his oration the Minister of Public Instruction patted him on the head, saying "*très bien, très bien.*"

G. W. FOOTE.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE LADIES AND THE MAGISTRATE.

THERE was a blushing magistrate
All in the street of Bow;
Said he: "This case is very blue;
Dear ladies, go! I beg you to—
It really is not fit for you."
And yet they would not go.

The magistrate, he shook his head,
And said, with air recondite:
"The law permits you to be here,
'Tis true; but mark, this book will sear
Your moral fibre; mine, I fear,
Was long since quite beyond it."

And yet the ladies stayed and stayed
Until the case was over;
Their friends now scan them eagerly,
The awful difference to see
'Twixt what they were and what they be.
Yet nought can they discover.

WILLIAM PLATT.

## SLAVERY.

EASY is the descent into hell, but most difficult is the ascent to the world of mortals; yet in this end of the nineteenth century, when men who claim to be civilised assert that freedom has reached fruition, a state of miserable bondage obtains from which we would raise them, and we will.

The condition of the Israelites in Egypt, the bodily fatigue they underwent, the physical suffering they endured; the anguish of mind, the agony of soul that were nearly keen enough to turn the brain; these have been expatiated on time after time. The refinement of torture endured by negroes, not in Africa only, but in the United States before the civil war, has been written about in words of fire. And now slavery is relegated, so far as mere recognised bodily bondage goes, to the limbo of a dead past, the memory of which is ever present; so that the mere mention even of a condition of serfdom is sufficient to arouse feelings of pity in any civilised community. And rightly so. But much as the powers that be may congratulate themselves and one another on the supposed suppression of the slave traffic, is it not a fact that the minds and hearts of thousands of men and women are in a bondage more dreadful than any Egyptian bondage—slaves to the superstitions of past ages? The religion of their forefathers hangs like a millstone around their necks; the shackles of dogmas made in the age of faith impede their progress; reason is dethroned in the churches. Why is it? Is it that environment has so great an influence that they cannot free themselves from it? Or is it that the religious instruction received in the early days—an impression always the most lasting—gives a bias to the mind, a bent to the inclination which few are able to overcome when the age of reason bids faith stand on one side? Certainly bibliolatry is a great factor in the slavery of mind. In the days of youth, when the soul is plastic, when the foundations of the superstructure of character are laid, when the impress of the future is stamped indelibly on each individual; in those early days, if the Bible is crowned with myrtle, enshrined in the highest niche, regarded as too sacred to question, then no wonder if its words are considered divine, if its superstitions are thought sacred truth, if its myths and mysteries are believed to be sanctified facts, far on through the days of early manhood to middle age. This Bible, which has been proved no revelation, which contradicts itself over and over again, which is full of immoralities, absurdities, and inconsistencies, which is in no sense final—this book is one of the chains which enslave mankind to error. Freethought must, for some time, direct much of its energy to the destruction of this fetish. Bibliolatry permeates the sects. Nonconformists swear by it, the Established Church proclaims "Church doctrine to be Bible truth." Every sermon assumes the truth of the Scriptures. The stock argument of the Christian is a text. To free them from their bondage it is necessary for all Freethinkers to be zealous in propagandist work of a destructive nature. Reconstruction will come of itself. With us is freedom, and therefore truth.

J. S.

## WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

J. Pruett, 5s.; T. M. G., 1s.; B. C. W., 1s.; P. Cassidy, 1s.; T. J. Thurlow (collection), 4s.; Glasgow Branch N. S. S., £1; T. Robertson, 5s.

*Per Miss Vance:*—W. Fowler, 1s.; R. E., 2s. 6d.

*Per R. Forder:*—E. Holyoake Marsh, £2; G. C., 2s.; G. Milford, 1s.

A little girl in Boston wrote a composition on boys. Here it is: "The boy is not an animal, yet he can be heard to a considerable distance. When a boy hollers he opens his big mouth like frogs but girls hold their tongue till they are spoke to, and then they answer respectable and tell just how it was. A boy thinks himself clever because he can wade where it is deep, but God made the dry land for every living thing, and rested on the seventh day. When the boy grows up he is called a husband, and then he stops wading and stays out nights, but the grown-up girl is a widow and keeps house."

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## THE BEDBOROUGH CASE.

A SPECIAL meeting of the Free Press Defence Committee was held on Friday evening, June 24, at the Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden, London. Mr. G. W. Foote, who occupied the chair, moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Mr. William Platt, and carried unanimously :—

> "That, while not concerned to oppose, defend, or express any opinion respecting the particular views of Mr. Bedborough or of the various other persons for circulating whose writings he is being prosecuted, this meeting regards the present case as one which requires the most careful watching in the interest of the general freedom of the press ; and this meeting pledges itself to endeavor to raise the necessary means for Mr. Bedborough's defence, regarding this as the most practical assertion of the principle which is assailed by the prosecution."

It was then resolved that a manifesto, on the basis of this resolution, should be drawn up and printed after it had passed the Executive. A sub-committee was appointed to draft this document—consisting of Messrs. G. W. Foote, William Platt, and Geoffrey Mortimer. These gentlemen met the next day, and their draft was immediately transmitted to the honorary secretary, Mr. Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, London, N. No doubt we shall be able to print it in the next number of the *Freethinker*.

Amongst those who have already joined the Committee are Robert Buchanan, George Moore, Walter Crane, Edward Carpenter, G. W. Foote, G. J. Holyoake, J. M. Robertson, George Bernard Shaw, A. E. Fletcher, John Trevor, William Platt, William Sharp, T. S. Barrett, Dr. Helen Densmore, Herbert Burrows, and H. M. Hyndman. The Committee is rapidly enlarging, and a list of additional names will be published shortly. We may add that application will be made for a writ of certiorari to remove the trial of the case to the Court of Queen's Bench.

## HELL NOT DEAD YET.

THE clergy are always telling Freethinkers that in attacking the dogma of hell-fire they are flogging a dead horse. The good, kind, truthful Christian gentlemen do not use the same language to their flock. Then it is their business to keep hell well alight.

A little book lies before us at this moment, *The Blessed Sacrament, Preparation, Attendance, Giving of Thanks, Spiritual Communion, Drawn from the Writings of the Saints*, by A Parish Priest, bearing the imprint of Mowbray & Co., Farringdon-street, London, E.C. This volume has been reprinted again and again, and is used as a handbook for the Communion Service. This masterpiece starts as follows :—

> "We have about us, or, to speak more truly, we are ourselves, immortal souls. We are beings who have once been born, but who now can never die. We came out of nothing, but we cannot go into nothing again ; O God forbid, the merciful great God forbid, we should pass into nothing ! When they who have led lives of pleasure, of covetousness, of self-willed sin—when such, I say, come to lie upon their death-beds, they may perhaps feel that awful, impossible wish that they could pass into nothing ; for to be nothing were better than to be in the strong gripe of Satan, amid the intolerable heats of hell. Dying sinners may feel that their immortality is to be an unendingness of pain, of remorse, of despair ; and the deadness and the dumbness of passing into nothing, though it surely would make even a dying sinner shudder, would be more bearable to think of than the life in hell—the living in fire, the feeding on fire, the breathing fire, the being clothed in fire, the thirsting for cool water where all, all is fire—above, beneath, on this side, on that side, a far-stretching country of burning fire. Fearful is the thought ! fearful enough to quench lust, to cool anger, to make us out of love with money, to spoil our appetites for worldly pleasures !" etc.

Thousands of copies of this book are in circulation, principally among young people preparing for their first Communion.

Some Freethinkers fondly imagine that at the latter end of the nineteenth century the religion of the "merciful, great God" has been shorn of its worst features. This is not by any means the case. The priest still insinuates the subtle poison of hell into the minds of the rising generation, the while he flatters us by a pretended retreat.

## ACID DROPS.

ABOUT five thousand children were assembled in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoon. The Duchess of Portland presided over the meeting, which was joined by some adults. After some speech-making the following resolution was carried :—"That this meeting views with satisfaction the great blessings that have accrued to Scotland, Ireland, and Wales from the Acts of Parliament closing licensed premises on the Lord's Day ; and hereby affirms the principle of Imperial Sunday Closing for the whole of the United Kingdom." Every child present had a bun and a box of chocolates. That was all right. But why on earth were they brought there to demonstrate against the ways and doings of their elders ? It is just the method to turn them all into little prigs and pharisees.

The Duchess of Portland is a kind, amiable lady ; but, like too many of her sex, she is fond of short cuts to what she desires, and is apt to rely upon compulsion instead of persuasion. It is doubtless very good of her to try to regulate common people's consumption of beer, but she had better begin with her own class, and make *them* teetotalers, before she troubles herself about the poor man's half-pint. As for Sunday drinking, we cannot see it is any worse than Monday drinking. What her ladyship and the general body of Temperance people are demanding is a whole day of trade protection for the ministers of Christianity. No wonder they have the support of the Churches.

Emperor William is hearing a little unpleasant truth from one of his subjects. Herr Harden, who is charged with *lèse-majesté*, and whose paper has been confiscated, addresses an open letter to this pious, bigoted, and tyrannical monarch, telling him that he is misinformed about the actual sentiment of the nation towards him, and that he is surrounded by a clique of sycophants who flatter him as the master in every art and science.

The imperial Bombastes Furioso of Germany is too pious to follow the example of a much greater man than himself—namely, the freethinking Frederick the Great. That tough old monarch allowed all his subjects freedom of thought and speech. One day he was riding through a street in Berlin, attended by one orderly—for he was a real King of men, and disdained all idle display. A crowd was gathered in front of a shop window, and the old King pulled up his horse to see what they were gazing at. It was a caricature of himself. But he didn't fall into a passion and summon the police. He was not built that way. Besides, his achievements were such that he could safely stand a little ridicule. So he sent his orderly in with a message to the shopkeeper. "Tell him to place it lower down," said Frederick, "as the people are cricking their necks by looking up at it." He was a wise man.

One is glad to know that Admiral Sampson has formally withdrawn his charge against the Spaniards of having mutilated dead American soldiers. It was a peculiarly odious charge, which should not have been made without absolute evidence. It naturally stirred up intense indignation in the United States, and indignation of an opposite character in Spain. If people must fight they should try to fight with as much chivalry as possible. The proverb says that the Devil should have his due, and slander should be avoided even against the Spaniard, who has sins enough to answer for without such inventions.

The Rev. Charles Garnett, Congregationalist, of Manchester, has published his sermon on the death of Gladstone. There is little in it that calls for our comment, but one point may be noticed. We are told that Gladstone had great faith in God, and "hence the nobility of his political ideals." Charles Bradlaugh had no faith in God, and his political ideals were as high as those of Gladstone. Men of *all* political parties have faith in God. Lord Salisbury is as sincere a Christian as the late Liberal leader. Mr. Garnett did not stop to think of this. He was too much bent on making a little capital for his own faith.

Christian journals are still playing the fool over Mr. John Morley. Here is the *British Weekly* stating that Mr. Morley is profoundly impressed by the religious devotion of some of the younger Tories in the House of Commons. There can be little doubt, it says, that he looks back with compunction and shame to many of his early follies, in particular to the ridiculous article in which he announced that the author of *Supernatural Religion* had pulverised Christianity. It is pretended that these remarks are founded on a more or less private conversation with Mr. Morley—which we more or less respectfully decline to believe.

The Bishop of London talked common sense—or, if you like, sound philosophy—at the recent opening of a Home

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for boys at Gunnersbury. "There was nothing," he said, "about which so much nonsense was talked as punishment. People wanted to refine punishment, they wanted it to have some qualities which it could not possibly have. Punishment could be nothing else than simply taking revenge; punishment was not reformatory." We quite agree with this; we have said it over and over again. But if punishment is simply revenge, however disguised by euphemisms, what about *everlasting* punishment? Is it not simply everlasting revenge? And doesn't it make the sinner a victim and God a devil? As the gentleman in the play says, We pause for a reply.

Francis Frederic Weeks, artist and photographer, has been sentenced at the Old Bailey to seven years' penal servitude for bigamy and unlawfully assaulting his own daughter. Mr. Justice Grantham said that Weeks, although professing religious sentiments, was a villain of the deepest dye.

According to the Boston *Herald*, there is a man living near Derby, Connecticut, who is engaged in making violins for the angels. He says that God has ordered a thousand. No money will tempt him to part with the instruments. They are said to be finely constructed, for he is an expert woodworker, and doubtless they will some day fall into the hands of players who are a little lower than the angels.

Canon Wilberforce preached lately in Westminster Abbey on Dives and Lazarus. He does not appear to have told his congregation that Dives had but one vice—his wealth; or that Lazarus had but two virtues—his poverty and his sore legs. What the preacher did was to denounce, without mentioning it, the firm of Bryant and May. "It is the simple Christian duty of every man," said Canon Wilberforce, "so far as is possible, to ascertain the condition of the workpeople by whose toil the dividends on his investments are accumulated." Substantially this is true enough. But why "*Christian* duty"? Certainly it is not the Christian duty of *every* man. It is not the Christian duty of any non-Christian. Such a duty is really one of common humanity. But there is no repressing the "cheek" of these Christian preachers. They generally help good movements at the eleventh hour, when it is safe and even profitable, and then they talk as if they had done everything. Plenty of Freethinkers denounced the recklessness of commercial greed before Canon Wilberforce rendered his tardy assistance.

We note a statement in the *Sydney Bulletin*, that a rich North Lyell man named Crotty, having gone to glory perhaps sooner than he wanted to, has left his widow £100 a year, and all the rest of his wealth to the Roman Catholic Church. Mrs. Crotty went through all the bad times with her husband, and now she is treated (relatively) like a pauper, while lazy priests fatten on the estates. Her allowance is to be increased to £600 a year if she enters a convent. On this condition we dare say the priests will keep her out of one.

What a strange world this is! What a mixture it contains of good, bad, and indifferent! Saints and sinners, heroes and cowards, philosophers and fools, jostle each other in the great human crowd. Just look at the Blackwall tragedy at the launching of the new battleship *Albion*. Sightseers throng on a temporary wooden bridge, which is marked "Dangerous," and from which the police warn them in vain. The only way to get them off, as one constable said, was to "chuck" them off. There they would stand, and when the great wave came that was caused by the big ship taking the water, they and the bridge were all swept away together. So much for the fools, and now for the heroes. All sorts of men who could swim plunged into the water and fished out bodies—some living, some dead—passed them over to the people on shore, and then plunged in again to save more. Some of them nearly lost their own lives in the work of rescue. So much for the heroes, and now for the scoundrels. Some of the rescuers laid their coats and waistcoats down, the latter containing their watches; and these garments, with their contents, were walked off with by thieves. Just fancy! A man is risking his life to save others, and a scoundrel robs him while he is doing it! Surely a robber like this is the most infamous specimen of degraded humanity; worse than a burglar, worse than a passionate murderer. To get hold of him, if possible, and quietly extinguish him in a lethal chamber, seems the only thing to be done with him. His case is utterly hopeless. There is nothing in him for reformation to work upon. And if God created him, it only shows that God has a lot to answer for.

Down at Yarmouth the Town Council wanted a strip of Church land for a much-needed street improvement. The Church, having a keen taste for mammon, asked a very heavy price, and stuck to it. Thereupon the Town Council published a list of grants of land made by it for Church purposes during recent years, with the terms in each case. There had been five such grants, and the price paid was two hundred times less per square yard than the Church is now demanding. Dear, good, disinterested, self-sacrificing Church!

Mr. William Redmond, who belongs to a special parliamentary assembly of seven or eight Irish members in the House of Commons, writes to the *Times* as a Roman Catholic, and protests against the language used by some of the Protestant speakers in the debate on the Benefices Bill. For our part, however, we don't quite see where Mr. Redmond, or any other Irishman, comes in on this subject. The Church of England concerns the people of England, who are not going to ask Irishmen what they should say in a discussion upon its ritual and discipline.

Many years ago this same William Redmond, whose constituents at that time could all have been conveyed to Westminster in two or three omnibuses, egged on the Gladstone government of the day to prosecute the *Freethinker* for "blasphemy." Mr. Redmond, as a Catholic, doesn't mind imprisoning his religious opponents, but he cannot bear to hear his own religion so much as alluded to unflatteringly. Just as bullies are always cowards, and censorious people cannot abide criticism, so your bigot cries out that he is insulted if he hears a word of reproach.

Canon Knox-Little, who is a Ritualist High Churchman, pitches into Sir William Harcourt for saying that hundreds of parsons are false to their vows. "The honorable gentleman," he says, "is plunged in such a depth of abysmal ignorance, he has got into the habit for so long of saying what he thinks may politically 'pay,' that I have no doubt the lines between truth and falsehood are so deplorably blurred in his mind on such subjects that he really does not know what is true and what is not true." Which is bad writing as well as bad temper. But if you prick the skin of a priest you generally make acquaintance with a remarkable species of "charity."

Mr. Kensit, the Paternoster-row bookseller, who has stirred up all this hubbub, now asks for £5,000 for his crusade in favor of what he calls a Second Reformation. We thought it would come to that.

Mr. Kensit has been furnished with a bodyguard by the Order of Gideonites. "I have subscribed to their club," he said to a *Daily News* man, "where they not only practise boxing, but have all manner of games under a Dissenting chapel." Mr. Kensit said that "Father Jay has a similar club at Holy Trinity, Shoreditch, and, if I am not mistaken, its members have gone to Ritualistic churches to protect the clergy and congregations." How these Christians love one another!

Dr. Parker has just held his Jubilee at the City Temple. He has been preaching for fifty years, and doing pretty well at the business. One anthem sung at the service was written by Dr. Parker himself—"When wilt thou come again, my absent Savior?' But does the Doctor really want him to come? Would he relish the prospect of having to sell all he has and giving the proceeds to the poor? We venture to doubt it. However, there is no need for Dr. Parker to be frightened. Christ has been coming for nearly two thousand years, and in spite of Prophet Baxter he is likely to be coming for the next two thousand years. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

The *Christian Budget*, a new paper, unkindly gives a list of the seven different predictions of Prophet Baxter as to the second coming of Christ. Six of them have already expired, and the seventh runs out in 1901. Baxter has been wrong six times. "It remains to be seen," the *Budget* says, "what will be the fate of the seventh prediction." That doesn't trouble Baxter, however; he has survived six exposures, and he guesses he'll get over the seventh.

Edward Baker (who is he?) writes to the *East London Advertiser* asking for "the aid of all those interested in civic righteousness to help rid Limehouse of the debasing and demoralising teachings of Secularism." This gentleman doesn't understand what he opposes. He thinks that Secularism has, and can have, no morality, because it knows nothing of God. This is so ridiculous that the editor appends a note pointing out that "we have no evidence that the leaders of the Secular party attempt to shield themselves behind the doctrine of moral irresponsibility."

When the prophet Jonah fell—or rather, was thrown—overboard the Lord prepared a great fish, which Jesus Christ said was a whale, to take him in out of the wet, to find him lodgings if not board for three days and nights, and finally to land him safe and sound at his proper destination. Unfortunately the Lord was not so kind to the sailors on board the boat belonging to a Russian battleship, which capsized

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at Noumea. Fourteen of them were instantly devoured by sharks. Yet every one of these poor fellows was probably as good as Jonah.

"Providence" has been unpleasantly active at Port Arthur. A Chinese torpedo boat was driven ashore in the recent typhoon, and 130 sailors were drowned.

The Marquis of Salisbury has received a deputation of members of parliament, who begged him to take up the cause of the clergy. They declared that the taxation of clerical incomes was excessive. His lordship admitted the grievance, but held out no hope of its being redressed in the immediate future. Poor clergy! How sad it is that some of them are compelled to practise what they preach, and earn the blessings of poverty.

Mr. Chaplin is a Tory; he is also a Christian; and perhaps in this double capacity he went down to Grays on Saturday, June 25, and gave away the prizes to the boys on board the *Exmouth* training-ship. In the course of his speech he gave utterance to the following: "They had heard it said, no doubt—and it was perfectly true—that the poor were always with us." Mr. Chaplin patronising Jesus Christ in this way is a curious spectacle.

The Peculiar People fence the question, Would they trust to prayer in the case of a broken limb? They reply that those who trust in the Lord never get one broken. Still, they are not free from accidents. One of the persons drowned at the launching of the *Albion* was Samuel Southgate, son of Elder Southgate, a well-known member of the Peculiar People at Canning Town.

The Spanish government is chiefly occupied in telling lies to the Spanish people. Official telegrams are read out in the Chambers, and afterwards published at large, which are as romantic as the most extravagant adventures of Don Quixote. After one of these performances the other day, Senor Fabie, a member of the Senate, made a flowery patriotic speech, and ended by invoking the God of Armies on behalf of those who were defending Spain's honor and rights. This gentleman forgot that the God of Armies is always on the side of the upper dog in the fight. If Spain were stronger than the United States, she would have the support of this God without praying for it.

The young King of Spain (poor boy!) made his first Communion on June 22 in a private chapel in the Palace. All the Ministers were present, and the Bishop of Sion officiated. This worthy addressed the young King, enjoining him to think of the misfortunes of his country, and to ask God to protect her. The next day the lad was confirmed in the presence of a large and distinguished assembly of princes, prelates, ministers of state, and members of the aristocracy. Confirmation is a sort of spiritual vaccination, and it doesn't always "take effect." Whether it has done so or not in this case, we have no means of ascertaining; and, to tell the truth, we are not very curious to learn.

Mr. Nevinson, who has written a striking account of the recent war between Greece and Turkey, depicts the Greek country priest as an ignorant, superstitious, mechanical gabbler. One brace of priests galloped through the service in the most irreverent fashion, and their "only audience was God and the village idiot." Query, Was this two persons or one?

At the recent International Congress of Spiritualists in London, which was honored by the patronage of that enterprising and eccentric gentleman, Mr. W. T. Stead, a paper was read by a Russian representative, who gave a circumstantial account of the doings of a "medium" who was always able to warn the Czar against Nihilist plots. "It is sad to record," says the *Daily News* reporter, "that so useful an ally to the Scotland Yard of St. Petersburg could not stand the strain, and is now suffering from softening of the brain.

Messrs. Smith and Sons, the great book and periodical distributors, have a monopoly of many railway stalls and other agencies of circulation, and they ought to be compelled to deal fairly by the public. Instead of this, they set up a press censorship of their own, as though their literary or ethical opinions were of the slightest importance to anyone but themselves. They always refused to supply customers with Bradlaugh's *National Reformer*, which, of course, was a great detriment to its sale. Generally speaking, too, they boycott the *Freethinker*, which would probably have twice or thrice its present circulation if it were only as accessible as other journals. But the firm of "Old Morality" does not stop at papers; it applies the censorship also to books. It refused, for instance, to sell Mr. George Moore's *Esther Waters*—a book which Mr. Gladstone approved and wished to see widely read. Now it boycotts Mr. Moore's new book, *Evelyn Innes*.

We have not yet had time to read Mr. Moore's new novel, but we have glanced at it, and it seems to be a very careful and conscientious piece of work. We can quite believe that the author spent three years over it and copied it out five times. That it is plain-spoken is obvious, that it is indecent is an absurdity. Mr. Moore himself, in replying to the *Westminster Gazette*, claims for his book a high moral intention. His central idea is that obedience to conscience is what differentiates man from the beasts, and he seeks to exhibit the triumph of conscience over sensual desires and vagrant affections. Is it likely, then, he asks, that "an immoral book should have been written around a profoundly moral idea?"

Sheriff Guthrie, of Glasgow, trying a case of wife assault, said he was not one of those who thought that, under all circumstances, it was a heinous offence for a man to lift his hand against his wife when she was misbehaving, but it should be done "in reason and moderation." But supposing the wife is the stronger of the two—as is sometimes the case—is it right for her to apply the same "reason and moderation" to her husband? Sheriff Guthrie should look at this side of the problem and deliver another judgment.

Some anonymous Christian, anxious for the salvation of other people's souls, advertises in the *Westminster Gazette* as follows: "Grieve for your sins, confess to God his justice in condemning you, and truly believe his Son is your own Savior. Eternity in hell is the only alternative." This advertiser should go to hell himself. We don't mean swearing. Nothing of the kind. What we mean is, that if he went to hell and came back he would be able to give us more precise information. Perhaps he wouldn't find the way back. Well, that might be awkward for him, but probably the world wouldn't put on mourning.

J. T. Gallaghan, M.D., contributes some ricketty verses to *Donahue's Magazine*, which are reprinted over here in the *Monitor*. He tells what Catholics have done for America, and one couplet is really a gem:—

> Were not Catholics the foremost? First and only in that day
> To protect and grant all people right to worship their own way?

"Foremost," "first," and "only" show that the poet is a true Irishman. But that is a minor point. The cream of the joke is its history. The Catholics in America gave the natives the choice of embracing the Romish faith or being reduced to slavery if their lives were spared. Dr. Gallaghan has read the record upside down—that is, if he has read it at all.

"General" Booth's "Self-denial" plan of raising the wind is catching on in the Church of England. A new organ is wanted in Norwich Cathedral, and the cost is estimated at £3,000. To realise this sum Dean Lefroy appeals to the whole diocese. He asks the faithful to abstain during one week from spirituous drinks, tobacco, concerts, theatres, and every other luxury, and to give the amount thus saved "to the Almighty." Of course the Almighty doesn't want it, and won't get it. Dean Lefroy, however, will take it as his commission agent; and, in the eye of a priest, it comes to exactly the same thing.

The following is said to be a *bona-fide* version of a prayer offered up lately by a "Christianized Chinkee":—

> Lor blessee Legislatee Councillee,
> Give him evly ting bountifully,
> Allee longee chilee, let him havee (twentee)
> Allee samee money, havee muchee plentee;
> Plentee muchee cabbagee, turnipee, and tatee,
> Lor muchee blessee Council Legislatee.
> But fo him Legislatee Semblee,
> Lor makee him plentee muchee tremblee,
> No chilee, no monee, no letter havee,
> Him poor John, too muchee savee
> No lettucee, no turnipee, no cabbagee.
> Him for poor John too muchee savagee
> No landee, no closee, no monee-boxee,
> But Lor give him plentee smallee poxee.

The Church pleases to style Materialism "The Gospel of Negation." Indeed! What do we deny? A solitary fact, truth, an object of knowledge, or what? The priest cannot answer. We simply deny their bold affirmations, originated in ages of ignorance, and which at the present day are farther from being maintained by the data of science than ever before. Materialists affirm that nature is all, that it is supreme, and that it contains within itself all the elements and the cogencies needed to evolve cosmic and animal life. This the Church denies. These self-evident facts, revealed to the humblest human being by science and his own senses, it ignores. Which is the "Gospel of Negation"? Which is the true unbeliever?—*O. Wettstein.*

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, July 3, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W.: 7.30, "The Revolt of the Parsons."

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

J. S.—Shall appear.

A. T. Barnard.—Received with thanks.

G. Barber.—Thanks for the copy of Rev. C. Garnett's sermon on Gladstone.

G. W. Blythe.—We do *not* agree with you that the Peculiar People ought to be fined or otherwise punished; certainly not while this is a Christian country, and while the jury are sworn in on a copy of the very Word of God which these people obey.

C. Blyton.—Mr. Foote dropped his Lecture Scheme in favor of the Treasurer's Scheme, which has been in operation for the last twelve months. Thanks for your good wishes for the Secular incorporation.

T. Shore.—Thanks. See paragraph.

Patrick Treacy asks whether the Emperor of Austria is privileged to perform Mass once a year. We never heard of such a thing. Our correspondent might ask the *Tablet* or some other Catholic organ.

F. W. Donaldson writes: "I shall be very glad indeed if you will put me down as a member of the Secular Society, Limited. I enclose herewith ten shillings, and take the opportunity to express my grateful thanks to you for what you have done in this important matter."

T. J. Thurlow.—It is good of you to interest yourself so in the Wheeler Fund.

T. Fisher.—Thanks. It is very difficult to say whether Chiniquay's book is altogether trustworthy, but we believe it is largely so. The Secular Society, Limited, is quite distinct from the N. S. S., though of course not in opposition to it. The wisest men often make very poor prophets. We expressed our view, for what it is worth, in the opening of our article last week on "The Secular Charter." Now it is best to go on with the work and await developments.

Enquirer.—Neither Mr. Foote nor anyone else will be the treasurer of the new incorporation, the Secular Society, Limited. The Board of Directors will have a banking account; all monies received will be paid into it, and all expended will be withdrawn, in the usual way, by cheques signed by as many members of the Board as may be decided. The Board will hold its first meeting in a few days for the purpose of admitting applicants for membership of the Society.

J. T. E. sends cheque for £2, and promises support to the extent of £5, to the Secular Society, Limited. He thinks it "the grandest move of our time, worthy of Bradlaugh and full of work for Foote." This correspondent asks whether members cannot subscribe *more* than 10s. annually. We reply that the 10s. for the first year, and 5s. a year afterwards, is necessary to constitute membership. Beyond that any member can donate as much as he pleases to the Society, or bequeath any sum or any property to it by will.

Miss E. M. Vance sends 10s. with an application for membership in the Secular incorporation.

Non Dei.—(1) Interesting as a local correspondence. Your letter should do good. Sorry you could not get in your second letter. (2) Mr. Thompson's *Democratic Readings* are excellent in their way. Of course they are intended for the million. If you want a thorough grounding in Freethought, you will have to read other books. You will find a great deal of information about the Bible in Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes* and *Bible Romances*, the footnotes of which contain references to many valuable and authoritative works. *Crimes of Christianity* will also give you much historical information. The cheapest book on the date and authorship of the Old and New Testaments is Dr. Giles's *Hebrew and Christian Records*.

H. R. Clifton.—List given out to printer as desired. Your little *Secular News* is a good idea. We wish it success. Thanks for your handsome reference to the new Secular incorporation.

A. B. Moss.—Pleased to hear that the fellow Taylor failed in his attempt to break up your fine meeting on Peckham Rye last Sunday. We can well believe that the police kept a sharp eye upon him.

W. Cox.—Glad to hear that a subscription to the Wheeler Fund is coming from the Liverpool Branch.

James Neate, of the Bethnal Green Branch, an East London stalwart, applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. "I think the venture a good one," he says, "and deserving a good start-off from Freethinkers all over the country."

J. D. Leggett applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, which he wishes all success.

Mrs. Gladys Dawson, Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden, London, W.C., is the honorary treasurer of the Free Press Defence Committee. Subscriptions in aid of Mr. Bedborough's defence are urgently needed. Mr. Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, London, N., is the honorary secretary.

Dr. W. W. Hardwicke writes: "I have just read your scheme of the Secular Society, Limited, and am only astonished that it has never been proposed before."

S. Fulton.—The balance of the old Bradlaugh Memorial subscription, amounting to about £60, is locked up in the Birkbeck Bank in the names of G. W. Foote, George Anderson, and W. H. Reynolds and cannot be withdrawn because the last refuses to sign the necessary document. No such difficulty can possibly arise in connection with the Secular Society, Limited.

T. Robertson, secretary of the N. S. S. Glasgow Branch, sends 10s. with application for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. "If you succeed," he says, "in the flotation of the Society, you will have done much to nullify the disabling effect of the Blasphemy Laws."

F. Smallman writes: "I desire to become a member of the Secular Society, Limited, as per your 'Secular Charter' printed in last week's *Freethinker*, and enclose herewith cheque for 10s., the amount of the entrance fee. If you have a separate prospectus with the Memorandum and Articles of Association printed, I shall be glad to receive a copy of the same." We have sent a copy, and shall be glad to send other copies to serious applicants.

Papers Received.—Awakener of India—Liberator—Truthseeker (Bradford)—Sydney Bulletin—People's Journal—Isle of Man Times—Solidarity—Nelson Chronicle—Boston Investigator—Christian Budget—Progressive Thinker—Freidenker—Adult—New Century—Weekly Citizen.

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 is due.

*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.

The National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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.

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

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. Foote lectured to a very good audience, considering the warm weather, at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, his subject being "The Ladies of the Bible." Mr. Harry Brown occupied the chair, and spoke with tact and brevity—two excellent qualities in a chairman. The lecture was often amusing; at any rate, the audience indulged in plenty of laughter. Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening (July 3), taking for his subject "The Revolt of the Parsons." The present rumpus in the Church of England will be dealt with, and the true character and position of the State Church proved from history and statistics.

Mr. George Anderson, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, well-known to most Freethinkers, writes to say that he wishes to become a member of the Secular Society, Limited. We have much pleasure in recording the fact.

Several others have applied to become members of the Secular Society, Limited. We hope a hundred more applications, at least, will be received during the next two or three weeks. For the present they should be sent direct to Mr. Foote, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. As soon as the Board of Directors has admitted the first batch of members, and appointed a secretary, an announcement will be made in our columns.

Charles Darwin was really a far more important man than William Ewart Gladstone. His ideas were seminal. He was a bloodless revolutionist. He moved the mind of the whole world from his quiet Kentish village. His fame has gone forth to all lands, and it will grow with the ages. Posterity will mention him as they mention Sir Isaac Newton.

A monument to Darwin has just been unveiled in the Zoological Gardens, Antwerp, in the presence of all the authorities in the city. It consists of a bust of the great Evolutionist being crowned with a wreath of laurels by a beautiful female figure representing Mankind. The memorial is the work of M. Lambeaux, the greatest living Belgian sculptor.

We have received a new number of the *Awakener of India*, edited by N. K. Ramasami Aiya, High Court Vakil, at Madras. We have also received a letter from the editor,

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who says—and we can easily believe him—that it is very uphill work to oppose superstition in India. However, he means to do all he can, though it costs him time and money, as his little magazine has to be circulated gratuitously. He appeals to the educated classes with a view to stemming the tide of Revivalism and Mysticism which threatens to hamper the beneficial effects of Western science and civilisation.

The *Awakener of India* for June contains the following: "It is with deep sorrow that we record the death of Mr. J. M. Wheeler, the able sub-editor of the *Freethinker*. In him we have lost an honest and learned advocate of Freethought. Truly he was 'one of the heralds of a new and more glorious day for humanity.' We sincerely sympathise with Mr. Foote in his irreparable loss."

We have just received by one post four separate copies of the *Liberator*, which is so bravely conducted by our old friend and colleague, Joseph Symes, at Melbourne. In the last of these numbers he writes: "Our next issue will complete the fourteenth year of the *Liberator*. All Freethinkers must rejoice at the long lease of life we have had. If possible, I will run it for sixteen years more, and so make it thirty. If I cannot do that, I will do what I am able. *Nil Desperandum!*" We are quite sure friend Joseph will keep his word. By the way, how amusing it is to read that he is reported to have become a convert to the Salvation Army. Mr. Symes makes great fun of this preposterous rumor.

The Liverpool Branch has discontinued its Sunday evening meetings, which will be resumed the first week in September. The annual picnic of this Branch takes place next Sunday (July 10). Brakes will leave Woodside at two o'clock prompt for Burton Woods, Cheshire. The tickets are 3s. 6d. each. This includes a knife and fork tea. Local friends meaning to join the party should apply at once for tickets to Mr. Stocker, newsagent, Vauxhall-road, or to Mr. Hammond, 26, Sandheys-street, Kirkdale.

The Manchester Branch has arranged for a trip to Chester on July 10. Friends will assemble at the Central Station at 9 a.m. All information can be obtained from the secretary, Mrs. Pegg, 15 Mytton-street, Hulme.

## THE ADDRESS.

(WITH APOLOGIES TO A CERTAIN CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE MAN.)

A LECTURER *discovered at a street corner with a portable platform, and bottle of water hanging at side. An audience gathering, he mounts.*

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I have very much pleasure in standing here before you this afternoon—this Sabbath afternoon—and I sincerely hope and trust that the few blessed words I shall address to you will be to our mutual benefit, for Jesus Christ's sake. (*A deep voice:* "Amen.")

Friends, it is indeed impossible not to feel an involuntary admiration for the vigorous exercise of the human intellect. (*A voice:* "He's a college bloke, Bill.") Bodily labor, or even moderate exercise, seems to the superficial observer rather to waste and exhaust, and to destroy the body, than to sustain and preserve it; yet experience proves that exercise is necessary to the maintenance of health. In like manner, active philosophical discussion appears at first sight to be injurious to our faith; but these mental movements are needed to promote the well-being of the intellect. (*A voice:* "Yus, Tom, he's a long-un.") What better subject, I would ask, can we choose as a mental gymnasium this afternoon than the precious blood of Christ, which, as we know, washes away the sins of the world? "Come unto me all ye that labor, and I will give you rest." What comfort in these words, dear brothers and sisters. (*The deep voice:* "Amen." *Bill:* "There's the blood, Tom; I knowed he'd chuck that in.") Oh! it is not for us to engage in disputes about the great theological questions; we have the eye of faith, we are washed in the blood, and our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (*The audience gradually diminishes, those that remain engaging in conversation. The lecturer is heard with difficulty, thus:* "Though your sins be as scarlet..... living blood.....Almighty and All-merciful God.....heathen philosophers of the present day.....hotbeds of Atheism..... Bradlaugh.....damnation.....eternal bliss in the bosom of the Father," *and so on. At the close of the harangue questions are invited.*)

A GENTLEMAN—"Will the lecturer kindly tell me whether Christians believe in ghosts?"

LECTURER (*indignantly*)—"No. Certainly not."

GENTLEMAN—"Well, but what about the Holy Ghost?"

LECTURER—"Ah! the Holy Ghost is not a ghost. He is a spiritual being, and forms a part of the Godhead—the Holy Trinity. Does not our friend understand? Three in one and one in three." (*General dissatisfaction at this reply and some laughter, in which Bill and Tom join.*)

LECTURER (*with a bland smile as much as to say, Now I'll corner him*)—"Perhaps the gentleman will kindly step up and explain what he means by ghosts."

GENTLEMAN—"Really, as to the nature and habits of ghosts, I know nothing. I account for their existence in this way:—Man is such a social animal that he thinks this earth is too solitary even in the most populous cities. Therefore, he often peoples it with a good store of spirits and demons, that he may have other company besides his fellow men." (*Bravo! and loud and continued applause, during which the lecturer is understood to say something about levity, and walks off. Exeunt severally.*)

ARTHUR T. BARNARD.

## CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE WEDDED.

THE world arose at God's command, to please his heartless whim.
Across the wastes of Time he looked (lo, nought is hid from him),
And he saw the certain carnival of suffering, sin, and death,
Which shall only cease when the last live thing has drawn its last sad breath;
Yet he said: "To bloody strife foredoomed, arise, O earthly host,
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

He fashioned sentient myriads from earth's unconscious clay,
Formed that the strong might kill the weak; the weak, still weaker slay.
By God-implanted instinct driven, this God-created rout
Escaped from death by dealing death; lived but by life crushed out;
And murder filled the teeming land and the sea from coast to coast
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

As likest God in face and form, so likest him in mind,
Man all created things outstripped in the slaughter of his kind.
Man armed himself with fire and sword, and desolation spread,
Till the world was black with cities burned, and with precious life-blood red.
And the good Lord God made helpless babes and mothers writhe and roast
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The priestly hands in Paradise upraised to bless God's name
Once turned the rack, applied the screw, and lit the torture-flame.
There's not a nerve that thrills this frame with awful agony
But was searched and seared by the priests of God when their hellish wills were free—
All for the glory of the Lord, their hope and joy and boast,
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The earth is one stupendous amphitheatre of strife;
A mighty Coliseum where all creatures fight for life.
Yet *every act* direct from God *Almighty* must proceed,
He *energises the energy* for every thought and deed.
Unopposed, unaided, this fiend misrules, with his murder scheme engrossed,
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

EX-RITUALIST.

The Rev. Dr. Thompson, of New York, tells the following story: "A colored woman, having wandered into a very respectable church, was inspired by the music and began to throw her arms about in wild gesticulation. The sexton telling her to keep still, she replied that she could not; she had got religion. The sexton said excitedly: 'Madam, you must keep still or go out. You ought to know that this is no place to get religion. This is a church.'"

A teacher in a Sunday-school of an Episcopal church said to one of her pupils: "James, what good thing—what great thing, are you willing to give up as a sacrifice during the Lenten season?" James meditated about ten seconds and responded: "I think I'll give up going to Sunday-school."

A devout Episcopalian mother was teaching her little five-year-old her Sunday-school lesson. "I don't like God, anyway," said the maiden. "Why not?" asked the horrified mother. "Because I don't think it was very nice of him to send his son Jesus down here to be knocked around and abused so, while he stayed up in heaven and had a good time."

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## SOLOMON AND THE SATANS.

WHEN Solomon ascended the throne, Jerusalem must have been a wretched place, without any art or architecture, with a swarming mongrel population, mainly of paupers. The holy ark was kept in a tent, and the altar of unhewn stone accurately symbolised the rude condition of the people, among whom Solomon could find no workmen of skill enough to build a temple. It is not easy to forgive him for compelling a good many of them into the public works; but it was probably no more than a national conscription of the unemployed paupers in Jerusalem, chiefly on fortifications for their own defence. There was apparently no slave mart, and it seems rather better to conscript people for public industries than, in our modern way, for cutting their neighbors' throats. Most of them were the remnants of tribes that once occupied the region, much despised by the Israelites, and probably they looked on Solomon's plan of building Jerusalem into a city of magnificence, giving everybody employment and support, as a grand Socialistic movement. An Ephraimite, Jeroboam, who tried to get up a revolt in Jerusalem, does not seem to have found any adherents. The only people who complained of any yoke—and their complaint is only heard of after some centuries—were the priest-ridden and prophet-ridden Israelites who had become fanatically excited about the strange shrines built for the king's foreign wives, and the splendid carvings and forms in the temple itself. Probably the first two commandments in the decalogue were put there with special reference to some Solomonic cult with an æsthetic taste for graven images and foreign shrines.

There can be little doubt that Solomon, by his patronage of these foreign religions, detached them from the cruel rites traditionally associated with them. Among all the censures pronounced against him none attributes to him any human sacrifices, though such are ascribed to David and Samuel (1 Samuel xv. 33, 2 Samuel xxi. 9). The earliest rebukes of sacrifice in the Bible are those attributed to Solomon. "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice" (Proverbs xxi. 3). "By mercy and truth iniquity is atoned for" (Proverbs xvi. 6). "Mercy and truth preserve the king; he upholdeth his throne by mercy" (Proverbs xx. 28). "Deliver them that are carried away to death: those that are ready to be slain forbear not thou to save" (Proverbs xxiv. 11). "Love covereth all transgressions" (Proverbs x. 12).

Solomon may not indeed have written these and the many similar maxims ascribed to him, but they are among the most ancient sentences in the Bible, and they would not have been attributed to any man who had not left among the people a tradition of humanity and benevolence. Had the royal "idolater" or his wives stained their shrines with human blood, the prophets would have been eager to declare it. Two acts of cruelty are ascribed to Solomon's youth in the book of Kings: one of these, the execution of Shimei, carried out his father's order, but only after Shimei had been given fair warning with means of escape; while the other, the execution of Adonijah (Solomon's brother), if true, is too much wrapped up in obscurity to enable us to judge its motives; but it cannot be regarded as historic.

The second historiographer of Kings, setting out to record Jahveh's anger about Solomon's foreign wives and shrines (1 Kings xi.), says, with unconscious humor, that Jahveh raised Satan against him—two Satans. One of these was Hadad, an Edomite, the other Rezon, a Syrian. The writer says that this was when Solomon was old, his wives having then turned away his heart after other gods. Fortunately, however, this writer has embodied in his record some items, evidently borrowed, which contradict his Jahvistic legend. One of these tells us that Hadad had been carried away from Edom to Egypt, when David and his Captain Joab massacred all the males in Edom; that he there married the sister of Pharaoh, and that he returned to his own country on hearing of the death of David and Joab. When this occurred, Solomon, so far from being old, was about eighteen. The Septuagint (Vatican MS.) says that Hadad "reigned in the land of Edom." We may conclude, then, that, on the return of this heir to the throne, Edom declared its independence, nor is there any indication that Solomon tried to prevent this. Another contradiction of this writer is a note inserted about Rezon the Syrian: "He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon." Not, therefore, a Satan raised up by Jahveh against Solomon when in old age he had turned to other gods. Rezon "reigned over Syria," and there is no indication of any expedition against him sent out by Solomon. Bishop Colenso (*Pentateuch*, vol. iii., p. 101), in referring to these points, remarks that we do not read of a single warlike expedition undertaken by Solomon.*

The remark (1 Kings xi.) about the Satans set against Solomon is more applicable to the Shiloh traitors, Ahijah and Jeroboam. Jeroboam—a servant whom Solomon had raised to high office—was instigated by Ahijah, a "prophet" neglected by Solomon, to his ungrateful treason. Ahijah pretended that he had a divine revelation that he (Jeroboam) was to succeed Solomon on account (of course!) of the king's shrines to Istar, Chemosh, and Milcom. If the narrative were really historic, nothing could be more "Satanic" than the lies and treacheries related of those self-seekers. Were the story true, the failure of these divinely-appointed "Satans" to overthrow the kingdom of Solomon, who did not arm against them, must have been due to his popularity. In after times this impunity of the glorious "idolater" would have to be explained; consequently we find Jahveh telling Solomon that, offended as he was by the shrines, he would spare him for his father's sake, but would rend the kingdom, save one tribe, from his (Solomon's) son. That this should be immediately followed by the raising up of "Satans" to harass Solomon and Israel, Jahveh having just said the trouble should be postponed till after the king's death, suggests that the whole account of these quarrels (1 Kings xi. 14–40) is a late interpolation. Up to that point the old record is unbroken. "He had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon" (1 Kings iv. 24, 25).

Jahveh, in his personal interview with Solomon (1 Kings xi. 11–13), said: "I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant." That is, as explained by the "prophet" Ahijah, to Jeroboam. As a retribution and check on idolatry, the selection, besides violating Jahveh's promise to David (1 Chronicles xxii.), was not successful; after the sundering of Israel and Judah into internecine kingdoms, Jeroboam, King of Israel, established idolatry more actively than either Solomon or his son Rehoboam. On Jeroboam, his selected Nemesis, Jahveh inflicted his characteristic punishment of visiting the sins of the fathers on the children: as David was left the seduced wife whose husband he had murdered, while his son was executed; as Solomon was left in peaceful enjoyment of his kingdom and none of the sinful shrines destroyed, while his son bore the penalty; so now Jeroboam, elect of Jahveh, built golden calves, surpassed Solomon's offences, and vengeance was taken on his son Abijah, who died. This Abijah left a son, Baasha, who, undeterred by these fatalities, continued the "idolatries" with impunity for the twenty-four years of his reign, the punishment falling on his son Elah, who was slain after only two years' reign by his military servant Zimri. And this Zimri, who thus carried on Jahveh's decree against idolatry, himself continued "in the ways of Jeroboam," the shrines and idols themselves being meanwhile unvisited by any executioner or iconoclast until some centuries later.

In Josiah there arrived a king, of the line of David, who might seem by his fury against idolatry to be another "man after God's own heart." He pulverised the images and the shrines, he "sacrificed the priests on their own altars," he even dug up the bones of those who had ministered at such altars and burnt them. He trusted Jahveh absolutely. He went to the prophetess Hulda, who told him that he should be "gathered to his grave in peace." He was slain miserably by the King of Egypt, to whom the country then became subject.

* The marriage of Hadad with Pharaoh's sister, and that of Solomon shortly after with Pharaoh's daughter, might naturally, Colenso says, lead to some amicable arrangement between these two young princes, representing respectively the ancient domains of Jacob and Esau, and the Bishop adds the pregnant suggestion: "Thus also would be explained another phenomenon in connection with this matter which we observe in the Jehovistic portions of Genesis—viz., the *reconciliation* of Esau and Jacob" (Genesis xxxiii.). That Solomon was on good terms with Edom appears by the fact that his naval station was in that land (1 Kings ix. 26).

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Josephus ascribed the act of Josiah, in hurling himself against an army that was not attacking him, to fate. The fate was that Josiah, having exterminated the wizards and fortune-tellers, repaired to the only dangerous one among them, because she pretended to be a "prophetess," inspired by Jahveh. Her assurances led him to believe himself invulnerable, personally, and that in his lifetime Jerusalem would not suffer the woes she predicted. Josiah, "of the house of David," seems to have thought that his zeal in destroying the shrines which his ancestor Solomon had introduced, mainly Egyptian, would be so grandly consummated if he could destroy a Pharaoh, that he insisted on a combat. Pharaoh-Necho sent an embassy to say that he was not his enemy, but on his way to fight the Assyrian: "God commanded me to hasten; forbear thou from opposing God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not." Here, however, was the fanatic's opportunity for an Armageddon; Pharaoh had appealed to what Solomon would have regarded as their common deity, but which to Josiah meant a chance to pit Jahveh against the God of Egypt. On Jahveh's invisible forces he must have depended for victory. So perished Josiah, and with him the independence of his country.

Solomon, the Prince of Peace, had made the house of Pharaoh the ally of his country. Josiah carries his people back under Egyptian bondage. Solomon had built the metropolitan Temple, whose shrines, symbols, works of art, represented a catholicity to all races and religions—peace on earth, goodwill to man. Josiah, panic-stricken about a holy book purporting to have been found in the Temple, concerning which the King by his counsellors consulted a female fortune-teller, makes a holocaust of all that Solomon had built up.

—*The Open Court.* MONCURE D. CONWAY.

## BOOK CHAT.

SARAH GRAND'S latest work, *The Beth Book* (Wm. Heinemann, Bedford-street, W.C.), continues in good demand at the libraries and the booksellers. The pious spleen vented upon it in some of the reviews will be easily understood by anyone who has read the book itself. Beth, otherwise "Elizabeth Caldwell Maclure, a woman of genius," having arrived at the maturity of her intellectual powers, developes a disbelief in dogmatic theology. "Churches Beth had come to look upon, not with distrust, but with indifference, as an ineffectual experiment of man's. She could find no evidence of a holier spirit or a more divine one in the Church than in any other human institution for the propagation of instruction. The Church has never been superior to the times, never as far advanced as the best men of the day, never a leader, but rather an opposer of progress, hindering when ideas were new, and only coming in to help when workers without had proved their discoveries, and it was evident that credit would be lost by refusing to recognise them. There is no cruelty the Church has not practised, no sin it has not committed, no ignorance it has not displayed, no inconsistency it has not upheld, from teaching peace and countenancing war, to preaching poverty and piling up riches" (pp. 522-3)

* * *

"The God of the Hebrews," says Beth, "what is his history? He loved cruelty and bloodshed. The innocent animals first suffered in his service, but, not content with that, he went from bad to worse, as men do, and ended by demanding human sacrifice, the sacrifice of his own son. And for that specially we are required to adore him, although it must be clear to the commonest capacity to-day that the worship of such a deity is devil-worship. I do not say there is no God; I only say this is not God—this blood-lover, this son-slayer, this blind omniscience, this impotent omnipotence, this merciful cruelty, this meek arrogance, this peaceful combatant; this is not God, but man. The mind of man wars with the works of God to mar them. Man tries to make us believe that he is made in the image of God; but what happened was just the reverse.....He projected an image of himself into space, and was so delighted with his own appearance from that point of view that he called it God, and fell down and worshipped it. If you would understand man, consider God; if you would know his God, study man" (p. 500).

* * *

It is not only Beth, however, who gives bold utterance to heterodox truths. There is an artist—the only male person sketched in anything like agreeable colors in the book—who is equally outspoken. He says: "It is true that religion culminates in human sacrifice, both here and in Africa, and for refinement of horror we have here the literal bloody sacrifice of a son by the father. But that is not God, as you say; that is the ultimate of the priest. And the priest is the same at all times, in all ages, beneath all veneers of civilisation. His credit depends upon a pretence to power. He is not a humble seeker after truth, but a bigoted upholder of error and an impudent time-server. He destroys the scientific discoverer in one age; in the next he finds his own existence is threatened because he refuses to acknowledge that the discoverer was right; then he confesses the truth, and readjusts his hocus-pocus to suit it" (p. 500).

* * *

Fitzgerald's version of Omar Khayyam—the old Persian poet, and "large infidel," as Tennyson called him—was published by Quaritch in 1859. Only a few copies were printed, but none were sold, and eight years afterwards Quaritch threw the whole remainder into the penny box outside his door. It is said that Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the painter-poet, found them there, and they were soon bought up. Early in the present year a copy in the original wrappers was sold at Sotheby's for £21, and the purchaser was Quaritch!

* * *

"With a Guitar, to Jane," is the title of one of Shelley's beautiful personal poems. Jane Williams was the wife of his friend Williams, who was drowned with the poet in the bay of Lerici. She kept the guitar given her by Shelley till her death, when it was bought by her grandson, Mr. J. W. Williams. An American Shelleyite, Mr. Edward Silsbee, wished to purchase it recently, but Mr. Williams would only part with it to a public institution. Mr. Silsbee agreed to this condition. He bought it and presented it to the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

* * *

The *Literary Guide* (Watts & Co.) for July is as interesting as usual. A new writer, Mr. A. G. Whyte, contributes a thoughtful article on "The Existence of the Soul." The book reviews are numerous and well done.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### "PROVIDENCE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Drewell has written with some warmth in reply to my letter, but there is a ring of genuine humanity in it which I appreciate, although I cannot agree with his conclusions.

It would seem that Mr. Drewell has not perused the letter which appeared some time since in the *Freethinker* upon the attributes of God. For the definition of Jehovah, which he requires, I say that he has neither form nor sex, but is like magnetism—a power felt but not seen, and pervading all space. He thinks and controls, but I should say knows neither love nor hatred in himself, these being passions of perishable beings. Having no sex, it is yet fitting to use the most dignified pronoun in referring to him.

"Maker" was a misprint for *matter* in my letter, which somewhat qualifies my observations.

I am convinced that the amount of matter which exists in the universe has always existed, and probably the planets also. Jehovah did not *create* matter, but he has been co-existent with it, and has controlled it for all time. I never mentioned *creation*, and therefore there is no occasion for me to "know of a time when the universe was not, and needed creating or making."

Without occupying space to quote our friend's remarks, I will endeavor to follow them.

As to droughts and floods.—Jehovah's laws must *broadly* govern the elements, because they are on a mighty scale, and in the commotions of nature I submit that the good effects outweigh the bad. Storms are necessary to purify the atmosphere, and probably also the seas, and distribute the irrigating waters over the face of the earth. Continual calms and fine weather lead to pestilence, especially in thickly-populated places. A hurricane which does much damage in one district will probably drive great volumes of aqueous vapor into regions where they are greatly required It is quite certain that if Jehovah controlled the elements down to small details, he would not give universal satisfaction. The weather that suited Farmer Jones's turnips exactly would be injurious to Farmer Brown's shocks of corn. They must take their chances of the season's averages. Even a rough season has its compensations. The soil and the trees have a longer rest, and are likely to bear well the next year. The hardest oaks and the hardiest men grow in our stormy zone.

Volcanic action is caused by the spontaneous heating of certain rocks in the immense bulk of the earth—not by the cooling of a molten world, which is the pet theory of the present day. Such a declining heat would never revive at

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any point, and the rock crust would have sealed up itself long ago. This volcanic action, we know, sometimes causes enormous destruction, in the way of eruptions, earthquakes, and abnormal waves; but without it, instead of being nobly diversified, the world would be now, and without a continuation of it would become in the future (by the wearing down and disintegration of the higher parts), an uninhabitable surface of marsh and water.

With regard to diseases.—Unless the beings on the earth were immortal, diseases and failures of nature must occur, and not a few of these are brought about by the sufferers or the progenitors of them. The increase of animals, if not kept in check by destroyers, would have to be kept down solely by pestilence. The destroyers sometimes have forms and qualities which are more attractive than those of the animals destroyed. Is not the sprightly terrier more attractive than the wild rabbit or the rat?

With regard to the great mortality amongst infants.—Can this be said to be an unmixed evil in a country which is so crowded that the majority of honest workers can only live from hand to mouth, and fiercely compete in the struggle for existence until they are simply slaves, without any independence, comfort, or time for healthy recreation? Surely it is better for a few to live well than for a number to live ill.

As to the actions of criminals which Mr. Drewell comments upon.—He is mistaken in thinking that I suppose God "overrules all these things." He permits them to occur, because otherwise he must take away all free agency from mankind, constitute himself the controller of all their actions, and be continually performing miracles. Man has extra advantages, but he has made bad use of them, and I, for one, have no great faith in the supposed future development of the human race.

The next paragraph compels me to refer to myself, because Mr. Drewell may suppose that I have been so comfortable in this life as to take a too complacent view of things. Unfortunately this would be a mistake. I have not, it is true, had a serious illness for thirty-three years; but for over eighteen years I have suffered from chronic catarrh, which has destroyed the sense of smell, and is a most wearisome complaint. I consider it is incurable. I do not expect Jehovah to relieve it, although I believe in him, because if he did so millions of others would also be entitled to relief. And, further, if he cured once, why not twice, or altogether, and so make man immortal? Fancy a world crowded with an undying race who would live long enough to curse their immortality.

I have heard it suggested that old age should end our days, but I do not see that it would improve the condition of mankind; it certainly would not improve their moral character. The aged, as a rule, are neither very useful, ornamental, nor comfortable in their existence, and I think *really* sensible people do not desire to live to become very old.

Again, if premature death is an unnecessary evil, all animals ought to be allowed to die of old age. The result would not be satisfactory.

Now to the main question. Mr. Drewell, who is a *thinking* and intelligent man, has failed to show *how* the elements of the world could be managed or utilised so as to produce better results than they do at present. Therefore is it not reasonable for me to infer that the organisation of the universe, with its orderly precision, could not be carried on by the chance action of *unthinking* matter?

The orbital motions of the planets are, by some scientific men, vaguely ascribed to gravitation and attraction; but it appears to me that the bottom is knocked out of the theory by the fact that the sun (the centre of our system) rotates upon its axis. Its own gravitation could not cause this circular motion, and the attraction of revolving planets would not cause it, but on the contrary tend to impede it, as anyone can prove to himself by causing a small iron ball or nut to rotate upon an axis, and placing several magnets near it in different directions.

I must continue to believe in Jehovah, but do not believe in the immortality of anything but Himself.

JNO. C. EDGLEY.

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TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Freethinker* of June 12 there appeared some correspondence, over the signature of John C. Edgley, inviting any reader of the *Freethinker* to write an article showing how the elements on an earth could be better managed, in some respects, than they are at present, without counterbalancing disadvantages. Absurd as such a challenge appears to me, I will, nevertheless, endeavor to gratify the curiosity of the writer.

But before I proceed I will disavow any intention of claiming to be qualified to enter into competition with Mr. J. C. E.'s maker and controller of the elements, as I am not particularly inclined to start reasoning from a premise which I consider fictitious. For it is nothing but fiction to represent natural forces, and the qualities of objects around us, as commands of a supernatural personal being. Now for the asked-for suggestions as to the direction in which a Freethinker considers Mr. Edgley's controller of the elements could have manipulated the said elements in a more advantageous manner than at present:—

1. I should have suggested making good health contagious, instead of loathsome diseases.

2. I should have advised Providence, as a point of justice, to confine the action of heredity to good qualities only—mental as well as physical, so as not to make the innocent suffer for the guilty.

3. I should have suggested the arrangement of the elements in such a way that such insane climatic conditions as are experienced every day, and at the cost of untold misery to millions, could not exist.

These are only a few of the improvements I would submit to the consideration of Providence, and in order to put them to a practical test I would not object to having my scheme for the controlling of the elements opposed to that of Providence, in a general poll. Which would win?

S. HARTMANN.

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## THE BEDBOROUGH CASE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—While highly approving of our President's action in the above, let me advise all (especially those attending lectures) never to be without a copy of the *Freethinker* for June 12, wherein his views are plainly expressed with regard to contents of the publications, etc., named. If they *fortify* themselves with fifty copies, they will all be long worn out before their use is gone, by replying and showing Christian opponents what your views *are*, for they (the Christians) will pick out parts quite irrespective of any connection, and say: "See what your President approves"; "*This* is what the N. S. S. defends," etc., etc., etc.

UNCLE TIM (Exeter).

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## The Eagle and the Lion.

The cartoon in a late number of the New York *Life* shows the British lion and the American eagle walking together on an eminence with the kingdom of the world outstretched at their feet. The following lines accompany the cartoon:—

The Eagle and the Old Lion
Went walking hand in hand.
They laughed like anything to see
Such quantities of land.
"If it could all belong to us,
I think it would be grand!"

"If seven kings with seven hosts
Should want the reason why,
Do you suppose," the Eagle said,
"We'd funk it, you and I?"
"I doubt it," said the Old Lion,
And winked a humble eye.

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## Religion for the Kilted.

The Scottish Church is far from unmindful of the spiritual necessities of her kilted warriors; but a committee has been appointed to remedy any defects which may have hitherto been overlooked. Accordingly, they have just issued a book of devotions for the use of those soldiers who profess adherence to the tenets of the "Established Kirk," apparently the only persons either worth praying for, or not long past redemption. The result of the compiler's labors takes the outward form of a somewhat bulky volume, three hundred pages in length. This appears to be chiefly made up of extracts from the inspiring works of Jeremy Taylor, Baxter, and Thomas à Kempis. As to the necessity of the work, it is scarcely within my province to express any definite opinion. I cannot, however, help doubting if all the pious exhortations contained therein are as appropriate as they might be, or whether they are so great an improvement on those to be found in the prayer-book at present in use. One orison, in particular, appears to strike "Tommy" as being a little out of place, where he is directed to pray that he "be delivered from the snares of idleness." I am told that the compilers need not unduly distress themselves upon this point.—*The Critic.*

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In a most interesting article on oratory in a late number of *The Cosmopolitan*, the author refers to Ingersoll as follows: "Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll is, without doubt, one of the greatest popular orators now living. Ingersoll will never receive the full credit due to his great success as an orator during the present generation, as his vehement assaults on the Christian religion have aroused so many and such powerful enmities. But without regarding his creed, judging him solely by his power as an orator, no nation can to-day produce his equal. There is poetry, wit, humor, sarcasm, and tenderest pathos in nearly every lecture he delivers, whether on religion or politics."

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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, "The Revolt of the Parsons."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, The Holborn Thespians in "A Pair of Spectacles."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "Christian Criminals." Peckham Rye: E. Pack—3.15, "Holy Liars"; 6.30, "What is Morality?"

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. Ramsey, "Christian Evidences."

FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, W. Ramsey.

FINSBURY PARK (near bandstand): 3.15, A. Guest, "The Propagation of the Gospel."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, Stanley Jones.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30 and 3.30, R. P. Edwards.

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, R. P. Edwards.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, C. Cohen.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Historical Review of the Old Testament."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Lucretius Keen, "Creation: Is it True?"

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH: Picnic to Holte Fleet, from New-street Station (Midland Railway), 7.25 a.m.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Lecture-room, corner of Raby and Parker-streets, Byker): 7, J. Reid, "From Christianity to Secularism."

PLYMOUTH (Democratic Club, Whimple-street): 7, Meeting of members.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): W. Heaford—11, "A Defence of Freethought"; 3, "The Vindictive Spirit in Religion"; 7, "The Mistakes of Jesus." Tea at 5. The morning lecture (weather permitting) will be given near the Monolith.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Election of officers.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—July 3, m., Mile End; 10, m., Mile End; 17, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 31, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell.

T. J. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—July 3, e., Mile End Waste; 24, e., Mile End Waste.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## THE WICKED PRECENTOR.

"PROVIDENCE" has made many mistakes in this world, and one of the greatest was letting John Calvin be anything but a Scotchman. North of the Tweed was his proper home. He and John Knox were two fine companions. Colonel Ingersoll says that they fitted each other like the upper and lower jaws of a wild beast. Both were men of great ability, both were sure they were right, and both were ready to make other people admit it. John Knox was perhaps the less objectionable of the two. He had some amiable weaknesses. He was fond of a glass of wine, and had a partiality for the ladies. John Calvin was more entitled to the epithet of "sour," which Browning bestows upon the northern Protestant. Look at his portrait. What a nose he had! Long and pointed—just the size and shape for poking into other people's business. Servetus should never have trusted a man with a nose like that. John Calvin carried his certificate of character in front of his face. It was always there. Servetus, however, did not notice it, or he misread it, and the result was that he was burnt to death with *green* wood, and died in an awful slow agony.

John Calvin had a strong but not a decisive influence in England. He offered to draw up a creed, a ritual, and a discipline for the English Church, but our "Reformers" put him off with compliments. He was more successful in Scotland. The "Reformers" of that country adopted his damnable theology and his damnable discipline. They set up what is called Presbyterianism, and had the humor to call it Christian liberty. Every minister of "The Kirk" was a little God Almighty. A tyrant was placed in every parish. His business was to preach a hell hereafter and realise it here. And the people were so overawed that they said they liked it. They drank and fornicated on the sly, and the minister sometimes joined in the sport—also on the sly. But in public they declared that they would live and die for the Kirk. And when the trouble occurred in England in the seventeenth century, and Charles the First's head was cut off, and monarchy was abolished, and the House of Lords shut up, and the Bishops were kicked out of their dioceses, the Scotch were foolish enough to believe that England, after breaking the rods of Episcopacy, would welcome the scorpions of Presbyterianism. But they were rudely undeceived. Milton's sonnet and Cromwell's sword showed the English temper; and Preston, Dunbar, and Worcester sent Presbyterianism north again, bleeding, groaning, and dejected.

From that time Presbyterianism had to confine itself to the torture of Scotchmen, and how it succeeded is vividly told in Mr. Henley's monograph on Robert Burns. It is pretty strong yet, but not as strong as it was. In the cities and large towns men laugh at and defy it; in the smaller towns and rural districts it is still a rampant tyranny.

Carnoustie is one of these little places, and a curious rumpus has recently occurred there—a report of it appearing in the *People's Journal*. Mr. A. Simpson was the precentor of Panbride Free Church, where he played the harmonium, which is as much church music as the ordinary House of God will stand in "Caledonia stern and wild." Mr. Simpson was also a newsagent, and, like a good business man, he supplied what his customers wanted. It did not occur to him that keeping a shop entitled him to set up a press censorship. He sold every paper that was reputable, whatever opinions it advocated, and nobody seems to have complained. But the minister of Panbride Free Church, the Rev. A Macpherson, had to be reckoned with. This gentleman paid a visit to Mr. Simpson's shop to see whether he was dealing only in "proper" literature. Imagine his indignation at finding that his precentor, the player of his harmonium, the leader of praise in his church, was actually selling a certain theatrical publication, which is not named, and (worse still) that abominable journal called the *Freethinker*. The man of God sternly ordered him—in the name of the Almighty, and for the salvation of his own immortal soul—to discontinue the sale of these papers. Mr. Simpson, however, felt capable of thinking for himself; anyhow, he felt capable of conducting his own business, and plainly said so. Thereupon the Rev. A. Macpherson called a meeting of the Session to deal with this obstinate sheep, who was too much like a goat. It was unanimously agreed "that Mr. Simpson be considered an unfit person to fill the post of organist of the church, but can still retain his membership." This decision was communicated to the culprit, who was informed that he might still finger the ivories if he would only give "an assurance that he would discontinue the sale of the above-mentioned or any similar papers." But there was to be no trifling, and three days were given for a definite answer. Mr. Simpson replied that he did not want "any amateur assistance from irresponsible people." "Supposing the papers referred to," he said, "were below what you consider your moral standard, would it not have been far more sensible on your part to have called the attention of the authorities to them, and have them suppressed and the publishers prosecuted?" Mr. Simpson also declared: "Racing papers, that is, gambling papers, you admitted I could continue to sell." Finally, he told the reverend gentleman: "I do not admit your authority to interfere in the conducting of my business." That settled it. If a man of God is not to interfere with other people's business, why the deuce does he exist at all on this planet? Mr. Simpson was therefore discharged forthwith from "the office of organist and leader of praise in Panbride Free Church," and requested to send in immediately the key of the sacred harmonium.

Mr. Macpherson expresses "regret at this unfortunate termination of the matter." It is probable, however, that Mr. Simpson will not take it quite so much to heart. He has honorably maintained his independence, and he may be glad to have done with such a ministerial busybody. You may keep company with the devil till you see his cloven hoof. Then you look out for other society. Mr. Macpherson has betrayed himself. Mr. Simpson understands him now, and is probably no longer anxious to receive his spiritual ministrations. If there is a heaven hereafter, this sensible newsagent will perhaps get there without leave of the Rev. A. Macpherson.

G. W. FOOTE.



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## CHRISTIAN DISHONESTY.

THE vindication of freedom is one perpetual conflict, and, when the struggle is of a religious nature, it is generally very keen. Experience has proved that, if we approach any question from a religious point of view, we are apt to stand upon narrow, unsafe, and dangerous ground. It is a matter of history that the most wicked follies and the most shocking crimes have been committed in the name of religion. Supposing it were true, as it is alleged, that Christianity is productive of peace, it is a strange fact that its adherents should always be in conflict with each other, and that in their quarrels the most severe language is indulged in on both sides. That this is so was forcibly illustrated in the late Parliamentary debate upon the Anglican Church. No charge appeared too severe, and no invective too keen, for the Protestant defenders to hurl at their Roman Catholic brethren. It afforded a striking proof that the religion of Jesus is utterly impotent to inspire love and good feeling amongst his professed followers. We know of no anti-religious community wherein is to be found so much open discord and bitterness of feeling as we witness in the Christian fold. It is quite time that these devotees of theology directed their attention to the better regulation of the lowest passions of their nature.

When we speak of Christian dishonesty we simply mean want of probity or integrity in principle, lack of sincerity in profession, and faithlessness in carrying out the obligations of the faith. If one-half of the charges were true which were made in the House of Commons by the vehement defenders of the Anglican Church during the debate referred to, then our so-called National Church is the hotbed of the most unprincipled tactics and the grossest forms of hypocrisy. It was there alleged that clergymen are guilty, not only of "misconduct in doctrine and practice," but of systematised treachery and perjury. Sir W. Harcourt said: "I have been overwhelmed with correspondence on this matter from persons of all political parties and all sections of the Church of England, and I believe I speak for a great many persons in the country when I say that there is at present at work an organisation attempting to identify the doctrines and practices of the Church of England with the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome." As Secularists, we favor neither of the contending parties, but we recognise that this religious controversy may confer advantages upon the struggle for legitimate mental freedom. It demonstrates the justice of our demand for Secular liberty; and, moreover, the conflict will tend to keep both Churches—Catholic and Protestant—in check. Thus their weakness will add to our strength, and show to the world that the orthodox religion does not promote harmony and brotherly love. The Secular plea is free speech, and individual liberty for every one, controlled only by a proper consideration for the rights of others.

Hitherto public attention has been drawn chiefly to the conflict between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism; but now the secret practices of the Jesuits have come to light. This Christian trinity presents a curious aspect of religious dissension, folly, and vice. American card-players have a game they term "Cut-throat-euchre." Three persons are necessary to play the game, and two of the players are always against the leader of trumps. So has it been with this three-handed theological game. The Jesuits have shown their readiness, if they can win their own game, to apparently ally themselves with either party. We have given our opinion in previous articles upon Catholicism and Protestantism; we now propose to record our estimate of Jesuitism, which we regard as the very incarnation of deceit, aggression, and moral corruption. Of course we admit that there are Jesuits who are sincere and earnest workers, but, as Macaulay observes: "Great vices are mingled with the disinterestedness and self-devotion of the society. The same devotion that gives them such fearless courage makes them also have little regard to truth and mercy; and a Jesuit, by the interest of his religion, too often meant the interest of his Society." We have just been reading again *The Order of Jesuits*, reprinted from the *English Review* for March, 1846; also Paul Bert's Preface to *La Morale des Jesuites*, translated from the fifteenth Paris edition, and, as the result, we pronounce that the teachings of the Jesuits are utterly subversive of the legitimate exercise of all national and civil authority. They are destructive of personal freedom, and are an impediment to the cultivation of the moral sense. The Jesuit order is a deadly conspiracy against truth, honor, domestic fidelity, and the highest safeguards to the well-being of society. As an organisation it is a standing menace to all free and constitutional government, and is thoroughly incompatible with the more prolific elements of modern civilization. Its policy is based upon avowed falsehood, hypocrisy, and the maxim that it is "a virtue to lie and deceive for the glory of the Church." Its motto is "The end justifies the means." If the machinations of the Jesuits are allowed to triumph, there will be an end to freedom of thought, private judgment, and national progress. The fact should not be ignored that Jesuitism is the worst form of Roman Catholicism, and that when it flourished, comparatively unrestrained, immorality and intellectual darkness reigned supreme.

The Jesuits profess to be genuine Christians, and their organisation is known as the "Society of Jesus," which is strictly a secret order. It originated thus:—Luther was excommunicated in 1520, which date Mosheim fixes as the beginning of the Reformation. The Church had become so corrupt and despotic that revolution within it seemed certain to crumble the rotten superstructure to the ground. To oppose it the "Society of Jesus" was organised, under the leadership of Ignatius Loyola, in 1534. Loyola was a military man of no mean parts, so he conceived an order, planned after military discipline, with himself as General, possessing the powers of an autocrat. He brought to his assistance in shaping his plans a man of remarkable ingenuity for framing a constitution that would subvert the manhood to absolute obedience to a superior in power, in the person of Lainez, who may be credited with maturing the constitution of the Jesuits. Four degrees are provided as follows:—Novice, or novitiate, scholastic, second novitiate, and that of a professed member. The Society was founded by Loyola, and was established by Pope Paul III. Sept. 27, 1540. It appears that a boy of fifteen years, or upwards, is eligible as a member if sound physically, and passes an otherwise satisfactory examination. F. Genelli, in his biography of Loyola, says: "In those who offered themselves he looked less to purely natural goodness than to firmness of character and ability to business, for he was of opinion that those who were not fit for public business were not adapted for filling office in the Society."

According to the authorities alluded to above, the Jesuits teach that, under certain circumstances, robbery is justifiable. "Trifling thefts committed on different days, and at different opportunities, against one man, or against many, however great may be the amount which has been stolen, will never become mortal sins.....A son who robs his father is not accounted to sin mortally." It is alleged that in taking the oath direct equivocation is permissible. "It is not in itself a sin to use equivocation in swearing.....When, for instance, the swearer begins by 'I swear that,' let him in a low voice insert the reservation 'to-day,' and then continue aloud. In this manner the entire speech is true." It is taught that difference of opinion is not to be allowed. "Let no difference of doctrine be permitted, neither by words of mouth nor in letters or books." They also teach as a religious duty death to heretics, the destruction of reason, and the abnegation of all family ties. At the admission of the novice into the Association he is made to "swear to combat, even unto death, the enemies of humanity (heretics). He has sworn eternal hatred to the genius of evil, and he has promised absolute and unreserved submission to our Holy Father the Pope, and to the orders of their hierarchical superiors of the Association. The Director, in admitting him, exclaims: 'We have one soldier more!'" (*Les Jésuites et l'Universe*, par F. Génin, pp. 266–7). The novice is also made to contemplate for hours, in the darkness and solitude of midnight, such imaginary scenes as the depth of hell, the doings of the Devil, and the tortures and sufferings of the damned. Thus, at the very initiation, fear is made to crush the reason of the poor victim to prepare him for still further degraded submission to the Church. He is not, under any circumstances, to entertain opinions opposed to those of the Pope or General; he is to give up all family associations and all personal property; and he is never to disobey his superiors, command him to do what they may. In fact, his body and mind are rivated

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to this debasing humiliation by vows and dread of the infliction of fearful penalties here and hereafter. (For proof of this see "Spiritual Exercises," by Ignatius Loyola.)

This Christian Society further maintains that upon all questions of morals the judgment of the Church is final, even if it contends that what appears to some to be white is black. "That we may be altogether accordant with and conformable to the Catholic Church, we are bound, if the faith defined anything to be black which to our eyes appears white, in like manner to pronounce that it is black." That, according to its doctrine of "probable opinions," the same act may be lawful and unlawful just to suit the desire of the individual. "Is it lawful to follow one probable opinion at one time, and a different probable opinion at another time, upon the same subject? It is probable, for instance, that a tax has been unjustly imposed; it is also possible that it has been justly imposed. May I then to-day, in my capacity as the King's tax-gatherer, exact the said tax, and to-morrow, or even on the same day, in my capacity as a merchant, secretly defraud it? *I affirm that it is lawful to do at pleasure sometimes the one, and sometimes the other.*" The late Mr. Gladstone, in his work *The Vatican Decrees*, states that the Jesuits teach the authorised condemnation of those who favor the fostering of "the liberty of the press, the liberty of conscience, and the liberty of speech." Those are also condemned by these teachings who allege "that the Church should not employ force, that in the conflict of laws, civil and ecclesiastical, the civil law should prevail, that marriage not sacramentally contracted has a binding force, and that in countries called Catholic the free exercise of other religions may be laudably allowed."

These are but a few specimens of the demoralising teachings of the members of "Christ's Church." The truth is, the noblest traditions of the Anglo-Saxon race are being assailed by these Jesuits, who are attacking the very bulwarks of that freedom which has been secured at too great a cost to be yielded up without a struggle, "even unto death," in its defence. The triumphs of human thought and the potency of unfettered intellectuality must be protected. Jesuits may plot, priests may connive, the Pope may exult, and party politicians may rejoice; but be it our duty to resist to the very last the intrigues of a Church whose very teachings are the embodiment of all that destroys human happiness, poisons the atmosphere of domestic life, and impedes the advancement and elevation of the national character. CHARLES WATTS.

## THE SECULAR CHARTER.

### PUBLIC AND PERSONAL NOTES.

A FORTNIGHT ago I printed in the *Freethinker* the whole Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Secular Society, Limited. In the same number of this journal I gave a long explanation of the new Society, pointing out its advantages, and showing that gifts and legacies might be given or bequeathed to it with perfect security. This is a matter which I shall have to return to shortly. For the present I am, as I said, anxious to enrol as many members as possible. The entrance fee is ten shillings, which covers the first year; afterwards the subscription is five shillings per annum.

Several friends in various parts of the country have applied for membership, but I should like to see a much larger number of applicants during the next few weeks. The first General Meeting of members must be held within four months of registration; that is to say, before the end of September. By that time there ought to be at least a hundred on the Society's books.

One Freethinker, who is a member of the N. S. S. Executive, tells me that he and some of his friends have talked the matter over, and they prefer to wait to see what will happen. He and his friends do not altogether approve the present constitution of the Board of Directors. I presume they mean that there are too many lecturers upon it, and too few "laymen." But this is a point easily explained, and easily set right.

An interesting and instructive history might be written of my efforts to incorporate this new Society. When the project was ripe I sought the co-operation of substantial "laymen." But I found that scarcely one was prepared to take any responsibility. That, as usual, was left to me. Several said they would help when the Society was once established, but they did not care to sign the Memorandum and Articles, and thus become Directors immediately. What was I to do then? Let the project drop after so much thought and trouble? No, no; I am not built that way. What I did was this. I asked my friends and colleagues, mostly poor men, to give me their signatures. They did so, and I thank them—and the party may by-and-bye thank them too. By a law, which we cannot help, Messrs. Hartmann, Watts, Forder, Cohen, Moss, Heaford, and myself are the first Directors; and we are at least a good guarantee that only *bonâ fide* Secularists will be admitted.

Well, we only sit as Directors until the first General Members' Meeting, which, as I said, must be held before the end of September. Then the members can place whom they please upon the Board. They have the matter in their own hands, if they will only join. What more do they want? Is it manly and dignified to hold aloof, and then complain that things are not to your liking? Why not join and try to make them so?

All along I have said that I wish the "laymen" of our party would take this matter up with spirit and energy. That would be far better than criticising the poor lecturers who have sufficient faith in their President to stand by him when he calls upon them. Let the "laymen" begin business and keep at it. Nobody will be more pleased than I shall be to witness the spectacle. I am really not anxious to do everything myself. Those who fancy so don't know how much I have to do already. Besides, I am no more fond of unnecessary work than the next.

Long ago I stated in the *Freethinker* that I did not want to be the Chairman of this new Incorporation. My presence on the Board may be advisable I think it is. But I should like the Chairman to be a man "substance," as they say, and a man of tried business capacity. The Board may consist of as many as twelve members, and if the lecturers and journalists of the movement were represented by (say) four Directors, and the "laymen" by eight, I think that would be a fair, wise, and serviceable arrangement. Of course I only give this as my personal opinion. The decision rests with the general body of members.

I call upon the "laymen' of our party to come to the front in this matter of business, as laymen of position and capacity come to the front in Christian bodies. Carping at this juncture is too much like a cloak for laziness or cowardice. I place at their disposition a scheme which has cost me long and careful thought, much trouble, and (for a poor man) a good deal of money, which I think I am entitled to have repaid me. Well, the "laymen" can take this gift or leave it. I cannot do more than offer it. And if they desert their duty, and leave it all to me, I shall go on with it as I can, but I shall smile rather scornfully at any irresponsible criticism they like to indulge in. There are no rights without duties, and those who do nothing have not even a claim to be listened to when they choose to speak.

I repeat that the present Board is only preliminary. Nothing of any importance will be done until after the first General Meeting. What we have to do in the meantime is to enrol members. Applications should, for the present, be sent direct to me. Whatever arrangement on this point the Board may make at its first meeting will be duly announced in next week's *Freethinker*.

And now a word in conclusion. Some apprehensive persons want to know what is to become of the N. S. S. if the incorporated Society succeeds. I reply that I don't know and don't care. If it succeeds, the Secular Society, Limited, will be really and practically the old N. S. S. with a legal status, a business organisation, security for its funds, and a right to receive, hold, and use donations and bequests without let or hindrance. These invaluable additions can be hardly a detriment. For the rest, we may leave the result to natural selection. If the new organisation helps

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the old one, and both can live together in peace and co-operation—well and good. If the new organisation absorbs the old one by achieving its objects more efficiently—that is also well and good. And if the supporters of the new one are just the same persons as the supporters of the old one, what on earth is there to grieve about? Let us have a little common-sense—and let us have a lot of members.

G. W. FOOTE.

## BUDDHA AND HIS TEACHINGS.

(By the late J. M. Wheeler.)

*(Concluded from page 420.)*

Gautama, now the Buddha, travelled from place to place, appealing alike to Brahman and outcast. He compared his law to the sky; all could participate in its beneficent influence. "Not by birth does one become an outcast; not by birth does one become a Brâhmana; by deeds one becomes an outcast, by deeds one becomes a Brâhmana."* The common people heard him gladly. He is said to have personally converted 1,250 persons. One of his chief disciples was a barber. Even wretched outcast girls, whose only couch was a dung heap, would seek him to gain relief from their burdens. He taught them the Five commandments, or rather prohibitions, against destroying life, stealing, impurity, lying, and drinking intoxicants; and the six positive injunctions to loving-kindness, purity, forbearance, fortitude, contemplation, and knowledge. Those who entered into the Samgha, or assembly of mendicant monks dedicated to deliverance, had more minute directions. After entering on the path they were to divest themselves of the ten Samyojanas, or fetters, which are: 1, Delusion of Self; 2, Doubt; 3, Reliance upon the efficacy of rites and ceremonies; 4, Bodily passions; 5, Hatred, ill-feeling; 6, Desire for future life on the earth (or in the worlds of form); 7, Desire for future life in heaven (or in formless worlds); 8, Pride; 9, Self-righteousness; 10, Ignorance. Good must be pursued without any ulterior motive whatever, and that man is not spiritually free who requires any reward in a future life beyond the grave. Buddha, in short, taught the Gospel of Renunciation; of gaining all by desiring nothing. An illustration may be drawn from a dialogue which occurs near the beginning of Sutta Nipâta:—

> "'I have boiled (my rice), I have milked my cows'—so said the herdsman Dhaniya—'I am living together with my fellows near the banks of the Mahî (river); (my) house is covered, the fire is kindled; therefore, if thou like, rain, O sky.'
>
> "'I am free from anger, free from stubbornness,' so said Bhagvat. [The blessed Lord, Buddha] I am abiding for one night near the banks of the Mahî (river); my house is uncovered, the fire (of passions) is extinguished; therefore, if thou like, rain, O sky!"†

The herdsman continues through several verses, enumerating his material advantages which Buddha parallels with his own absence of desire.

Buddha paid no heed to the teaching of the sacred Veda, and absolutely forbade sanguinary sacrifices. To this day the doctrine of atonement by blood remains an almost insurmountable obstacle to the acceptance of Christianity by any Buddhist. Buddha taught reverence to man instead of sacrifice to gods. He said:—

> "If a man for a hundred years worship Agni [the Hindu god of fire] in the forest, and if he but for one moment pay homage to a man whose soul is grounded (in true knowledge), better is that homage than sacrifice for a hundred years.‡
>
> "To feed one good man is infinitely greater in point of merit than attending to questions about heaven and earth, spirits and demons. These matters are not to be compared to the religious duty we owe to our parents; our parents are very Divine."§
>
> "To a young man about to worship the six quarters he said: 'Know, young man, that these are the six quarters. Parents are the east quarter, teachers are the south quarter, wife and children are the west quarter, friends and companions are the north quarter, spiritual pastors are the zenith, and servants and dependents are the nadir."‖

The supreme power, with Buddha, was kamma (in Sanscrit karma). Kamma, in its primary signification, is work. It means an action, either good or bad. Secondly, it means the consequences of action, the merit or demerit which lives on after it is produced. Finally, as an abstraction it is the energy or cause whereby things are brought into existence, the bad producing bad, and the good good. Everything is in ceaseless evolution; whatever begins must end. All that remains of the individual at his death is his kamma. We inherit the kamma of all the countless multitudes in the past. They toiled and suffered for us, though they knew it not; and we in turn shall pass our kamma on to our successors. Buddhism is thus at one with the dictum of Comte, that we live *by*, and should therefore live *for*, others. Kamma supplies both the absence of an immortal soul and of a personal ruler of events.

Buddha, however, did not directly deny the existence of the Brahmanic gods. But he made them subject to kamma. In the Brahmajala-sutta Buddha declares this of Brahma, the supposed creator. He is in the whirl of transmigrating births which are the result of kamma. He is simply one of innumerable sentient beings, from an insect to a god, who are in a state of constant change, dying perhaps in this world and reproduced in another, according to the merit or demerit of the kamma. And so with the Brahmanic view of other worlds. He did not deny their heavens and hells, but made them subject to his fundamental tenet, *sabbam aniccam*, all is impermanent. In the words of Dr. Oldenburg, p. 130, "God and the universe trouble not the Buddhist; he knows only one question, How shall I in this world of suffering be delivered from suffering?"

Much dispute has arisen among scholars as to the meaning of Nirvana, the goal of Buddhism; but in the light of further acquaintance with Pâli texts the question is approaching settlement. Dr. Oldenburg says (p. 269): "Nirvana must have been understood in the ancient Order to be either the Nothing or a supreme felicity; there was finally neither on the one side nor on the other perfect accuracy." Nirvana means the extinction of Tanhâ—a moral condition of holy calm possible to be attained in this life. Nirvana attained, the chain of kamma is broken, and no new being is produced. "As a flame blown about by the violence of the wind, goes out, cannot be reckoned (as existing), even so a Muni [monk or ascetic] delivered from name and body, disappears, and cannot be reckoned (as existing).* Exert thyself, then, says Buddha; being wise and thoughtful in this world, let one, having listened to my utterance, learn his own extinction."†

For forty-five years Buddha continued his public preaching, when, finding his powers failing, he called his followers round and asked them to speak out if they had any doubt or misgiving in regard to his teaching. "Inquire, brethren, freely. Do not have to reproach yourself afterwards with the thought, 'Our teacher was face to face with us, and we could not bring ourselves to inquire of the Blessed One when we were face to face with him!'"‡ All kept silent. He finally said: "Behold now, brethren, I exhort you, saying, 'Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with diligence!'" These were his last words.

Buddha had not written anything, and after the death of their master it is said three of his disciples were selected to record his teachings. It is not easy to credit that his immediate followers would have spoken of him in the exaggerated terms in which he is here described. Probably we have similar phenomena to that found in the Christian gospels. Remembering, however, how Omar (afterwards Caliph), when near the tent where Mahomet lay dead, drew his scimitar, and swore he would slay any who dared say that the Messenger of Allah could die before all the hypocrites were exterminated and all the heathen converted, we may leave this question to be settled by subsequent criticism. Mr. Rhys David says, in the "General Introduction to his Translation" (p. 10): "The age of these writings can be fixed without much uncertainty at about the latter end of the fourth or beginning of the third century, before the commencement of the Christian era."

In the reign of King Asoka (B.C. 242), who adopted Buddhism, while extending the utmost toleration to all

* Sutta Nipâta, 141. † *Ibid*, 18 and 19.
‡ Dhammapada, 107.
§ Sutra of 42 sections, sect. 10, *Beal's Catena*, p. 194.
‖ Sigala Vada Sutta; R. C. Childers; *Contemporary Review*, p. 422; Feb., 1876; and Sept Suttas Pâlis; Paris, 1876; p. 316.

* Sutta Nipâta, 1,073. † *Ibid*, v. 1,061.
‡ Book of the Great Decease, chap. vi., sect. 5; page 113, vol. xi.

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other beliefs,* missionaries were despatched not only throughout India and to Ceylon, but also to Thibet, Mongolia, Kashmir, and Siam. "Nor is it impossible," says Colonel Meadows Taylor, "that Buddhism may have been preached in Britain, as it was in Greece."†

The Canon of Buddhist Scriptures was then determined. They are called "Tripitaka," "the three Baskets," or "Caskets," and are divided into Sutra, Vinaya, and Abhidharma, Doctrine, Discipline, and Metaphysics. The Sutra consists of discourses delivered by Gautama, and in some instances by his disciples, and also contains birth-stories and illustrative narratives in connection with the sermons. The Vinaya gives the laws of the priesthood, forming a code of monastic discipline, together with legends and details of the life and ministry of Gautama. The Abhidharma discusses the various philosophical speculations in terms of great wealth and precision. These constitute their sacred scriptures, and are the ultimate appeal on all points connected with the religion. Only a portion, chiefly from the two first divisions, has as yet been translated. The Pali Text Society is deserving of the utmost commendation for its efforts to publish the whole of the texts in Roman character, and if the Society receives the encouragement it deserves, we may reasonably hope that English translations of the whole of the Buddhist Sacred Literature will shortly appear. The influence which a knowledge of Sanscrit literature and of Buddhism has already had upon European thought is known to all acquainted with German philosophy. The publication of Pali literature will have a considerable value for the student of early manners and folk lore, as well as for students of the history of the development of religion. The work of the scholars who are making us acquainted with this faith deserves much commendation, even if, while viewing the extensive influence which it has had upon the world, we are unwilling to endorse the final words of the Book of the Great Decease: "Hard—hard is a Buddha to meet with through hundreds of ages!"

## GAMBETTA.

*(Continued from page 421.)*

We may here dispose of a question which once caused much dispute and gave rise to a legend. How did Gambetta lose one of his eyes? According to the legend, he destroyed it himself. Not liking the clerical seminary at Montauban, he wrote home to this effect: "Dear father, If you don't come and take me away from this place I shall poke out one of my eyes." M. Gambetta, senior, took no notice of this strange epistle, and in a few days he received another: "Dear father, I have poked out one of my eyes, and if you don't come and take me away I shall poke out the other." This is a capital story, and shows the idea people had of his determination of character. But it is utterly untrue. Gambetta lost the sight of his right eye at the age of eight. He was one day in a cutler's shop near his father's house, watching a workman drill a hole in the handle of a knife. The instrument suddenly broke, and a sharp fragment wounded the eye, puncturing the cornea. There ensued a watery discharge and protusion of the ball. It was for years a source of annoyance and pain, and in 1867 he had it removed to save the other eye.

Gambetta came to Paris at the age of eighteen to study law. He was renowned among the students who lodged with him at the Hotel de Var, not only for his vigorous ideas and vehement speech, but also for his liberal allowance of three hundred francs a month. In 1859 he was enrolled at the Paris bar, and as to be *dans ses meubles* was the rule, he furnished modest apartments of his own. His father was against his practising in Paris, where the market was so overstocked, and wanted him to settle down at Cahors. But *Tatan* came to the rescue. She had an annuity of about £100, and she said to the father: "You do not see how you can keep your son in Paris, it may be for long years, but next week I will go with him, and we shall stay together"; then, turning to Léon, she added, "And now, my boy, I will give you food and shelter, and you will do the rest by your work."

Gambetta returned to Paris with her and did work. During his student days he had led a noisy life, and he was a thorn in the side of the Imperial gendarmes, before whom he would spout sedition in the streets. But he studied hard all the same, and now he studied harder than ever. Bismarck called the September government "men of the pavement." He was just as accurate as the *Spectator* which, after Gambetta's death, described him as "imperfectly educated." The truth is, he had a splendid education. He was a good connoisseur in art; he was well versed in more than one branch of science, and could, in after years, chat on ornithology with Paul Bert; his knowledge of Greek and Latin was extensive and profound; he was well acquainted with Italian; he could read English easily, although he never trusted himself to speak it; he was deeply read in the best literature of France; his stock of law was enough for his induction to the bar; and he was proficient in military science, a subject in which he always took a deep interest. Gambetta's preferences in French literature were characteristic. He knew yards of Victor Hugo's verse, but he delighted chiefly in the old authors—Molière, La Fontaine, Diderot, Voltaire, and, above all, in Montaigne and Rabelais. He usually carried about a copy of the latter, and it is reported that he has left some racy notes on the great humorist.

At the Café Procope, an old establishment that had been patronised by the great writs and wits of the eighteenth century, including Diderot and Voltaire, there was a large upstairs room in which a debating society held its meetings. Gambetta attended them, and soon became their most noticeable figure. Most of the attendants were impecunious young men who have since become eminent in science, art, literature, and politics. They felt his ascendancy, and predicted that he would "make the world dance." But their plaudits did not entice him astray. After leaving them he went home, and from midnight till three in the morning he gave himself up to extra study. At the age of thirty he was equipped with the best culture, his rare faculties were well trained and alert, and that eloquent tongue was ready to use all his great resources for some noble purpose. And what could be nobler than to impeach tyranny in the name of freedom? The man was ready, and the hour was at hand.

As Crémieux's secretary, Gambetta had picked up a good knowledge of legal practice. As early as 1862 he was engaged, on the recommendation of Jules Favre, to defend Buette, a foreman mechanic, who was charged with treason. Only a year before he tried his first speech at the bar in defence of a prosecuted newspaper, *Le Hanneton*, stuttered, broke down, and was mercilessly snubbed by the judge. But now he spoke freely, and charged the jury not to listen to the suggestion, *Tu non es amicus Cæsaris*. From that moment the workmen of Paris fixed their attention on the "one-eyed advocate." At last Gambetta's opportunity came. He seized it, leapt into notoriety, and suddenly became a power in France. He did not, as Byron said, "wake up one morning and find himself famous"; he gave eloquent speech one day to the suppressed passion of millions, and made himself famous.

The Empire was beginning to be found out. Eugéne Tenet's book baffled the press laws, and told the French people how Louis Napoleon had established his throne. It showed how the Coup d'Etat had been resisted, gave a long list of martyrs, and narrated the death of Alphonse Baudin, a deputy who was shot on a barricade in the Rue Sainte-Marguerite. Paris was moved, and on the next *Jour des Morts* hundreds of old exiles and young students visited Baudin's tomb at Montmarte. The police made several arrests, and journals that condemned them were prosecuted. On the *Reveil* starting a subscription for a monument to Baudin's memory, a prosecution was commenced against its editor, Charles Louis Delescluze, who entrusted his defence to Gambetta.

The notorious judge Delesvaux presided at the trial. He was a fierce legal hawk, often styled the Jeffreys of the Second Empire. The case of Delescluze came on late in the day, after several other editors had been defended by Crémieux, Jules Favre, and Emmanuel Arago. It was getting dusk, and just before Gambetta rose Delesvaux observed: "I suppose you have not much to say, so it will hardly be worth while to have the gas lighted."

* Mr. Davids, in his *Hibbert Lecture*, pp. 229–231, gives extracts from the noble inscriptions of this truly great king, and affirms, moreover: "There is no record known to me in the long history of Buddhism, throughout the many centuries where its followers have been for such lengthened periods supreme, of any persecution by the Buddhists of the followers of any other faith."

† *A Student's Manual of the History of India*, p. 51; 1871.

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"Never mind the gas, sir; I will throw light enough on this affair," answered Gambetta; and amid the laughter produced by this retort he began that splendid speech which lifted him above the great orators who had preceded, and won him a national fame. He attacked the Empire with astonishing vigor. The judge rose to stop him, but a growl from the crowd in court forced him back into his seat. Gambetta's hearers were startled by his courage and fascinated by his eloquence, and when he finished his magnificent peroration their admiration knew no bounds.

> "Listen; for seventeen years you have been the masters of France, absolute and arbitrary, as yourselves have said. We will not inquire what use you have made of her treasures, her blood, her honor, and her glory. No one is ignorant of the financial catastrophes which, at this very moment, spring like mines under our feet; but what condemns you the most is that you have never dared to say—We will celebrate, we will put among the solemnisations of France, the second of December as a national anniversary. And yet every successive *regime* in the country has honored the day of its birth. There are only two anniversaries, the 18th Brumaire and the second of December, which have never been raised to the rank of a public celebration, because you know that, if you attempted to do so, the general conscience would revolt against them. Well, that anniversary you have neglected we will vindicate and take for ourselves; we will celebrate it every year without fail; it shall be the anniversary of our dead, until the day when the nation, again become master, shall require of you the great national expiation, in the name of liberty, equality, and fraternity."

Gambetta's speech made an immense stir in France, and when he went south to defend other journalists at Lille and Toulouse he was greeted with acclamation. The Republicans saw in him their destined leader. He soon entered the Corps Legislatif as a sworn enemy of the Empire, having been returned by two constituencies, Belleville and Marseilles.

Gambetta's future career belongs to history. Soon after taking his seat he became the leader of the Irreconcilables, a party which, in his own words, had "recourse neither to violence, nor to insurrection or conspiracy," but were implacably opposed to any form of government that took the nation's destinies out of its own hands. Even then he was a man of order as well as progress. He detested "demagogues of every kind, whether Cæsars or Marats," and he plainly told the Republicans that before they could hope to govern France they would have to prove that they could govern themselves. When Napoleon tried to galvanise the Empire by a plebiscite, Gambetta denounced it in one of his finest speeches. The polling showed 7,500,000 votes for the Empire, and 1,500,000 against it. The formidable minority included no less than 56,000 soldiers, and this fact so alarmed the Emperor that he lent a willing ear to those who counselled a war with Germany. That frightful contest destroyed his throne in a few weeks, and prepared the way for the Republic.

In the stormy days that followed Sedan one grand figure towered over all. Gambetta's voice declared in the Chamber that "Louis Napoleon and his family had for ever ceased to rule over France," and it was he who proclaimed the Republic from the Hotel de Ville. An eye-witness of that memorable scene states that he was perfectly cool and collected when thousands of older men lost their heads. After doing all he could in Paris, Gambetta left it to organise the national defence in the provinces. As the city was then invested, he had to leave by balloon. It was a dangerous enterprise. The companion balloon was lost in the German ocean, and Gambetta's came so close to the Prussians that their shots whizzed past the car—one going through his hair. We have not space to tell how he raised the provinces against the enemy. In four months he levied 600,000 troops, equipped and provisioned them, found them generals, directed their campaigns, and inspired them with enthusiasm. Von Moltke himself has borne testimony to the wonderful labors of the young Dictator. Success was impossible, but Gambetta worked like a Titan for France. He could not save her provinces, but he saved her honor; and Frenchmen loved the hero who, in the darkest hours of defeat and shame, kept a brave heart and "never despaired." Yet, if Gambetta toiled for France, he played deep in the game of life and death for the Republic, and in that he succeeded. Let us thank him for that.

G. W. FOOTE.

*(To be concluded.)*

## THE FREE PRESS DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

THIS Committee has been formed to watch the Bedborough case in the general interest of free publication, and to raise a fund for an adequate defence when the case comes on for trial. Subscriptions are urgently required. They should be sent to the honorary treasurer, Mrs. Gladys Dawson, Bedford Hotel, Covent Garden, London, W.C., or to the honorary secretary, Mr. Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, London, N.

The Committee has issued a careful manifesto, which is being widely circulated. "Its members," this document says, "belong to many different schools of opinion. They are not in any way concerned with the particular views entertained by Mr. Bedborough, or set forth in the writings which form the ground of the prosecution. The present is neither the time nor the occasion to express either agreement or dissent. The one thing to be done is to defend the liberty of *all* opinions. It is always the bigots who choose the point of attack, and it is there that the friends of freedom must rally."

A large number of representative persons have joined the Committee, and fresh adhesions are received daily. We have only room for a selection of names: G. J. Holyoake, G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, C. Cohen, Robert Buchanan, J. M. Robertson, Edward Carpenter, Herbert Burrows, Walter Crane, Mona Caird, Grant Allen, A. E. Fletcher, H. M. Hyndman, George Moore (the novelist), George Bernard Shaw, W. M. Thompson (editor of *Reynolds'*), Frank Harris (editor of *Saturday Review*), E. Belfort Bax, H. Quelch, H. S. Salt, Edward Truelove, and William Platt.

A public meeting to protest against the prosecution, and to affirm the principle of free discussion, has been arranged for Tuesday evening next (July 12) at South-place Institute. This is centrally situated, being close to Moorgate-street Station, and to car and 'bus service to nearly all London. A strong list of speakers is being prepared. Mr. Foote will be amongst them, and no doubt the Secular party will be largely represented in the audience. The bigger the gathering the more influential it will be, and the more notice will be taken of it by the ordinary press.

## ACID DROPS.

SENOR SAGASTA stays in Madrid, which is a long way off the fighting. Perhaps it is for this reason that he says the war will go on. "There are in Cuba," he declares, "a hundred thousand men, including volunteer troops, ready to die in its defence, but they will not yield." What these poor devils are really asked to die for is the pig-headed stupidity and asinine pride of the Spanish government. Apparently the only way to bring the war to a close is to send an American fleet over to Spain, and the sooner that is done the better in all probability it will be for everybody concerned.

The clerical journals at Madrid publish violent articles against the peace party. They preach war to the bitter end, and rely upon "one above" for victory. Well, we guess the end will be quite bitter enough to satisfy them; and it looks as though their God had given them away already.

The *Chicago Chronicle* suggests that those clergymen who are preaching and praying so earnestly for the success of the American armies should form themselves into a regiment and go to the front. We wish they would take this advice. And if a regiment of Catholic priests were organised to meet them, and the two regiments annihilated each other—well, we shouldn't grieve too profoundly.

Chaplain Milburn, of the United States Senate, has been praying for Queen Victoria, and asking God Almighty to "maintain the eminence of her sovereignty." The New York *Truthseeker* wants to know if there are not chaplains enough in England to do all the necessary praying for the Queen. "Our official prayers," it says, "come high—about five dollars each—and we cannot afford to produce them for the export trade."

Dean Lefroy, of Norwich, wanted to raise £3,000 for a new organ in the Cathedral, so he started a Self-denial Week in the diocese, during which faithful Churchmen were to swear off drink, tobacco, theatres, music-halls, and all other luxuries and amusements, and send him at the finish

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the amount they had saved. Well, the Self-denial Week is over, and has realised £36 1s. The Dean regards this as "inadequate and unsatisfactory."

The present Lord Chancellor of England, Lord Halsbury, late Sir Hardinge Giffard, did all the dirty legal work for the Tories when they were baiting Bradlaugh. He also conducted the famous "blasphemy" prosecutions in 1882-3. He never did anything else worth mentioning. However, he has a splendid reward for *that*. Mr. H. C. Richards is another lucky opponent of the great Iconoclast. He contested Northampton three times, always unsuccessfully. Finally he captured "Jemmy" Rowlands' seat in East Finsbury. He is now made a Q.C., and this probably means a good income at the bar.

Bill stickers, the Birmingham *Daily Mail* says, are responsible for some peculiar mistakes. On a window in a leading thoroughfare of that city there was a placard announcing, "Shop to let, good basement." Underneath a bill poster had stuck the announcement, "Christ is coming."

Monsignor Bonomelli, Bishop of Cremona, has written a book entitled *Let us Follow Reason*. Of course he means a certain distance. He tries to harmonise Church dogmas with the Darwinian theory: new wine in old bottles. The Vatican is said to be scandalised, but is afraid to condemn the author.

According to a correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette*, a Turkish band was heard at Jerusalem, on Sunday, June 12, practising Handel's "Rejoice, O Daughter of Sion." The explanation is as follows. The band had been ordered to practise several German marches, to be played when Emperor William enters the Holy City, and the bandmaster took counsel with a German musical friend, who mischievously recommended this piece of Handel's among other compositions. Of course the Turkish soldiers had not the slightest notion of the meaning of the words.

Sam Jones, the Yankee revivalist, has been "answering" Colonel Ingersoll in Atalanta city. Sam is a poor sort of "funny" creature, but he goes down with a certain section of the Christians. One of his definitions was this: "An Agnostic is one who will not listen to reason, and is talking all the time." A sentence like this passes as witty and logical amongst Sam Jones's audience.

"Bob Ingersoll," said holy Sam, "is an Agnostic for revenue only." This is a display of Christian charity. As a matter of fact, Ingersoll preached Freethought when it *didn't* pay. It pays now because he has made his name a household word in the United States. Sam Jones is like a good many other Christians; he mistakes the effect for the cause.

But the funniest thing is yet to come. Sam Jones described Ingersoll as "a little bald-headed man." Certainly he is bald-headed, and doesn't fly into a passion (like Elisha) when he is reminded of the fact. But *little!* Why the Colonel is about six feet high, and broad in proportion. Somebody must have played a huge joke on Sam Jones—unless Sam Jones is playing a very small joke on his own public.

At the New Jersey State Prison, on May 29, Bishop McFaul, of Trenton, administered the sacrament of confirmation to fifty-nine convicts. In the audience there were 420 convicts, all Catholics. For of such is the kingdom of heaven.

The *Catholic Universe* makes the following admission:—"The vice and immorality among the Catholic body in Liverpool are fearful. The sooner we admit that fact the better, and deny it we cannot in the face of statistics compiled by the Rev. Father Nugent. This plain statement of figures, set down in black and white, reveals a horrible, hideous blot on the Catholic character in the great northern seaport. Their substance is this—that in Liverpool the strongest phalanx in the devil's army is recruited from the ranks of Catholicism. Of the three great divisions in that gloomy host—thieving, harlotry, and intemperance—the majority are members of our community."

Some weeks ago that pious novelist, Marie Corelli, indignantly denied (through her solicitors) that her next novel was to be entitled "The Sorrows of Christ." Someone had evidently played a joke upon her, and she did not see its humor. Since then the joke seems to have developed, for the *Strand Magazine* for July gravely contradicts the suggestion that "the title of her next book will bear the blasphemous and revolting title of 'The Sins of Christ.'"

Marie Corelli is afraid that her next novel will "excite the clergy of all denominations a good deal." She will find that they take a lot of exciting. Nothing she can say will raise their hair.

There have been many Papal tiaras. Pope Julius paid £400,000 for his. It was a grand affair, and when he was hard-up he pawned it. It was broken up at the Revolution. The tiara of Paul II. cost £300,000. He was so fond of wearing it that he brought on heat apoplexy, which killed him. In 1854 the Queen of Spain sent a beautiful tiara to Pope Pius IX. There were 18,000 diamonds in it, and it was valued at £21,000. Everybody knows that the Popes are poor fishermen, servants of the servants of God; but they have generally had a childish love of glittering baubles.

The Bishop of Worcester does not see that a university is wanted at Birmingham. What is wanted, in his opinion, is "a vigorous effort to meet the spiritual necessities of the city." He begs Churchmen not to "allow any other object to turn them aside" from this "awful responsibility." This is the episcopal way of saying, "Education be damned, sir; let us have more parsons."

The Bishop of Stepney, according to the *Westminster Gazette*, has been preaching some "eloquent" sermons at St. Paul's Cathedral. "In the last," we are told, "he said that there was in the Cathedral a tall and clever artisan, who was a living example of the value of intercessory prayer. Some years ago, in an East-end workshop, he challenged a fellow-workman, a little man of small brain power, to a discussion in any hall on the truth of Christianity. The little man said: 'I can only pray for you.' Years rolled on, and the big man became an earnest Christian, and now scours the streets of London in the hopes of finding his little colleague and thanking him."

This is one of those delightfully silly yarns that are so eagerly swallowed and highly relished in religious circles. Note the simplicity with which the infidel is allowed to be "clever," while the Christian is a man of "small brain power." Note also the final simplicity of the big, clever man "scouring the streets of London" to find the little, stupid man. What a remarkably clever way of trying to find one person amidst the six million inhabitants of our great metropolis. One hardly knows which to admire most, the exquisite beauty of the story or the sublime wisdom of its application.

This same Bishop of Stepney has an article in the July number of the *Dawn of Day* on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The argumentative part is simply beneath contempt. We should waste our time, and that of our readers, by dealing with it. The evidential part, however, is really original. The Bishop states that Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, was "seen by five hundred people in broad daylight on a mountain." Now we know all about the five hundred people. Paul invented them. But the "broad daylight" and the "mountain" are pretty bits of latter-day fiction. There is nothing about them in the New Testament.

"A Pauper" writes to the *Islington Gazette* from Wallis-road Workhouse drawing attention to the scanty and poor food dealt out to the inmates. "Three times a day," he adds, "we are called upon to return thanks to Providence for what we have received." This is the most unkindest cut of all.

Canon Eyton affords another fine illustration of Christian charity. "We must not act," he says in the *Church Gazette*, "in the spirit of that poisonous little rat, the *Church Times*." How the Christians would chortle if Freethinkers wrote in this way of a Freethought journal. Still, we are bound to say that Canon Eyton only follows the precedent set by Jesus Christ, who called his religious opponents "vipers," not to mention "whited sepulchres" and "children of hell."

The Archbishop of Manila has decamped in order "to avoid irritating the insurgents by his presence and provoking them to acts of violence." What a sweetly happy excuse for levanting!

Recent medical science and the hospital system together have done much to demoralise the people of this country. They have filled ordinary men and women with a most disgraceful fear of disease and death. The tendency all round is to treat a sick human being something like a kennel of dogs treat an ailing canine. Such a person is to be "isolated," thrust away amongst strangers, and allowed to live or die according to the strength of his constitution. The poor wretch himself loses all the helps of natural sympathy and affection, which are often more curative than medical skill; while those from whom he is severed are degraded in proportion as they lose the courage and humanity to nurse their own sick ones back to health or onward to a peaceful death.

An illustration of this lamentable state of things has just

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occurred near Holsworthy, in Devonshire. A farm laborer, aged seventeen, was taken ill of typhoid fever, and when it was known what he was suffering from the farm folk would not go near him or render him any assistance. Dr. Kingdom, the medical officer of health for the district, had to remove the lad to the Devon and Exeter hospital, where he died the morning after his arrival.

One fact in connection with this case we have much pleasure in noticing. Ordinarily we are not fond of parsons, but this is solely on account of their profession. We were never so bigoted as to suppose that there were no "good fellows" amongst the thousands of ministers in England. Certainly one of them is the Rev. G. D. Melhuish, the rector of Holsworthy, who stayed with the poor typhoid-fever-stricken lad for three days and nights, when the members of his own class deserted him. We take off our hat to that parson. He is a man.

Christ said "Woe unto ye rich," and "Blessed be ye poor." Nearly two thousand years afterwards John Morley writes of England as "a paradise for the well-to-do, a purgatory for the able, and a hell for the poor." And is he not right? The sleepers on the Embankment seats might have a word or two to say about the "blessings of poverty." The police have been very strict lately. Their orders are that no one must be allowed to sit on the seats after midnight. So it's "Now then, up you get!" and "Move on there, move on," to the sleepers huddled in a shapeless mass on the hard iron and wood or the cold stone steps. It is a pitiable sight to see the poor wretches creep back like whipped dogs as soon as the representative of law and order has passed, to snatch a few minutes' rest until the petty tyrant returns.

*Apropos* of the High Church Billingsgate against Sir William Harcourt, the *Daily News* calls attention to the fact that Matthew Arnold used to call the religious papers "the infidel Press."

On the fall of Lord Beaconsfield in 1880, when Gladstone was busy in forming a new ministry, a friend asked what he could do to help; he was willing to write notes or send messages. Gladstone's answer was "Pray," and Lord Stanmore calls it "a most characteristic reply." It is just possible, however, that Gladstone didn't want the proffered help, and that the pawky old parliamentary hand "spoke pious" in order to veil his refusal.

"Providence," general or particular, according to taste, has permitted another disastrous earthquake in Italy. At Rieti not one house escaped without serious damage, and hundreds of persons were injured. Much destruction occurred at other places.

The Jew-hunt has been going on merrily in Western Galicia. Christians have attacked the Jews, burnt down their houses, and pillaged their property. An excellent combination of religious fervor and good business.

Professor Evans, the distinguished antiquary, is preparing a book on the criminal prosecution and capital punishment of animals in Europe. These ridiculous proceedings occurred under Christianity. An old Pagan would never have thought of prosecuting and hanging a pig, for instance; that splendid intellectual and moral achievement was reserved for the devotees of "the only true religion."

George Watt, while lying in Norwich Prison under sentence of death for murdering his wife, expressed a hope that he might "meet her in heaven." Perhaps she is less anxious for the encounter. One experience of the kind is quite enough for any sensible woman. A man who could kill his wife here might knock her on the head with his hallelujah harp hereafter.

Walter Horaford, who was recently hanged at Cambridge Prison for poisoning his cousin, Annie Holmes, paid great attention to the chaplain's ministrations, and read his Bible regularly every day. He did not express penitence for his crime; nevertheless religion, or something, supported him beautifully. He walked to the scaffold without the least trepidation.

Rev. Arthur Mordaunt Hale, a Guernsey curate, has been sentenced at Gloucester to five years' penal servitude for bigamy. Mr. Justice Matthew said that the prisoner's offence was aggravated by the position he held as a minister of the Gospel.

Ten thousand troops are camping on Salisbury Plain. Their spirituous necessities are looked after by the canteen, their spiritual necessities by the Bishop of Salisbury, who has erected Church of England tents. This has inspired the Wesleyans with a generous rivalry, and Methodist tents are being provided. The black-coats will tell the red-coats the way to heaven; and probably some of the red-coats will wish the black-coats in the opposite establishment.

"When I was ordained," says a correspondent of the *Daily News*, "the Bishop placed his hands on my head, using these words: 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." Every clergyman of the Church of England is therefore what the Yankee called a "little tin Jesus."

There was a fire at Gardiner (Me.), and a woman who was burnt out was hunting up her effects which had been removed. Not finding an article she was very anxious about, she shouted: "Where in h—l is my Bible?' So says the *Reporter-Journal* of that city.

Charles Rumpf, a minister of the Gospel at Elizabeth, New Jersey, has been arrested and put on trial for beating his wife. The neighbors interfered when he took to pounding her on the head with a big Bible. Perhaps he thought the better the book the better the deed.

Moses Ricks, a negro preacher, was arrested in Monroe County, Arkansas, for an outrageous assault on a farmer's wife. Three hundred citizens took him out of gaol and lynched him. No more preachee, no more rape. Sad are the tribulations of the godly.

"The Bible courted investigation. It was not to be judged by human reason." We take this delicious morsel from a report in the *Watford Observer* of a sermon by the Rev. G. Boggis. Comment upon it would be like refining pure gold, painting the lily, or throwing a perfume on the violet. Boggis is unique. Nought but himself could be his parallel.

At the recent Oxford Diocesan Conference the Rev. N. C. Poyntz, of Dorchester, created quite a diversion. He contended that while it was right to bring the Church into harmony with the Prayer Book, it was also right to bring it into harmony with the Bible. This was enough to raise the Bishop's suspicions, and his lordship kept a sharp eye on that Dorchester parson. He was allowed to go on, however, and he pointed out that it was distinctly ordered in the fifth chapter of James that elders, or priests, should pray over the sick and anoint them with oil. This "distinct command" ought, in his opinion, to be obeyed, and "those Bible practices" should be restored. But this was too much for the Bishop, who didn't relish the prospect of having his hands perpetually greasy; so his lordship cut the speaker short and put the resolution, and poor parson Poyntz lost his chance of reintroducing clerical oil-cans.

The Queen loves her soldiers and sailors. She also loves her parsons. Her Majesty has just given 1,000 guineas to the Queen Victoria Clergy Fund. She gave a twentieth part of that sum for the Improvement of the Condition of the Working Classes.

Mr. Reader Harris, a legal gentleman, edits a paper called *Tongues of Fire*. Turning over its pages, we note an editorial complaint that the people of this country pay £5,000,000 as gate-money at football matches, and only £1,250,000 for the conversion of the heathen. We object to this too. It would be better to spend the whole £6,250,000 on football.

In another part of the same paper we read of an ardent missionary who came to an untimely end. "Within three weeks of his reception of the Spirit," we are told, "he started for India, and died within ten days of landing in that country." This is not an economical way of carrying on business. Evidently the Lord holds missionaries very cheap.

Where the devil is the devil? Lots of people want to know. He has been missing for a long time. Mr. Reader Harris, however, seems to have discovered his whereabouts. Amongst the "Prayers Asked" in *Tongues of Fire* is this: "For the inmates of Hanwell Asylum, that the devil may be cast out." Well, well; who would have thought it? Poor old Nick! The cleverest fellow in the universe at last amongst the lunatics!

A youngster of this town, not long since, while the family were enjoying a visit from the minister, stood behind the door, and as the preacher entered the room the lad jumped towards him with a loud "whoop." Upon being questioned by his parents as to why he acted so rudely, he answered: "I wanted to see if 'perfect love casteth out all fear.'"—*Wilson Kansas Echo.*

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, July 10, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W.: 7.30, "Purgatory; or the Half-Way House."

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

W. Lewis.—We do not share your views, but we have no quarrel with them. On the ground of a good life in this world we can all join heartily.

Edward Lawson will become a member of the Secular Society, Limited. "I am glad," he says, "that you have got the scheme so far advanced, and hope you will soon be able to get it established on a solid foundation."

E. J. Warren.—Your lecture notice for last week arrived on Wednesday, too late for insertion.

R. J. Turner.—You should apply to the magistrate for a summons. Salvation Army people have no more right than others to become a nuisance.

Student.—The words you refer to are technically correct. We left the phraseology to our solicitor.

Henry Swift (Kimberley).—Thanks for your subscription to the Wheeler Fund, in memory of "that good soldier of the cause."

Dr. W. H. Stevens writes: "I wish to become a member of the Secular Society, Limited, and enclose 10s. as my entrance fee. I think it is a move in the right direction, and most heartily congratulate you on having so well thought it out. I wish it every success, which I shall do all I can to promote."

Alice Mary Baker, daughter of the late Daniel Baker, applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, and writes: "I wish it every success. If carried out, it should solve a difficulty, and place your party in a better monetary position."

E. Guillaume.—Thanks for letter and enclosure. Your certificate of membership in the new Society will be forwarded in due course.

W. H. Deakin.—See our notes on the Secular Charter. Thanks for the cutting.

N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme.—Miss Vance acknowledges: J. Oram, 2s. 6d.

W. Elcoat, applying for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, says: "Whenever the Secular party make up their minds to go in for a suitable hall I will give £2 towards it."

R. Chapman.—See paragraph. Mr. Foote intends to visit your district in September or October. What halls are available at South Shields now?

James Neate.—Thanks. See paragraph.

C. H. Cattell (Birmingham) writes: "In my humble opinion you have earned the gratitude of all Freethinkers for your bold attempt to deal with the bequest business. The scheme places matters on such a sound financial basis that, if it is only taken up with spirit by the party, it should silence all grumblers and lead up to a grand organisation worthy of your leadership." This correspondent is thanked for cuttings.

G. W. B.—We purposely refrained from discussing whether parents should or should not, on secular grounds, be obliged to call in medical aid for their sick children. Indeed, we stated so plainly in our article. Our sole object was to expose and denounce the hypocrisy of professed Christians who prosecute real Christians.

W. P. Ball.—Thanks for your weekly batch of cuttings.

Louis Levine.—The London correspondent of the *Irish Independent* is a liar or the companion of liars. Mr. John Morley has *not* been received into the Catholic Church. Thanks for copies of your leaflets. They are excellent, and their circulation should be of much service to the good old cause.

Newsagent.—The best cheap edition of Shelley, we believe, is the one edited by William Rossetti, price 3s. 6d. Shelley only repudiated *Queen Mab* on the ground of its immaturity—he wrote it at eighteen. He did not recede from its philosophy.

W. H. Spivey.—Copy of the Memorandum and Articles of Association forwarded.

Louis Organ.—Thanks for the paper.

Tom Taylor.—Pleased to hear from you again. Our regards to your wife.

E. Pinder.—Thanks for the Leicester list of subscriptions to the Wheeler Fund. We can quite understand that your members *are* being pushed just now for your forward movement, which we hope will be a great success.

J. Partridge.—Glad the Birmingham friends had such a pleasant excursion.

Papers Received.—Record—Islington Gazette—Crescent—Torch of Reason—Freidenker—Secular Thought—Public Opinion—Lucifer—English Mechanic—Humanity—Freethought Magazine—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Watford Observer—Progressive Thinker—Lincoln Leader—Weekly Citizen—Consett Chronicle—Tongues of Fire—People's Journal—Dawn o Day—Oxford Times.

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 is due.

*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.

The National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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.

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

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. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening (July 10), taking for his subject, "Purgatory; or the Half-Way House." Mr. Foote has never lectured on this topic before, and it will have at least the charm of novelty.

A North of England Freethinker, who is a man of position and an M.B. and B.S., but cannot court martyrdom by having his name published, applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, and writes as follows to Mr. Foote: "It seems to me a splendid idea, conceived in a statesmanlike manner. It must be a great source of content to you personally to see a way at last whereby you may escape not only monetary loss, but also a great deal of gratuitous insult and insinuation. I should support the new Society if only to give *you* a fair chance."

Mr. Cohen lectures for the Bethnal Green Branch in Victoria Park to-day (July 10) at 3.15 and 6.30. The collection in the afternoon will be given to the Wheeler Fund. Freethinkers in the neighborhood, who have not yet contributed, should go to this lecture and drop something into the box.

Mr. Cohen's recent lectures at Stanley are noticed in the *Consett Chronicle*, which says he can always draw a large audience here, and adds "there is something in that." "How many of our local ministers," it asks, "could 'draw' as Mr. Cohen has done? If the most eloquent among them called a meeting against Secularism, the probability is that not above a score of the faithful would have turned up."

Mr. Joseph McCabe, formerly the Very Rev. Father Antony, who is now acting as organiser and lecturer to the Leicester Secular Society, is evidently getting well to work. On Sunday last he lectured in the Secular Hall on "The Revival of Ritualism." He is down for two more Sunday lectures during July. The hall will be closed during August, but in September a course of lectures will be delivered by Mr. McCabe on "The Nature and Purpose of Secularism."

Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, the president of the Leicester Secularists, and a very devoted friend of the movement there and elsewhere, does not often take the platform, we believe, but he takes it to-day (July 10) at the Secular Hall, his subject being "The Future of Secularism," with special reference to the Secular Society.

"The Real Robert Burns," by G. W. Foote, in his paper, the *Freethinker*, ought to be put in a pamphlet. It is a faithful, natural picture of the poet and the man. Burns was anything but a Calvinist, and, not being a hypocrite, he expressed his doubts of orthodoxy in phrases not calculated to flatter the Church. Freethinkers the world over owe Mr. Foote a debt of gratitude for his splendid defence of the great Scotch bard.—*Boston Investigator*.

The same number of the *Boston Investigator*—the oldest Freethought journal in America, and still one of the best—prints a long extract from Mr. Foote's address at the grave of the late J. M. Wheeler. Our esteemed contemporary announces the approaching publication in its columns of a symposium on the question: What would you substitute for the Bible as a moral guide? Colonel Ingersoll is amongst those who will supply answers. Mr. Foote has been invited to furnish a contribution, but is unable to do so in consequence of the load of work thrown upon him by the loss of his sub-editor.

This is how the N. S. S. Annual Conference strikes the New York *Truthseeker*: "The National Secular Society of England has just held a successful Annual Conference at Manchester (May 29). The attendance was good, interest

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deep, and enthusiasm lively. Without the slightest hesitation the delegates re-elected G. W. Foote for president. A motion was carried, authorising the Executive, meaning President Foote, to arrange for a national demonstration on the occasion of Colonel Ingersoll's visit to England in 1899."

The *Record* (Watford) publishes an excellent letter by "Celsus" in reply to Canon Reith's nonsense about the antiquity and independence of the Anglican Church, which only dates from the reign of Henry VIII., and is in every respect a creature of the State.

"Iconoclast" has started a useful correspondence on "The Finality of the Bible" in the Lincoln *Leader*. Correspondence of this kind in the local press is of great service to Freethought.

Wilson Macdonald, the sculptor, has gratuitously designed a bronze bust of Thomas Paine, to be placed on the monument at New Rochello. The expense of casting and placing is being defrayed by a public subscription, Dr. E. B. Foote being the treasurer.

The Liverpool Branch holds its annual picnic to-day (July 10). Brakes leave Woodside Ferry at 2 o'clock for Burton Woods, Cheshire. The tickets (3s. 6d.) include the drive and a knife-and-fork tea, and can be obtained from Mr. Cox, 28 St. George's-hill, Everton, or from Mr. Hammond, 26 Sandheys-street, Kirkdale.

The South Shields Branch holds its annual picnic to-day (July 10), travelling in brakes from North Shields to Holywell Dene. During the customary meeting held under the trees the presentation of a silver watch will be made to Mr. John Sanderson, who is leaving the district for the south of England. We have known Mr. Sanderson for any number of years, and a better man never walked in two shoes—or out of them.

The Birmingham Branch N.S.S. had its annual picnic on Sunday last. By Midland Railway to Worcester the members and friends, to the number of eighty-six, started at 7.30, and arrived there at 8.30, where a special steamer was waiting to take them to Tewkesbury, a two-hours-and-half trip on the Severn. Favored with beautiful weather, kindred spirits, and some excellent music, the journey each way was of the most pleasant description. The return at 8.30 brought to a close one of the brightest outings the Branch has had. Great praise is due to Mr. R. Taylor, the president, and Mr. W. T. Pitt, treasurer, for the splendid boat arrangements.

One thing is much to Gladstone's credit. He had a sincere regard and admiration for John Stuart Mill, whom he called "the Saint of Rationalism."

## WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

W. Heaford, 10s.; Gateshead Friend (per C. Cohen) 10s.; J. Helm, 10s.; W. Armstead, 2s. 6d.; J. R., 1s.; W. P., 1s.; Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; J. Dennis, 10s.; J. Hocken, 1s.; Henry Swift, £1.

*Per Miss Vance*:—Manchester Branch, £2; Mr. Charles Payne, 5s.; A Friend, 5s.; Sale of *Truthseekers* sent per J. W. Gott, 10s. 2d. Ipswich Branch: Mr. and Mrs. Pickett, 5s.; T. L., 2s. 6d.; W. K., 2s. 6d.; T. Haste, 1s.; J. Calver, 1s.; Messrs. Abbott, Baker, and Bishop, 1s. 6d. W. Hardiman, 2s.; R. Dowding, 2s. 6d.; J. Oram, 2s. 6d.

*Per E. Pinder*:—Rank and File, 1s.; S. Leeson, 2s.; A Friend, 1s.; Another Friend, 1s.; J. H., 1s.; W. Wilber, 2s.; J. Potter, 1s.; J. Sharman, 1s.; H. Sursham, 1s.; Tom Richards, 1s.; J. Essex, 1s.; W. Payne, 1s.; Muston, 6d.; H. Allen, 1s.; Mrs. Hill, 6d.; Mrs. Lowe, 1s.; Miss Manning, 6d.; Mrs. Slater, 2s. 6d.; W. Marston, 1s.; A. Lette, 2s.

## A Child's Laugh.

Strike with hand of fire, O weird musician, thy harp strung with Apollo's golden hair; fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim, deft touches of the organ-keys; blow, bugler, blow, until thy silver notes do touch and kiss the moonlit waves, and charm the lovers wandering amid the vineclad hills. But know, your sweetest strains are discords all, compared with childhood's happy laugh—the laugh that fills the eyes with light, and every heart with joy. O rippling river of laughter, thou art the blessed boundary-line between the beasts and men; and every wayward wave of thine doth drown some fretful fiend of care. O Laughter! rose-lipped daughter of joy, there are dimples enough in thy cheeks to catch and hold and glorify all the tears of grief.—*Ingersoll.*

## THE WRITINGS ON THE TOMBSTONES.

I WANDERED through a churchyard on the Devil-dodgers' day,
The day that's bossed by "beetles" on the Bible-banging "lay";
For Monday I was waiting, so I whiled the time away
By reading all the writings on the tombstones.

How saintly were the people in that churchyard now at rest,
Like Adam was before he fell—that is, before he dressed;
Not like the people living now, but better than the best—
According to the writings on the tombstones.

The grave I first inspected was a new one, spick and span;
'Twas that of William Smith, deceased, a wealthy slaughterman;
He fell asleep in Jesus on the twenty-first of Jan.—
According to the writing on the tombstone.

Now, William Smith, deceased, no doubt placed fat beneath the scale,
And did some other sinful deeds while in this sinful vale;
But William went to glory when he kicked the mortal pail—
According to the writing on the tombstone.

The souls of all the other folks, whose graves I gazed upon,
Have gone to be with Jesus, like the soul of number one;
They've joined the blessed angels, every blessed mother's son—
According to the writings on the tombstones.

How very sad Old Nick must be; how very, very glum;
His "roomy" lodgings are "to let," no lodgers ever come;
The damned infernal regions are as empty as a drum—
According to the writings on the tombstones.

. . . . . .

I murmured, as I came away that Sabbath afternoon,
"Oh, why do Christians fear to die, if death is such a boon?
They've no more faith in Christ than in the man that's in the moon,
In spite of all their writings on the tombstones!"

ESS JAY BEE.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of monthly Executive meeting held on Thursday, June 28 (the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair). Present: Messrs. E. Bates, C. Cohen, T. Gorniot, S. Hartmann, Victor Roger, F. Schaller, C. Watts, W. Heaford, E. W. Quay, C. Quinton, J. Neate, M. Loafer, P. Sabine, W. Leat, and the secretary (Miss Vance).

The cash statement was received and adopted.

It was resolved that a new prospectus be issued in accordance with the alterations and additions to the rules made at the Society's Conference.

The sub-committee's minutes, which contained a suggestion that a special balance-sheet dealing with the receipts and expenditure in connection with the Treasurer's scheme should be issued when the first twelve months of working had expired, were read and confirmed.

The President then reported upon the Secular Society, Limited. The Society had a legal basis for the first time in history, and under this incorporation the banking account would be the only treasurer, all monies being paid into the bank and all payments being made by cheques signed by members of the board elected for that purpose. Several questions having been asked and explanations given, the President then reported that he had been acting in the Bedborough prosecution as a private individual, and had drawn up a resolution which had been unanimously carried by the Defence Committee.

Those present expressed their satisfaction at Mr. Foote's attitude, and Mr. Heaford moved, and Mr. Neate seconded: "That this Executive regards the prosecution of Mr. Bedborough as an attack upon the right of free publication, and hereby subscribes the sum of one guinea as a subscription towards the cost of his defence."

The election of sub-committees was then proceeded with.

Benevolent Fund Committee.—Messrs. R. Forder, S. Hartmann, G. J. Warren, Victor Roger, E. Bater, and Miss Annie Brown were re-elected, with the addition of Mr. E. W. Quay.

Finance and Propaganda Committee (Treasurer's Scheme).—Messrs. E. Bater, T. Gornoit, J. Neate, E. W. Quay, and Victor Roger.

Some discussion then arose as to the advisability of running an Annual Excursion, and a small committee, consisting of Messrs. Loafer, Sabine, and Bater, was elected to consider and report at next meeting. EDITH M. VANCE.

N.B.—Secretaries of Branches are requested to forward immediately the official forms upon which they have appointed delegates to represent their Branches upon the Executive. Only a very small number have been received to date.

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## THE YARN OF THE CROSS.

Not many months ago "Chips" gave the readers of the *Liberator* some capital articles (founded on Mr. Parsons' book) respecting the meaning of the Cross. Once or twice I have told in this journal the Legend or Yarn of the Cross, and it may not be amiss to relate it *de novo*. The Protestants still keep the barbarous notions of the Cross before the crowd, and thus perpetuate the savage and ferocious sentiments of the race—corrupting one portion of mankind into ferocious and cruel tyrants, and the masses into timid and non-resisting sufferers. The cruel tyrant is worse than the worst wild beast; the patient sufferer of what he ought to resent and resist is worse than the most contemptible cur. And these two classes of beings the Cross story, in the hands of the priests, has created in a perpetual stream for many hundreds of years. The amount of human suffering that has arisen from the Cross can never be estimated, nor even remotely guessed at. It is our duty to neutralise and destroy the power of the Cross as much as possible.

All through the Christian ages the Cross, or the sign and symbol that goes under that name, has been a magical instrument or sign, and the most astounding miracles have been ascribed to it. For at least a thousand years it was looked upon in the most materialistic light, and credited with power enough to change and reverse the course of nature in every respect, and to the fullest extent. What the older and later Pagans have ascribed to their incantations and charms, that the Christians have ascribed to their Cross. True, in modern times the Protestants have somewhat idealised it, and stripped off some of its purely physical elements; but they have not diminished its all-mightiness. If ever the Christians, Papal or Protestant, really had an Almighty God, it is the Cross. This Cross can conquer nature, or reverse its courses; can conquer men, and even wild animals; can conquer devils, high and low; and it is not less true that it can, and does, conquer God Almighty—that is, it *is* God Almighty, and the *other* Almighty has to yield to it.

The *real* history of the Cross I have given in my *Phallic Worship* pamphlet; but the Legend or Yarn of the Cross, invented and circulated by the Christians, is very different from that, and is a sheer romance from end to end. I may also mention that the Christ and his Cross are by no means historical; they, too, are pious yarns told by priests and monks to stir the devotion and confuse the brains of their dupes. The priestly fables called Gospels have had a long run and a widely-extended influence for evil; but their nature is now understood by intelligent people, and Christ and Cross must go the way of all gods and superstitions. There is no future for them, for the Age of Man has commenced; and Man and God can never occupy the same planet—the supernatural must all disappear in the Day of Science.

There can be no doubt that the Yarn of the Cross was as devoutly and universally believed in the Dark Ages as any item of the Christian faith. It was immensely popular; it was painted up in the churches, and shone in stained windows. There seems to be no room for doubt that the Cross Yarn is the Christian form of similar stories told in connection with Tree-worship, which in ancient times was universal. The Spirit of Vegetation was everywhere regarded with religious awe, and worshipped as the all-bountiful giver of good. And the Cross-worship is but one branch of Tree-worship—Christ, like John Barleycorn, being the spirit or soul or life of vegetation, which is constantly sacrificed for human life. The principal products of the vegetable kingdom are man's food, of which bread and wine were, and still are, the staple, however much they may have been superseded by other products of the animal and vegetable world.

With the hint given that the Cross Yarn is a survival of Tree-worship (mixed, of course, with Sun-worship), we may proceed to relate the story in its substance, though the details are too numerous for repetition here.

According to various monkish writers, the Cross of Christ was made of four kinds of wood; of three kinds only; of only one kind. Bede says the inscription was box, the upright beam cypress, the transverse cedar, the lower part pine. Another says the upright was cedar, the transverse pine, the head cypress. A third party contends that the upright was cypress, the transverse palm, the head olive. One legend says the whole Cross was made of the aspen tree, whose leaves have never ceased to tremble at the use its wood was put to. Lipsius said the wood was oak, and a later writer says it was pine. At any rate, the microscope shows that the wood preserved at Rome, Pisa, Florence, and Paris, all vouched by those who could not know to be parts of the Cross, is pine.

Of course, the old Tree-worship was hardly likely to permit one tree alone to have all the credit, and so the saints who took over the old Pagan superstition, and called it Christian, manufactured their imaginary Cross of various woods, as if they had been making some choice and showy piece of furniture.

Everyone knows the Bible yarn of Adam and Eve, their creation and fall, their expulsion from the Garden, and the death of Adam (Eve does not seem to have died at all) at the early age of nine hundred and thirty years. The two trees, be it observed, of knowledge and of life grew in the Garden, and from these Adam, and all his posterity, were excluded, until the Christ should come to restore all things.

Well, Adam one morning felt that his end was rapidly drawing nigh, and, like all pious people, he felt much inclined to stay a little longer in this "vale of tears." He sent for his son Seth (who at this time was eight hundred years old!), and begged him to go to the Garden of Eden and ask the angel there to give him a little of the oil of mercy which exuded from the tree of life. Adam expected that this would restore him to health and vigor. But Michael, the angel, refused it, saying it could not be had until 5,500 years had passed. Michael, however, gave Seth either a branch of the tree of knowledge or three seeds of it—though some say it was three seeds of the tree of life. Let us take the latter view.

When Seth went to Paradise he found his way, as Adam had told him, by the footsteps of his father and mother as they fled therefrom over nine hundred years before. Their feet were then so hot that they scorched all the grass they trod upon; and nothing grew again where they trod. Thus was Seth conducted to the gate of Eden.

When he returned Adam was dead, and Seth buried him, and either planted the twig he had brought on his grave, or else put the three seeds into his mouth. The tree that resulted was threefold, and it flourished till the time of Solomon.

You will not be surprised to learn that it was a branch of this tree that Moses had for his wonderful rod, with which he desolated Egypt, divided the sea, brought water from the rock, and sweetened the poisoned pool at Marah. In fact, you could not be surprised at anything this tree or its branches and leaves might do.

Another gospel declareth that Moses got possession of all three rods into which the seeds in Adam's mouth grew, and always took them about with him. By-and-bye he planted them in the land of Moab, where they flourished till David's time. An opportune angel bade David remove those rods to Jerusalem, where they healed the sick, cured a leper, and turned three negroes into white men. This holy king left the rods one night, and the next morning found that they had taken root and grown into one tree! He built a wall round it—for miraculous things always require protection, you know—and under its shadow he composed his psalms.

As it was a goodly tree, that wise but wicked King, Solomon, piously resolved to use it in the building of the temple, and ordered it to be cut down and shaped to fill a certain place in the building.

But the tree, evidently knowing that it was destined to other ends, declined to be fitted in anywhere. Do as they would, the beam was ever too short or too long for the purpose. It was of no use to employ saw or plane upon it, it was altogether incorrigible; and at length, Solomon's patience being exhausted, he ordered his men to fling the beam aside.

Maximilla, a prophetess, sat upon this wood, and it set her clothes on fire. She began to prophesy, and the Jews scourged her to death for doing so. Why they treated the girl so cruelly is not at all clear. Perhaps the Christians, who concocted the story, wished to show the Jews in the worst possible light.

After this the blessed wood was either flung into the creek called Kidron, near Jerusalem, or it became a bridge over it. Here it remained trodden under foot for some time, until the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon. She at once perceived the wondrous properties of the

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wood, and refused to tread on it she even preferred to wade through the water. She revealed to Solomon the nature of the wood, and he ordered it to be removed to the temple, where it was furnished with a precious case.

The Jews, for some reason, removed it; and as they were then constructing the Pool of Bethesda, they buried the beam in the bottom of it. The wood imparted to the water such miraculous properties that the sick in crowds went there to be cured. Still, for unexplained reasons, the Jews required a tremendous amount of miraculous healing in the time of Jesus, when, the gospel says, the healing virtues of the Bethesda water were due to the periodical descent of an angel, who should, according to the story, have come down much oftener, or stayed there altogether.

When Jesus and the two thieves were condemned, wood in Jerusalem was exceedingly scarce, it seems, and the high priest sent out men to find enough for the Cross of Christ. They went, and, as they passed the Pool of Bethesda, that ancient and sagacious beam buried in its bottom must have seen them and understood their errand. Knowing that its time was come, it broke loose from its grave and floated into view. The men saw it, took it, and turned it into the Cross on which Christ was crucified.

But the history of that timber is not yet finished. The disciples soon began to worship the Cross, and to heal the sick and cast out devils by its means. This did not suit the Jews, as you may suppose, and they took all three crosses and buried them—the true Cross making no objection. You would have thought it had lost its energy for ever.

The grave of the crosses was unknown, except to one Jewish family, and there they lay hid just about three hundred years, when Helena, mother of Constantine, went to Jerusalem for the good of her soul. She resolved to find the true Cross, and threatened the Jews with death if they did not produce it. Of course it was forthcoming, though not without some delay.

A wicked Jew named Judas was the only one who knew the grave of the Cross, and even he was not sure. The Queen ordered him to be put into a dry well, and there starved into submission. He came out almost a convert; he prayed for divine direction, and was conducted to the very spot where the crosses were buried. They were all found and taken up, but nobody could tell which was which. It would have been such a terrible thing, you know, to worship the cross of the impenitent thief, and Helena felt that she must find some means of distinguishing them. A girl was brought who was alleged to be sick. She was placed on cross number one, with no results; on number two with no results; but she no sooner touched the third than she jumped up as well as ever! The wood that could not reveal its hiding-place, that could not speak and reveal its own identity, could yet cure the girl!

In later times the Cross merges into the general history of the Christian superstition, and becomes as potent in the Church as it had been in ancient Paganism.

I may mention that one yarn tells how Lazarus and Mary Magdalen discovered the cross of the penitent thief in the island of Cyprus.

All early Christian yarns are equally yarns, and the one I have just related is as true as anything you find in the Gospels.

The use of the Cross in the Romish sect, sensuous though it is in so full a degree, is not more untrue than the more "spiritual" use to which it is applied in Protestantism. As an instrument in the hands of tyrants and swindlers, nothing can ever beat it; as a means of fostering cruelty and ignorance, the Cross of Christ never met its match.

—*Liberator.* JOS. SYMES.

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Dear God,—The baby you brought us
Is awful nice and sweet;
But 'cause you forgot his toofies,
The poor little thing can't eat.
That's why I'm writing this letter,
A purpose to let you know.
Please come and finish the baby.
That's all. From Little Flo.

"Why did you strike little Elsie, you naughty boy?" "Well, what did she want to cheat for?" "How did she cheat?" "Why, we were playing at Adam and Eve, and she had the apple to tempt me with, and she never tempted me, but went and ate it all up herself"

# BOOK CHAT.

THE *University Magazine* for July opens with the first instalment of an essay by Dr. Robert Park on "The Science of Emotions," which should be interesting to educationalists and social reformers. This is followed by a freshly-written article on "Paganism and Christianity" by C. Barclay Bennett, in which modern missionary enterprise to the heathen gets rather roughly handled. Among the other articles may be noticed Mr. Howard Williams's continuation of an able paper on "The English Criminal Code," and Mr. H. S. Salt's "Canonisation of an Ogre," a reply to Sir Henry Thompson's objections to vegetarianism. The number concludes with a not too accurate article on the Bedborough case. It is not true that Mr. Bedborough's bail is £2,000; the sureties are two of £500 each. Nor is it true that he is prosecuted for selling the six books enumerated, all published by the University Press. Only one of them is included in the indictment. Considering the careful way in which the prosecution is conducted, it is a great pity that the friends of the defence cannot avoid such inaccuracies.

* * *

The *Adult* appears this month under a new editorship. Mr. Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, London, N., has bravely stepped into the breach caused by the prosecution of Mr. Bedborough. Mr. Seymour explains that he is opposed to the current "Free Love" theories, but he believes in freedom of thought and discussion. Perhaps the best thing in the new number is the editor's contribution to the symposium on "The Question of Children." It is a welcome relief after the intellectual frivolity which has characterised too many recent articles on the marriage question.

* * *

*Humanity* (organ of the Humanitarian League) for July contains the first instalment of a strong article by Joseph Collinson on "The Slaughter of the Fur Seal." Mrs. Louisa T. Mallett writes on "Poisoned for Profit," dealing with the miseries of the lead and match factories. Another article unsigned is on "The Butchery of Big Game." The number also contains some interesting editorial notes and news paragraphs, from one of which we learn that the Wood Green Cycling Track is not to be used again for anything like the butchering contest which recently took place there in the presence of three thousand English "heathen."

# CORRESPONDENCE.

## "PROVIDENCE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—After carefully perusing Mr. Edgley's letter in your issue of the 3rd inst., I am forced to the belief that, in endeavoring to extricate himself from what I deem an unwarrantable and totally untenable position, he sinks deeper in the mire of illogicality; the more am I now convinced that his assumed Jehovah is but a "belief" conjured up in his own imagination, but of whom he possesses no "knowledge" whatever based upon the "known." I fail to recognise one scrap of evidence to warrant his assertions, and, in my opinion, in his eagerness to defend his position he has brought himself down to the very level of my contention, failing to establish anything beyond nature. He assures us Jehovah is like magnetism; but magnetism is only known as a phenomenon of or property of matter; therefore, to be like magnetism, Jehovah has "matter" as his very base. "Jehovah thinks"; but thinking is confined to "matter" in a certain state of organization, and Mr. Edgley has no knowledge of the "thinking" powers from any other source. Does magnetism think? If not, Jehovah cannot be like magnetism. Again, man has no knowledge of thought or intelligence apart from a brain. Has Jehovah a brain? Further, he has no knowledge of such brain being maintained without a continual supply of food in the shape of matter to replace disintegrated tissue. Does his God need food? If so, it destroys the very idea of a God, as such would not need external assistance. I am assured "Jehovah" has no sex, but Mr. Edgley has no knowledge of any of the higher organism "without' the opposite sex. He assures us "matter has always existed, that Jehovah did not create, and that he alone is immortal." But where is the evidence for such monstrous statements? How can God alone remain immortal in a universe of matter Mr. Edgley believes has always existed? If God did not create, how can he destroy the universe? My friend must endeavor to realize that "life" is but a phase of phenomena—an inherent property of a combination of matter. The rotting leaf by the wayside, or the rippling brook, is not dead; they are infinitely active—in other words, "alive." The universe and matter are the same.

What a dreary picture Mr. Edgley paints for the future—

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a magnetic immortal God reigning over a lifeless mass, or nothing. What will become of the universe of matter when Jehovah reigns supreme, or how can God alone remain immortal while matter exists? Where is Mr. Edgley's authority for portraying a lifeless, inert universe? He can have no conception of such a condition drawn from the province of the known, and nature. Matter is indestructible. We are assured "storms, etc., are necessary"; but if Jehovah has the power awarded, he could so arrange the universe that no need of such existed. But even granted there is, surely it would be an improvement if such events did not destroy myriads of helpless creatures, and cause widespread misery and destruction. First, Mr. Edgley claims an all-controlling power; he next proceeds to limit such power. He excuses his God by suggesting that "what weather might suit Farmer Jones's crops would not suit Farmer Brown's." Where is the sense in believing that it is necessary to send weather which will destroy one crop in order that another may benefit? If Mr. Edgley's God exists, he could arrange weather which suited all crops and avoid the destruction of any, or he might arrange the crops to suit the weather. No farmer ever complains of a good crop, but it will take a deal of time to educate him to believe in a bad one.

We are told "diseases and failures of nature" must occur, that the aged "are neither ornamental nor comfortable in their existence, and sensible people do not desire to live to become very old." But is it consistent that a parrot, wild hog, elephant, tortoise, or mere toad should have a longer life, and be freer from disease and suffering, than the highest intelligence? And why should man's latter years be embittered by a gradual torturing decrepitude, by the agonies of disease and decay (frequently congenital), by a return to very childhood or imbecility? Such a termination of a good career is cruel, and might be considerably improved upon. If man must die, why should he not retain his faculties, remain free from torture, close his eyes as if in sleep, and gently pass away? However, anatomy and physiology entirely fail to prove that the human body is necessarily incapable of unending existence; it contains within itself no marks by which we can possibly predict its decay. I am certainly of opinion that man does not die of so-called "old-age," or because of the number of years he has lived, but from ossification and starvation. (An explanation here would occupy too much space, but, with your permission, Mr. Editor, I shall be happy to write an article for insertion and criticism on this topic some day when I have more leisure.)

Why so many *do* desire a termination of their existence at the approach of old age is simply because life becomes a burden; the pleasures of existence are no longer realised. A fond parent in such condition not only has his own life embittered, but intense grief is caused to those by whom he is beloved. We are told "diseases are necessary as a check to increase, and that many are brought about by the sufferer." But is it the best possible arrangement for Jehovah to bring into the world more beings than Nature can accommodate, simply to be ruthlessly slaughtered, in many instances by a cruel and lingering process? If Nature were less prodigal, there would be no need for all this tearing with claw and fang, this torture, this waste of so much time and material. Surely it is admitted that myriads do suffer from hereditary diseases over which they have no control; even one such instance shows the grossest injustice. I totally deny that man is a free agent.

Mr. Edgley says "Jehovah 'permits' those crimes" I enumerated in my last. Well, if he permits, with full power to prevent, he is an accessory to the actual crimes, and equally as guilty as the criminal. Supposing I stood calmly by, witnessed a foul, cowardly murder, with power to prevent same, and did not take steps to do so, I should consider myself an inhuman monster, and should be treated as such by man. Mr. Edgley has placed his God in this position, and by doing so has degraded him to the level of an assassin; even humanity rises superior to the Jehovah he adores.

My friend tells us he has suffered from catarrh for eighteen years, and has lost the sense of smell. Nothing enlists my sympathy more than human suffering; but honestly now, does Mr. Edgley really think it is better to lose the sense of smell than to retain it? Has he ever tried to cure his complaint? If yes, he acts antagonistic to his own beliefs; if no, how can he tell it is incurable? To be consistent with his belief that things could not be better arranged, if in addition he lost the use of his eyes and ears to-morrow, and soon afterwards was paralysed in legs and arms, he would have to consider things could not be better controlled. As an individual, I imagine that the retention of all his faculties would be a far better arrangement; but Mr. Edgley has in no way established his Jehovah. Matter and the properties of matter are all with which "he" is acquainted, and suffice to account for every phenomenon witnessed; all postulated gods or attempted additions are superfluous; the word "necessity" seems to me to be an ample substitute for "God," and I deem it most unphilosophical to desire or suppose more causes than are adequate to explain the phenomena of things. Mr. Edgley does not believe in man's future improvement; surely he believes that man has risen from a condition of cannibalism, barbarism, and ignorance; surely he believes there is more intelligence in the world to-day than ever, and does he not believe that if man had first entered upon the stage of life as a civilised, intelligent being it would be an improvement upon his past history, or tardy development? I believe man *will* continue to improve intellectually, leaving his bestial propensities and powers to the brutes beneath him. I do not think any improvement will be made by contentment with even his present achievements by believing that things cannot be better controlled, but by doing his best to bend those forces in nature which are antagonistic to his welfare to do his bidding, by thwarting many of the ends nature aims at. It is quite certain that a belief in gods is no moral incentive, it does not tend to civilisation; the greatest cut-throats and swindlers of past and modern times have been God-believers; our prisons are filled with God-believers; the most prolonged, savage, and sanguinary wars the world has ever seen have been instigated by God-believers; and even England's great majority of God-believers are the most immoral and drunken under the sun. Gods have been a curse to man, a stumbling block to progress, causing more cruelty, more tears, more bloodshed, than any other infatuation. Instead of believing things could not be better arranged, and that all is ordered with a special view to his well-being, man must stand erect and face the problems of existence as they arise, grapple with the forces of nature, and bend them to his will. It is only by such means that the progress and civilisation of the past have been attained, and whereby we can ever hope to continue such progress. When man was a cringing coward, the slave of priestcraft, carpeting the very earth with his knees, when prayer to gods was most relied on, then did civilisation sink to its lowest ebb, culminating in the dark ages of faith, stagnation, bondage, ignorance, and immorality.

Let the gods fade from man's imagination, man remains needing all our assistance; let us cultivate the germs of a far more noble worship than grovelling at the feet of unknown Jehovahs; let humanity's flag of truth and progress float where once sailed proudly the bloodstained banner of the gods, where once grovelled the savage on his knees in recognition of impossible monsters of his own construction, cringing in awe to phantoms of his untutored brain.

OCTAVIUS DREWELL.

## THAT FORGED PASSAGE IN JOSEPHUS.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE windbags are continually asserting the celebrated forgery in Josephus to be genuine. As a matter of fact, it has been abandoned by all the men of any note on the orthodox side. Dean Milman says: "It is interpolated with many additional clauses" (Milman's *Gibbon*, vol. ii., p. 285). Bishop Warburton calls the passage "a rank forgery" (*Divine Legation of Moses*, book ii., sec. 6). Rev. Dr. Giles also condemns it as a forgery (*Hebrew and Christian Records*, vol. ii., p. 62). Dr. Lardner gives up its authenticity (*Works*, vol. vi., pp. 492-505). Dean Farrar says: "The single passage in which he (Josephus) alludes to him [Christ] is interpolated, if not wholly spurious" (*Life of Christ*, vol. i., p. 46). Dr. Edersheim says: "The expressions attributed to Josephus must have been altered, and in some parts interpolated, by later writers" (*Dictionary of Ecclesiastical History and Biography*, article "Josephus"). Gibbon says that this passage "was inserted into the text of Josephus between the time of Origen and that of Eusebius," and "may furnish an example of no vulgar forgery" (ch. xvi., footnote). And De Quincey, in his essay on the Essenes, emphatically says that "this passage has long been given up as a forgery by all men not lunatic" (*Works*, vol. ix.). This passage was first quoted by Eusebius, who is by no means a scrupulous authority (see Lardner's *Credibility*). The passage is foreign to the context. As a zealous and orthodox Jew, Josephus could not speak of Jesus as the Christ, nor doubt whether it was lawful to call him a man, for the Jews did not believe the Messiah to be God; and the statement that Jesus drew after him many Jews and Gentiles is inconsistent with the gospels. If Josephus were the author, it would be reasonable to expect in him frequent mention of Christ's miracles, whereas he is everywhere silent about them.

## She Would Not Insist.

The *Troy Times* tells of a little girl who had been naughty. When bedtime came her mother said to her: "Now, Mabel, when you say your prayers, be sure to ask God to help you not to be a naughty little girl."

Mabel promised that she would add this petition to her prayers; so, when she had finished her usual form she spoke as follows: "And now, O God, please keep Mabel from being a naughty little girl." There was a pause, then she concluded: "Nevertheless, thy will, not mine, be done."

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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, "Purgatory; or the Half-Way House."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): July 14, at 8 30, Members' general meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15 and 6.30, C. Cohen.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, E Pack.

FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, E. White, "Miracles, with Special Reference to those Performed by Jesus Christ."

FINSBURY PARK (near bandstand): 11.15, Debate between Mr. Tarry (Christian Evidence lecturer) and E. Pack (Secularist), subject: "Christianity v. Secularism."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, R. P. Edwards.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 3.30, Stanley Jones.

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, A lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11 30, Stanley Jones.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "What Christians Believe."

**COUNTRY.**

DERBY (Central Hall, Market place): 7.30, Mr. Tunnaley, "Thoughts we may Draw from the Character of George Eliot."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Sydney A. Gimson, "The Future of Secularism," with special reference to the Leicester Society.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, Members' quarterly meeting; 7, Vocal and instrumental music, recitations, etc. Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): Picnic at Holy Well Dene, 12 45 ferry; brakes leave North Shields at 1 o'clock.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—July 10, m., Mile End; a. and e., Victoria Park; 12, Limehouse; 18, Mile End; 17, m., Camberwell; a. and e., Peckham Rye; 19, Limehouse; 20, Mile End; 24, m., Wood Green; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 26, Limehouse; 27, Mile End; 31, m., Kingsland; a., Finsbury Park; e., Victoria Park. August 7, m, Camberwell; a. and e., Peckham Rye.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—July 10, m., Mile End; 17, m. and a., Hyde Park; e, Kilburn; 31, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell.

T. J. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—July 24, e., Mile End Waste.

## POSITIVISM.

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Information and publications on the Religion of Humanity may be obtained free from Mr. Malcolm Quin, Church of Humanity, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 3d.

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HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.

ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.

TRUE RELIGION. 2d.

THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.

LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? 2d.

LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. 2d.

GOD AND THE STATE. 2d.

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FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Dr. Field. 2d

GOD AND MAN. Second reply to Dr. Field. 2d.

THE DYING CREED. 2d.

THE LIMITS OF TOLERATION A Discussion with the Hon. F. D. Coudert and Gov. S. L. Woodford. 2d.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 2d.

ART AND MORALITY. 2d.

DO I BLASPHEME? 2d.

THE CLERGY AND COMMON SENSE. 2d.

SOCIAL SALVATION. 2d.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. 2d.

SKULLS. 2d.

THE GREAT MISTAKE. 1d.

LIVE TOPICS. 1d.

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**London: R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.**

*THE BEDBOROUGH PROSECUTION.*

## THE ADULT.

HARRY SEYMOUR, *Interim Editor.*

JULY NUMBER READY ON 23RD JUNE.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## MOTHER TOLD ME SO.

I AM not going to say anything against mothers. I remember the sweet soul who gave me birth. How often in moments of trouble, of weariness, of disgust, have I longed for a soothing look of those tender eyes that never fell upon me except in love! Despite the long interval of all those years since I stood by her open grave, I see her still in the moonlight of memory. He who has had—alas that one should ever say *had!*—a good mother can never quite lose his reverence for women. That sacred affection will soften all his feelings; and amidst all the disillusions, the bitterness, and perhaps the cynicisms of life, he will be refreshed by the waters of a pure and holy fountain, springing up perpetually from the depths of his own heart. He will also be in touch—perhaps unconsciously, but none the less surely—with the central fact of human civilisation; for the smile of a mother, bending over her child, was the first ray of sunshine on the red struggle of existence.

Let us honor the mothers of the race—the *true* mothers; the women who love, and strive, and sacrifice, and eat the bread of carefulness, and stitch and mend little garments, and sometimes taste the saltness of tears in the silence of the night. I do not despise the Frenchman—I honor him—who is smitten to his knees at the sound of the words "*Ma mère.*" Cant clings about all our emotions, as the ivy clings about the oak, sometimes smothering and killing it; but the oak itself is grand and noble, and so are our natural emotions. *Ma mère*—my mother! When a man says that tenderly I would pardon even his kneeling, for he is in Nature's holy of holies.

Love is the greatest thing in life, and the mother is its first priestess and missionary. But love is not all. It may even be dangerous if misguided. Thought is necessary too. The head is wanted as well as the heart. And in the past, owing to the necessary course of evolution, the woman has supplied the affective element in life, while the man has done most of the hard thinking. Not *all* men, of course; the majority of them have been mere plodders and acquiescers; but the minority of them have made the valuable discoveries and promulgated the fertilising truths This is a fact too patent to be ignored. And it is perfectly natural. We are all subdued to what we work in; environment determines organisation; and the greater originality of man has been caused by the greater enterprise of his social functions.

But the very fact that the woman stayed at home more than rectified the balance of power. It gave her the greatest influence over the children. The man saw them occasionally; she saw them every day and all day long. She taught them to walk, she taught them to speak, she gave the first direction to their minds and the first impulse to their characters. For this reason it has been said that the hand which rocks the cradle rules the world.

One class of man stayed at home with the women, while the other men tended cattle, hunted, or fought. These were the priests, and thus they laid the strong foundations of their empire. The priest still rules through the women and children. "The mother, the wife, the sister," as I wrote many years ago, "shield him and his creed; and their white arms and soft eyes are a better guard than all the weapons in the armory of his faith." The mother is the priest's proxy. She rears her children for the Church. "She whispers of God," I wrote, "with accents of awe, that fall solemnly on the little one's mind. She trains the knee to bend, the hands to meet in prayer, and the eyes to look upward. She wields the mighty spell of love, and peoples the air of life with phantoms." She moulds the child for the priest, who burnishes it with catechisms and stamps it with dogmas.

When scepticism comes in later life the priest has always a ready warning. "Don't forsake the religion of your mother." He tries to throw the doubter back at his mother's knee. Occasionally he has the audacity to ask, "Would you call your mother a liar?" And the worst of it is that this irrational appeal is too often effective. Yet this same priest has no hesitation in begging for subscriptions to Missionary Societies, whose agents go through the "heathen" world, which is the largest part of it, endeavoring to make its inhabitants forsake the religion of *their* mothers.

"Mother told me so" is a very good reason up to a certain point. She is likely to tell her child the truth as far as she knows it. But outside the sphere of her interests and affections she is very rarely a thinker. Even in religion it is the worship, and not the doctrines, to which she is really attached. The truth is, she tells the *child* what the priest tells *her*. She is an unwitting instrument of deception. She unconsciously promotes a wretched imposture. She enslaves the beings she loves to an enfeebling superstition. She does not know that she is a tool in the hands of designing priests, who prey upon her and, at the same time, use her to rear a fresh generation of victims.

Well, if the mother's influence is so potent, Freethinkers should recognise the fact as well as the priests. I have no patience with a Freethinker who goes to a Secular meeting and leaves his wife at home, or lets her go to church. Of course he must respect her freedom. He must not try to govern her will. He must refrain from every shadow of coercion. But he is bound to use every possible persuasion, without being ostentatious or offensive. And if he is a good husband, and a tender father, she is very likely to listen. If a woman both loves and respects a man she will go a long way with him. It was a woman, not a man, in the old story, who said: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." And if the Freethought husband can make his wife a Freethinker, he will make his children Freethinkers too. Surely this is worth a strong and patient effort. I invite all my readers who need the invitation to commence this experiment. It is idle to talk about converting the world unless you make a beginning at home.

G. W. FOOTE.



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## CHRISTIAN IMAGINATION.

THE editor of the *New Age* is a careful and thoughtful writer, and whatever emanates from his pen bears the mark of earnest sincerity. His recent articles upon the "Sermon on the Mount," which appeared in his paper, were certainly ingenious; but his remarks had, in our opinion, very little logical connection with the Beatitudes. He has certain religious notions which are far in advance of, and which differ from, those entertained by the great body of professed Christians. He, like many other writers at the present time, seeks to give an ethical explanation to the New Testament, and to Christ's teachings. The object in itself is not necessarily objectionable, providing it is not pursued at the sacrifice of consistency and logical sequence. It is, however, at this point where the advocates of "rational Christianity" show their inconclusive reasoning. They fail to indicate the relevancy of their new interpretation with the fundamental teachings of the old faith. Hence they resort to "special pleading," and an effort is made to amalgamate modern thought with traditional Christianity. This, to our mind, is an untenable position. To be logical, there appears to us to be only one of two courses to take. The New Testament and Christ's supposed teachings must be regarded either as being of a supernatural character or simply as natural productions. Those who adopt the latter course are not justified in applying to Christ, or to the writings associated with his name, such terms as "divine" and "spiritual." Such phrases from a natural standpoint are meaningless, and those who employ them in this sense betray an emotional tendency rather than logical precision.

In proof of this we may refer to an editorial article which appeared in the *New Age* of June 30, entitled "The Divorce of Religion and Politics," which was a criticism upon some remarks made a few weeks since by a weekly contemporary upon what it termed "the horrible dishonesty and hypocrisy of the clergy of the State Church." The *New Age* takes its contemporary severely to task for writing as follows: "The articles of the Church include the belief that Christ—or rather Jesus—went down bodily to hell; that a spirit can be at the same time a Father, and a Son, and proceed from itself as a Ghost; that Adam was really the father of the human race, and that he was placed naked in a garden, where he ate an apple, in consequence of which countless generations of mankind are to suffer, and be damned to everlasting fire." To this the editor of the *New Age* replies: "Now this, we submit, is not the way to write about solemn mysteries which have perplexed the sublimest intellects, and for which some of the greatest thinkers, such as Hegel, for instance, have suggested a rational basis.....To adopt this method is to show a want of imagination and spiritual insight—a weakness which is too frequently characteristic of the clergy themselves. This want of imagination has been responsible for untold agony and doubt. To preach as fact what both the Old and New Testament writers treated as fable—that is to say, used as poetical illustration—has led to most of the scepticism which has driven away the mass of the workers and the poor from the services of religion."

This is a fine specimen of the "special pleading" in which "advanced Christians" are so fond of indulging. It is to "strain at a gnat and to swallow a camel" with a vengeance. No answer is given to the extract from the thirty-nine articles of the Church. Why is this? Simply because such Bible teachings are too absurd to be defended. Then, in the name of common-sense, why should not their folly be boldly pointed out? If they are "solemn mysteries," why are they taught as palpable facts? A "rational basis" might have been *suggested*, but it has never been demonstrated. The whole thing, from beginning to end, is thoroughly irrational, and no amount of Christian sophistry can make it accord with reason. If it be true that the Bible writers regarded the whole thing as a fable, then Christianity *per se* is nothing but fiction, for upon these teachings, taken from the Prayer Book and set forth in the Bible, the supernatural theory of Christianity is based.

We fail to see either the force or relevancy of the editor's remark, that the method of frankly stating what the Bible teaches "shows a want of imagination." We say nothing about "spiritual insight," inasmuch as we have no idea of what it really is, and the editor has not attempted to explain it. Is it imagination or reality that the Bible teaches what the articles of the Church state? Is it not a stern reality that these absurdities are taught by thousands of clergymen, and believed in by tens of thousands of their followers as truths? Alas! it is too real that the greatest delusion that ever darkened the human mind owes its origin and perpetuation to the promulgation of Bible absurdities. No marvel that "the mass of the workers and the poor" have been "driven from the services of religion" when we are told that its acceptance depends so much upon imagination, and that the want of this faculty is a prolific source of doubt. This is pre-eminently a matter-of-fact age, when something more than imagination is required as a guide in daily life.

Of course imagination is not to be entirely ignored. To its results we owe some of the most exquisite joys of life, and under its magic influence the sublimest aspirations of the human mind are evoked. But its function belongs to the poetry of life, not to its practical struggles. Above all, the principles by which we regulate our conduct should be based upon solid and perceptible truths, not upon merely poetical fancy. We can understand the editor of the *New Age* claiming so much as he does for imagination, for, so far as his Christianity is concerned, he, like Sheridan's opponent, appears to be "indebted to his imagination for his facts." His explanation of New Testament teachings and his estimate of Jesus are but little more than poetical effusions. With many who adopt this method religion, to quote the words of Junius, is "the gloomy comparisons of a disturbed imagination, the melancholy madness of poetry, without the inspiration" of demonstrated truth.

Here is a sample of the value (?) of the editor's imaginative method. In speaking of the Bible stories he says: "It does not matter whether a story is true. The essential point is whether it illustrates a great truth—as, for instance, the parables of Christ." Now, this may be right when applied to acknowledged works of fiction, but when it refers to the Bible one would ligitimately consider that, from a Christian's point of view, the "essential point" would be, Is the story true? The editor, referring to Ruskin's estimate of the Bible, mentioned the stories of the Fall, the Flood, the Patriarchs, the Kings, the Prophets, and the Apocalypse of St. John. Now, we ask, what "great truths" do these stories illustrate? Shall we take the drunkenness, indecency, and injustice of Noah; the matrimonial infidelity of Abraham; the deceit of Jacob; the inhuman conduct of Moses; the treachery and bloodthirsty desires of David; and the gloomy nightmare of the hell-fire doctrine of St. John? The "great truth" here illustrated is that the God of the Bible sanctioned the worst forms of folly, vice, and crime that the most inhuman mind could conceive, and that the special favorites of God were destitute of truth, humanity, and high moral sentiments.

As to the parables of Christ, the "great truths" which many of them are supposed to illustrate are difficult to discover. The "moral" to be drawn from some of them is very low indeed. Take, for instance, the Parable of the Sower. It is intended here to illustrate that good doctrines are not always accepted, and that sometimes, when they are, their efforts are only transitory. But the disciples did not understand what was meant, and, when asked why he spoke in parables, Jesus said: "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." If such language as this were found in any other book than the Bible, it would be designated as unmeaning babble, indicative of a lunatic asylum. There is no great advantage in speaking purposely to people in language they do not understand, and where the moral comes in we cannot see.

The parable of the forgiven, but unforgiving, debtor is supposed to convey the moral of forgiveness of injuries, even unto seventy times seven. A certain king, who would take account of his servants, when he began to reckon found one who owed him ten thousand talents. But, as the servant had no means of paying this debt, the king ordered him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, to satisfy the claim. But the servant praying for patience, and promising to pay, the king took

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compassion on him, and forgave him the debt without conditions. But this servant was not so compassionate to a fellow-servant, who owed him a hundred pence; but, seizing his debtor by the throat, cast him into prison, and would neither wait nor forgive the amount. So his fellow-servants went and told the king, who called the hard-hearted person before him, and said: "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." The moral here is exceedingly defective. Though the servant was no doubt avaricious and unrelenting, still the king, who is intended to illustrate the beauty of forgiving a trespasser against him, no sooner hears of his servant's harshness against a fellow-servant than he casts to the winds all considerations of forgiveness for even a second offence—to say nothing for a seventy-times seventh—and condemns the offender to torture. And the heavenly Father is to be more revengeful still; for, unless we forgive every one his trespasses, we are to be condemned to everlasting punishment. Is this a "great truth"? If I were a Christian, I should say God forbid!

We have not space at our command to dwell upon the other parables, but from the two noticed it will be seen how imaginative it is to talk of the great truths they illustrate. The "moral" of the "Good Samaritan" is that man should love the Lord God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself. This, however, is impossible. The "Lord God" of the Jews and Christians is not worthy of so much affection. He is a pitiless, revengeful, and unforgiving being, who rewards only those who pay him homage, and will eternally torture for the faults committed by the erring and imperfect creatures whom he himself has created. For a neighbor to love you as himself might be a pleasant thing, only it is never likely to happen. And, therefore, to teach that which is not possible is not useful—that is, it is not moral.

The "moral" taught in the parable of "The Lost Sheep" is both vicious and false. It is vicious because it offers a premium to a believer in "immortality" to become a sinner, that he may be "saved," and cause more joy in "heaven" than ninety-nine good men. And false, because no owner of a flock experiences more pleasure in the possession of one sheep—especially one that has caused him trouble and anxiety—than he does in ninety-nine good and patient ones that have never disturbed his equanimity. As a friend of ours once said: "There is no inducement to be good in order to win the crown of glory if nearly all the jubilation is to be bestowed on the scamps when they enter the abode of bliss."

Under the heading of "Moses and the Prophets," we shall continue next week our comments upon the article by the editor of the *New Age*.

CHARLES WATTS.

## MR. KENWORTHY'S "IMMEDIATE REASON."

"THE Gospels as History: What is their Worth To-day?" That is the question which Mr. John C. Kenworthy asked at Essex Hall, Strand, last Monday week. I went to hear his answer, though my own mind was fairly clear as to the historical worth of the four Gospels. I may as well state my opinion straightway. I believe that in the earlier years of the first century an obscure village carpenter held little meetings of Galilean peasants at which he exhorted to repentance, to sweetness of life, and to poverty; that he attached a few disciples to his person by his nobility of character; that he taught for a few months only; that he attempted to introduce his new ideas into Jerusalem; that he was almost at once arrested; and that he was put to death with two thieves nearly as obscure as himself. A few such simple facts as these (if, indeed, they were facts; I am not so arrogant as to say I am sure of their reality) would amply suffice for the groundwork of the Christian legend. Nothing is so hard to believe as a miracle; but nothing is easier to invent. The undisciplined piety—very earnest and genuine piety—of the first Christians piled up miracles on the personality of Jesus just as readily as the affection of mourners heaps flowers upon a grave. Indeed, the mental process is akin in both cases. It was love and admiration which adorned the career of Jesus with the brilliance of miraculous deeds. To simple-minded folk this was a most natural thing to do. We need not conjure up any theory of fraud. We have only to remember how we ourselves, living in an age of criticism, and nursed in logic, often idealise the men and women we love, and how lightly we embellish the dead with a purity of character which the Angel of Exactitude would deny. The worth of the Gospels, then, lies in this:—That they show, as in a mirror, the intellectual condition, the hopes and fears and pity and ideals of the poor people who created the Christian religion. As a record of events, in the newspaper sense of the word "events," the four Gospels have about as much value as Tennyson's "Idylls of the King." Nobody classes Tennyson among the historians. He was a poet, and the Gospels are poetry—admirable poetry. I know of no book which more charmingly reflects the psychology of the proletariat of the old Roman world than the New Testament. I was hoping Mr. Kenworthy would have said something in support of such a view. Unhappily, he appeared to cling to the mere mechanical theory of the Gospels. By "mechanical theory" I mean that he is anxious to take the Gospels as a kind of Annual Register—rather inaccurate, but still sufficiently reliable to be quoted as reports and journals of contemporary writers.

Now, I am sorry Mr. Kenworthy should tie himself up to such a hopeless case. The reason I am sorry is this:—Mr. Kenworthy is filled with a very real compassion for the poor; he desires to be of service, especially by appealing to the better nature of the commercial and wealthy; and he seeks to do this, not just by putting his finger directly upon the springs of their conscience, but by a roundabout reference to the ancient Christian ethics. He is thus compelled to plead for "Christian evidences"—a science more dismal than Political Economy, and more elusive than the great Sea Serpent. Why should a good man like Mr. Kenworthy waste his time with discussing the date of the four Gospels? It is an interesting literary question. It might occupy a niche of an educated man's attention, like a fondness for book-plates, or rare coins, or Dresden china, or sixteenth-century French furniture. But to stake one's social philosophy upon it is a most melancholy investment of one's intellectual funds. I wish I could restrain Mr. Kenworthy's indiscretion, and persuade him to walk straight towards the problems of life without taking a long circuit through Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Joseph of Arimathea's garden. My heart sank when I heard him say: "The results of historical criticism." I knew what was coming. Poor Mr. Kenworthy was about to deliver his soul into the keeping of the Christian apologists, and they will never let him go so long as they can produce a ragged shred of parchment to make believe that the Christian Gospels are as trustworthy as the *Times*. Mr. Kenworthy went on: "The results of historical criticism and of scholarly research into the nature and origins of the Gospels stand substantially proved and established. We have no longer to seriously reckon with that old type of criticism which says the Gospels were the product of a priesthood, and were forged and passed upon the world to buttress up the claims of the imposture of the Church. Sanday's Bampton Lectures on 'Inspiration' show that there is practical agreement that the Gospels were produced between the years 60 and 100. There is little reason to doubt that they are substantially biographical. There *was* a Jesus who lived and died as stated, and his teaching was such as is there given. That, it seems to me, is beyond serious discussion. All the world is in substantial agreement."

I cannot help groaning as I transcribe these sentences from my shorthand notes. First of all, it is not true that all the world is in substantial agreement as to the above-named dates of the Gospels. And, in the next place, what saddens me is this:—I have an immense suspicion—a suspicion which rises several hundred feet above the level of Mr. Kenworthy's faith—that the Gospels were *not* produced between the years 60 and 100. It is likely enough that certain vague and thin legends came to birth in that period, and that these furnished a skeleton for the fuller "histories" of the second century; but that is a very different theory. All this I must debate with Mr. Kenworthy before he and I can find a common basis for

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the consideration of social reform! That is really what it comes to. We are to turn into mud-larks, searching the banks of the great river of literature in order to pick up stray items of evidences as to the dates of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. When we have found these evidences, and agreed upon their value—and Balaam's ass alone knows when this happy consummation will be attained—Mr. Kenworthy and I will then begin a new discussion on the *moral* and *intellectual* worth of the contents of the Gospels. And, meanwhile, the sick world awaits our coming with such modest aid as we have skill to render! Alas! if the world depended upon us, it would die while we were nagging one another on the date of the Muratorian Canon!

Mr. Kenworthy gave me a flutter of hope when he proceeded: "Our method is that of Rationalism." But who shall describe my feelings as he went on as coolly and good-naturedly as Count Tolstoi himself?: "We believe ourselves to be at one with Jesus, who said:—We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen. In the Gospels there are things difficult to understand. For instance, as to the significance of the legend [*sic*] of the Miraculous Conception. It may be a long time before we can satisfactorily account for the presence of miracle stories in the Gospels. We find ourselves obliged to put aside those parts which are beyond our *immediate reason* and experience. With what, then, are we left?"

That was what I was eager to know. How much was left? Would it be, as they say in chemistry-lectures, as much as would go on the end of a knife, or would it be an ample store which would make Herbert Spencer unnecessary and Ruskin superfluous? I had not expected Mr. Kenworthy so calmly to banish the miracles to the far-distant day of verification—the "long time," as he called it—but I did expect something definite as a residuum. Because, you see, I wanted to get on. I wanted to attack the great problem of poverty, commercialism, and ignorance.

Mr. Kenworthy continued: "With what, then, are we left? With so much of the teaching as is here and now intelligible to us; with so much of the incidents as speak to our hearts as being true illustrations and the inevitable outcome of the teaching. We are to put aside that which we cannot understand, and concentrate our attention upon what we *do* understand."

That is just what I feared. After Mr. Kenworthy and I had agreed upon the dates of the Gospels, we should have to agree as to how much we understood. And that, also, would consume a fair amount of time; for Mr. Kenworthy has an idea that "Jesus took into his own soul the ripened product of Hebrew thought and Greek thought." I should hesitate to assent to that until Mr. Kenworthy and I (mud-larks again!) had carefully compared the Gospels with at least Plato's *Dialogues* and Aristotle's *Ethics*. And all this time, what is to be done with militarism, and vivisection, and prostitution, and the unemployed, and the betting-ring, and a thousand other evils? Why does not the excellent and brave-hearted Kenworthy (I am sure he is all that) march on towards the twentieth century, instead of tramping down the stairs into the darkness of the first?

F. J. Gould.

## SAM JONES SCORED.

And it is a Woman who Performs that Task with Precision and Force.

It is generally agreed that when one man makes misstatements about another the proper way for the insulted man to resent it is to meet the other publicly, call him a liar, and enforce his remarks to the extent of his strength, whipping the other fellow or getting whipped; in the absence of the man insulted his friends are supposed to do his part for him. At least, below Mason and Dixon's line this custom prevails.

But there is also a general prejudice against fighting a preacher. This has come to us from the time when preachers were considered infallible, and some men in the pulpits to-day almost justify such impressions in their congregations by their perfect lives. And even when a man has "chewed off his tag" (in Sam Jones's parlance), and scorns the judicious guidance of his church, his licence gives him the sanctity that protects him from personal attack. So, if a preacher so far violates his mission as to descend to slander of good men, how shall he be called to account? It is beneath the dignity of a man to argue with one who has slandered his friend, and he can't fight a preacher.

Protected as he is, the preacher is subject to attacks only from a class equally immune from personal attack—the women. The free-sword preacher and I, a woman, have equal safety in slandering men. He is protected by his cloth; I by my petticoats. We both show equal cowardice when we slander our betters, but a preacher and a woman fight on equal grounds—neither of us will suffer the usual penalty.

According to the report of Rev. Sam P. Jones's lecture, published in the *Constitution*, the lecturer is very much provoked with Colonel Ingersoll. He is growing effeminate in the worst way—adopting the faults of ours that we are trying to conquer. When somebody slights him he breaks forth into wild invective. Now, it is rather hard for Mr. Jones that Colonel Ingersoll has more regard for fact than Mr. Jones credits him with. The great Agnostic as much as said to him that he must measure up to the standard of thought he required of his controversialists. Such men as Gladstone, Black, and Field he was willing to dispute with, but a mere funny man was not worthy his heavy projectiles. But Mr. Jones did not have the anxiety to meet Colonel Ingersoll that he professed. The challenge added a little to his notoriety, and gave him something to talk about, and if it had not been for the fact stated in Colonel Ingersoll's reply, that Jones did not represent any great religious branch, Mr. Jones would have been much obliged to the great Agnostic for the notice given him. And justly so, for, as even Colonel Ingersoll's enemies admit, his intellectual peer is not found in America.

And what specific charge does Rev. Sam P. Jones make against Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, Agnostic. He says: "The biggest fool in the world is the man who disputes an established fact." The truth certainly! Is Mr. Jones a qualified judge of established fact? Some of his statements would not bear out such a claim. But a meaner fool is the man who attacks an established and well-deserved reputation for truth, honor, sincerity, sobriety, and justice.

I notice the observation that an Agnostic is all mouth and talk. It is too bad for Mr. Jones that there are any people, who are within hearing of his voice, that have resources for accumulating fact beyond his statements. Perhaps the majority of his audience have had such resources closed to them. I have no doubt that he would tell them it meant eternal damnation to read Bob Ingersoll's writings. His position must be that he, believing the people to be of too small intelligence to resist the argument of Colonel Ingersoll, enjoys the applause of this intellectual audience. Or else Mr. Jones, knowing the invincibility of Colonel Ingersoll's position, deliberately seals his books and abuses the author of such incomparable logic. The first inference is not complimentary to the people, the last not to Mr. Jones. The followers of Agnosticism are never afraid a preacher will convince them against their will, nor do they believe the masses of the people to be of so little intelligence that they cannot form opinions for themselves when both sides are laid before them.

Mr. Jones says Colonel Ingersoll is an Agnostic for revenue only, because he gets $1,000 a night for lecturing. (I never heard of Mr. Jones being offered over $500, but I may not be correctly informed. His nest is pretty well feathered, anyway, and he is the only Methodist preacher in Georgia who has amassed money.) But how about the years of Colonel Ingersoll's young manhood, when there was no revenue in Agnosticism; when Colonel Ingersoll was without other resources than derived from his profession; when he talked his views regardless of financial loss through his frankness?

Mr. Jones's eyesight is also affected by his spite. Colonel Ingersoll at sixty years of age is a perfect specimen of physical manhood, over six feet tall, and perfectly proportioned. The only way a scrawny little fellow like Sam Jones could look down on him would be by crawling into the upper berth of a sleeper, and looking down with one eye closed. Two features of this anecdote represent the slight regard for fact in the entire report before me. He called a man six feet high "a little bald-headed man," and he gets his information concerning this man from a Pullman-car porter, who would like to have a tip. And what will an enterprising porter not do for a tip? If Colonel

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Ingersoll had condescended to gossip with the porter, he would probably have told the Colonel that he saw Sam Jones take a drink.

Colonel Ingersoll does not spend his time fighting benevolent institutions, colleges, almshouses, and charity of all kinds, and if Mr. Jones knows anything at all about the man he slanders, he knows that Colonel Ingersoll is a pattern of morality; that, standing in the open, with the searchlight of all the churches upon him, his critics have utterly failed to find a flaw in him. He has no chapter in his life that he seals to observation by the statement that it was "before his conversion."

Of course, Mr. Jones is correct in saying he has seen no charity done by Colonel Ingersoll. "None so blind as he who will not see." I daresay Mr. Jones has not suffered nervous prostration from his search, anyway. Then the Colonel has not the commercial head that so often accompanies the charitable heart. You will not find any orphan asylums with his name on them, nor will you find that he has contributed towards any colleges that support the doctrine he believes to be erroneous. And if he had done so Mr. Jones would be the one to say he was insincere, and use such misdirected charity as an argument against the Colonel. You will not find his right hand raised above his head gossiping about the bestowals of its neighbor. People come to hear his lectures regardless of the use of the money they pay in, but they go away knowing that such a man will use money rightly. Colonel Ingersoll's charity is not his stock-in-trade. But, as many poor, struggling young men, and thousands of the abjectly poor of New York city know, Robert G. Ingersoll is a charitable man.

"The man who will invade the sanctity of the home and destroy its idols, take the last prop from beneath the feet of old age, and throw the faith of women and children to the winds," is one who maliciously slanders a man full of years and honors, serene in the undivided devotion of his family and every person who has known him intimately—which happiness the slanderer tries to destroy with the vilest weapon that was ever used by man.

And though this "meanest cur alive" fails in his attempt, he is practically guilty of the crime.

LOTTIE GEORGE BELL.

—*New York "Truthseeker."*

## GAMBETTA.

*(Concluded from page 438.)*

WE must pass hurriedly over Gambetta's retreat to Saint Sebastien, the bloody episode of the Commune, the meeting of the Bordeaux Assembly, the signing away of Alsace and Lorraine, the voting of the new constitution at Versailles, and the intrigues against Thiers. During this period Gambetta did not speak often, but he worked hard; he knew how to watch and wait. He founded an influential paper, the *République Française*, gathered round him an able band of devoted friends, and assisted Thiers in his fight with the monarchists. When that veteran statesman resigned the presidency, and made way for MacMahon, Gambetta threw himself into the struggle against the reactionaries with all the ardor, courage, eloquence, and power he had displayed in the war. He, who had really founded the Republic, was now its savior. He led the 363 in the Chamber, his voice roused the nation, and he had prepared for an armed resistance to the threatened *coup d'état*. The secret of Gambetta's friendship for Gallifet is that the dashing general came to him at this crisis, and placed his sword unreservedly in the hands of the Republican leader. A very characteristic story shows what stuff Gambetta was made of. An emissary from the Government privately warned him not to speak against MacMahon. He scornfully replied: "Tell the Prime Minister that I will speak from a pedestal if I can; but, if not, from a housetop. In one way or another my voice shall reach further than his, and so long as I have a drop of blood to shed the Republic shall not fall."

Never was Gambetta grander than during this struggle. His eloquence was then in its golden prime, and his strategy was almost faultless. By getting himself elected president of the Budget Committee he contrived to hold the purse strings, and so kept the May plotters short of funds. He maintained such admirable discipline over the Republicans that the Government could find no pretext for using violence; and he organised the party throughout the country so well, and obtained such accurate information as to its prospects in every constituency, that he was able to predict the number of Republican deputies who would be returned after the dissolution. The *Times* well referred to the wonderful amount of nervous force he expended at this time, "not only in the tribune, but in the lobbies, the smoking-room, and wherever else he talked to bring men round to his way of thinking." But alas, as the same writer remarks, "it is evident now that he was wearing himself out rapidly, and that every one of these discourses, which will be remembered as rare intellectual treats by those who heard them, cost the gifted orator days or months of life."

We may here deal more fully with Gambetta's wonderful eloquence. He was the supreme orator of France, and probably the greatest in the world. Mr. T. Wemyss Reid writes (*Politicians of To-day*, vol. i., p. 57) as follows:—

> "I have heard the voices of many great orators in my time. I have often listened to Bright, before he betrayed that huskiness of tone which now distresses him whenever he speaks. Many a time I have sat entranced whilst the mellow, rounded, and most melodious tones of Mr. Gladstone have rung clear and high above the din of stormy factions in the House of Commons. I have heard Spurgeon at his best, letting every man in the vast Tabernacle hear each syllable as it fell from his lips. I remember, too, the mellifluous tones of Wilberforce; and I am familiar with the silken accents of Coleridge. But never have I heard speech like that of M. Gambetta's—never have I heard a voice of such compass, emphasis, flexibility, and power."

The well-informed Paris correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* gave a more detailed account of Gambetta's oratory:—

> "Nothing was more remarkable in him than this power of thus investing with imaginative fervor the dictates of practical prudence and conciliation. But his oratorical displays were usually reserved for a formal occasion. In the tribune of the National Assembly at Versailles the effects he produced were such, I suppose all who ever witnessed them would agree, as we are never likely to behold again. As an orator he seemed to me, when I heard him in those days, to unite in a superlative degree the two qualities of weight and splendor. As soon as he began to speak his voice cleared itself, and rang like a trumpet. Its tones were as sympathetic and various as they were resounding. He could be as irresistible in conjuration as he was terrible in menace, and his choice of language and intonation never failed. He could be alike furious or familiar without ceasing to be dignified. His looks and actions were full of command, and it was a thrilling sight to see him stand there like a mountain while the sea of hostile deputies fumed below. With a toss of his great head and mane, and a tremendous gesture, he would hurl back taunt after taunt into the arena, till his enemies cowered, and shrank into silence."

A very similar description was given by M. Pressensé in the *Christian World*, and his testimony is doubly valuable as coming from a Protestant politician who deplored Gambetta's attitude towards religion:—

> "One title to fame Gambetta holds unchallenged: he was undoubtedly the greatest orator of the day. No one can form a conception of the power with which he spoke who has not seen him on the tribune, pacing rapidly up and down, striking the marble with heavy blows as though it were the anvil from which the fire was to leap forth, shaking his long hair like a lion's mane, never disturbed by any interruption, but always following out the close thread of his argument. He was particularly an impromptu speaker, yet one always felt that underlying his most unpremeditated utterances there was a wealth of thought and well-matured reflection. I have always been struck in hearing him with the vigorous logic running through his most impassioned utterances. His language was often incorrect. The volcano would cast forth at first a shower of stones and smoke, mingled with the flame; but in the end the flame leaped upwards, grand and glowing."

Gambetta's unique eloquence was, however, always held subordinate to practical ends. As M. Brisson said at Père la Chaise: "He did not speak merely to air his eloquence; he only spoke to act." He could deliver a dozen great speeches in as many days, or keep silent for as many months. And he was a true artist in words. No one admired a fine speech more than he, and no one was more

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ready to applaud any successful orator in the Chamber. His own eloquence, too, was not something reserved only for special occasions; he was a brilliant *causeur*, easily adapting himself to intercourse with cultivated women, and especially fascinating at his own *réunions*, where he could give the rein to his exuberant powers.

Gambetta emerged from his struggle with MacMahon and the reactionaries as the great commanding figure in French politics. M. Grévy was elected President when MacMahon resigned, and Gambetta took the presidency of the Chamber of Deputies. From that dignified position he wielded immense authority. It was he who caused the Parliament to return from Versailles to Paris, and it was his oratory and influence that secured the passing of the Amnesty Bill. But from that time his enemies in the Chamber, comprising all the Royalists and Imperialists, and all the extreme Reds, intrigued against him, and made him the object of ferocious abuse and unmeasured slander. He never condescended to notice them, however, and it is now clear that they never shook his popularity in the country. When they forced him into taking office against his wish, he speedily forced them to make him resign before they had fretted away any of his reputation. That is the secret of his "fall from power" soon afterwards. Gambetta never showed more astuteness than when he manœuvred his enemies into throwing him out of office on the question of *scrutin de liste*. It was a part of the traditional programme of the Republicans, and many of his opponents, secret and open, including M. Grévy and M. Clemenceau, had obstinately defended it, and bitterly denounced the *scrutin d'arrondissement* when it was carried by the Conservative Congress at Versailles. This fact entirely disposes of the absurd and interested cry of "Dictator" which was raised against him at the time.

Gambetta worked hard to reform the army, to enlighten the peasants, to educate the masses, to oust the priest from the schools, and to break the power of clericalism. In all these he succeeded. His attitude towards clericalism was clearly defined in one of his greatest speeches during the war with the May conspirators:—

> "Those who have organised that league have great power, the Jesuitism which has its seat at Rome, whence it directs all movements of mobilisation and concentration.....They have tried by circulars, prosecutions, and condemnations against the publication of what is going on, to stop the mouth of the country. The country knows all, it has seen through all. On the 14th of October it will condemn it all.
>
> "It will condemn that ultra-clerical policy which conceals itself under the cloak of religion in order to gain the conquest of temporal power; it will condemn those who seek, by possessing themselves of the agencies of education, to secure control over the minds of the rising generation, in order to stupify and subject them; it will condemn the campaign directed by the men in black against the intelligence of the world. The 14th of October is a new plebiscite which they try to snatch from France. You know what happened in 1870. We said to the country: To vote *Yes* means war, ruin, and shame. Our voice was not heeded, and all was lost. At present Europe is troubled; on one side the East is on fire, on the other France is plunged in a decisive crisis. The neighboring nations follow the phases of our drama with apprehension. All have shaken the clerical yoke. All, even Spain, have flung aside the Ultramontane chain. Well! There must be no longer any doubt. Yesterday we said: 'Clericalism! there is the enemy.' To-morrow, France and Europe must say: 'Clericalism! there is the *vanquished!*'"

Gambetta did not propose the immediate separation of Church and State; he knew, as a wise statesman, that it is folly to attempt too much, and that to turn all the poor rural clergy out of their cures was to begin at the wrong end. But he never concealed his personal views. He was a staunch Freethinker, he publicly praised Comte as the greatest thinker of our century, he called himself a Voltairean, and he was buried without religious rites. No private gossip can weigh against these facts.

Gambetta is gone into the silent land; he sleeps beside his mother in a modest tomb, at the summit of a steep hill looking out over the Mediterranean. But his grand work for liberty and progress remains, to conquer death and time, and secure for him a proud immortality. He will live in the annals of France, a magnificent name in the list of her sons who greatly lived, greatly wrought, and greatly dared.

G. W. FOOTE.

# ACID DROPS.

PRESIDENT MCKINLEY requests the American people to offer a special thanksgiving to Almighty God for the success of their naval and military arms at Manila and Santiago. Of course the victor is always in the right, and God is always on the side of the strongest.

Captain Phillip, of the United States battleship *Texas*, after the destruction of the Spanish fleet off Santiago, called all hands to the quarter deck and thanked God for an almost bloodless victory. "I want to make public acknowledgment here," he said, "that I believe in God the Father Almighty. I want all you officers and men to lift your hats, and from your hearts to offer silent thanks to the Almighty." No doubt the Almighty duly appreciated the compliment. It must comfort him to know that he has Captain Phillip's patronage.

By a "bloodless victory" Captain Phillip meant that his own side suffered very little loss. This was not exactly due to the superior piety of the American fleet, but rather to the fact that the Spanish gunners couldn't shoot with any accuracy. What they hit, for the most part, was the Atlantic Ocean, and that only because it was too big to be missed.

A bloodless victory is the best sort of victory. But was it so in this case? Captain Ussher, of the *Ericsson*, who went to aid the sinking *Vizcaya*, says: "The American shells had torn holes through her plates. Through them I could see naked men, bloody, gashed, roasting in her shell." A bloodless victory indeed! Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

This war has got to be fought out now it is begun, and, of course, the Americans will win. They have immensely superior resources, and, besides having as much courage as the Spaniards, they have the dash and spirit of their race. In this respect they have our admiration. But we are unable to admire them when they drag God Almighty into the contest, and talk either folly or hypocrisy. It seems to us that any decent God would put an end to this struggle very swiftly, by deciding what is right, and enforcing it on both parties. And this he could do without bloodshed or suffering, if he only cared to exert himself.

Perhaps, after all, the truth of the matter is summed up in Henri Bayle's epigram: "The only excuse for God is that he does not exist."

Lieutenant Hobson, who sank the *Merrimac* at the entrance of Santiago Harbour, is said to have been an active member and president of the Young Men's Christian Association at Annapolis. "Is it not time," asks *Men*, the organ of the Y.M.C.A. of North America, "for the flaunt to be suppressed that Christian men and Y.M.C.A. men are 'softies'?" But who ever said they were "softies" when it came to fighting? Christians have never been backward at that game. They do by far the most of the fighting on this planet, and whenever they engage in bloodshed they always affect to have the approval of their God of Battles.

Civilisation produces a certain tenderness and chivalry even in the conduct of warfare. Of course the Christians will put this down as an effect of Christianity, but it is nothing of the kind. Look back over European history and see how wars were waged by Christians only two or three hundred years ago—not to go as far as the brutalities of the Middle Ages, or the fiendish cruelty and cannibalism of the Crusades. We were turning over recently the pages of an interesting old book—*The Adventures and Discourses of Captain John Smith*, the founder of the State of Virginia. This is the Captain John Smith referred to in George Long's Introduction to his translation of the *Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*. "He saved the young colony of Virginia," Long says, and "He was great in his heroic mind and his deeds in arms, but greater still in the nobleness of his character." All this is true enough. But let us see how Captain John Smith and his friends fought the Crim Tartars nearly three hundred years ago.

"I mind me specially at Rebrynk," he says, "where the enemy was entrenched too strongly for us to harm him. Nevertheless, whenever we could catch a few of their men, we cut off their heads, and rolled them up and down before their trenches; whilst they flayed alive seven of our porters and hanged their skins upon poles." What a horrible picture!

Christianity was Christianity then as it is now. Something else—namely, civilisation—has softened men's tempers during the three centuries that have rolled by since the adventures of Captain John Smith. Let us take another picture from the recent naval battle off Santiago. Captain

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vans, of the *Iowa*, made a prisoner of Captain Eulate, of the *Viscaya*; and this is how he described his reception of the defeated Spaniard: "Finally, to the *Iowa* came a boat with Captain Eulate of the *Viscaya*, for whom a chair was lowered over the side, as he was evidently wounded. A captain's guard of marines was drawn up on the quarter-deck ready to salute him. I stood waiting to welcome him. As the chair was placed on deck the marines presented arms. Captain Eulate slowly raised himself from the chair and saluted me with grave dignity. He unbuckled his sword-belt, and, holding the hilt of his sword before him, kissed it reverently, tears streaming from his eyes. He then surrendered the sword to me, but, of course, I declined to receive it. When the crew of the *Iowa* saw this they cheered like wild men. Just as I started to take Captain Eulate into my cabin in order to allow the doctors to examine his wounds, the magazine of the *Viscaya* exploded with a tremendous noise and a huge burst of flame. Captain Eulate, extending his hands, said: 'Adois, *Viscaya* There goes my beautiful ship, Captain.' And so we passed into the cabin, where the doctors dressed his three wounds.

What a fine touch is in that one sentence—*When the crew of the "Iowa" saw this they cheered like wild men!* That wild cheer does them infinite credit. They would have been pained to see a brave man humiliated, even though he was their enemy. It was a great relief to them to find that he was to be treated with the greatest courtesy. His sword was no longer of any use to him, but his retention of it was symbolic, it appealed to the imagination; and that a crowd of common men, fresh from fighting, could be there and then so deeply sensitive to such an appeal is a testimony to their sound character. If men can feel like this with the lust of battle hardly cooled in their blood, may we not hope that the time is not so very far distant when a still higher development of the same feeling will bring about the entire abolition of war and the establishment of peace and brotherhood?

"Boys," said General Sherman in his famous address to the cadets—"Boys, they tell you that war is all glory; but let me tell you it is all hell." This is about the truth, and we hope the war between America and Spain will soon be over. We welcome the signs of approaching peace.

Friendship between England and the United States is a grand thing. Nobody is more pleased to see it daily growing than we are. For that very reason we are annoyed at the cackle of fools over the matter. And one of the biggest of these fools is the Rev. Dr. Kennedy, who spoke at a Fourth of July meeting in the east of London. "He claimed all the countries of the earth for Christ," the report says, "and he would have Britain and America set themselves to the task of bringing the whole world in subjection to the Redeemer." Now, in our opinion Jesus Christ himself should undertake that colossal job. It is his business, and let him look to it. Still, if the Yankees want a share in the enterprise—which we rather doubt—they are welcome to it as far as we are concerned. But we decidedly object to poor old John Bull being saddled with any part of it. His cares of empire are already too great. Don't let them be increased—least of all by zealous sky-pilots. Give the "weary Titan" a chance.

The London *Sun* is down upon the Rev. Peter Thompson and the East-end Wesleyan Mission. There is a paper conducted in the interest of this pious enterprise called the *East End*, and in it there is an announcement, in the style of a play-bill, of a forthcoming performance—which the *Sun* calls disgusting. Here it is:—

THEATRE.

The great and terrible day of the Lord.
By command of the King of Kings.
At the Theatre of the Universe on the Eve of Time
will be performed
The Great Assize, or Day of Judgment.

The scenery, which is now being prepared, will not only surpass everything that has yet been seen, but infinitely exceed the utmost stretch of imagination. There will be a just representation of all the inhabitants of the world in their various and proper colors, and their customs and manners will be so exactly delineated that the most secret thoughts will be discovered.

This theatre will be laid out after a new plan, and will consist of pit and gallery only. N.B.—The gallery is very spacious, and the pit without bottom.

Act I. will be opened by an Archangel, with the trump of God.

Act II.—A procession of the Saints.

Act III.—An assemblage of all the unregenerate. The accompaniment will chiefly consist of cries, weepings, wailing, mourning, lamentation, and woe.

To conclude with an address by the Son of Man.

After which the curtain will drop.

This does not strike us as "disgusting," but merely as silly. If there be a hell, and most people are going to it as fast as their legs will carry them, it is an act of kindness to stop them, no matter what device is resorted to for the purpose. The right thing to do is to quarrel with the doctrine of hell and damnation.

Puritan theology is at a sad discount. According to the *British Weekly*, the following samples were sold at a recent auction in Edinburgh:—Manton's works, twenty-two volumes, 4s.; Owen's works, twenty-four volumes, 5s. 6d.; Nichol's *Puritan Divines*, forty-three volumes, 3s.; eighty-nine volumes in all for 12s. 6d. The theology of those old preachers is as dead as a door-nail. That is why their works fetch so little. Some of them were men of very great ability, especially those in Nichol's collection. Thomas Adams, for instance, had brains and wit enough for anything.

A local gossiper in the *Birmingham News* writes: "A curate astonished the congregation of a certain church in the suburbs the other Sunday by declaring, in the course of his sermon, that if he could have his own way there should be neither pews nor chairs in the building, that worshippers should either stand or kneel, as to attend church was to do penance."

No doubt it is a penitential act to attend a place of worship—especially when the pulpit is occupied by a curate of this kidney. He has evidently been sent to the people of that parish for their sins. Supposing he could "have his own way," church attendance would be even less than it now is. Already round about Birmingham, as in London City churches, the irreducible minimum is very nearly arrived at.

A more sensible suggestion is that of an eminent Birmingham man, Mr. Sam Timmins, that *smoking* pews should be provided. But here again we meet with a difficulty. How is the smoke to be carried off? What with the clouds of shag and the fogginess of the preacher, all would be enveloped in obscurity. The women's head-gear and costumes would be thrown away, and then good-bye to church-going altogether.

Another writer in the same local print, pondering over the question why men do not go to church, except as the complaisant escorts or possible admirers of the ladies, thinks that the sermons should be "brighter." This, again, would be whipping a dead horse. No amount of "brightness" can gloss over or compensate for that absolute want of truth which is the main deficiency of pulpit discourses and of church and chapel services.

Orange celebrations went on merrily in the north of Ireland on July 12. The following is a copy of a placard which was extensively posted in the town and vicinity of Donegal, where the population is almost entirely Catholic:—

A GRAND ORANGE DEMONSTRATION
WILL BE HELD
IN DONEGAL,
ON TUESDAY, 12TH JULY, 1898.

Who fears to speak of Derry, Aughrim, and the Boyne.
PAPISTS, STAND ASIDE.
We conquered you before, and can do so again.
OUR MOTTO STILL IS:
Down with Home Rule, Hurrah for King William,
and to Hell with the Pope.

Procession to be formed at New Orange Hall, and to Parade the Principal Streets, after which a Public Meeting is to be held.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

"To Hell with the Pope!" What a sublime exclamation! How full of sweet and tender charity! Protestantism is about as lovely as Catholicism is true; and Christians do love each other most intensely.

Fancy the row there would be if Freethinkers were to post a placard containing the line, "To Hell with the Archbishop of Canterbury!" But there is no likelihood of this being done. Freethinkers are too well bred. They leave that sort of brutal incivility to the friends of religion.

The Bishop of Calcutta, who has returned to England, told a recent meeting of the Indian Church Aid Association that he was very thankful for the work done in his diocese. He felt that "God's blessing" had been upon it. And he spoke of the "extraordinary providential circumstances" that had attended it. In the same speech, when he had apparently forgotten all about Providence, he lamented that an earthquake had sunk part of his cathedral, and "three churches in the Assam district were absolutely levelled to the ground." Bishops, like certain other people should have good memories.

Mr E. T. Hooley, the bankrupt millionaire, gave £500 to

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the augmentation of the benefice of Risley, Derbyshire. In consideration for this the Bishop of Southwell consented to the right of patronage to the benefice being transferred from himself to Mr. Hooley. Query, will the advowson be sold with the rest of the bankrupt's estate? Or will Mr. Hooley appoint the next parson to that parish? It is a pretty piece of business in any case.

According to the Rev. J. Hirst Hollowell, secretary of the Northern Counties Education League, who has "personally verified" the case, a Church of England curate taught as follows in a Church school—that is, a school called "voluntary,' but really supported almost entirely by the taxpayers. "To be baptised at chapel," the curate taught the children, "is of no use. You must be baptised at 'church.' You cannot say 'Our Father which art in heaven' unless you are baptised at church, for God is not your Father until you are baptised at church." This is bad enough. It is an abominable piece of priestly impudence. But why should any surprise be felt? Church parsons are bound to take up this attitude. If baptism is as good and efficacious outside the Church as inside it, what is the use of the Church? Baptism is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," and Nonconformists go in for it as well as Churchmen. To the Freethinker, baptism is humbug altogether. It is not conceivable that God (if he exist) should be affected in his feelings towards any child by the fact that a mystery-man had, or had not, sprinkled it with so-called holy water, which is only common tap-water after all.

The case of Dr. Charles Oscar Murphy is a good argument for universal civil marriage, leaving everybody to go through whatever religious ceremony he chooses in addition—a matter with which the State has no real concern. Dr. Murphy, who is in practice at Manchester, applied in the Probate Court, before Sir Francis Jeune, for a declaration that his marriage to Martha Price on September 25, 1876, was a lawful marriage. The couple went down on their knees and pledged their troth in what they regarded as the sight of God, and Father Birch told them that this would constitute a valid marriage. In this belief they lived together, and were recognised by the clergy as husband and wife; indeed, they paid Father Birch a fee of £5, and a certificate was issued by Canon Sheehan, bearing Cardinal Vaughan's seal. After all those years Dr. Murphy finds that he was not legally married. He was deceived by his own Church. And this could not have happened if all marriages had to be contracted at a public office, as in France.

Roman Catholics have just been making their annual pilgrimage to Canterbury in honor of St. Thomas à Becket. Father Anselm preached to them in the Church of St. Thomas, and in the course of his sermon said that "Roman Catholics looked to the High Church party for the conversion of England." No doubt the High Church party is doing its best (or worst) in that direction, but it is playing the game too openly and is being found out. England will get rid of its State Church long before the High Church party convert England. Father Anselm is counting his chickens before the eggs are laid.

Mr. John Kensit's conviction for brawling in St. Cuthbert's Church has been quashed at the County of London Sessions. The chairman said that the conviction was perfectly legal, but the "lay" magistrates decided the matter over his head. One result of this judgment is that the vicar of St. Cuthbert's talks about having to employ "muscular Christianity." We may yet see members of the Church of England fighting each other in the State gospel-shops, with hair on the tops of pews and blood on the floors. What a happy family is the household of faith!

Suicide of another Atheist. No, no, we beg pardon; suicide of another clergyman. The Rev. J. J. Twist, rector of Castle Hedingham, Essex, hanged himself in a barn. Here endeth the lesson.

The Bishop of London is not exactly a humorist, but he is sometimes funny. The other day he presented prizes to the pupil teachers of the Central classes of the London Diocesan Board of Education, and in the course of his remarks he referred to the unkind things that had been said about the religious teaching in Church schools. "It was a sad fact," he said, "that anyone should be found to make a statement about which no human being could possibly know anything." Angels and ministers of grace defend us! Do you really mean that, Bishop Creighton? If you do, you are "a sad fact" yourself. You get £10,000 a year for making statements of the kind you condemn. No human being can possibly know anything about heaven and hell, yet you and the rest of the clergy are always making statements about them. A Daniel come to judgment; yea, we say, a Daniel! And the first person he condemns is himself.

Canon Knox-Little told a good story once at a Church Congress. He said he remembered a lychgate in front of a beautiful church, which had been restored and made very nice. There was painted over the door, "This is the Gate of Heaven," and underneath was the large notice, "Go round the other way."

"Arrested for Publishing Obscene Literature; G. W. Foote in Court." This is a line from the contents-sheet of a certain anti-infidel paper, edited by an ex-gaol-bird. Of course the suggestion to the unwary is that G. W. Foote is the person arrested for obscenity. Two friends have asked us whether it is not actionable. We reply that it would be if we advocated Christianity and the fellow in question advocated Freethought. But what chance is there of a Freethinker getting an honest verdict from a jury against a Christian? None at all that we can see. So we simply leave this fellow to his beastly trade of lying for a living. He cannot do us any real harm, and as for his dupes—well, they are too base and foolish to be pitied.

The Peel Rechabites are in a fury. They wanted a demonstration in Peel Castle, and the Governor replied that they might use the place and take the "gate" for charity, but there must be no speeches for or against teetotalism or anything else. This reply led them to pass a high-flown resolution "condemning" the Governor's action. "But suppose," the *Isle of Man Times* asks, "Mr. G. W. Foote, the great Freethinker, came over here and wanted to address a crowd in Peel Castle? Who would be the first to cry 'Shame!' Would it not be the God-fearing Rechabites of Peel?" What is sauce for the Freethought gander is sauce for the Rechabite goose.

"Labby" has been reading the Thirty-nine Articles, apparently for the first time, and he finds them ambiguous and contradictory. He wants somebody to explain them. What a fine opportunity for Canon Gore! Satisfying "Labby" that the Thirty-nine Articles are intelligible, and perhaps credible, would be a better investment of time than burning incense and dressing like a peacock.

Father Hays, of West Bridgford, has been preaching two special sermons at St. Peter and St. Paul's Catholic Church, New Brighton, on Modern Unbelief. The reverend gentleman, who was in an ultra-Jeremiah vein, declared that "all the powers of darkness were leagued against God and his Christ." But as they have always been so leagued it is hard to see why Father Hays is raising such a hubbub at this particular moment. "The blighting curse of modern unbelief," he continued, "was passing over the fair countries of Europe and bringing death and disease in its train." Really, now! Father Hays is quite a humorist. Modern unbelief, in the form of science, is grappling with disease instead of promoting it; it is also keeping down the death-rate, and considerably raising the average longevity. Disease and death, indeed! Father Hays might as well have said "blood and thunder."

All the Bishops who were in the House of Lords voted against the recognition in England of marriages contracted in the colonies under the Deceased Wife's Sisters Bill. The right reverend fathers-in-God, however, were in a woful minority. Their cause was out-voted by nearly three to one.

Church of England places of worship in London are exempted from local rates for the paving of streets, but Nonconformists have to pay the full amount. As a matter of justice *both* should pay, but the Nonconformists prefer to make it *neither*, so they are moving the London County Council to give them the same exemption as the Church. And the worst of it is they will very likely get it.

Rev. Emlyn Jenkins, of Barnet Congregational Church, being in want of a fetching subject for a sermon, took "Amusements," and it caught on. The church was crowded, probably by persons after a bit of the subject of the man of God's discourse. The rev. gentleman had a good deal to say about the "degradation" of theatres. He did not positively assert that you couldn't go to the theatre first and heaven afterwards, but he thought it most likely you would go to the other place. The *Stage* reminds him, however, that the clergy don't seem a great moral improvement on actors. Here is one parson sentenced for drunkenness, there another for bigamy, and elsewhere another for an offence which is hardly mentionable in polite society. Let them look to themselves first.

Parson Newman, rector of Hawkridge, a place with ninety inhabitants, has an income of £625 a year, with a house and twenty acres of glebe land. He also claims to be the owner of one half of the river at a spot called "Tarr Steps," the other half belonging to Sir T. C. Dyke-Acland, who allows anyone to fish except on Sundays. The man of God, however, is more exclusive. He has just proceeded against a chance visitor for trying to catch trout. This gentleman apologised for his mistake, but the man of God was not to be appeased. When the case came before the magistrates it was discharged. So the visitor lost his fish and the parson lost his victim.

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, July 17, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, London, W.: 7.30, "The Holy Ghost."

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

T. MOODY.—We will try to publish the statistics you are seeking.

T. HOLSTEAD, applying for membership (with 10s.) in the Secular Society, Limited, promises to give £50 along with others for the Society's printed objects. Mr. J. Umpleby, who promised £50 conditionally, will please note. There ought to be eight more promises to that extent forthcoming. The offer of £1,000 by another generous friend of the movement is meant to attract other offers, and will be cheerfully redeemed if it succeeds in doing so. This is a matter which we shall not labor during the summer heat, when so many are holidaying. We shall recur to it, vigorously, in September. Meanwhile those whom the spirit moves can write to us, and welcome.

G. F. DUPLAY.—Why so much heat? Are you not flying in the face of your own doctrine?

GEORGE DIXON sends 10s. for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. "A happy conception indeed," he says.

W. H. HARRAP.—Wheeler subscription acknowledged in this week's list. Thanks. Certificate of Membership (10s. received) in the Secular Society, Limited, in due course.

T. CLARK.—Shall appear.

GEORGE WALKER (Manchester).—We cannot answer such questions through the post. The law compelling Church attendance was passed in the reign of Elizabeth. It has never been repealed, but it would doubtless be treated as obsolete.

FRANCIS NEALE writes: "I shall be most delighted to become a member of the Secular Society, Limited. Enclosed is my 10s. Nothing so businesslike or so hopeful has ever been proposed in connection with Secular organisation during my twenty-five years' experience of the party. There can be no doubt as to the legality of the scheme. Several gentlemen who, professionally, are 'learned in the law' have not only assured me of its technical safety, but, being with us anti-theologically, are proposing to offer themselves for membership. The statement of objects and aims in the *Freethinker* for June 19 is one that I should like to see reproduced from week to week. In clear and succinct terms it presents all that we immediately desire and can successfully work for."

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for your weekly batch of useful cuttings.

H. J. ROWDEN.—Let him lie.

C. STOCKER (Liverpool).—Thanks for the cutting. Mr. Foote has already entertained your suggestion that his articles on the Peculiar People should be reprinted in pamphlet form. It shall be done as soon as possible. A few alterations and additions will be necessary. Glad to hear that Liverpool opinion about "the new scheme" is "favorable."

C. H. SMEAD.—We agree with you as to the importance of maintaining the Secular station in Victoria Park. We fancy you are mistaken, however, in supposing that Mr. Cohen will leave London at the end of July. He stays in London, we believe, at least until the end of August.

R. CHAPMAN.—Your note to hand. Shall be glad to receive a detailed answer as soon as possible.

EX-CHRISTIAN.—Kindly send us your name and address, not for publication, unless you desire it, but as a guarantee of good faith.

F. W. SWAIN.—Please send the addresses, as well as the names, of the five Derby friends who mean to join the Secular Society, Limited. The entrance fee should accompany the applications, as the payment is a condition of legal membership. Glad to hear that you expect to get further adhesions, and that the Derby friends "trust such a grand scheme will meet with every success."

JAMES NEATE.—Thanks. See acknowledgment in the list.

J. PARTRIDGE (Birmingham),—Received. Pleased you are joining the Secular Society, Limited. Every Secularist with 10s. to spare should do the same.

A. B. MOSS.—Received. Glad to hear you had a large audience at Limehouse.

MARTIN WEATHERBURN, a Northumberland stalwart, sending 10s. for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, writes: "I have examined the Secular Charter, and like its looks. Whether it is a success or not—and I think it cannot but succeed—you deserve the party's very best thanks for undertaking and completing, with so much careful and painstaking work, a machine so well calculated to do the work and guard the rights of the Secular party."

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.

J. BARRY.—Your application for membership, with ten shillings, duly received. Certificate will be forwarded in due course, when the form is settled by the Board and printed.

W. COX.—See "Sugar Plums." It is encouraging to know that the Liverpool friends are "pleased with the Secular Charter," and that "applications will be forwarded in the course of a week or two."

LOUIS ORGAN.—Your letter should do good. Thanks for the reference. We are glad to hear that the Socialists have won in their struggle for the right of free meeting at Oxford; also to learn that you think our "Acid Drops" are "past grand."

W. LAMB.—Thanks for your application, with ten shillings, for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. May your good wishes for the success of the scheme be realised!

COTTONOPOLIS.—Yes, we knew the late Dr. Pankhurst personally. We made his acquaintance in the early seventies, when he was an active member of the Manchester Republican Club in company with the late Dr. Guest. Dr. Pankhurst was a Freethinker, though he never mustered courage enough to avow it publicly. He was a man of very considerable ability, and great fluency of speech, but he did not carry sufficient ballast, and he never "arrived," as the French say. In private he was genial and amiable.

A. T. BARNARD.—Will see for next issue. There are no *shares* in the Secular Society, Limited. Members pay ten shillings the first year, and five shillings afterwards. That constitutes full membership, with power to elect the Directors and to vote on all business at the General Meetings, either in person or by proxy. It is expected that the Society will derive most of its resources from donations and bequests. Copy of Memorandum and Articles of Association sent.

A. G. LEVETT.—Your indignation is natural, but hunting skunks is a stinking game, and there's no bag at the finish.

ANONYMOUS idiots are warned that their pious messages go into the waste-basket unread. We always look for the name and address first.

E. G. JAMES.—Thanks.

A. H. KISBER tenders us his "earnest congratulations" on the completion of the Secular Charter, on which "so much ingenuity and thought has been expended." He thinks it "now remains for all good Secularists throughout the country to demonstrate their loyalty to the cause in a practical manner." Therefore, for his own part, though by no means a rich man, he offers to give a sum of £10 on condition that four other London Secularists contribute each a like amount. "This," he says, "will realise the first £50, and thus form a fair nucleus, and may induce future contributions." Will the other four Secularists accept this handsome challenge immediately? We hope to hear from them during the next week.

R. JOHNSON applies for membership (with 10s.) in the Secular Society, Limited, and writes: "I put implicit faith in you to carry the matter through if you are helped by the whole party, as you should be. Those who are always so ready to carp and hinder should step aside *now*, and let those lead who are capable and willing. You want all the help you can get, and you ought to have it."

A. G. SCOPES.—Much pleased that you are joining the Incorporated Society. Certificate in due course.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges a parcel of clothing from Miss Embleton.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—T. Hibbott, 5s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Open Court—Freidenker—Stage—Lucifer—Der Arme Teufel—Torch of Reason—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Independent Pulpit—Discontent—Crescent—Progressive Thinker—Isle of Man Times—Daily Argus—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Secular Thought—Oxford Times—Liberator—Record—Truth-seeker—New Century—Chard News.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectured on Sunday evening at the Athenæum Hall on "Purgatory." There was a very good audience considering the summer weather, and the lecture provoked much laughter and applause. Mr. Thurlow, who acted as chairman, spoke in high praise of the new Secular Incorporation, for which he said that "the President" deserved the warmest thanks of every Freethinker.

Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening. His subject will be "The Holy Ghost." An airy topic for a summer talk.

A hundred members are wanted at once—more if possible—for the Secular Society, Limited. This is a matter to which every real Freethinker should give his serious attention. The President of the National Secular Society has taken great pains to furnish the Freethought party with an instrument by which it can do its work, and hold its funds, with legal security. The first General Meeting of Members will be held in September. Meanwhile it is highly desirable that a good number of members should be enrolled. Written applications for membership should be sent (for the present) direct to Mr. Foote, at 28 Stonecutter-street, accompanied by a remittance for 10s., the entrance fee for the first year.

Mr. Foote intends to organise some more Sunday Freethought Demonstrations in London, in which he will be assisted by Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. C. Cohen, and perhaps other speakers. Demonstrations of this kind were organised

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two years ago, and were very successful. They will probably take place on Sunday afternoons. Due announcements will be made in our columns. Hyde Park, Regent's Park, Clerkenwell Green, Victoria Park, Finsbury Park, and Peckham Rye are amongst the places it is intended to visit. Mr. Wilson, who gave ready assistance before, has kindly offered to supply the brake and horses for these new Demonstrations.

The *Boston Investigator* for July 2 begins the publication of a Symposium on the question, "What would you substitute for the Bible as a Moral Guide?" Colonel Ingersoll's contribution comes first, and we are reproducing it in the *Freethinker*. We observe that our Boston contemporary has a poor idea of the men of God who are "helping" the United States army in the field. "The government," it says, "has expended one million dollars for army mules. This does not include the expenditure for army chaplains."

According to the *Investigator*, "George Jacob Holyoake, of England, says that he was the first person to use the word 'jingo,' which he did on March 13, 1876, in a letter to the London *Daily News*." This isn't a point of much importance. Inventing "jingo" is not like inventing the steam engine, the railway locomotive, or the electric telegraph. Still, as a matter of fact, the word "jingo" was in use before Mr. Holyoake was born. During the anti-Russian fever, under "Dizzy's" government, the word was popularised by the "Great Macdermott," who used to sing in the music-halls—

We don't want to fight, but by Jingo if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men, and got the money too.

Somebody called the war-fevered gentlemen "Jingoes" in consequence of this popular song, but who that somebody was—that is to say, the *first* somebody—is hard to decide and scarcely worth deciding. Very often, in these cases, a ready-witted obscurity starts the phrase, and some journalist or public speaker catches it up and gets a cheap reputation for originality. Mr. Holyoake has other laurels to show, and need not worry himself about the authorship of "jingo."

Members and friends of the Liverpool Branch, to the number of about sixty, had a most enjoyable outing to Burton Woods on Sunday. After a drive through a most delightful part of Cheshire, the party arrived at their destination in a temper to appreciate the repast that was awaiting them. This being over, the Secular pilgrims walked through the beautiful woods, and, as the weather was very fine, the hour of departure struck with a note of sadness. It was a red-letter day.

The South Shields friends' picnic in Holywell Dene was a marked success in every way. The weather was on its very best behavior, and the attendance a record. The veteran Thomas Thompson presided over a brief meeting. Captain W. B. Duncan formally presented to our old friend, John Sanderson, a handsome silver watch as a token of regard from his Tyneside friends. The secretary added some remarks from the Freethought position. Mr. White was certainly overworked finding accommodatien for so many Sunday pleasure-seekers, but, ably assisted by Mrs. White, contributed largely to the comfort and enjoyment of both members and visitors throughout the day.—R. C.

*Secular Thought* (Toronto) reproduces "Ess Jay Bee's" verses on "Where was God Almighty?" from the *Freethinker*. We are pleased to see that the Toronto Secular Society is holding its own, and that editor Ellis's Sustentation Fund is fairly well supported. It would be a great loss to Canadian Secularism if his paper were allowed to fail.

Joseph Symes's *Liberator* for June 4 contains several references to the *Freethinker*. The editor notes that we have reproduced one of his articles. Yes, and no doubt our readers much enjoyed it.

Our gallant contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*, has re-engaged Mr. Watson Heston, at a reduced salary, to furnish it with weekly illustrations. The new series will commence during the present month.

One of our welcome exchanges is the *People's Newspaper*, published at Rockhampton, Queensland, and edited, we believe, by Mr. Wallace Nelson, formerly of Sheffield, who will be still remembered by a good many English Freethinkers. The latest issue of this paper to hand contains a number of notes on the death of Gladstone. The following will interest our readers:—

"GLADSTONE AND BRADLAUGH.

"It appears to me, however, that Gladstone was never really tested in the furnace of sorrow and pain. He married happily. His children all turned out well. No dark shadow crossed his life. He had honor, wealth, fame, power, affection, health. All the good things of life were his in largest measure. I could never feel towards Gladstone as I feel towards poor Charles Bradlaugh. Both, I am convinced, were great men. But, taking all the circumstances into account, Charles Bradlaugh was the greatest man of the two. Gladstone had the advantage of a university career; Bradlaugh was self-taught. Gladstone had wealthy and influential parents; Bradlaugh's parents were poor and had no influence whatever. Gladstone held popular opinions; Bradlaugh was an arch-heretic. Gladstone's life was one splendid triumph; Bradlaugh's life was one great struggle. Bradlaugh could have done all Gladstone did, but I question whether Gladstone could have struggled as Bradlaugh struggled. Still, both men were great, and both were pure, and it is pleasing to know that they had for each other the profoundest and sincerest esteem. After life's fitful fever may they sleep well. The influence of their splendid lives will remain as a stimulus and an inspiration to generations unborn."

The *Torch of Reason*, published at Silverton, Oregon, is one of our interesting exchanges. It seems more or less the organ of the Secular Church that has been organised out West—which, we understand, is no longer wild and woolly. The June 30 number of this weekly journal opens with a reprint of Mr. W. P. Ball's "An Atheist's Thoughts." This excellent poem nicely fills the front page, and the printer has surrounded it with a pretty border. We note that the Oregon State Secular Union has been holding its Tenth Annual Conference at Wagner.

Another of our welcome exchanges is the *Independent Pulpit*, published monthly at Waco, Texas, and edited by Mr. J. D. Shaw. It always contains some good reading but it reaches us very irregularly. We have just received the May number, which looks a trifle antique. Sometimes we have reproduced an article from our Texas contemporary, and we note that it returns the compliment by reprinting Mr. Foote's articles on "The Doom of Christian Spain."

This number of the *Independent Pulpit* has "May" plain enough on the front, but it seems a mistake, for there is an editorial reference to the death of J. M. Wheeler. Editor Shaw says: "Many of his articles have been copied in these columns, and I cannot suppress a feeling of the deepest sadness at the thought of his sudden removal. I had come to regard him as one of our ablest and most accurate thinkers."

At the end of Editor Shaw's magazine we see the report of his "Emergency Fund," which is "a guarantee to the publisher against any losses and for more effectually extending the circulation." Freethought journals are more numerous in America than they are over here, but they appear to be just as difficult to maintain. We are glad to see that Editor Shaw is fairly well supported.

The Free Press Defence Committee held a public meeting at South-place Institute on Tuesday evening to protest against the prosecution of Mr. George Bedborough for selling a scientific book by Dr. Havelock Ellis. Mr. G. W. Foote, who took the chair, explained that he only did so because no one else was ready. An influential chairman of neutral color would have been preferable. Letters of regret at inability to attend were read from Mr. G. B. Shaw, Mr. J. M. Robertson, Mrs. Mona Caird, and many others. The list of speakers included Mr. William Platt, Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. Bazett, Mr. Peddie, Mr. Turner, and Mrs. Thornton Smith. The resolution proposed was carried unanimously.

## WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

COLLECTED at Mr. Cohen's lecture in Victoria Park (per James Neate), £1 2s.; T. Yapp, 1s.; B. A Millechamp, 1s.; S. Barnett, 1s.; Liverpool Branch, £2 10s.; T. Moody, 2s. 6d.; J. D. H. and G. G., 10s.; W. and E. O., 2s. 6d.; W. H. Harrap, 10s.; T. Bradshaw, 2s. 6d.

## A Wicked Editor.

One of our exchanges tells this: An editor who died of starvation was being escorted to heaven by an angel who had been sent for that purpose.

"May I look at the other place before I ascend to eternal happiness?" asked the editor.

"Easy."

So they went below, and skirmished around, taking in the sights. The angel lost track of the editor, and went around Hades to hunt him up. He found him by a big furnace fanning himself and gazing with rapture upon a lot of people in the fire. There was a sign on the furnace which read, "Delinquent Subscribers."

"You go on," said the editor; "I am not coming. This is heaven enough for me."

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## INSTEAD OF THE BIBLE.

[This is Colonel Ingersoll's contribution to a Symposium in the *Boston Investigator* on the question, "What would you substitute for the Bible as a Moral Guide?"]

YOU ask me what I would "substitute for the Bible as a moral guide."

I know that many people regard the Bible as the only moral guide, and believe that in that book only can be found the true and perfect standard of morality.

There are many good precepts, many wise sayings, and many good regulations and laws in the Bible, and these are mingled with bad precepts, with foolish sayings, with absurd rules and cruel laws.

But we must remember that the Bible is a collection of many books written centuries apart, and that it in part represents the growth and tells in part the history of a people. We must also remember that the writers treat of many subjects. Many of these writers have nothing to say about right or wrong, about vice or virtue.

The book of Genesis has nothing about morality. There is not a line in it calculated to shed light on the path of conduct. No one can call that book a moral guide. It is made up of myth and miracle, of tradition and legend.

In Exodus we have an account of the manner in which Jehovah delivered the Jews from Egyptian bondage.

We now know that the Jews were never enslaved by the Egyptians; that the entire story is a fiction. We know this, because there is not found in Hebrew a word of Egyptian origin, and there is not found in the language of the Egyptians a word of Hebrew origin. This being so, we know that the Hebrews and Egyptians could not have lived together for hundreds of years.

Certainly Exodus was not written to teach morality. In that book you cannot find one word against human slavery. As a matter of fact, Jehovah was a believer in that institution.

The killing of cattle with disease and hail, the murder of the first-born, so that in every house was death, because the King refused to let the Hebrews go, certainly was not moral; it was fiendish. The writer of that book regarded all the people of Egypt, their children, their flocks and herds, as the property of Pharaoh, and these people and these cattle were killed, not because they had done anything wrong, but simply for the purpose of punishing the king. Is it possible to get any morality out of this history?

All the laws found in Exodus, including the Ten Commandments, so far as they are really good and sensible, were at that time in force amongst all the peoples of the world.

Murder is, and always was, a crime, and always will be as long as a majority of people object to being murdered.

Industry always has been, and always will be, the enemy of larceny.

The nature of man is such that he admires the teller of truth and despises the liar. Among all tribes, among all people, truth-telling has been considered a virtue and false swearing or false speaking a vice.

The love of parents for children is natural, and this love is found among all the animals that live. So the love of children for parents is natural, and was not, and cannot be, created by law. Love does not spring from a sense of duty, nor does it bow in obedience to commands.

So men and women are not virtuous because of anything in books or creeds.

All the Ten Commandments that are good were old, were the result of experience. The Commandments that were original with Jehovah were foolish.

The worship of "any other god" could not have been worse than the worship of Jehovah, and nothing could have been more absurd than the sacredness of the Sabbath.

If Commandments had been given against slavery and polygamy, against wars of invasion and extermination, against religious persecution in all its forms, so that the world could be free, so that the brain might be developed and the heart civilised, then we might, with propriety, call such Commandments a moral guide.

Before we can truthfully say that the Ten Commandments constitute a moral guide, we must add and subtract. We must throw away some, and write others in their places.

The Commandments that have a known application here in this world, and treat of human obligations, are good; the others have no basis in fact or experience.

Many of the regulations found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are good. Many are absurd and cruel.

The entire ceremonial of worship is insane.

Most of the punishments for violations of laws are unphilosophic and brutal.....The fact is, that the Pentateuch upholds nearly all crimes, and to call it a moral guide is as absurd as to say that it is merciful or true.

Nothing of a moral nature can be found in Joshua or Judges. These books are filled with crimes, with massacres, and murders. They are about the same as the real history of the Apache Indians.

The story of Ruth is not particularly moral.

In first and second Samuel there is not one word calculated to develop the brain or conscience.

Jehovah murdered seventy thousand Jews because David took a census of the people. David, according to the account, was the guilty one, but only the innocent were killed.

In first and second Kings can be found nothing of ethical value. All the kings who refused to obey the priests were denounced, and all the crowned wretches who assisted the priests were declared to be the favorites of Jehovah. In these books there cannot be found one word in favor of liberty.

There are some good Psalms, and there are some that are infamous. Most of these Psalms are selfish. Many of them are passionate appeals for revenge.

The story of Job shocks the heart of every good man. In this book there is some poetry, some pathos, and some philosophy; but the story of this drama called Job is heartless to the last degree. The children of Job are murdered to settle a little wager between God and the Devil. Afterwards, Job having remained firm, other children are given in the place of the murdered ones. Nothing, however, is done for the children who were murdered.

The book of Esther is utterly absurd, and the only redeeming feature in the book is that the name of Jehovah is not mentioned.

I like the Song of Solomon because it tells of human love, and that is something I can understand. That book, in my judgment, is worth all the ones that go before it, and is a far better moral guide.

There are some wise and merciful Proverbs. Some are selfish, and some are flat and commonplace.

I like the book of Ecclesiastes because there you find some sense, some poetry, and some philosophy. Take away the interpolations, and it is a good book.

Of course, there is nothing in Nehemiah or Ezra to make men better, nothing in Jeremiah or Lamentations calculated to lessen vice, and only a few passages in Isaiah that can be used in a good cause.

In Ezekiel and Daniel we find only ravings of the insane.

In some of the minor prophets there is now and then a good verse, now and then an elevated thought.

You can, by selecting passages from different books, make a very good creed, and by selecting passages from different books you can make a very bad creed.

The trouble is that the spirit of the Old Testament, its disposition, its temperament, is bad, selfish, and cruel. The most fiendish things are commanded, commended, and applauded.

The stories that are told of Joseph, of Elisha, of Daniel and Gideon, and of many others, are hideous, hellish.

On the whole, the Old Testament cannot be considered a moral guide.

Jehovah was not a moral God. He had all the vices, and he lacked all the virtues. He generally carried out his threats, but he never faithfully kept a promise.

At the same time, we must remember that the Old Testament is a natural production, that it was written by savages who were slowly crawling towards the light. We must give them credit for the noble things they said, and we must be charitable enough to excuse their faults, and even their crimes.

I know that many Christians regard the Old Testament as the foundation and the New as the superstructure, and, while many admit that there are faults and mistakes in the Old Testament, they insist that the New is the flower and perfect fruit.

I admit that there are many good things in the New

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Testament, and if we take from that book the dogmas of eternal pain, of infinite revenge, of the atonement, of human sacrifice, of the necessity of shedding blood; if we throw away the doctrine of non-resistance, of loving enemies, the idea that prosperity is the result of wickedness, that poverty is a preparation for Paradise; if we throw all these away and take the good, sensible passages, applicable to conduct, then we can make a fairly good moral guide—narrow, but moral.

Of course many important things would be left out. You would have nothing about human rights, nothing in favor of the family, nothing for education, nothing for investigation, for thought and reason; but still you would have a fairly good moral guide.

On the other hand, if you would take the foolish passages, the extreme ones, you could make a creed that would satisfy an insane asylum.

If you take the cruel passages, the verses that inculcate eternal hatred, verses that writhe and hiss like serpents, you can make a creed that would shock the heart of a hyena.

It may be that no book contains better passages than the New Testament; but certainly no book contains worse.

Below the blossom of love you find the thorn of hatred, on the lips that kiss you find the poison of the cobra.

The Bible is not a moral guide.

Any man who follows faithfully all its teachings is an enemy of society, and will probably end his days in a prison or an asylum.

What is morality?

In this world we need certain things. We have many wants. We are exposed to many dangers. We need food, fuel, raiment, and shelter; and besides these wants there is what may be called the hunger of the mind.

We are conditioned beings, and our happiness depends upon conditions. There are certain things that diminish, certain things that increase, well-being. There are certain things that destroy, and there are others that preserve.

Happiness, including its highest forms, is, after all, the only good, and everything the result of which is to produce or secure happiness is good—that is to say, moral. Everything that destroys or diminishes well-being is bad—that is to say, immoral. In other words, all that is good is moral, and all that is bad is immoral.

What, then, is, or can be called, a moral guide? The shortest possible answer is one word—Intelligence.

We want the experience of mankind, the true history of the race. We want the history of intellectual development, of the growth of the ethical, of the idea of justice, of conscience, of charity, of self-denial. We want to know the paths and roads that have been travelled by the human mind.

These facts in general, these histories in outline, the results reached, the conclusions formed, the principles evolved, taken together, would form the best conceivable moral guide.

We cannot depend on what are called "inspired books," or the religions of the world. These religions are based on the supernatural, and according to them we are under obligation to worship and obey some supernatural being or beings. All these religions are inconsistent with intellectual liberty. They are the enemies of thought, of investigation, of mental honesty. They destroy the manliness of man. They promise eternal rewards for belief, for credulity, for what they call faith.

This is not only absurd, but it is immoral.

These religions teach the slave virtues. They make inanimate things holy, and falsehoods sacred. They create artificial crimes. To eat meat on Friday, to enjoy yourself on Sunday, to eat on fast-days, to be happy in Lent, to dispute a priest, to ask for evidence, to deny a creed, to express your sincere thought—all these acts are sins, crimes against some god. To give your honest opinion about Jehovah, Mohammed, or Christ is far worse than to maliciously slander your neighbor. To question or doubt miracles is far worse than to deny known facts. Only the obedient, the credulous, the cringers, the kneelers, the meek, the unquestioning, the true believers, are regarded as moral, as virtuous. It is not enough to be honest, generous, and useful; not enough to be governed by evidence, by facts. In addition to this you must believe. These things are the foes of morality. They subvert all natural conceptions of virtue.

All "inspired books," teaching that what the supernatural commands is right, and right because commanded, and that what the supernatural prohibits is wrong, and wrong because prohibited, are absurdly unphilosophic.

And all "inspired books," teaching that only those who obey the commands of the supernatural are, or can be, truly virtuous, and that unquestioning faith will be rewarded with eternal joy, are grossly immoral.

Again I say: Intelligence is the only moral guide.

## THE LOSS OF THE "BOURGOGNE."

"A terrible disaster occurred at five o'clock on Monday morning (July 4), when the steamship 'La Bourgogne' collided with an English sailing vessel, the 'Cromartyshire,' in a heavy fog, and sank almost immediately. There were over seven hundred on board, and only about two hundred, including thirty (?) of the crew, were saved.....*Only one woman was rescued*.....The scenes which occurred on board were of the most terrible description. The men fought for places in the boats, forcing the women and children back, and trampling upon them.....Many of those who endeavored to climb on to the boats and rafts were forced back by fiends with knives and other weapons. The crew behaved particularly in a brutal and cowardly fashion."—*Daily Paper.*

I WILL tell you a story of Providence—seven hundred lives in a ship;
Crash! and another was into them, and they were in death's grip.
Of course, 'twas by merciful Providence that the other one didn't sink too;
But listen, I'll tell you what Providence in the whole case had to do.

Seven hundred lives in a vessel, women, and children, and men;
Two hundred were women and children, needing help the most—what then?
Confusion, curses, and blows—and worse—(O hapless lives!)
Men changed to cowards and fiends, with the murderous use of knives!

The weak in the hands of demons are helpless, their prayerful cry
Dies only with their last breath, as these were surely doomed to die;
A mother will strive for her darlings, as only a mother can,
But what is a poor weak woman in the merciless power of man?

Seven hundred lives on a sinking ship! but dire is the tale to tell;
The whole world knows the story; some think God knew, as well,
When the whelming wave took the weak and brave, while the worst of the cowardly crew,
With many of those who struck the blows, were saved—can such be true?

Five hundred *went* with the sinking ship! and a woman—aye, only one
Of two hundred women and children, will again behold the sun;
"God's in his heaven; all's right with the world"; but I think a man would have striven
To have saved the brave and the weak and small, with the choice of a God in heaven.

J. A. B.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### DEISTICAL PLATITUDE VAMPING AND "PROVIDENCE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Although preternatural phantasm hatchers are rampant just now, I fear the poverty of the type-case shall bid fair to deprive their reputations of immortality; but as there may be some susceptible individuals occupying a transitional position between Atheism and Theism, and who may therefore incline to give credence to such philosophism, I trust you will extend your courtesy to admit this criticism of your correspondent, Mr. C. Edgley's communication, to your columns.

Dealing generally with the whole communication, I incline to think that the author may be felicitated (or reprehended) on the facility with which he has there reduced fiction-spinning to a definite system. He has dealt first with "Jehovah," shorn him of his "attributes," exhibited him *per se*, and industriously set to work and put them on again. Dealing with Mr. Edgley's comments successively in the order of their occurrence, we have first to face the "attributes-of-God" phantasm. Here your correspondent carefully negates some flimsily-suppositional "attributes" by telling us that "He had neither form nor

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sex," which is an unthoughtful and loose statement, although it can be conceived with Mr. Edgley that even a fetish cannot very well have sex if it have no form. Anyhow, if Mr. Edgley is unable to show that some varieties—"allotropic modifications," if he likes—of his Deity have no form and yet have sex—a demonstration which must require some smart juggling with theological fallacies—it is evident he has needlessly complicated a needlessly intricate conception, by his use of the word "sex." Before we leave the complications—if we can get clear of them at all—I must ask your correspondent, since he has made recurrently a gratuitous use of these formulæ, why he uses the terms "he," "himself," and "Jehovah" with the possessive case terminal attached, in the face of his artlessly-frank dictum, pronounced in the same breath, that "He is like magnetism—a power felt, but not seen."

Of course Atheists in general will laughingly acquiesce in the statement that *such* a deity, "I should say, knows neither love nor hatred." But here we have "Jehovah" shorn of all possible attributes, except one, common to energy in every form, and which is obvious—to physicists, at any rate—and raised to the status of an abstract mechanical power, made congruent with magnetic force, and all sequential considerations disregarded with most summary indifference. But, unfortunately, and I say it with all regret, Mr. Edgley has not seen fit to stop here, but goes on in palpable disobedience to the injunction of the proverb, "*Ne sutor supra crepidam*," and accordingly continues: "He thinks and controls." Epitomising, we arrive, now, at the refreshingly-naïve proposition: "Jehovah .....has neither form nor sex, but is like magnetism.....*He thinks* and controls" (italics mine). Well, sir, I must confess this is too deep for me. I, for instance, always thought that "Mind," a function of which is thinking, invariably goes "hand-in-hand" with "Matter"—as an attribute, one might say, of certain "organised" forms of matter in the massive form—an essential conception in psychological accordance with the Science of Mind.

Reasoning necessarily from analogy, then, psychology, and consequently scientific Agnosticism, I incline to think must say: "Thinking without 'form' is conceptibly impossible." Consequently, our summarised quotation from Mr. Edgley is absurd. Certainly the conception embodied in it is unrepresented and unnecessary, and that seals its fate as a philosophical hypothesis, or even speculation. The whole extent of these communications of Mr. Edgley is so palpably choke full of fallacies and preposterous premises—psychologically so, philosophically so, and (in the light of Mr. Edgley's last paragraph, for instance) scientifically so, that it is almost impossible, in decent space, to deal adequately with his comments. If the fable of an ancient fictionist, relative to the surreptitious abstraction by "the Lord God" of a rib from an individual in a very deep sleep, ran instead: "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took some of his *brains*," and closed up a Torcellian vacuum "instead thereof," one might account for the ever-present, ever-varying mass of theological phantasmagoria, which suggests a slight modification of the lines of W. S. Gilbert:—

> A thing of shreds and patches,
> Of legends, tales, and snatches;

and for the cognate deistical or pan-deistical emanations of such quasi-theologians as (to take a contemporaneous example) your correspondent. As it is, there is nothing for it but to wade warily forward. "I am convinced," says your correspondent, "that matter has always existed." So was Aristotle; now-a-days the inference is axiomatic (except among some ignorant superstitionists; but these, of course, are negligible). But he proceeds, still in disobedience to our Latin injunction, "and probably the planets also." The stars, presumably, are too insignificant when compared with the great planets, and visually greater moon, to merit consideration (!). "Jehovah did not create matter, but he has been existent with it for all time." The off-hand assertiveness of this dictum is enough to suggest to a "simple-minded orthodox" theologian a possibility of the previous occurrence of an audience between "Jehovah" and Mr. Edgley on this question. It will appear a bold statement to most, and, to the Atheist, such ignorance, such despairably absolute ignorance of all scientific method, of all mode of logical inference, of all criteria of representative hypothesis, and consequently of all philosophical conception, must appear commensurable only to the efficiency of the trammels of philosophism and theurgical superstition. Your readers will probably be aware that storms do not purify "probably also the sea." These have, of course, rather the converse effect (if any) on the *sea*. During wind-storms, for instance (irrespective of direction), suspended solid matter will doubtless be mechanically brought in contact with, and be taken up by, the sea water; whereas during heavy rains the effect will be more practical. In this case we shall have any soluble salts, etc., including, of course, all alkalis, and acids wherever exposed to contact—in the atmosphere or on land—dissolved during the rain storm, and ultimately carried to the sea by rivers and streams as (highly diluted) saline and acid solutions. This is, of course how the sea became salt; but any *purifying* effect has ceased thousands of years ago at least. As to the spontaneous heating up of "certain rocks," etc., students, in order to appreciate the "amateurishness" of the idea, must be acquainted with the data and constants, etc., supporting the theories out of which Mr. Edgley thinks he has knocked the bottoms. In reference to another remark of his, I must say scientists write tolerably clearly of their theories, etc., most of which they can by now symbolise by mathematical formulæ, but cannot be expected, when describing advanced hypotheses to "dance to the comprehensions" of the uninitiated and ignorant. With reference to the bad effects of droughts, storms, and diseases being counteracted by good effects—as stated by Mr. Edgley—the fact remains that bad effects are sensibly produced, and, if we admit existence of the controlling, thinking, omnipresent deity of your correspondent, it is right to regard such responsible for resorting to such drastic measures to counteract or control the results of his own handiwork, instead of arranging so that this tinkering with consequences would not be necessary.

Skipping most of Mr. Edgley's communications as irrelevant and speculative, and coming down to the last paragraph of his last letter, we come across an astounding statement—no less, in fact, than that he has, with very simple apparatus evidently, arrived at results in discordance with the second law of motion! But the description is elliptical, and, alas, the results are based on imperfect experiment. If he procures bar magnets of exactly the same strength, and disposes them at exactly equal distances from the iron ball, which must turn about its axis with the *minimum* of friction, he will find on revolving the ball that it will *practically* obey the second law of motion, as given in any text-book on physics, if the magnetic bars be placed in opposite directions, *all* with their north-seeking, or *all* with their south-seeking poles towards the ball. But even if these precautions be not observed, the magnet forces which condition the behavior of the metal sphere must not be confounded with gravitational force; they are easily interpreted by the theory of electro-polar molecules, which also applies to magnetic induction. But all this last is, of course, beside the question, so far as Mr. Edgley is involved.

J. St. J. Higgins.

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## "JUSTICES' JUSTICE."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—While the question of prison treatment is so prominently before the public, I take the opportunity of suggesting the publication of a record of "Justices' Justice," a sort of black-book of the sentences by which the humaner sense of society is from time to time offended. At present what happens in most cases is this. There is an outcry for a time, perhaps a local appeal or remonstrance, which is almost always unsuccessful; then the unhappy "criminal" is overlooked in the rush of other matters, and is cast away, forgotten and unbefriended, for a long term, or perhaps a life of imprisonment. It is thought that, if some permanent record of long sentences could be periodically sent to the press, much good might result from giving this reminder to the public conscience.

Will not some M.P. move for a return of the names and offences of all convicts now sentenced for fifteen years and over? Is there any reason why the public should be entirely in the dark as to the punishment inflicted in its name?

Joseph Collinson.

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I've been looking through the papers,
Ever since the war began;
Not a paragraph is printed
That I do not closely scan.
I have read of Dewey's exploit
There in old Manila Bay;
I have followed Schley and Sampson,
And the rest from day to day;
I have read of every battle
On the sea and on the land,
And I'm bothered—there is something
That I cannot understand.
Not a son has been delivered
From a death-wound since the start,
By his mother's little Bible
That he wears above his heart.

---

## Obituary.

We regret to see in the *Chard and Ilminster News* a report of the death of Mr. John Cuff, of Southchard. Our contemporary says that he was "well known and respected in the locality." At the time of his death he was a member of the Chard School Board. He had filled other public offices. His age was sixty-nine. Mr. Cuff was a decided Freethinker. He was one of our correspondents and a subscriber to various enterprises in the movement

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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, "The Holy Ghost."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): July 16, at 8.30, Bertha Jeffries Dramatic Co. in "Alone: A Mistaken Story."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (20 Edgware-road, near Marble Arch): Tuesday, at 9, Half-yearly general meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 8.15, Stanley Jones.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen; Peckham Rye: 8.15 and 6.30, C. Cohen.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, E. Pack; 7, R. P. Edwards. July 20, at 8, C. Cohen.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Stanley Jones.

FINSBURY PARK (near bandstand): 8.15, H. Snell, "The Priest and the Child."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, A. B. Moss, "A New Bible."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): A. B. Moss—11.30, "The Wandering Jews"; 8.30, "Bible Prophets."

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, A lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Miracles and Prophecy as Tests of Truth."

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. July 19, at 8, C. Cohen.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, E. White, "Miracles."

COUNTRY.

DERBY (Central Hall, Market-place): 7.30, G. Harper, "An Hour with the Poets." Half-yearly meeting.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "The Flower as a Symbol of Life."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Excursion to Wharncliffe Side. Members and friends meet at 2 o'clock corner of Arundel and Norfolk-streets to go by carriages to Mr. Ewing's farm.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Report of Federation Meeting, etc.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London.—July 17, m., Camberwell; a. and e., Peckham Rye; 19, Limehouse; 20, Mile End; 24, m., Wood Green; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 26, Limehouse; 27, Mile End; 31, m., Kingsland; a., Finsbury Park; e., Victoria Park. August 7, m., Camberwell; a. and e., Peckham Rye.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—July 17, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 31, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell.

T. J. THURLOW, 350 Old Ford-road, London, E.—July 24, e., Mile End Waste.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

VOL. XVIII.—No. 30. SUNDAY, JULY 24, 1898. PRICE TWOPENCE.


## THE ZOLA TRAGI-COMEDY.

THE change of Ministry in France has produced no change in the attitude of the authorities towards Zola and the Dreyfus case. Behind the Government is the Army, and the Army is to-day the master of the Republic. It is the one institution which Frenchmen acclaim. "*Vive l'Armée!*" is the accepted shibboleth of patriotism, while "*Vive la République!*" has become almost a cry of sedition. The chiefs of the Army, who have won no victories, give themselves the sublimest airs. To doubt their perfect honor, absolute judgment, and official infallibility has become a crime against the nation. Nor is this all. A military tyranny has been extended over civilians. Owing to the conscription every Frenchman becomes a soldier, and is therefore made liable to be tried by court-martial for any comments he passes upon the Army. M. Reinach has been dealt with in this way for his authorship of newspaper articles, and such a monstrous perversion of constitutional government is enough to alarm every true friend of France and every sincere lover of political liberty.

It was an open secret that the Civil authorities were willing, and almost anxious, to leave Zola alone. His trial had been conducted in a fashion which astonished the civilised world. Moreover, it had been so badly conceived and initiated by the infallible Army chiefs that the Court of Appeal quashed the sentence by declaring the whole trial to have been irregular. Further, it was clearly established that Dreyfus had also been tried and condemned irregularly. There is no longer any doubt—in fact, it is fairly confessed—that incriminating documents were placed in the hands of his military judges and never shown to him or his counsel. To call this a trial at all is an outrage on justice and common-sense. But the Army chiefs care nothing for justice or common-sense. They care only for their own "honor"—that is to say, their own infallibility. Although they blundered so egregiously over Zola's first trial, they still declare it is an insult to say they can possibly be mistaken. Zola, therefore, is indicted again. He must be crushed at any cost. That impudent mouth of his, which insists on telling the truth, must be stopped, even if French freedom is rolled in the gutter and trampled in the mire.

The scenes of the first trial in Paris were so disgraceful that the second trial was arranged to take place at Versailles. Zola appeared on Monday in the Assize Court. He was represented as before by Maître Labori, who raised several legal objections which were all overruled. He then demanded that the case should be heard in full, and that witnesses' mouths should not be closed. His client was not afraid of the consequences if this were agreed to, and he hoped the Court would not follow the example of the Paris Courts, where every question that might elicit a reply adverse to the general staff, or to the Army, was ruled out of order. The decision of the Court, however, was that it would only accept discussion on matters concerning a few words from Zola's letters, picked out by the plaintiffs, who are the officers that were at the Esterhazy court-martial. Maître Labori then applied for the right of appeal before a higher court, and, this being granted, he said that he would now accept judgment by default. Thereupon he packed up his papers, walked out of court with Zola and all his friends, and left the officers and the judge to transact the rest of the business as they pleased. It was a splendid stroke, turning the projected tragedy into a howling farce. Decidedly that Maître Labori has a head on his good pair of shoulders.

Zola's attitude is this. "I will accept the challenge of my enemies," he says, "if I am allowed a fair fight, but I will not enter the arena under fettering conditions. Give me a fair trial, and I will defend myself. Deny me this, and I will not defend myself at all. You shall do as you please, and accept the responsibility in face of the world."

Well, in the absence of the defendant and his counsel, the Public Prosecutor entered upon his task. He delivered the long speech he had prepared for the occasion. It was tedious enough, but one of its points was tremendously amusing. Zola was accused of getting up all this excitement to supply himself with materials and characters for his next romance! Even his enemies in court could not help laughing at this brilliant absurdity.

After the Public Prosecutor came the Judge, who sentenced Zola to one year's imprisonment and a fine of three thousand francs, besides the costs of judgment. But the appeal must be heard before this sentence takes effect, and it cannot be heard before October. Meanwhile the "insulter of the Army" is off for a holiday, like a sensible man, and the Paris papers are recording his "flight." Duels are being fought right and left, the atmosphere of Paris is once more electric, and nobody knows how soon a storm may break forth.

Zola is fighting this battle magnificently. It is an inspiration to see one man making such a stand against the madness of a nation. We hope he will never have to go to prison, but if he does he will doubtless bear it with fortitude and dignity. It will not be the first time in history that the criminals have locked up an honest man For our part, we derive an extra pleasure from the reflection that Zola is a Freethinker. He is mortally hated by the Church as well as by every corrupt circle in France. On the other hand, he is supported by many men of light and leading in France, and indirectly by a host of such men throughout the whole of Europe. It is all very well to talk about Zola's love of notoriety—as though that were an adequate motive for his striking action! Zola was not an obscurity, but a foremost French writer. No, he is not actuated by a love of notoriety, but by a love of justice, fair play, truth, and freedom, upon which France has for the moment (let us hope *only* for the moment) turned her back.

G. W. FOOTE.



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## MOSES AND THE PROPHETS.

In our article last week we dealt with the views of the editor of the *New Age* upon the function of imagination as a factor in the development of Christianity. We now propose to notice his claims upon behalf of Moses and the prophets. It is to be regretted that professed Christians, who allege that they have thrown aside the extravagances of orthodoxy, should indulge in such exaggerated demands as the editor does in the following words. He says: "We believe it possible to govern in accordance with the principles laid down by Moses and the prophets, and by Jesus and his Apostles.....All that is great, either in kingship, or leadership, or citizenship, has owed its greatness to its being in harmony with these eternal truths, to which the best expression has been given in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. All true politics, like all true art, must have a spiritual, not a materialistic, basis." Here we have the utterances of the enthusiastic theologian, not the calm statement of the discriminating reasoner. That *some* of the teachings ascribed to Moses and Christ are commendable, and that at the time in which they were written they were possibly useful, we admit; but to assert that to-day society could be wisely governed by the general principles propounded by either is simply a theological fiction. Our best laws, our most humane customs, and our highest ethical code are based upon principles the very opposite to those found in the Old and New Testaments.

Let us here submit a few questions bearing upon the editor's allegations, to which we respectfully invite his attention. Did not Moses teach absolute trust in the God of the Jews; the duty of punishing, even unto death, those who followed other gods; the most inhuman treatment of women; a horrid, cruel, and demoralising mode of warfare; the practice of revenge, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"; the revolting system of slavery, accompanied with the worst kind of torture and brutal punishment; and, finally, that it was permissible to sacrifice the honor of virgins to the passions of men? Would it be right or possible to govern any civilised country upon such principles as these? Could the "greatness" of the kingship of David, Saul, or Jehu, be emulated to-day even in "Christian England"? Where is the "spiritual basis" in this country of "true politics"? It would be interesting to read the editor's reply to these questions. It is really saddening to see how men of more than ordinary intelligence prostrate their ability in the vain endeavor to harmonise the Bible with modern requirements, which cannot be done, for the teachings of the Old Testament are not "up to date." The book, of course, has its value in its proper place, but that place is not in the governing powers of the nineteenth century.

As to Jesus and his Apostles. Will the editor mention one progressive democratic government whose legislation is regulated by the principles of the New Testament? We know of none, and, in our opinion, not one exists except in the imagination of certain professed Christians. The late Archbishop Magee was quite right when he stated, in his address at the Diocesan Conference at Leicester, in October, 1889, that the State does not, and *could not*, exist on Christian principles. The belief that Jesus ever intended to improve the government of this world by secular means is utterly groundless. His negligence in this particular cannot be explained away by saying that society was not ripe for reform, and that Jesus lacked the power to revolutionise the institutions of his time. There may be some truth in the latter allegation, for the power of Christ for all practical work seems to have been very limited indeed. But he did not attempt any political reform, as other men in all ages have done; he did not make honest endeavors to inaugurate improvements which, under happier circumstances, might have been carried out. There is no evidence that Christ ever concerned himself with such reforms as civil and religious liberty, the freedom of the slaves, the equality of human rights, the emancipation of women, the spread of science and of education, the proper use of the land, and the fostering of the fundamental elements of human progress. So little did Christ understand the philosophy of secular reform that when he condemned covetousness (which was very laudable upon his part) it was because he thought it interfered with the preparation for inhabiting "mansions in the skies," rather than in consequence of its effects upon homes on earth. He entirely overlooked the agencies that promote human comfort. The means that have been employed to produce and to advance civilisation received from him no matured consideration. If every word attributed to him had been left unuttered, there is no reason to believe that one feature of modern progress would be missing to-day. Let anyone carefully read, with an unbiassed mind, the four Gospels, and then ask himself the questions:—What philosophic truth did Jesus propound? What scientific fact did he explain? What social problem did he solve? What political scheme did he unfold? Until these questions are satisfactorily answered we are compelled to regard the oft-repeated boast about Jesus being a secular reformer as mere "sound and fury, signifying nothing."

We will now deal more fully with the editor's bold statement, that "it is possible to govern in accordance with the principles laid down by Moses." We have already referred to the leading principles which governed the conduct of Moses. They were the very reverse of those which the English race would accept to-day. De Beauvoir Priaulx, in his *Question Mosaica*, estimates the Jewish leader as a counsellor, leader, and legislator thus: "Invested with this high authority, he announced to the Jews their future religion, and announced it to them as a State religion, and as framed for a particular State, and that State only. He gave this religion, moreover, a creed so narrow and negative—he limited it to objects so purely temporal, he crowded it with observances so entirely ceremonial or national—that we find it difficult to determine whether Moses merely established this religion in order that by a community of worship he might induce in the tribe-divided Israelites that community of sentiment which would constitute them a nation; or whether he only roused them to a sense of their national dignity, in the hope that they might then more faithfully perform the duties of priests and servants of Jehovah. In other words, we hesitate to decide whether in the mind of Moses the State was subservient to the purposes of religion, or religion to the purposes of State" (p. 420).

The character of Moses appears to us to have been cruel, crafty, and sanctimonious. He commenced his career by committing a cowardly murder, and his life was characterised by deceit and stained by the wholesale shedding of human blood. Let any one read Exodus xxxii. and Numbers xvi., and he will find upon the authority of "God's word" that Moses was guilty of the most despicable and heartless crimes of which it is possible to conceive. Here we have recorded against God's Prime Minister instances of hypocrisy, anger, and of an utter disregard for human life, which brand him as remorseless and brutal. No man actuated by principles worthy of emulation could possibly have acted as he did. We are told that he was "meek above all men," but where his meekness came in can only be visible to Christian imagination. Surely it was not in his conduct as narrated in Numbers xxxi., where we are told how the conquered Midianites were treated. The children of Israel "slew every male," burnt the towns and camps, and "took captive the women of Midian and their little ones," and took for a prey all their cattle and all their flocks. When Moses learned this, he "was wroth with the officers" for sparing the women, and said unto them, "Have you saved all the women alive?" He then commanded in the name of the Lord: "Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman" who has known man; but all the girls and marriageable young women "keep alive for yourselves." It is said "there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." Let us hope for the sake of humanity that this is true.

But it is contended that the Ten Commandments contain the highest moral code that the human race possesses. This is not true, and, if it were, they did not originate with Moses or any other Bible writer. There is no doubt that they were copies of those related of Bacchus and Zoroaster. Max Müller says "what applies to the religion of Moses applies to that of Zoroaster." From a practical standpoint the Ten Commandments of Buddha are much superior to those of the Bible. There are two versions of the Decalogue given in the Old Testament, varying in certain not unimportant particulars. It is divided into two parts—that which relates to man's duty to God, and that which relates to the mutual duties of man to man. The defects of the Decalogue are threefold. First, much more is said about our behavior to the Jewish God than with reference

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to our conduct to our fellow man; secondly, there is too much negation, saying, "Thou shalt not," instead of informing us what to do, and how to do it; and, thirdly, the best reasons for acting rightly are not given. For instance, the advice that we should not "bow down to graven images" is very good in its way. But *why* are we not to do so? Because "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." This is a sordid appeal to fear. Fancy an Almighty God being jealous of the estranged affection of an unfortunate Jew. Then take the command, "Honor your parents." This is excellent advice, but why are we to do so? "That thy days shall be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This reason is both selfish and unreliable. The best of sons have frequently died in the morning of life, while some of the worst have had a prolonged existence, causing grief to their parents and disgrace to themselves. The one further objection to the Ten Commandments is that throughout there is an absence of any noble, inspiring principle of conduct. They teach no real love, nor supply any solid and dignified incentive to a virtuous life; they supply a penal code, not a practical rule of conduct.

CHARLES WATTS.

## RELIGION AND MAN.

MAN, we are often told, is a religious animal, and so long as the meaning of the phrase is carefully indicated its general accuracy need not be questioned. It is certain that mankind in the mass has been, and still is, preponderatingly religious; and even in the case of the lower races, where no clearly defined dogmas or ritual exist, there is yet present a vague, indefinite fear of supernatural agencies. From crude material the higher religions are afterwards elaborated.

If, then, by the above statement it is meant that religious beliefs are pregnant and potent facts in human history, and that even to-day the majority of people *instinctively* lean towards a religious view of the world, I do not know that it can be successfully challenged. But if more than that is implied, if it is meant that man is essentially religious in the sense that religion is an inexpugnable part of his nature, or that it is necessary to his complete development as a man, then there are few statements that could be more safely challenged or more decisively disproved.

Such a position might have been taken up with some confidence at a time when heresy and immorality, and unbelief and imbecility, were, to the general mind, interchangeable terms. But nowadays, when thousands of men and women, whose characters are beyond reproach, and whose intellectual abilities admit of no question, are realising, as Justice Stephen put it, that life may be made very pleasant and enjoyable without any religion at all, such an opinion smacks far more of the religious advocate aiming to establish his case at any cost rather than that of the impartial searcher after truth.

Moreover, wherever there has existed a wide diffusion of knowledge, religion has always represented a vanishing force in the tide of human affairs. This is so apparent that even the clergy are compelled to acknowledge as much; only they describe it as purifying religion of the grosser elements by which it has been contaminated; although a process of purification that ousts religion from one department after another, and finally leaves it nothing that is known or knowable to rule over, comes dangerously near a process of destruction.

For the impartial student the broad fact remains that on the whole the influence of religion has declined in exact proportion to the development of man's knowledge of the universe.

The whole frame of mind upon which religion lives is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. It is no longer possible to speak of the world as God's world, or to see his guiding hand in its processes, as was possible even in the days of our grandparents. The intellectual atmosphere has undergone such a change that the grotesque nature of what were once called fundamental religious ideas is clear even to the professed believer. The conception of mechanical forces operating over incalculable periods of time has superseded that of an anthropomorphic deity creating and sustaining the world for the benefit of his worshippers. Evolution has ousted creation from the field; natural law has annihilated miracles; revelation and prophecy, the entire paraphernalia of old-time religion, is rapidly disappearing; while not one religionist in a thousand dreams of making the scriptures he professes to believe in, or the church he subscribes to, his authority for dealing with the problems of every-day existence.

That primitive man should have been superstitious was both natural and inevitable. His religious beliefs were born to him as the result of an attempt to deal with the phenomena of nature around him and within him, unaided by such information as could alone bring the task to a successful issue. Unacquainted with that conception of mechanical causation which, wherever it has penetrated, has had the effect of diminishing the intensity of religious feeling, the whole universe was interpreted in terms of self. Personal intelligences, in the main hostile to man, were pictured everywhere as directing natural operations, and it was to appease those mythical existences that religious practices came slowly into existence.

Primitive man was thus necessarily superstitious. His religion represented the only explanation of the world possible at the time, and expressed in terms of the only forces then known those connected with self. In brief, to paraphrase Bacon's famous dictum concerning Atheism, a little reasoning brought the gods into the world, but a little further reasoning carries them out again.

Nor is the leaning towards religion, manifested by people at the present time, at all surprising when one bears in mind the course of human development. We are the heirs of the ages, and inherit its infirmities along with its virtues. For countless generations the belief in the supernatural has been so impressed upon human nature, the religiously-inclined have been so carefully fostered, the non-religious temperament has been so pitilessly weeded out, as to render it a matter of extreme difficulty to eradicate a frame of mind that has been so sedulously cultivated, and at such a tremendous cost to the race.

It may be admitted, then, that mankind is in the main instinctively religious, because all our instincts are matters of education, of training, and heredity. Human instincts are far more indications of historic processes than unimpeachable witnesses of their own truthfulness and worth; and, therefore, to endorse without qualification every instinct that man possesses is to repeat the errors and crudities of our ancestors, and thus lose the lesson we might learn from their experience. Indeed, the process of civilisation consists very largely in a transformation of instincts; and there are certainly good grounds for assuming that the religious feelings of the past, and still more of the present, represent a huge fund of wasted mental and moral energy that sadly needs diverting into more serviceable channels.

It is probably this aspect of religion that is most depressing to the social reformer. When one reflects upon the time and energy at present spent upon religion, the army of parsons and parasites maintained by religious organisations, and whose maintenance represents such an enormous drain upon the resources of a country—upon the millions of pounds annually spent on religious observances that might as profitably be addressed to the rushing wind or vanishing cloud, and then add to all these the permanent evil inflicted upon the race by the cultivation of a frame of mind that is in itself a far greater obstacle to progress than any specific action that religion is responsible for, one feels that, beside any good religion might have achieved, there stands a vast monument of recorded wrong that can never be wiped out or atoned for.

The plain fact of the matter is, that religion has all along been in the position of a bogus company floated on a fictitious capital. It maintains its hold over many worthy people for the reason that, even after the ignorance that gave it birth was dispelled, it still continued associated with, and controlling, a number of forces that were in no sense religious. The moral maxims and feelings that were born of the common exigencies of life, and the social teachings born of the gregarious instincts of the race, have always been more or less mixed up with religion, and the latter has been the great gainer by the connection. The mere habit of association counts for a great deal. As Mill puts it: "Since almost all who are taught any morality whatever have it taught them *as* religion, and inculcated on them through life principally in that character, the effect which the teaching produces as teaching it is supposed to produce as religious teaching, and religion receives the

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credit of all the influence in human affairs which belongs to any generally accepted system of rules for the guidance and government of human life."

I remember reading somewhere a story of a wonderful white stone that, placed in hot water, made excellent soup —with the addition of a little beef, pepper, salt, and vegetables. It is somewhat the same with religion. It does excellently well—with the addition of a little common sense, humanitarian feeling, education, and all the various factors of a progressive civilisation. Only one is impelled to question whether the civilising tendencies that so many attribute to religion may not, after all, be really connected with the non-religious secular forces with which it has been connected. Has not religion been to civilisation what the stone was to the soup? Or worse still; the stone at least left the other ingredients pure, while religion has rather represented a dissolving mass that has frequently contaminated all around it.

The whole course of human history gives support to this view of the matter. There is not a single force that man has subdued to his service that was not at one time as intimately connected with religion as the conduct of life is believed to be now. The stars once sang aloud the glories of God; they now bear inevitable testimony to the law of gravitation and the greatness of Galileo and Newton. Electricity was once the messenger of the deity; it has now doffed his livery, and works humbly in the service of man. The organic world was once the great storehouse of facts from which the theologian drew indubitable proof of the creator's wisdom; it now furnishes far stronger evidence of the mechanical principle of evolution and the insensibility of natural processes to human needs and desires. Human nature is the last refuge left; and religion is here simply because the forces in operation are of a more subtle and complex character. The strongest defence of religion has always been the ignorance of its votaries. But as this ignorance is gradually dissipated, and as people learn to dissociate from it all rests for its recommendation upon purely human grounds, religion stands stripped of all its borrowed plumes, self-condemned as a form of thought that was born of the combined ignorance, fear, and wonder of primitive man, that has been perpetuated largely by the operation of class interests, and has owed all it ever had to recommend it to the human nature it has done so much to retard in its development towards a higher condition of existence.

C. COHEN.

## SAMARITANS AND PENTATEUCHS.

READERS of Mr. Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock* will be aware of the exceedingly flimsy grounds on which he endeavors to establish the indefinitely pre-exilic antiquity of the Samaritan Pentateuch. They will also recall his cavalier treatment of those critical experts who were unwilling to allow to this version a greater antiquity than the time of Sanballat—about 400 B.C. He doesn't even deign to notice the arguments adduced by them in support of their contention. Of course, it may have been that Mr. Gladstone was not sufficiently familiar with these arguments to appreciate their significance, but in any case, seeing that they had been accepted as final by so many of the ripest critics, he ought, in justice to them and also to his readers, to have dealt with them on their merits. It is surely a very uncritical proceeding to ignore all the special facts bearing on a problem, and to attempt to solve it on *à priori* considerations alone, and without any guarantee, too, that these considerations are not the outcome of a false historical perspective. "How is it possible," said Mr. Gladstone, "that the Samaritan Pentateuch should have held the supreme place in the regard of the Samaritans if about or near the year 500 B.C. or still later, if at the time of Manasseh the seceder it had, as a matter of fact, been a recent compilation of their enemies, the Jews?" But here Mr. Gladstone's historical vision is blurred. Undoubtedly, at the time of Manasseh the seceder, there was sufficient regard for the Pentateuch at any rate to induce them to make some sort of a systematic effort to obey its injunctions. But, using Mr. Gladstone's words against himself, how is it possible to conceive that the Pentateuch should have had the supreme place in the regard of the Samaritans if, during the whole of the period following the division of the kingdom, they made absolutely no attempt to shape their conduct in accordance therewith? Nay more, are we not entitled to look for some evidence of a zealous discharge of Pentateuchal obligations among the northern tribes, between the time of the establishment of the kingdom and its rending asunder through the diplomatic incompetence of Rehoboam? Did it not occur to Mr. Gladstone to ask why this sudden display of anxiety to obey the Pentateuchal law at the time of Sanballat, when the whole history of the Samaritans anterior thereto was a record of complete neglect and violation of its commands? According to the Pentateuch, Yahveh was to be worshipped at one only sanctuary; their own practice was to worship him on as many high places as they could erect altars upon. This ought to have put Mr. Gladstone on the track. On the track, yes, of the solution of the problem; but its acceptance would have left a gaping breach in his general argument for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Indeed, it is difficult to see how this "supreme regard" for the Pentateuch could have arisen on the assumption that the Israelitish inhabitants of Samaria had been expatriated by Shalmaneser, who supplied their places with "men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and Ava, and Hamath," etc. It was not possible for these non-Israelitish people to have any reverence for the Pentateuch, for they were admittedly so ignorant of how Jehovah should be worshipped that the King of Assyria, at their own request, had to send them a priest of Israel to teach them the "manner of the God of the land." Mr. Gladstone's "supreme regard," then, could not possibly have existed at the time. But did their subsequent proceedings interest them any more in the consistent carrying out of the requirements of this reverentially, regarded Pentateuch! It may be calculated on the basis of a very shrewd guess that between the time when they were absolutely ignorant of how to worship Yahveh, and the compilation of the Book of Kings some two or three hundred years later, they had no more reverence for the Torah than they would have had if they had never been transported from their native homes in Babylonia. And the evidence of this is supplied by certain verses in the latter part of chap. xvii. of the second book of Kings. "Unto this day they do after their former manners; they fear not the Lord, they serve their own gods and graven images, they are altogether a bad lot." "If these books," says Mr. Gladstone, "grew up by gradual accretion, still that must have been an accretion gathering round a single channel. A double process could not have been carried on in harmony." This in reference to an independent origin for the Samaritan Pentateuch, for the assumption of which there is not the slightest reason. This argument is a complete begging of the question. Mr. Gladstone should have proved that there was even a *single accretion* in the shape of a Pentateuch in the southern kingdom at the time he is contemplating—the separation of the ten tribes from the two—before deciding on the likelihood or otherwise of a "second accretion" on the same lines in Samaria. Mr. Gladstone is simply fixing up a man of straw which collapses with the first breath of criticism. *There was no Pentateuch in existence at the time of Rehoboam.* Or, if Mr. Gladstone was satisfied that there was, he had no right, in the face of the strong contrary opinion, to assume that the fact was established beyond all dispute, and from such unwarranted assumption to derive the premises for a conclusion in reference to another matter equally the subject of disputation.

It is surprising that Mr. Gladstone should have allowed himself to perpetrate such a logical fallacy. Now this we do know, that a "double process" did proceed collaterally in the two kingdoms in relation to their *worship.* They both harmoniously worshipped on the "high places," and in other respects transgressed the explicitly given directions of the Torah of Moses. This is the way they showed (priests, prophets, and people) their "supreme regard and reverence" for their divinely-given Pentateuch. Judging from their practice, the rational supposition would be, not "that they had possessed at the time of Rehoboam a code corresponding in substance" with the Pentateuch, but rather that they had not the slightest idea that there was any such code in existence which rendered it obligatory upon them to worship at one shrine exclusively, and that at Jerusalem. It is usual to say that Shalmaneser did not take all the Israelites of Samaria captive; there were little batches of them who did not come out until after dark, when they knew that Shalma-

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neser's warriors would be afraid to tackle them. This would have been mean of them. But this supposition seems to conflict both with the letter and the spirit of the statements in Kings, that the Lord delivered them *all* into the hands of the Assyrians, and that the imported Assyrians had to request the King of Assyria to send a priest to instruct them how to worship Yahveh; which they would not have required to do had there been any considerable number of Israelites left—sufficient, that is to say, to have, by assimilation, given birth to a fresh Semitic type. But it is legitimate to ask why should the Samaritans have concerned themselves at all with the Pentateuch if it had originated quite recently with their "enemies the Jews"? The answer is partly that Samaritanism, in the shape of racial antipathy and religious antagonism, had no existence until a combination of special circumstances called it forth some time subsequent to the exile. What, then, were these special circumstances that gave birth both to Samaritanism and the Samaritan Pentateuch? They were these. In the year 538 B.C. some 200,000 Jews returned to Jerusalem from Babylon and commenced to rebuild the Temple. The inhabitants of Samaria, being, as they said, under the protection of the national god, desired to take part in the work. But of this proffered assistance the Jews disdainfully refused to avail themselves. They were then, of course, as they have been since, passionately in love with manual labor, and they wanted to be able to say, as they mopped the sweat from their manly brows: "We did every little bit of that ourselves." Of course, it was very reprehensible on the part of the Samaritans to want to use up some of their own perspiration on the job, but from the point of view of the lotus-eater it is impossible to withhold some meed of admiration for their love of work for its own sweet sake. But could they not have managed to bustle about in some way just as the building was nearing completion, and then have bamfoozled the Jews into the belief that they had done the lion's share of the work? But, assuming that there was a real desire to be of service in this offer, what contemptibly silly and childish people the Jews must have been to have declined it on the ground that the Samaritans had not sufficient of elect blood in their veins to be the objects of God's favoritism like themselves. However, be that as it may, it was owing to this episode that "that long feud began between Judea and Samaria, which was only ended by the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans" (Professor Sayce's Introduction to the Books of Nehemiah, Ezra, and Esther). But we have still to account for the establishment of a rival worship and the production of a Pentateuch in the Samaritan letters. Nothing is easier. *A woman was at the bottom of the whole mischief.* Though the returned Jews turned up their capacious noses at the idea of being assisted by the Samaritans in the building of the Temple, they showed a surprising complaisance in accepting the good offices of the foreign women in the matter of begetting children. "Priests, Levites, and laity all took unto themselves foreign wives." One of the chief offenders was Manasseh, grandson of the high priest Eliashib, who laid successful siege to the fluttering heart of the daughter of Sanballat, the governor of Samaria. There is no doubt the old man was himself a party to the deed. But this was a flabbergaster to poor old egregious Nehemiah. Choking with rage, he commanded the young man to "put her away" on pain of excommunication and expulsion. But Manasseh failed to see the fun of this. He really loved the girl, and gave Nehemiah to understand that he would see him in Sheol before he forsook the mother of his children. For these personalities, as well as for being wicked in the main respect, Nehemiah "chased him from his presence." At least, Nehemiah says he did. However, Manasseh was driven from the priesthood and from Jerusalem; but, taking refuge in Samaria, he presented himself to his father-in-law, Sanballat, who smoothed his ruffled feathers and promised to obtain leave from Darius, the Persian King, to build for him a nice new temple on Mount Gerizzim, like that at Jerusalem, and to make him the chief priest there. Darius complied with the request, and the temple was built on Mount Gerizzim, overlooking the city of Shechem. But a temple similar to that on Mount Moriah would have been useless without a ritual service also like that at Jerusalem. This service was a very complicated affair, but it was all codified in the Pentateuch, which was the basis of the Jerusalem worship. All that was necessary, therefore, was to make a transcript of this Pentateuch in the Samaritan character, and the foundation of a rival worship was laid. There would have been no difficulty in the mechanical part of this transcript, for Manasseh would have had the assistance of his father-in-law, and as many of the Samaritans as the latter chose to employ for the purpose. But there is still another link wanting if every difficulty is to be removed. We have got our temple and our Samaritan Pentateuch, but we are not so sure of our worshippers to fill the temple and to obey the behests of the priestly interpreters of the book. That link is supplied by Josephus, who tells us that Manasseh was accompanied to Samaria by other priests and Levites who had married into Gentile families, and Nehemiah himself speaks in the plural of the priests and Levites who had "defiled the priesthood by marrying foreign wives." "Samaria was the natural place of refuge for fugitives from Judea," says Professor Sayce in the work quoted above, so that there is not a single factor necessary to the solution of the problem on post-exilic lines missing. The Samaritan desire to do homage to Yahveh finding vent in the building of a temple at Shechem, the necessity of a ritual service thereat, supplied by the Jerusalem Pentateuch, the existence of a field for the operations of the Samaritan priesthood when once established, all combine to form a chain of evidence, complete in every link, to demonstrate that the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch did not see the light of day until (at most) 400 B.C.

We may safely say that had not Manasseh married the daughter of Sanballat, the Samaritan Governor, there would have been no temple on Mount Gerizzim, and no Samaritan Pentateuch. There is another aspect of this question which hardly concerns, in the light of the above data, the antiquity of this version. If Deuteronomy xxvii. 4 and Joshua viii. 30 be accurately given in the Hebrew Bible, then it undoubtedly follows that the Samaritans were violating the command of Moses in building a temple on Mount Gerizzim. On the other hand, the same stigma would attach to the Jerusalem priesthood if the Samaritan reading were correct. The book of Deuteronomy states that there was only one place for the legitimate worship of Yahveh, which place we must regard as Jerusalem. But the Samaritans, while agreeing that there was only one shrine, contended that its proper location was not Jerusalem, but at Shechem, in Samaria. This claim is, of course, as Robertson Smith shows, "glaringly unhistorical." That the Samaritans perceived the difficulty of reconciling such a claim with the practice of the Israelites down to the captivity is shown by their ignoring even those prophetical writings which originated in their own part of Palestine. But, basing their claim on the Pentateuch alone, and ignoring the subsequent practice, there seems to be some show of reason for it. Indeed, they may be said to have decidedly the best of the argument. When the Samaritan temple was built, the Jews accused the Samaritans of disobeying the law of Moses as given in Deuteronomy xxvii. 4, and in Joshua viii. 30, to the effect that it was Mount Ebal, and not Mount Gerizzim, which was to be the site of Joshua's altar. But the Samaritans quoted these identical verses as proof that the altar was to be built on Mount Gerizzim! In his *History of the Hebrew Nation and Literature* (pp. 202–4) Samuel Sharpe says that one or the other of the two nations must have falsified their Bible, and that the Jews themselves seem to be convicted out of their own Bible of having altered the disputed passages. Deuteronomy xi. 29, xxvii. 12, in the Hebrew copies, as in the Samaritan, both place the blessings of the law on Mount Gerizzim and the curses on Mount Ebal, "which passages seem to support the Samaritans, and to prove that the Jews had altered their Hebrew Bible on purpose to throw blame on the Samaritans." It is hardly likely that the cursings would have been uttered on the very spot where stood the altar of Yahveh. Yet, on which ever mount the altar was erected, the historical books show that it was not the spot which was intended to be the permanent site of the worship. But the Samaritans never troubled to transcribe any other books of the Old Testament than the Pentateuch, which was all that was necessary for their immediate purposes. You see they were quite willing to assist in building the temple at Jerusalem, although they subsequently asserted that Mount Moriah was the wrong spot; which all goes to show that the Samaritans, like the Jews, had elastic consciences, and were not a bit better than the rest of us—I mean than they should have been. Had they been allowed to assist in the

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temple operations at Jerusalem, we should have heard nothing of the right spot for it being on Mount Gerizzim, which again shows how "supremely they venerated the Torah of Moses." However, there was falsification on one side or the other; but when we know that the whole Pentateuch was a forgery, it need not surprise us that, when the occasion arose, Pelion was piled upon Ossa.

Enough has been said to show that Mr. Gladstone's over-confidence in the antiquity of the Samaritan Pentateuch was the result of an understudy of the data on the subject. In his notions of Samaritan reverence for the Pentateuch he is diffusing the Gladstonian consciousness over a period of five hundred years, during which the habitual practice was of such a character that, if Ezekiel is to be believed, a worse fate ought to have overtaken the Israelites of both divisions of the kingdom than that which befel the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Mr. Gladstone is projecting his own subjectivity into a time when Gladstonism would have been as much out of place as mothers' milk in a vivisectionist's laboratory.

B. STEVENS.

## DEATH OF MRS. LYNN LINTON.

MRS. LYNN LINTON, who died last week in London, was a fluent and occasionally powerful writer. She was born at Keswick on February 10, 1822. Her father was vicar of Crosthwaite, her mother was the daughter of Bishop Goodenough of Carlisle. In those days the clergy were not remarkably religious. "My father's fellow-parsons," she once wrote, "were a very queer lot. Some drank and fought in public-houses, others were little better than honest day laborers, and it was not uncommon to hear the officiating clergyman exclaim, when his Sunday's ministrations were over, 'Gosh! that job's jobbed!'" Mrs. Linton's education and experience did not incline her to orthodoxy. She thought for herself and became very advanced. In 1872 she made her name by the publication of *The True History of Joshua Davidson*, in which she traced the supposed career of an English workman, who lived on the principles and in the spirit of the founder of Christianity, and of course came to grief. *Under Which Lord?* was a more important novel. It depicted the relations of a Christian wife and an Agnostic husband, between whom came a High Church clergyman, setting them at variance and estrangement. Mrs. Linton was old-fashioned enough to dislike the "new woman" movement. She wasted much eloquence on "the shrieking sisterhood." But she was in favor of the best education of her sex; and perhaps, after all, if we see to the education, good old mother nature will see to all the rest. Mrs. Linton was a Freethinker when Freethought was more *tabu* amongst women than it is even now, and she merited esteem for the courage with which she avowed and maintained her opinions.

## ACID DROPS.

ONE of the highest of High Churchmen is the Rev. the Hon. James Granville Adderley, who officiates (some people would say *performs*) at Berkeley Chapel. This gentleman dresses in semi-monkish costume, and holds forth on Sunday afternoons in Hyde Park. What he says is of no particular importance, but he hopes to "catch on" by the histrionic adjuncts. Last Sunday morning he preached at his chapel, having announced that he would "answer the difficulties and doubts of the upper classes." In the course of his sermon, according to the *Daily News* report, he referred to the "two great doctrines" of Apostolical Succession and the Sacraments, and declared that "When men realised that they were realities and not shams they felt that clergymen were not ordinary human beings or moral police, but were armed with power and authority by God himself." Well, we quite agree with one part of this. The clergy are *not* ordinary men; to say that they are is to libel the average citizen. As for the rest of "Father" Adderley's declaration, we have to say that it is doubtless very flattering to his pride and vanity. But what he has to do to make it good is to produce his certificate from headquarters. Short of that, let him work a miracle, which Jesus Christ said should be easy to his apostles.

"Father" Adderley did some rare hocus-pocus at the altar. He elevated the wafer and chalice—the body and blood of Christ—high above his head, and prostrated himself so that his lips nearly touched the "holy table." Then he awaited communicants, but not a single one came. Nobody appeared to believe in the preacher's "power and authority" from God. It was a Sunday morning entertainment—nothing more.

Madrid had a fine holiday while Santiago was falling. Bull fights and religious processions were the order of the day. St. Iago was a bit under a cloud for the way in which he served Cervera, but plenty of other saints were available. Relics and images were carried through the city, attended by pilgrims dressed in the fashion of the middle ages. When an image passed all the people fell upon their knees. Such are the people who expected to take the cheek out of the Yankees.

Admiral Dewey annihilated the Spanish fleet at Manila on a Sunday; whereupon, it is said, the Presbyterians begged President McKinley to give orders that the United States' admirals and generals should not fight any more battles on the Lord's Day. Curiously, however, it was also on a Sunday that the second Spanish fleet was annihilated off the coast of Cuba. More curiously still, it was on a Sunday that the American flag was hoisted at Santiago.

War, war, glorious war! Reuter's correspondent at Santiago telegraphed that the city presented a dismal sight. Most of the houses had been sacked, nothing eatable could be had for love or money, Spanish soldiers looked like living skeletons, and the docks were crowded with starving refugees. Twenty thousand refugees were quartered at El Cavey, five thousand at Firniega, and five thousand at Cuabita Selboniate. No less than five hundred persons were crowded in one small building that looked like a pig-stye, and gave out a horrible stench. The poor wretches—men, women, and children—had been using the river water, on which all manner of filth floated. War, war, glorious war!

We don't rejoice at hearing anything to the discredit of other countries; at the same time, we like to hear things to the credit of our own. According to Mr. R. H. Davis, the *New York Herald* war correspondent, there is only one foreign Military Attaché who has been right to the front with the Americans at Santiago. The French Attaché never got within seven miles of the front, and the others were at General Shafter's headquarters three miles in the rear. Captain Arthur Lee, the Britisher, advanced with the firing line. He went up the hill with the 12th when they charged at El Caney, and, while maintaining his position as a non-combatant, rendered timely aid to the wounded under an incessant fire.

The men of the Worcestershire Regiment, stationed at Mountain Ash, in South Wales, are actually playing football and quoits on Sunday. Moreover, they seem to enjoy it—which is worse. So a number of residents have complained to the Urban District Council, which has ordered its clerk to write to the commanding officer protesting against "this conduct." We hope the officer will light his cigar with it.

The Russian Government is exporting the "Spirit Wrestlers," many of whom are coming to England, and will form a colony in Essex. Our own "Peculiar People" are not far off. Devastated Essex bids fair to become the home of "fancy religions."

It is pleasant now and then to come across a clergyman with a little common sense. Dean Hole, of Rochester, for instance, is opposed to Sunday Closing, which so many of his clerical brethren look upon as a sort of eleventh commandment. He is not even in favor of teetotalism. "I believe," he said to a *Church Gazette* interviewer, "that total abstinence is a fine thing for a drunkard, but I don't believe in it for anyone else. I hold with temperance, which means self-control. Teetotalism is a new-fangled doctrine. Every creature of God is good for use; I can't help it if people abuse some of them." The truth is, as Mr. Foote proves in his *Bible and Beer* pamphlet, that Christian teetotalism is utter humbug. Jesus Christ was no teetotaller himself, and it is a bit of impudence for a Christian to set up as better than his Savior.

There is a man in Glasgow who is so fond of the Bible that he is writing it all out, giving an artistic initial letter to each chapter, and a pictorial heading illustrative of the context. By using the leisure of four years—the man is a compositor—he has reached the middle of the Psalms. It is reported that he is a native of Dumfries. We suppose the nearest museum is at Glasgow. Probably they will find a place for him there when he joins the majority.

Be ye fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. That is what God says. But the Convocation of Canterbury is of a different opinion. It has just condemned clergymen

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who rush into marriage "without an adequate income." Trust in God must be tempered with worldly prudence.

Muscular Christianity is coming to the front again. It appears that a Kensit meeting was held at Islington the other evening, and when it was over about two hundred persons created great disorder in Almeida-street. When Police-constable Dormer, 159N, appeared upon the scene he found many of them fighting. A regular pitched battle was going on between John Driscoll and Frank Wydell, and as they would not desist he was obliged to run them in. Both were bound over to keep the peace for three months. During that time it will be dangerous for them to attend another Kensit meeting.

More muscular Christianity! At a meeting of the English Church Union at Frampton Cotterell, Gloucestershire, a strong resolution was passed against "the cowardly untruths recently propagated in the House of Commons against the clergy by Sir William V. Harcourt," and the Rev. T. W. Belcher, D.D., said that if Sir William Harcourt would come into that room and repeat those slanders, he would knock him down. This Church militant remark was greeted with loud cheers. Everybody was ready to deliver a dig into the paunch of the fat Knight of Malwood.

Now what did Jesus Christ say? Turn to the eleventh verse of the fifth chapter of Matthew and read: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." That is what Jesus Christ said. Parson Belcher, however, is above all that nonsense. He believes in knocking his enemy down. But of course he is a very good Christian all the same. Christianity never did mean following Jesus Christ. Only lunatics and paupers do that.

Mr. George Wise, the Christian Evidence and Protestant lecturer at Liverpool, seems bent on getting his share of the notoriety gained by Mr. Kensit. On Sunday last he went to St. Thomas's Church, Liverpool, and towards the close of the service he jumped upon a chair and shouted: "Now that this service is over I will read this protest ——." Then his voice was drowned in the general uproar. Chairs were thrown down, Prayer-books were littered about, women screamed, and the male portion of the worshippers gathered about their minister in readiness to fight Mr. George Wise and his Orange lambs. Happily the police arrived on the scene before there was any bloodshed, even from damaged noses. The mob of intruders retired, and the ladies who had fainted in the confusion were able to recover. Mr. George Wise's lambs sang "Onward Christian soldiers"—onward, that is, against their fellow Christians. But then it was always a happy family.

What puzzles us is this. What business had Mr. George Wise in that church? Is he a member of it? Is he even a member of the Church of England at all? We should like a little light thrown on the problem.

"Peculiar People" are prosecuted and found guilty of manslaughter in London, but the "Christian Scientists" are going to build a church in New York. Three persons, whose names will not be divulged, have subscribed a large sum of money for its erection, one of them as much as fifty thousand dollars. This gentleman is said to have been "healed in an almost miraculous manner." "Almost" is distinctly good.

The boys at one of our public schools, it is said, once got the great cricket champion, Dr. Grace, out for a very small score. The hymn for the evening chapel contained the well-known line, "The scanty triumphs Grace has won," and when the boys came to that line they nearly raised the roof off.

Hugh Price Hughes's latest yarn is as follows: A man came to the evening service at St. James's Hall and stayed to the prayer meeting. The "Power of God" took hold of him, and to escape it he rushed out of the hall, went to Euston, and took a ticket for Liverpool. That was not far enough out of the way of this mysterious Power, so he shipped to America. The "Power" followed him to America, and made him so uncomfortable there that he was compelled to come all the way back to St. James's Hall, London, and get "converted," which he did, afterwards telling this story as a tribute to the "wonderful power of God."

Why the "Power" could not convert him on the first occasion, and save him the expense of a journey to America, was not stated by Mr. Hughes, who told this story in a Wesleyan church not twenty miles from London.

The Lambeth Board of Guardians has been discussing the church-going of the inmates of Renfrew-road Workhouse. Mr. Hopkins reported that he had "spent an hour and a quarter's misery" in the Workhouse chapel on the previous Sunday morning. Mr. Cochran thought the chapel should be shut up during the chaplain's holidays, at any rate; that would be a great relief to some of the people. Miss Grey piously exclaimed, "That would be a shame"; but Mrs. Despard said she did not see why poor people should be kept in compulsory misery. Mr. Briant declared that when he visited the chapel some of the paupers looked happy, but he added that "they were asleep." Finally the matter dropped, with the understanding, we presume, that the workhouse people may "sleep" if they please—at least, during the sermon.

A man, presumably Scotch, called at a North London shop last week and asked the assistant if he would buy a Bible. "How much?" asked the young man. "Eighteenpence," said the Scripture hawker. "Why, I can buy them four a penny in the Cattle Market," rejoined the shopman. "Then, damn you, go and buy them," exclaimed the pedlar, walking out.

Belfast celebrated the Battle of the Boyne as usual. Of course there were conflicts between the people and the police, and the military had to take part in preserving order. There is nothing like religion for promoting peace and brotherhood.

Donegal was practically in a state of siege all day. The police formed cordons in the streets, and dragoons were drawn up in the square. Nationalists, armed with sticks, poured into the town to defy the hated Orangemen. A good many people were injured, but that is expected on such an occasion.

By the way, the Orangemen at the Donegal meeting denied responsibility for the placard to which we drew attention. We print their denial as an act of justice. But who posted the placards?

Samuel Frederick Hence is landlord of the "Bricklayer's Arms," Parker's-row, Bermondsey. He is also a churchwarden of the local Christ Church. One day he met a cat, and thereby hangs a tale. The cat was a stray one; it had the impudence to enter his premises, and he called his fox terrier to worry it. The cat ran into his private apartment, where he struck it with a form and held it down while his dog killed it. This pretty bit of sport was witnessed by two policemen, and the sportsman got sentenced to a month's hard labor. Against this, however, he appealed, with the result that he pays a fine of £5, gives £20 to the S. P. C. A., and settles the bill of costs amounting to over £60. Worrying cats is an expensive luxury even to a landlord and a churchwarden.

Mrs. Chant and Mr. Stead were in evidence together at the annual meeting of the National Vigilance Association. The chair was occupied by Mr. J. C. Rickett, M.P., who said that "the question for them to consider was whether to adopt the gospel of naturalism in preference to the religious view of life which taught a man to restrain his animal instincts." Mr. Stead heard that nonsense and did not correct it, though he knows very well that it is not the Freethinkers who are responsible for the debauching of young girls which goes on in London.

The St. Swithin superstition is dying of being found out. Protracted observations at Greenwich Observatory show that the weather is not at all affected by what happens on St. Swithin's Day. As a matter of fact, though, there happens to be rather less rainfall in the forty days after a wet St. Swithin than after a dry one. If anything, therefore, the superstition needs to be reversed.

The poor old Pope is reported to be suffering from extreme prostration, caused partly by the heat and partly by the shock of the Spanish disaster. The truth is the Vatican holds a tremendous lot of Spanish securities, which the success of the Yankees has rendered worthless. What poor old Pecci is really suffering from is an acute attack of "No Dividends."

A friend of ours, whose wits sometimes go wool-gathering, believes that he visits all sorts of foreign places while he is in that condition. The other night he visited Heaven and Hell—at least he says so; and he tells us that in Heaven they were singing

> Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

while in Hell they were singing

> Praise him all creatures here below.

The Rector of Bow has been devoting himself to the splendid task of apologising for the firm of Bryant and May The poisoned workers and their sympathisers will be ready to consign the reverend gentleman to a locality where sulphur is even cheaper than at the manufactory he thinks it Christlike to defend on behalf of the poor shareholders.

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What a sublime piece of humbug is the Holy Christian Church! The Carpenter of Nazareth lived on the high road and died on the gallows, and the Cashier of his little Salvation Army ratted for thirty shillings. Some say it was thirty half-crowns. Very well, let it be so. At that rate the entire stock-in-trade, cash at the bank, book debts, and goodwill of the business was estimated at less than £3 15s. But that was nearly two thousand years ago, and things have altered very much for the better during the interval. Only the other day we noticed a newspaper paragraph, announcing that the Bishop of London had just held a swell garden-party, which was attended by the *élite* of fashionable society. His lordship has a fine palace, and £10,000 a year—twice as much as the Prime Minister of the British Empire! Upon this salary he preaches "Woe unto you rich!" and "Blessed be ye poor!" Really it is the greatest farce on earth.

Sabbatarianism is dying in Scotland, but it dies hard. "At Dunoon recently," says the *Daily News*, "under the shadow of Highland Mary's statue, pious mobs refused to allow tourists to land on Sunday. Shooting tenants have been 'rabbled' in the North for taking boat to get their letters on Sunday." It is still next to impossible to hire a horse on Sunday north of the Ness. It is in the Celtic districts that the old Sabbatarianism lingers.

One of the American speakers at the World's Convention of Sunday-schools, recently held in London, was Bishop Charles H. Fowler, D.D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This gentleman, according to the *Daily Chronicle* report, spent "twenty-five minutes in belauding the Bible as far exceeding all other books in wisdom, poetry, history, oratory, logic. If the English-speaking races will only plant the Bible wherever they go, they will 'fix' this world in twenty-five years."

How like an American that is! Everything is going to be done in a jiffy. Cuba was to be taken from the Spaniard in a week or two, and all this time has been required to capture Santiago. Now it is to take only twenty-five years to "fix" the whole world by "planting" the Bible everywhere. We don't exactly know what "fixing" the world means, but we presume it is as big as the equator anyhow. Nor do we exactly know what "planting" the Bible means, though we do know that the Bible is "a plant."

Two thousand three hundred delegates attended this Sunday School Convention from all parts of the world. Four delegates from the United States were missing. In spite of their pious object, the Lord did not warn them of the danger ahead, and they were drowned in the wreck of the *Bourgogne*.

A large number of the Sunday-school Convention delegates came over on the *Catalonia*, which caught on fire on the voyage. However, the crew worked hard and saved the ship. Perhaps the delegates helped by praying. Anyhow, they got safely across the Atlantic.

Reference was made at one of the Convention meetings to the delegates who went down in the *Bourgogne*. One of the speakers—it was the Hon. S. H. Blake, of Toronto—said that "God opened the sea-gate of his heaven and gave them glad entrance." We guess, though, that the other American delegates were precious glad they came over on another ship.

Whoso taking the sword shall perish by the sword, said Jesus Christ. The *Methodist Recorder* is "gratified" to find that "the Methodists of the North and South have been in the forefront of this battle" at Santiago.

"Father" Ignatius gives a curious puff to Guy's Tonic. He ordered a bottle for a "Brother" at Llanthony Abbey, who was sadly troubled with flatulence, and the patient derived much advantage from the medicine. So far so good. But the "Father" goes on to say that the Tonic was "much blessed by God to the Brother for whom it was ordered"—which entirely destroys the value of the testimonial, for when God blesses the medicine it cannot possibly matter whether the bottle contains Guy's Tonic or common ditch-water.

The New York Presbytery, by twenty-six votes to twenty-five, has rejected a certain candidate for the ministry whose character and scholarship were all right, but whose faith was not up to the requisite standard. He believed in the general inspiration of the Bible, but he thought that it might in detail be incorrect. Presbyterian ministers have no freedom to pick and choose. Mother Eve's talking serpent, Balaam's ass, and Jonah's whale must all be swallowed, and the consumers must not fail to look agreeable.

The Bishops have issued a "report" on the vexed question of the re-marriage of divorced persons. They declare that the Christian ideal is that of indissoluble marriage; but, as the wretched secular law allows divorce, the clergy must not exactly put themselves in opposition to the State—for it might be unpleasant to themselves. What they should do in the case of a divorced person who wants to re-marry is this: They should persuade him (or her) to get married at a registrar's office. Well, it would be a good thing if everybody got married there, for more than half the good fortune of the clergy is due to their officiating at baptisms, marriages, and burials.

The spiritual lords almost invariably vote against useful measures. They voted against the Bill to abolish capital punishment for stealing from shops property of the value of five shillings. They fiercely opposed the Reform Bills. The Roman Catholic Disabilities Bill and the Jewish Disabilities Repeal Bill both met with their determined opposition. The right reverend fathers-in-God resisted the motion for the Admission of Dissenters to Universities, and also the Bill to permit in churchyards funeral services other than that of the Church of England. They have, in fighting the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, displayed the intelligence and the noble firmness of mules.

Mr. Dillon moved the omission of a sub-section of Clause 67 of the Irish Local Government Bill, which provides that any person in holy orders, or being a regular minister of any religious denomination, shall not be eligible as a county or district councillor. Captain Donelan, an Irish Protestant, supported Mr. Dillon; but he was opposed by Colonel Saunderson, a Protestant, and Mr. Hayden, a Catholic. Opinion, therefore, is pretty evenly divided, even amongst Irishmen themselves; and it was only natural that the government clause should be retained in the Bill, as it was, by a majority of 165 to 74. Mr. Gerald Balfour, speaking for the government, said that "There could be no doubt that it had been the practice for Catholic priests in Ireland to carry into the domain of politics the arms of spiritual warfare. If priests were permitted to sit on those bodies, every engine would be brought to bear, spiritual and otherwise, to secure their election." Still, it would not do to exclude Catholic priests and admit Protestant ministers; so the whole tribe of sky-pilots are debarred from sitting on the new Councils.

On the whole, it seems to us that this is a wise provision. History and experience show that the men of God are only *safe* when they are confined to their spiritual functions. Besides, it will never do to give them the full rights of citizenship without compelling them to fulfil all its duties. They enjoy certain privileges—exemption from serving on juries, for instance—and they cannot expect to enjoy all the sweets and escape all the sours. It was Sydney Smith—himself a minister of religion—who said there were three sexes—men, women, and clergymen. The men of God should be treated as neuters.

Mr. A. E. Fletcher is himself a Christian Socialist. We are rather surprised, therefore, to find his paper, the *New Age*, so cheerfully accepting the defeat of the Christian Socialists at the recent German elections. "It is quite hopeless for them," our contemporary admits, "to compete at elections in big towns and industrial centres with the Social Democrats, who have the men, the experience, and the determination for the political warfare." The leaders of the Social Democrats are nearly all Freethinkers, and most of them Atheists.

There was a very curious prayer meeting the other day at Tooting. Inspector Hobson, of the City Police, arrested a young man named Pickernell on a charge of fraud. The prisoner got into the bathroom, fastened the door, and then cut his throat. After a time he opened the door and admitted the inspector. Pickernell knew he was dying, and coolly asked the inspector to pray with him. The two went on their knees together and "asked for divine mercy," as the reports say. Evidently the duties of a policeman are extremely mixed. He runs in stray dogs, escorts perambulators across busy streets, chases burglars, eats cold mutton with the cook, and on the top of it all is liable to be called upon to kneel down and pray with his prisoners. Yes, a policeman needs to be an all-round man nowadays.

## WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

Mr. and Mrs. Pegg, £1; A. G. W., 10s.; A. F., 2s. 6d.; W. F., 1s.; R. F., 1s. 6d.; W. W., 1s. 6d.; L. A., 2s. 6d.; A. B., 1s.

*Per Miss Vance*:—E. Bater, 1s.; Mrs. Bater, 1s.; Miss Bater, 1s.

*Per R. Forder*:—H. G. Dowie, £1; Tommy, 2s.; E. Self, 1s.; J. E. Stapleton, 2s. 6d.; A. S. Vickers, 2s.; W. Pike, 1s.; E. G. W., 5s.; J. Preston, 2s. 6d.; H. J Dungey, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Selwood, 2s. 6d.; J. May, 15s. 6d.

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## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

A. E. Davis.—Thanks; see paragraph.

F. Cotterall.—See paragraph. Miss Vance is looking after the arrangements for the Sunday Freethought Demonstrations. Please write to her, if she has not already written to you.

W. W. Leavis.—Received.

C. Cohen notifies to friends and Branch secretaries his new address—17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton.

Ex-Ritualist.—It is entirely subject to your own decision.

A. Fincken, becoming a member of the Secular Society, Limited, says: "I have gone through the Charter, as published in the *Freethinker*, and consider it redounds very greatly to your credit. To all your critics, amongst whom I class myself, let me say after (a long way after) Shakespeare: 'Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious by this summer scheme of yours!'"

James McGlashan sends £1 for himself and his brother John, for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. "All my prayers (old memories!) for a great success," he exclaims.

J. J. Kimberley.—Received. You and your friend, F. Symonds, will be duly nominated for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, at the next meeting of the Board.

J. Titherington, sending 10s. for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, says: "I think the day is dawning for Freethought."

D. Black (Glasgow) is joining the Secular Society, Limited. He thinks it deserves success.

John Whita.—The lad's verse is creditable, but hardly up to the mark for publication. It is not enough to have ideas and sentiments; he must learn the *technique* of versification.

J. N. (Leeds).—A good story; but few of our readers, we imagine, would understand the Stock Exchange jargon.

Charles Pegg (Manchester) and Mrs. M. E. Pegg send their subscription for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. Mr. Pegg thinks it the best thing that has been done in the history of the party.

John Ross (Liverpool) writes that he has got twelve names, and hopes to get more, of intending members of the Secular Society, Limited. The full list is to be forwarded to us shortly.

A. J. Marriott.—Glad you are joining the Incorporated Society; also that you have been doing a little work lately in Hyde Park.

W. W. Hardwicke.—Thanks. You did not enclose the 10s. in your former letter. The Society is not in the embryonic stage, as you thought; it is legally incorporated, and we have the Registrar's certificate.

H. Dawson.—In our next.

R. Davison.—Copy of Memorandum and Articles of Association forwarded. We hope you will be able to induce "a few good men in your neighborhood" to join you in entering the Society. Thanks. Certificate will be forwarded in due course.

R. Forder has received applications from the following for membership in the Secular Society, Limited:—R. Gibbon, J. Wortley, C. J. Pottage, J. W. De Caux.

J. J. Bartram.—Mr. Foote will write you shortly.

Papers Received.—Boston Investigator—Brann's Iconoclast—Progressive Thinker—Isle of Man Times—Middlesborough Telegraph—Crescent—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Public Opinion—Fashion—Fishing Gazette—Truthseeker.

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

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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 is due.

The National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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

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## 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.

## SPECIAL.

In the *Freethinker* of May 15 I stated that I should have to open a Fund for the regular judicious advertising of the *Freethinker*, for promoting its circulation in other ways, and to aid in its competent maintenance until these agencies produced the desired effect. That appeal, however, was brushed aside for the time, because I wanted to give a fair opportunity to the appeal on behalf of the widow of my dead friend and colleague, Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. It is now necessary to bring my appeal to the front again. This can be done without injury to the Wheeler Fund, which I propose to keep open until (say) the end of August. By that time everybody who means to subscribe to it may fairly be presumed to have done so.

Since my sub-editor's death I have been working like a galley-slave. I was not in a position to engage a new sub-editor, and another Wheeler will not turn up in a hurry. For the first month I paid his weekly salary in full to his widow; since then I have paid her one-half that amount regularly, as her affairs were not settled. The amount left for myself from the paper is the veriest trifle, and I am making arrangements for some paid assistance, as it is impossible to go on working at this rate much longer; in fact, nature is giving me plain warnings, which I dare not disregard.

I invite those who can spare a subscription, without injury to any other object, to send it to the "*Freethinker* Circulation Fund," and all I receive shall be duly acknowledged in these columns.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Applications for membership in the new Secular Society, Limited, are coming in steadily, if not rapidly. No doubt they will increase in volume after the holidays. In another part of the *Freethinker*, acting on Mr. Neale's suggestion, we reprint the Memorandum of Association, containing the statement of the Society's objects. It will be kept standing for some weeks.

Members have no sort of liability except the very unlikely one of being called upon to pay up to £1, not more, in case the Society should ever be wound up and there is a deficiency of assets as against liabilities. There are no shares, as in most companies. Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings for the first year, and five shillings a year afterwards. This gives them the right to elect the Board of Directors, and to vote on all the Society's business at General Meetings.

The first meeting of the present (preliminary) Board of Directors was held on Thursday, July 14. Mr. Foote consented to become Chairman until the General Meeting of Members in September, when he hopes that an influential "layman" will be found to occupy the post. Mr. Forder agreed to act as Secretary until the same meeting. It was decided that the Memorandum and Articles of Association should be printed in a small, neat form for general use. It was also resolved that the Board should defray Mr. Foote's out-of-pocket expenses in the formation of the Society—namely, the registration fee, the printing of Memorandum and Articles, and counsel's fee. Mr Foote presents no bill for his time and trouble and various expenses incurred during the two years that his project was being developed. We may add that the first batch of twenty-five members (not including the Directors) were admitted at this Board meeting.

A few critics, who talk from a plentiful lack of knowledge, are good enough to question the "legality" of this Incorporation. The same persons would question anything that happened to be pioneered by the President of the National Secular Society. Now, as a matter of fact, supposing a man left the Society a bequest, his Executors would have no alternative but to pay it over. Their opinion as to the Society's objects would count for absolutely nothing. The registration is a perfect protection against any hostility on their part. As a matter of fact, too, the Society's objects, as set forth in the Memorandum, are entirely legal, according to the judgment of the late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, which settled the Common Law of Blasphemy for future application. This point has been carefully discussed with a thoroughly competent solicitor and counsel of the highest standing. We repeat, therefore, that the Society gives absolute security to subscribers, donors, and legators.

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Owing to the tropical weather, Mr. Foote has deemed it advisable to close the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham-court-road, for a few weeks. During that time a number of Freethought demonstrations will be arranged in Hyde Park, Regent's Park, Finsbury Park, Victoria Park, Peckham Rye, and on Clerkenwell-green. Miss Vance, the N. S. S. secretary, is organising these demonstrations, and Mr. Wilson has kindly promised to give the use of his horses and brakes. Mr. Foote will try to speak at each gathering, and will be assisted by Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. C. Cohen, and perhaps other lecturers.

The Newcastle Branch sends us its annual balance-sheet, which is a healthy document, showing a fair balance on the right side. The members and friends have subscribed well, and the work has been carried on bravely in the face of difficulties. Thirty-nine lectures have been delivered during the year under the Branch's auspices, and ten new members have been enrolled, most of them being young men full of enthusiasm for Freethought.

Arrangements are being made for the Stanley, South Shields, and Newcastle Branches to have an excursion by brake to Durham on Sunday, August 21. The cost will be as moderate as possible, and all who wish to avail themselves of a cheap day's outing and mingle with the gathered saints should acquaint the secretaries of one of the above branches as early as possible to avoid disappointment, as only those will be provided for who give notice or procure tickets beforehand.

Instead of the "No Lecture" in Finsbury Park to-day (July 24), we are informed that Mr. Harry Snell will lecture on "What Freethought Teaches." No doubt he will have a large audience.

Mr. C. Cohen lectured twice on Peckham Rye last Sunday to very large audiences. A good deal of interruption was caused by Teapot Taylor's gang, who kept shouting and pushing towards the platform; but the people were bent on hearing the lecturer, and the disturbers were thrust outside the meeting, where they had to be quiet. It is to be hoped that the local Freethinkers will continue to rally round the Peckham Rye platform until the Christian Evidence rowdies are convinced of the futility of their tactics.

Readers of the *Freethinker* are reminded that Mr. Forder (28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.) is arranging to publish a collection of the best poems of Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, whom our late sub-editor called the Poet Laureate of Freethought. The contemplated price of the volume is half-a-crown. Mr. Forder has received the names of several subscribers, but more are wanted before he can venture on publication. We hope the requisite number will be made up speedily.

A pastor of long experience, according to the *Christian World*, states that the great majority of German working men stand quite aloof from Christian worship, and from every form of church life. The typical working man is absorbed by class questions and party conflicts. He has no real interest in religion.

The undaunted Zola has addressed another stinging public letter—this time to M. Brisson, the new Premier of France. "No Ministry can live," he says, "as long as this affair is not settled. There is something rotten in France, and normal life will only be established when the Dreyfus trial has been revised." Zola concludes by remarking that all politicians are ambitious, and expressing surprise that not one of them is sagacious and bold enough to play a winning game. "Not one of you," he says, "appears to suspect that the man who in three years' time will enter the Elysée will be the man who has restored the worship of truth and justice in France by revising the Dreyfus trial."

Mrs. Lynn Linton was not in love with missions to the heathen; in fact, she denounced "the modern craze for missionary work in unlikely and unsympathetic countries, where the lives of the missionaries are in danger, where the converts they make are for the most part unredeemed scoundrels, and where the civilisation of the people is older and more compact than our own."

Civil List Pensions are no doubt open to question on general grounds. While they are given, however, we are glad to see one or two of them fall to the lot of the unorthodox. In the list of pensions granted by the Government during the past year we find the name of Dr. W. C. Coupland, who receives £50 a year "in consideration of his labors as a writer upon philosophical subjects." Another name is that of Mr. W. E. Henley, who receives £225 a year "in consideration of his literary merits and inadequate means of support." Dr. Beattie Crozier receives £50 in addition to the £50 granted to him in 1894.

## HELPS TO HAPPINESS.

*A Lecture delivered before the Paine Hall Society, Boston, March 13, 1898.*

No man can be happy when all the time thinking that he is a miserable sinner; when through his mind runs the thought that "this world is all a fleeting show"; when he is convinced that earth is a "vale of tears"; when he dwells upon the words of the Bible-preacher, that "all is vanity," and when he constantly repeats to himself that verse from the old New England Primer:—

Our days begin with trouble here;
Our life is but a span,
And cruel death is always near;
So frail a thing is man.

The precepts of orthodoxy are not a very good prescription for happiness. Life may be a battle between a smile and a tear, but I believe in most cases that the smile conquers, that the smile carries the flag of victory.

Now, I do not believe that all religion is either true or good, that it is fit for men and women whose duty it is to make life wholesome and healthy. I contradict nearly all the teachings of the Christian religion; I deny that libel of the Book of Common Prayer, that we are "miserable sinners"; I repudiate that false statement of the poet Moore, that "this world is all a fleeting show"; I reject the Old Testament whine, that "all is vanity"; and I renounce the doctrine contained in those dismal lines from the New England Primer, which make human life, "like Niobe, all tears."

The gloomy sentiments of piety, of which I have quoted a few familiar samples, remind me of a speech made by a murderer on the scaffold. He said: "I'd orter been hung thirty year ago." All these dark, sombre, cruel, false views of life, put forth by Christian preachers, ought to have been killed years ago. There is one fact connected with the Bible which condemns it, in my mind, more than anything else. It is this: There is not a smile in it. You cannot find a bright, cheerful, laughing verse in the entire book. There is not a bud of mirth, not a blossom of joy, in the whole volume. Life, fashioned after the teachings of the Bible, would have no sweetness in it. The person who accepts this book for his guide and teacher puts his mind in a convent. You cannot find a text in the Bible for a sermon on real human happiness. In fact, I believe that the word "happiness" is not to be found anywhere in the volume. One cannot find any helps to happiness in a book which says nothing about happiness.

What men and women need far more than religious incentives are those encouragements which fill the heart with cheer, the mind with light, and life with gladness. There is a constant mental pilgrimage towards that Mecca of the human heart—happiness. The whole world looks to the enjoyment of certain circumstances, or to the attainment of a certain state of being, as the realisation of its earthly ambition. Everybody wants to be happy, and thinks, strives, wishes, and lives to that end. Mankind desire those objects and conditions which bring enjoyment here.

I wish at the outset to acknowledge my approval of this sensible ambition. I believe that the pleasures of life are consistent with the noblest pursuits and the loftiest aims; and I further hold that those comforts and delights which minister to the sweet gratification of the senses are not only legitimate, but also worthy and pure. I respect my whole nature, and believe that the cravings and wants of every part should be satisfied. The eye's wish to look upon what is beautiful should be respected. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." No physical charm was ever yet too fascinating. We are all willing worshippers of the beautiful. So we must commend the art which adds to the attraction of face or figure. Let us confess our debt to adornment, not for what it assists in revealing altogether, but for what it aids us in concealing. It has been said that every fashion was designed to hide a deformity. If this be so, then has fashion been a mantle of charity as well as an ornament. Nature can never be too alluring, never have too fair a face, too perfect a form, too winning a voice. I would add to that power of temptation which dwells in beauty rather than subtract from it. From that romantic period back in the Middle Ages, when the hand of love pinned its color upon the sleeve of the knight ready to go forth to battle, to these duller days of toil and trade, the potent spell of beauty has inspired the arm with

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strength, the heart with courage, and the soul with nobility. The world has always had, and I hope always will have, one knee for the beautiful. The music of a face is the Orpheus which draws all mankind after it. But there is a charm greater even than the magic spell of beauty; it is genius, this king whose throne is the brain of the world. The music of a thought has lifted man to realms of happiness which the eye of earth and the ear of clay have not heard nor seen.

The kingdom of the most wondrous power is the hidden kingdom of mind. The intellect commands supreme adoration. The lasting homage of mankind is poured out upon the altar of genius.

Burns says :—

> The charms of the min', the langer they shine,
> The mair admiration they draw, man;
> While peaches and cherries and roses and lilies,
> They fade and they wither awa', man.

What king of Greece sat upon a throne as lasting as Homer's? What sovereign of England has reigned so long in the hearts of his subjects as has Shakespeare? What emperor of China has swayed the destinies of empires like Confucius? What sheik of Arabia, or sultan of Turkey, has led his followers to victories like Mohammed, whose seven years of splendid military triumphs make him the Washington of his country? Socrates will live when the last glory of Athenian greatness has been forgotten. Burns will hold his sceptre over our hearts when Scotland's name is lost among the ruins of nations. The pyramids of Egypt are only the monuments of minds still higher which once towered above her mental plains. It is the grandeur of the man which makes the stone immortal that is reared above his grave.

The highest pleasures are those which satisfy the mind. The eye and the ear are avenues which lead to the purest realms. They are streets of the soul. The eye should see only what is beautiful; the ear should hear only what is pure and true. It was once thought that the five senses were five ways for the Devil to reach the heart, and that anything which pleased the eye, the ear, the nose, the palate, or the touch, was devised for man's ruin. But now the senses are looked upon as channels of communication between the world within and the world without. The beauty which fills the universe, instead of being a snare, is a beatitude. Man is educated by what he sees, hears, and touches, and is saved by the wonderful charm of nature which surrounds him.

We have progressed beyond the control of that rigid sentiment that regarded human enjoyment as a sin. Healthful pleasure is found to be a demand of our nature, and this age is concerned in promoting those conditions of life which are calculated to make living a joy, and existence a blessing.

Man's first necessity is to eat. Hunger makes the first demand upon the world. Nature's mouth is always open. To find something to eat is every man's imperative duty if he would live; and something for those to eat who are dependent upon him, if he would keep them alive. Life can be continued only by its demands being supplied. How to get this supply is the foremost problem of mankind. Everyone is born with an appetite for food and drink, if for nothing higher.

I would not cut the border of pleasure from the table, and reduce living to its lowest terms; nor blush with guilt, as Thoreau hinted that he should, for expending the vast sum of eight dollars and seventy-four cents for food during a period of eight months. We readily pardon his extravagance and forgive his economic blush for spending twenty-seven and a half cents a week for what he ate, when we find that his drink cost him nothing but a walk to the spring.

While believing fully in a generous diet for the body, I believe that a man need not be unhappy because he cannot sit down to a dinner of seven courses. Man does not need to be urged to multiply his animal pastimes. It is more necessary to tell him to hold his appetites with a rein of restraint. In eating and drinking we should emulate those chaste, temperate companions—the brutes of the field. The morality of food is a subject which will yet be discussed intelligently. We are told that "there is similarity 'twixt men and swine"; and why not, since men eat them? We are more closely related to our victuals than we imagine. What we take into the stomach influences our actions as well as what we take into the brain, and when we consider how large a proportion of mankind provide food only for their stomachs, what wonder that we have so many bodies six feet high with intellects only a foot high. A bread-and-butter majority elects the dominant habits.

The cry for something to eat and to drink is the cry of nature; but when this demand is answered, others of equal importance, though not making so much clamor, need to be met. What we shall satisfy our appetites with has been a question which heretofore has been answered with little thought of its general consequences. Man cannot eat and drink to himself alone. Not only our complexion is a bulletin of our indulgences, but they are revealed in our politics, in our philosophy, and in our religion. It is undoubtedly true to a certain extent that he who eats beef thinks beef, and also that our thoughts are more or less colored by the beverages we drink. Coffee, that dusky wine, is said to paint muddy pictures in the brain; and tea, that spur to the nerves, to drive the system until it is a wretched wreck. The advocates of animal food for man point with satisfaction to the preference of the divine appetite for lamb over vegetables; but does it follow, because Abel's offering was more acceptable to the Lord than Cain's, that what is good for gods is good for men? The vegetarians claim divine sanction also for their bill of fare, and quote with equal pleasure that God gave man only the herb and the fruit of the seed-yielding tree for meat.

L. K. WASHBURN.

—*Boston Investigator.*

*(To be continued.)*

## THE MURDERER'S HAVEN.

It happened 'tother morning,
A tick or two past eight,
There came a spook a-tapping
At Peter's golden gate.
The sleepy Peter cautiously
Slid back his little wicket,
And growled: "Pray where are *you* from,
And where's your bloomin' ticket?"

"I've come from England," said the spook,
In accents bland and soft,
"Where one named Berry has a knack
Of jerking souls aloft.
This pass the chaplain gave me,
When I had had a bath
In Jesu's blood; he said that would
Appease Jehovah's wrath."

St. Peter smiled; "Come in, my friend,
You'll find this pretty snug;
I wouldn't, perhaps, be here myself
But for a fellow's lug.
For God, you know, delights in blood
Since Abel killed that lamb;
For Cain and his ripe apricots
He didn't care a damn.

"And so you'll find throughout his Word—
Which, doubtless, you have read—
The dearer to God's heart the man,
The more blood he hath shed.
There's Dave, for instance—cut-throat chief—
*He* pokes about the Throne
And sings duets with good old Abe,
While I'm stuck here alone.

"Sometimes the young 'un comes around
And brews a drop of booze,
But then some straggler's sure to come
And spoil the mild carouse.
But come right in and take a harp,
And join the cut-throat throng,
And screw your pegs to concert pitch
And vamp their doleful song.

"And when you're tired of harping,
You can look down into hell;
You'll see the damned in anguish,
You'll hear your victim yell.
'Twill much enhance your happiness,
And make you sing with zest:—
Lor, can't the Devil give em socks
Lor, ain't I truly blest.

T. CLARK.

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## THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

*(Company Limited by Guarantee.)*

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION.

1.—The name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.

2.—The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.

3.—The objects for which the Company is formed are :—

(*a*) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.

(*b*) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.

(*c*) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.

(*d*) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.

(*e*) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.

(*f*) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.

(*g*) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.

(*h*) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.

(*i*) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.

(*j*) To employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants for the same end.

(*k*) To publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals.

(*l*) To assist, by votes of money or otherwise, other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects.

(*m*) To have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

(*n*) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred society in any part of the world.

(*o*) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

## And so They were Married.

Minister (to a man wishing to be married)—Do you wish to marry this woman ?

Man—I do.

Minister—Do you wish to marry this man ?

Woman—I do.

Minister—Do you like the city as a place of residence ?

Man—No ; I prefer the suburbs.

Minister—Do you like the suburbs ?

Woman—No, indeed ; I prefer the city.

Minister—Are you a vegetarian in diet ?

Man—No ; I hate vegetables. I live on beef.

Woman—I can't bear meat. I am a vegetarian.

Minister—Do you like a sleeping room well ventilated ?

Man—Yes ; I want the window away down, summer and winter.

Minister—Do you like so much fresh air ?

Woman—No ; it would kill me. I want all windows closed.

Minister—Do you like a light in the room ?

Man—No ; can't sleep with a light ; want the room dark.

Minister—Are you afraid in the dark ?

Woman—Indeed, I am. I always have a bright light in the room.

Minister—Do you like many bedclothes ?

Man—All I can pile on.

Minister—Do you ?

Woman—No ; they suffocate me.

Minister—I hereby pronounce you man and wife, and may the Lord have mercy on your souls.—*New York Weekly.*

## STAFFORDSHIRE CLERGYMAN AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS.

A Lesson in Local Self-Government.

A correspondent writes : The controversy which has been raging for the past month or so between the Rev. G. B. Brown, the Vicar of Aston, near Stone, and the schoolmaster of the parish schools, has had a termination which will exercise a far-reaching influence over the destinies of Voluntary schools in the county. It would appear that Mr. J. Plant has been schoolmaster at Aston for upwards of forty years. He has the merit of being a self-educated man, and, moreover, he has kept abreast of the times, studying to meet the requirements of the Education Department. This he has done so successfully that he has often secured the highest reward that can be given to a schoolmaster—exemption from a Government examination. The schools of which he is in charge were, up to this week, under the control of the vicar (Mr. Brown) and his two churchwardens. Mr. Plant some time ago requested the vicar to enlarge this Committee of Management, as there was constant friction. To this the vicar replied by giving him notice of dismissal, to take effect on August 1 next. When this became known, the parishioners were very indignant. The result was that a memorial was extensively signed, asking that at least Mr. Plant should continue in office until the present Government had passed their proposed Teachers' Superannuation Bill. Under this the schoolmaster would have been entitled to a yearly pension of between £40 and £50, whereas, if he were dismissed, it would only be half that sum. The influential parishioners, headed by Mr. Harold Wright, the Potteries stipendiary, who is the son of the late Mr. J. Skirrow Wright, the well-known North Staffordshire Liberal, thought this was a reasonable request and heartily supported it, with the result that it was signed by nearly every parishioner. The memorial, however, was ignored, and then Mr. Wright and two other lay gentlemen, in addition to the vicars of the neighboring parishes of Stone and Yarlet, addressed a letter to the school managers, asking them to reconsider the notice of dismissal, pointing out that Mr. Plant deserved greater consideration at their hands. They also pointed out that, in their "opinion, such a summary dismissal is, according to our present information, unjustifiable, and must raise the very gravest questions as to the general management of Voluntary schools throughout the country." To this the managers replied that they had received the letter, and that "they had appointed a new schoolmaster." Undeterred by this rebuff, the signatories of the letter interviewed the Bishop of Lichfield, and on his recommendation deferred further proceedings for a period, the Bishop stating that they would receive in a week a communication which would put matters right. They waited for a week, and yet another, but no communication came. Then they went further into the matter, and found that there were no official trustees of the school. They approached the owner, Mr. Harry Burr, of London, with the result that he offered a lease of the schools to Mr. Harold Wright and Mr. T. M. Paterson. These gentlemen at once accepted, and this week a meeting of the parishioners was held to discuss what should be done in the future. That meeting, which was crowded, resolved unanimously to take the management of the schools in their own hands. When it came to the question of who should be the managers there was much discussion. Mr. Wright said, as five gentlemen were to be in control, the vicar should be one, offering to retire in his favor. But this the parishioners, among whom were several ladies, would not agree to. In the end, six candidates were put up, the parishioners nominating a working man, Mr. John Mitchell. When the vote was taken the vicar only received nine votes, whereas the other five candidates were unanimously approved. The result was that the vicar and the churchwardens, the late managers of the school, are now prohibited from interfering in the management. The decision caused a great deal of surprise, for it means that throughout the many parishes in the county there is trouble looming ahead, for a great number are in a similar position to that at Aston.

—*Daily News.*

The Infidel was on the sea—
The storm was raging high.
He said : "There is no help for me,
Save only in the sky.
Lord, if you'll bring me safe to shore,
I'll preach the gospel evermore !"

Safe to the shore his ship was brought,
But while he knelt to pray
The natives came, and him they caught,
And did prepare to slay.
They said : "On him we'll dine and sup !"
And in three hours they ate him up !

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# BOOK CHAT.

Mr. Malcolm Quin, who conducts the (Positivist) Church of Humanity at Newcastle-on-Tyne, has issued a very able and well-written "Tract" of twelve pages on *The Spanish-American War*, copies of which are supplied gratuitously by Mr. J. T. Looney, 119 Rodsley-avenue, Gateshead. Mr. Quin appeals to "statesmanship," which is wise as far as it goes. But statesmanship is not everything, and sometimes it amounts to very little. Popular passion often counts for a great deal more, especially in free countries. Further, there is a kind of instinct in nations that drives them on in spite of all advice. Interest and feeling, rather than reason, have always determined the general course of human affairs. Mr. Quin seems not to make allowance for this. His argument appears too academical. He contends that "the main responsibility for the war rests with the United States." They had no business to interfere with the domestic arrangements between Spain and her colonies. Abstractly this is true enough; practically it often becomes false, because it involves an impossibility. Cuba is so near to the great Republic that its citizens could not keep cool over the infamies perpetrated there; at last they became hot, and a nation in that state is pretty sure to *do* something if it *can*. Then again, Mr. Quin argues that the European Powers should have stopped America's aggression. But here he overlooks the feelings of the English people, who would never have tolerated their navy being used to coerce America in concert with the navies of France, Germany, and Russia. Altogether, it seems to us that Mr. Quin's advice is calculated for conditions that do not exist. If the European Powers want to influence the settlement between Spain and America, they have to do it by way of suggestion, and not by way of intimidation. America is in no mood to brook their interference; and Russian, German, and French battleships could do next to nothing in American waters, because Uncle Sam and John Bull between them hold nearly all the coal in the Western hemisphere.

* * *

Mr. Quin says many excellent things eloquently in the course of his Tract. Here is one: "War has lost none of its ancient odiousness. On the contrary, modern civilisation—opposed to war as it necessarily is, by its conditions and by its aspirations—has yet invested it with new horrors, and a more terrible resource. Nevertheless, it has abandoned its frank brutality. It is no longer openly waged for its own sake. It has ceased to be an ideal. It is not now boldly and purely aggressive. It is ranked with the greatest of human calamities, and at least cannot avowedly be carried on for mere purposes of glory or conquest. It is driven to justify itself by some decent pretexts of trade, of philanthropy, or political liberation."

* * *

We referred recently to the unfairness which was shown to Freethinkers in such books as Chambers's *Encyclopedia*. We now find that Haydn's *Dictionary of Dates* sins in the same way. This book professes to give a list of blasphemy prosecutions, which must have been compiled either by a malicious or a grossly ignorant person.

* * *

Beeton's *Dictionary of Religions* has an article on "Secularism," which is evidently the work of an orthodox editor. So many cases of wilful misrepresentation and unfairness have come to our notice in well-known reference books that we are not surprised at the popular ignorance of Freethinkers and their aims.

* * *

The London *Echo* has for years been in the habit of referring to "Tom" Paine. It never makes the mistake of printing "Billy" Gladstone.

## The Greatest Liar.

Among the curious experiences of the Salvation Army few are more amusing than a case reported from Magdeburg in Germany. In February last one of the newspapers published in that city contained an announcement inserted as an advertisement that, at an approaching meeting of the Salvation Army, "the greatest liar in Neustadt, a suburb of Magdeburg, would be exposed." Of course the Army meant by this the devil, the father of lies; but how were the German police to know this? An action was taken against the newspaper and against the lady who presides over the Magdeburg "corps," for using language calculated to disturb one or more burghers of Neustadt who might possibly feel themselves pointed at. There were doubtless persons in Neustadt who were the greatest liars there, and if they were caused uneasiness by this advertisement, those who inserted it deserved punishment. The Court agreed, and the editor and the "captain" were each fined twenty marks, or in default ten days' imprisonment. They are serious people the German police.—*Christian World.*

## SABBATH-BREAKING; OR, GOD'S LAW AND MAN'S AMENDMENT.

"Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, *he shall surely be put to death.*"—God (Exodus xxxi. 15).

"Absurd! and wicked! move to omit the last fifteen words."—Parsons (everywhere).

"Remember the Sabbath!" said Jahveh, said Moses,
Say clerical noodles and knaves
To those that, ignoring what Reason imposes,
Are thus, *perforce, free* to be led by their noses
With all the abasement of slaves.

Yet parsons contemn Jahveh's law for infraction—
'Tis death on the "seventh" to pick sticks,
Or journey a mile, or perform any action
Entailing more work than a specified fraction
Of what may be done on the "six."

Although they say Jahveh was wise in enacting
The law of hebdomadal rest,
His penal command they are always infracting,
Thus thinking Him foolishly over-exacting;
Thus thinking man's wisdom the best.

This brutally murderous, queer regulation
Is one of the popular "Ten,"
The "Ten" that are taught as the root and foundation
Of all that is moral or good in the nation,
By salary-sanctified men!

You're told to remember the Sabbath; but, mind you!
You're ordered to kill folk that fail—
"Observing" and "punishing" equally bind you—
So never let civilised sentiments blind you!
But slaughter them, female and male!

You cannot essential constituents sever,
Nor shuffle God's laws as you choose;
He gave them, and said *He would alter them never*;
So follow the *whole* of His statute for ever,
Or leave it entirely to Jews!

G. L. Mackenzie.

## Sky Pilots.

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"Boys," said a teacher in a 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."—*Ram's Horn.*

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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 (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, The Wyndham Dramatic Company in "My Lady Help" and other sketches.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss. Peckham Rye: R. P. Edwards—3.15, "The Third Commandment"; 6.30, "Christ and his Teaching."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 7, T. Thurlow. July 27, C. Cohen.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen, "Foreign Missions."

FINSBURY PARK (near bandstand): 3.15, H. Snell, "What Freethought Teaches."

HAMMERSMITH (The Grove, near S. W. Railway-station): 7, A lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Lucretius Keen—11.30, "God *viâ* Christ"; 3.30, "Has Man a Free Will?"

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, Stanley Jones.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Heaford.

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, E. Pack. July 26, C. Cohen.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, H. Courtney, "Christianity and Progress."

COUNTRY.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, W. Wilber, "Some Reasons why I am a Secularist."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Lecture-room, corner of Raby and Parker-streets): 7, Discussion between J. Reid and A. McCormack, subject: "Individualism *v.* Socialism."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, A lecture.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—July 24, m., Wood Green; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 26, Limehouse; 27, Mile End; 31, m., Kingsland; a., Finsbury Park; e., Victoria Park. August 7, m., Camberwell; a. and e., Peckham Rye.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—July 31, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell.

T. J. THURLOW, 850 Old Ford-road, London, E.—July 24, e., Mile End Waste.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

VOL. XVIII.—No. 31. SUNDAY, JULY 31, 1898. PRICE TWOPENCE.


## GOD'S GLEANINGS.

CHRISTIANITY teaches an exclusive salvation. Its divines have very rarely doubted that all non-Christians would be damned. The wisest and best of the "heathen" were all doomed to everlasting perdition, for no man could possibly be saved except by faith in Christ. It was in Hell, and not even in Purgatory, that Dante saw Brutus, and Saladin, and the great Aristotle, the "master of those who know." "Firmly believe, and doubt not at all," said Saint Augustine, "but that not only all pagans, but also all Jews, heretics, and schismatics, that end this present life without the Catholic Church, shall go into eternal fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels." The Church of England articles declare that "they 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." The Book of Homilies admits that "Jews, heretics, and pagans do good works; they clothe the naked, feed the poor, and do other good works of mercy." Yet, because these good works are not "done in the true faith," the doers of them are "lost." The whole doctrine is vigorously and logically summed up by Bishop Beveridge in his *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*. "Let a man," he says, "be never so strict a Jew, never so strict a Mahometan, never so strict in any other religion whatsoever, unless he be a Christian he can never be saved. So that, though many Christians may go to hell, yet none but Christians can ever go to heaven."

Every missionary society is founded upon this doctrine. It was not sensationalism, but plain charity, on the part of a famous American Mission to issue an appeal on behalf of the millions of Africans who rushed every year like a cataract over the precipice of hell. If that was indeed a fact, it was a case for urgent benevolence. And every missionary society presupposes it as a fact. Nothing else could excuse the diversion of such vast sums of money from Christian countries, where so many people need relief from destitution and misery. Just as you might leave a hungry man for a while in order to save a man who was in immediate peril of being burnt to death, so you might leave a suffering white man who had a chance of heaven in order to save a happy black man who was going straight to hell; for what is temporal suffering here compared with eternal suffering hereafter?

Besides, if you admit that anybody but a Christian can go to heaven, you destroy the necessity of Christianity altogether. If every honest man is entitled to a seat in paradise, what is the use of all those myriads of churches and chapels, all those armies of priests, and all those multitudes of sermons? Salvation by good works subverts the very foundations of priestcraft by making churches and preachers superfluous. This is clearly perceived by the professional men of God of every denomination. It is true that the Catholic Church allows a certain efficacy in good works, but it does not admit their sufficiency; while the Protestant Church denies the efficacy of good works altogether, and derives salvation entirely from the free grace of God. Both Churches, therefore, assert the necessity of faith; in other words, they affirm, by implication if not explicitly, that it is impossible to go to heaven without being a Christian.

Now, if only Christians go to heaven, and many Christians go to hell, the question arises, What is the real number of those who are saved? Here again we are met by the general opinion of Christian divines in all ages that the saved are few in comparison with the lost. Many are called, few are chosen. The way to heaven is narrow, and few there be that find it. Jeremy Taylor, our English Chrysostom, declares in the plainest terms that the future lot will be "bad to the greatest part of mankind." He confesses it is "fearful consideration," but instead of seeking to soften it he presents it in all its rigorous horror. "The greatest part of men and women," he says, "shall dwell in the portion of devils to eternal ages." Thomas Watson, the Puritan preacher, whose writings were evidently studied by the late Mr. Spurgeon, says that "most go to hell," and that "to be of the number of those few who are delivered from it" is therefore "a matter of infinite thankfulness." Indeed, he makes the following quaint calculation:—

> "Divide the world into thirty-one parts, nineteen parts of it as possessed by Jews and Turks, seven parts by Heathens; so that there are but five parts of Christians, and among these Christians so many seduced Papists on the one hand, and so many formal Protestants on the other, that we may conclude the major part of the world goes to hell."

The old Puritan proceeds to emphasise and illustrate this with a certain relish. There are few jewels and precious stones in the streets, but plenty of mire. The wicked are as common as dirt in the street. Surely this is bad enough; but the preacher meant to drive the truth home to his hearers, so he concentrated all his faculties for a soaring climax. "The Devil hath the harvest," he exclaims, "and God only a few gleanings."

Bravo, Thomas Watson! That cannot be beaten. You have said the last word on this wonderful doctrine. By the alchemy of genius you have transmuted a world of verbiage into "one entire and perfect chrysolite" of simile. We picture the Devil reaping the big field with glad triumph, and God humbly and painfully picking up the scanty leavings, like Lazarus feeding on the crumbs that fell from Dives' table; and we commiserate the poor deity who is doomed to such unprofitable labor in the field which he himself ploughed and sowed—nay, created!

What a pitiable being this Christian doctrine makes of God! It is a wonder that the believers in it do not have a lucid interval to laugh at their own absurdity. Many of them succeed but poorly in life, but none of them fail as ignominiously as their God. He who foresees everything is disappointed! He whose power is infinite is baffled! He whose wisdom is infinite is circumvented! He who made and sustains everything is almost a beggar in his own dominion! Could anything be more ridiculous?

What reason do these people assign for their belief? Nothing but a cock-and-bull story about Adam and Eve, who were tempted by the Devil in the Garden of Eden, who sinned by eating forbidden apples, and thus entailed what is called "original sin" on all their posterity. Every educated person knows that this story is false, and the doctrine founded upon it is equally so. It is not even true that man is in any sense fallen. According to evolution he has risen. His faults of sensuality and temper do not spring from the temptations of a devil. They spring from his strong passions, weak judgment, and lack of self-control. They are not an intrusion upon his primitive innocence; they are a legacy from his far-off animal origin, and they gradually disappear in the upward course of his development.



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If there be a God, it is inconceivable that he is eternally baffled by one of his own creatures called the Devil. It is incredible that he should desire the happiness of all his children, and yet allow this Devil to lead off the vast majority of them to everlasting misery. Those who argue that this arrangement is part of an infinitely wise and good plan, and even that God has a right to do as he likes with his own, are guilty of intellectual absurdity and grovelling immorality. That cannot be wise and good in God which is foolish and wicked in man; and the real blasphemers are not those who denounce the puerilities of theology, but those who affirm that there is a God, and represent him as possessing the intelligence of an idiot and the character of a criminal.

G. W. FOOTE.

## AUTHORITY IN BELIEF.

In this critical age it is more than ever desirable, not only to believe what is true, but also to know *why* we believe it to be so. We agree with the advice of Peter when he said: "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." Unfortunately, the great majority of orthodox believers seldom trouble themselves either as to the nature and value of the opinions they entertain, or the authority upon which such opinions are based. It is as Dr. Watts wrote: "For the most part, people are born to their opinions, and never question the truth of what their family, or their country, or their party profess. They clothe their minds as they do their bodies, after the fashion in vogue, nor one of a hundred ever examines his principles. And thus men, without any industry or acquisition of their own, inherit local truths—that is, the truths of that place where they live, and are induced to assent without evidence. This hath a long and unhappy influence; for, if a man can bring his mind once to be positive and fierce for propositions whose evidence he hath never examined, and that in matters of the greatest concernment, he will naturally follow this short and easy way of judging and believing in cases of less moment, and build all his opinions on insufficient grounds." Similar indifference is manifested as to authority in belief, or, in other words, the reasons for adopting certain views. People attend church or chapel, and are supposed to endorse what they hear there expounded; but they hardly ever inquire what are the grounds of the belief they are asked to accept. It is this failing that has given priestcraft the immense power it possesses over the human mind. Hence Freethought urges the necessity of each individual acquiring as far as possible a knowledge of the basis upon which his or her beliefs rest. Of course, this would not necessarily be a guarantee that these opinions would be correct, but probably in many cases it would lessen the risk of accepting erroneous views, and at the same time supply an intelligent reason for endorsing beliefs which commend themselves to the judgment of the individual.

In the *Church Gazette* of July 9 there appeared a very discriminating editorial article upon this subject, in which the various notions as to authority in belief are set forth. It is there said: "One disputant, for instance, will, perhaps, cite the authority of the Fathers as conclusive; another will state his own unsupported beliefs; and another will choose passages from the works of the various sacred writers, and will call them 'texts.' We protest against such summary treatment of open questions." The following four authorities are then dealt with—namely, the Pope, the Church, the Bible, and the Individual Mind. To the first three our Christian contemporary takes exception. And yet it is upon these very authorities that the various orthodox sects have based their respective beliefs. Surely Freethought has indeed been potent in destroying the reliance upon that which was for ages regarded as the only foundation for the Christian faith. This new departure is another illustration of the varying and doubtful nature of the religions of the churches, and also an additional proof of the efficacy of Secular propaganda.

We are assured that the Pope "offers no solution" which those who are outside of his Church can accept. Of course he does not, simply because his very training and associations disqualify him as an authority upon theological beliefs in general. With Roman Catholics reason is no prominent factor in deciding which is the true belief; that is a function of absolute faith as interpreted by the Pope. The Church is admitted to be equally deceptive as an authority, for the question arises, *What* Church? As the *Gazette* put it: "The whole question as to the Church, and what that Church consists of, is itself far too much beset with difficulties on all hands to afford seekers any solid foundation or ground of belief. To point to 'the Church,' again, as the seat of authority is to assume that the Universal Church is at one, which is far from being the case; while to assign such authority to the Church of England is to occupy the weak and hopeless position of a half-way house between positions both separately tenable, but itself untenable. Being neither one thing nor the other, but an illogical compromise, such a position satisfies no one. Further, all claims on behalf of any particular Church are merely weak copies of similar, but stronger, claims on behalf of the Pope. Now, there is only one Pope, but there exist several different forms of Church orthodoxy to choose between. But such choice is an act of the mind itself. We are, therefore, thrown back on private judgment, after all, to decide between final arbiters, which amounts to a contradiction in terms." Thus two long-cherished authorities for Christian belief are discarded.

But thousands of earnest believers will exclaim: "Our authority is the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." The *Church Gazette* agrees with the first two items in this exclamation, but not with the third. It grants that "a great deal besides the Bible" is wanted to meet modern requirements. The reasons given for the insufficiency of the Bible are thus pertinently stated: "We must firmly maintain that the various writers of different portions of the sacred writings are not always in absolute harmony with each other, and especially is such discrepancy obvious between writers who are separated by wide intervals of time. But there is nothing approaching finality in all this. More. Had the sacred authors been even in the most perfect harmony throughout, yet the advances and developments of some eighteen centuries would, in any case, have rendered fresh sources of light indispensable, as has been remarked by an able correspondent in a previous number. Thus, the Bible can neither provide an *entire* source of authority for us, because many questions of recent growth have difficulty in finding in it any parallel; nor even a *final* authority as to matters it does actually treat of, because in some of these its writers differ more or less among themselves." These are plain but accurate statements, and, coming from such a source, the admission is a significant corroboration of the Secular position; but here our agreement with the Christian editor ends, so far as this article is concerned. He contends for the "whole Bible," with "a great deal more besides." But is the *whole* Bible desirable, and, if so, is it of any practical value to us as an authority? We think not, for the very attempt to put into practice certain portions of Bible teachings would annul the advantages conferred by the "great deal more besides." Of what earthly use would be many of the biographies, the obscene teachings, and the brutal commands of the Old, or the impossible and out-of-date injunctions of the New, Testament? None whatever; and, fortunately for human progress, apart from the Peculiar People no one at the present time makes any serious attempt to obey the one or to heed the other. They belong to the past, and most intelligent persons have long ceased to regard them as having any ethical force. Besides, the Church editor admits that the "discrepancy" of the Bible is "obvious," and that "its writers differ more or less among themselves." How, then, can that which teaches such contradictions be an authority in matters of belief? That the "whole Bible" is not a real authority upon these questions is evident from the many conflicting views which are supposed to be based upon its teachings.

The final authority, according to the *Church Gazette*, is the "Individual Mind." It, however, adds: "It is true that the human mind is a very imperfect instrument, and very often fails to act rightly. Yet it appears to be all that has been given us by nature for our ultimate guidance." Undoubtedly this is correct, but we take a decided exception to the following bold allegation: "Thus, pure reason, based on facts, does not constitute a final arbiter of belief; for, after all, it is the mind which has to judge of facts, and of reasons founded upon them; and in that ultimate decision the mind is final and supreme." Here we come in

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contact with the old theological statement, that the mind is an entity and something distinct from reason. But is this so? We regard the term "mind" as indicating the entire intellectuality of man, including his reason. Therefore, we cannot conceive of a higher and more trustworthy authority than "reason based on facts." This was the opinion held by such writers as Morell, as stated in his *Mental Philosophy;* by Hooker, as set forth in his *Ecclesiastical Polity;* by Chillingworth, as plainly alleged in his *Religion of Protestants*; and by Bishop Butler, who, in his *Analogy of Religion*, writes: "Reason is, indeed, the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself."

While, therefore, we admit that "Individual Mind" is the highest authority in belief, we include in that cultivated reason, when fortified by knowledge, guided by experience, and strengthened by discipline. Dr. Reid observes: "Reason is the principle by which our belief and opinions ought to be regulated"; and Dr. Watts, in his *Logic*, writes: "Reason, in its own nature, would always lead us to truth in matters within its compass, if it were used aright; but our sloth, precipitancy, sensuality, passion, and many other things, lead us astray." The truth is, Christians are always ready to appeal to reason when they think it supports their views; but when it renders them no aid, it is by them denounced as incompetent and misleading. As, we think, Charles Southwell once said: "Either reason is competent to fully, fairly, and finally decide on matters pertaining to religion, or it is not. If it is, then to depreciate it must be folly, and to neglect it insane. If it is not competent, all appeals to it are futile in the extreme."

CHARLES WATTS.

## "FORGETTING GOD."

TWENTY-ONE years ago an excellent old man (he was a Christian—that is of no account; he was a gentleman—that is everything) gave me a "Scripture Text-book," which I still preserve. One of its sections is entitled "Forgetting God." In this section are ranged threatening groups of texts, charged with thunderbolts of wrath and admonition against such as "forget God." To "forget God" is said to be a characteristic of the wicked; a mark of backsliders; the work of false teachers; a possible result of trials; an offence that will be punished; and a sin which implies forgetfulness of God's covenant, works, benefits, word, law, and power.

The years have passed, and, for all practical purposes, I have wiped the idea of God out of the book of my life. I look back upon my old theological creed as a man looks at the baby coat which he once wore, and which his mother fondly cherishes as a memorial. Once I prattled; once I prayed. To me—I know not how it might be with immortals—the world is changed, and the age of both prattle and prayer has slipped into the irrecoverable past. The vain babble of orthodox reproach—"the godless is a fool, the godless is a scamp, the godless is a failure, the godless will go to his prescribed niche in hell"—all this shower of Christian roses falls fragrant on my head, and leaves me unchanged. Except for critical and historical purposes, I have "forgotten God." The terrible list in the "Scripture Text-book" alarms me about as much as a viper steeped in a naturalist's bottle of spirits. Its bolts strike harmlessly. Quietly and steadily I reverse all its affirmations. To forget God, "a characteristic of the wicked"? Our best science forgets God; our best philosophy forgets God; our best poetry forgets God; our best education forgets God. Is it a mark of "backsliders"? All the great forward movements of the world borrow their weapons from the armoury of man, and their watchwords from the language of human lips. Is it the work of "false teachers"? False teachers do not usually stand in minorities; mistaken teachers may, but not false ones; false teachers do not give their day to toil, their nights to wrestling, and their life to a hope which orthodoxy calls forlorn. Is it a possible "result of trials"? Yes; but not in the sense intended by theologians. They mean that tried and suffering men may lose belief in God simply out of sheer disappointment. No; we lose faith in God through a sense of justice. The sorrows of the earth preach a natural atheism, and bid us reject every conception of an all-wise and all-kind God ever yet presented in book or rhetoric. Is it an offence that will be "punished"? The suggestion is absurd. If, indeed, an Omnipotent existed, it seems to me he ought to reward the man who would not repeat a creed he did not believe, and that God would give sincere atheism his supreme benediction. A straw can flutter along with the orthodox wind. It needs a heretic's honest will-power to face the blast of fashion. As to God's covenant—behold the Jews; his works—observe the tape-worm; his benefits—think of the Black Death; his word—ask the Biblical critics to find it; his law—is the world under his law? If his law is effective, then the pain and battle and injustice of the world stamp his law as bad, and if his supposed law is ineffective, it is no law at all, and there is no divine "power" for us to "forget."

The babe's little coat once protected his body; the man casts it aside without contempt. Theology once warmed and aided the human soul; the hour has come when we ought to forget it except as a relic of our forefathers. Why do we attack it? Only because it is thrust upon us as a legislation for the rule of modern life. Let vested interests repeal this legislation, and we shall close the campaign. Who wastes time in abusing the spelling of Edward the Third's days? It did well enough for Chaucer. But if a government, smit with antiquarian fever, should seek to impose Chaucer's orthography upon the printing-press of 1898, we should burn the government and its spelling-books together.

Let childhood forget God. The child is happy in its wonder at things bright and strong. When he grows older he will ask how and why the evil and the good consort so strangely together in the affairs of the universe. But we need not force the arrival of this problem. Our theological teaching will only induce an artificial precocity. Has not human life riddles enough? Why do we thrust our confused doctrine upon the little mind, and set it racking with the question, Why does not God kill the Devil? Let the child go and play. Give him pictures, flowers, music, occupations meet for his years, and useful ideas of history and of daily duty; but do not give him a creed; do not bid him kneel; do not worry him with God's commandments. Treat him kindly; he will respond. Discipline his thought; he will grow in wisdom. Behave justly to him; he will be honest. Act as a good father to him; he will reck little of a father in heaven. Bestow on him a mother's love, and your chamber shall be the shrine of his noblest Madonna.

Let youth forget God. What! passionate blood cross the threshold of love without the guiding hand of Heaven? And the wide world of marriage and parenthood open up its infinity of problems without any aid from the sphere beyond nature? Yes, exactly that. If we have laid the basis of good habits and character in childhood, and if we are wise enough to give all due respect to the claims of lovers (these claims are often neglected), the young man and the maid will work out their salvation by themselves. He leads her to new developments, and reveals noble capacities that slept till he kissed them into womanhood. She persuades him to new efforts; she checks him, when none else in heaven or earth can check; she teaches him the reality of life. I know perfectly well what incompetent theology wishes to say at this point—that youth without the ruling hand of the celestials will run riot, and go down to devilry and black night. Theology neither understands nor trusts human nature. It sees—what an imbecile can see—that sexual power brings with it the possibility of degradation. It does not see—what only the humanist and positivist can see—that sexual power, preceded by a sound moral education, has in itself the germs of social progress and regeneration. For the new-formed manhood and womanhood thrill with love, pity, and justice. The family is the creative centre where love thinks of its fellow, where pity cares for the babe and the ailing, and where justice renders to each his rightful share.

Let the prime of life forget God. Man shall learn to walk alone. Man is the creator, the providence, the judge, the savior. Man is the creator. He is light, for he reveals the secrets of the bowels of the earth. He is wisdom, for he has made all the sciences. They say in books of piety that nature displays the greatness of God. Nay, rather, it displays the greatness of man. The stars tell of the astronomy by which man has threaded the maze of the glittering host. Flowers and trees and mosses recite the triumphs of botany. The ground under our feet whispers

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of the patient building-up of geology, mineralogy, agriculture. The whole round of this earthly dwelling repeats the tale of man's achievement. And when education is conducted on a saner method, it will delight to show the child the power and majesty of the Creator, Man, to whom all the arts and industries owe their origin. Man is the providence. He watches the seasons, and governs seed-time and harvest. He feeds and clothes and protects. He over-rules the elements of disorder and crime. His tender mercy cares for the blind and the dumb, and his shield guards even the beast of the field. Man is the judge. He detects sin, and weighs vice and virtue in the balances. He hates iniquity, and pours out his wrath upon the oppressor. He is a consuming fire. Slowly but surely he effects the doom of unrighteousness, and no lie shall avail against his anger. Man is the Savior. He reconciles man to man, and some day will reconcile class to class. He dies that man may live. He sheds his precious blood. He, for his brother's sake, is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He is persecuted by man, but he forgives. Martyrs and reformers have been buffetted and spat upon and slain, and yet their love is unabated. Their race continues. New redeemers come upon the stage, and offer their bodies as a sacrifice for truth and justice. And some day Man shall gather the nations in one fold, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Let old age forget God. Old age, as the Ancient of Days, shall be the monitor of young strength, giving good counsel, and deducing the lessons of history. Old age knows, better than youth, how the world marches, and how small hopes become mighty victories, and how the little group expands into a nation. The old man rejoices to see the fruit of his labors. By his example and activity he has stimulated another generation. He has created his successors. They will go on conquering because his hands have taught them the art of war.

Let us all forget God. We have knelt, we have scattered incense, we have paid our vows; but the temple is cold and silent. Self-help is better than divine help. Let us till the earth with our own plough. Come forth and close these gates, and let none but the ivy touch them evermore.

F. J. Gould.

## MORAL INSTRUCTION AND THE BIBLE.

Every attempt at educational reform in England sooner or later finds itself blocked by the position the Bible holds in public opinion. This book is in possession; it is the bulwark of so many vested interests and inherited superstitions, that almost any reform is bound at some point to traverse the claims set up on its behalf. When, therefore, the Moral Instruction League was formed for the purpose of "substituting non-theological moral instruction for the theological instruction at present received in public schools," although the movement received the hearty support of the N. S. S., it was pointed out by its representatives that some definite public statement of the League's attitude towards the Bible would become more and more necessary as its work developed.

Partly, however, as the result of a deliberate policy on the part of a number of its promoters, and partly, I am afraid, as the result of temperamental dislike to wounding the curiously sensitive feelings of the religious world by attacking the educational status of "that Blessed Book," this aspect of the matter was practically ignored in the earliest official utterances of the League.

To my mind this was a mistake for two reasons. To conduct an avowedly anti-supernaturalistic propaganda, while refraining from attacking the Bible, is to spend one's time threshing the air; for in England the Christian scriptures stand as the practical incarnation of supernaturalism, and all rationalistic propaganda resolves itself into an attack upon its pretensions. It is the Bible that is placed in the hands of children who attend public schools; it is the Bible that is made the foundation of the supernaturalism received by the child, and it is consequently the Bible we have to fight in our attemps to secure for the rising generation a more effective education.

And, secondly, if it was imagined that the cry of moral instruction would disarm the enmity of the religious classes —particularly the interested religious class—then the League woefully under-estimated the shrewdness of its opponents. When it comes to a question of personal interest, the clergy are not less shrewd than any other class in the community, and it was only to be anticipated that they and their supporters would soon detect the old Adam of "secular education," in the new birth of "moral instruction," and act accordingly. A policy of ignoring the Bible will not do. It satisfies neither its friends nor its enemies; and, almost against its will, the League held a meeting on July 19 to determine what should be its policy in this matter in the future.

Practically, the meeting had two questions to consider. First, should the Bible be placed in the hands of children attending public schools; and, secondly, should it come under the head of general literature, and thus serve as a basis for the instruction given, provided such instruction be of a non-theological character.

The first question was summarily disposed of. To all classes of Rationalists the Bible, with its stories of revolting massacres, its unsound ethics, faulty notions of natural processes, and absolutely indecent language, is the last book of all to place unreservedly in the hands of the young. Years ago, Dr. Martineau, no prejudiced witnest against the Bible, declared that "Parents who would guard the moral purity of their child—who would not wish him to find access anywhere to impressions and premature knowledge of wrong; who would dread his contracting a sympathy with ferocious and intolerant passions; who would maintain his estimate of duty wisely graduated, and not suffer him to confound secondary with primary obligations; who would mix no taint of selfishness with his morality, of ignoble despondency with his conceptions of life and death—will be cautious in their use of the ancient Scriptures, and permit no unregulated access to them within their home. Of course there will be a clamor; but their duty is not to their bigot neighbor, but to the child at home." The above statement, I take it, has only gained a sharper edge by recent experiences.

The second question was one that naturally gave rise to the greatest discussion, and, unfortunately, was decided in the affirmative. Personally, I am firmly convinced that to keep the Bible in the schools on any pretence is to play the game of the parsons, and undo with one hand whatever good we may be doing with the other. The Bible is so saturated with supernaturalism, and there are so many people interested in quickening whatever latent superstition there may be in a child's nature—and all have that tendency more or less developed—that the suggestion received at school is easily quickened into active operation by the numerous incidents of everyday life, thus retarding the development of the child and society at large.

It is useless saying that we would teach the Bible free from all supernatural implications. The thing is an utter impossibility under existing conditions, and must remain an impossibility for some considerable time to come. The position the Bible occupies in the world at large—nay, the mere necessity of the League's existence—precludes the possibility of dealing with the book upon the same level as ordinary literature. If that were possible, the League might dissolve to-morrow. As it is, to imagine that one can deal with the Bible as one would deal with an ordinary book in a country that supports a trained army forty thousand strong, and spends upwards of £25,000,000 annually for the express purpose of popularising it as a supernatural production, is as ridiculous as it would be to attempt to deal with the Koran in the same manner before a fanatical Mohammedan population. One might treat either the Koran in England or the Bible in Turkey as an ordinary piece of literature, because in these cases there is an absence of prejudice in their favor; but to imagine that a professedly Christian population would ever so regard the Old and New Testaments, is to come dangerously near the burlesque.

Nothing short of a complete transformation of the social and intellectual environment could ever secure this desirable result. As it is, the only way to secure the Bible being treated as ordinary literature is to destroy its position as an inspired volume; and the first step in this direction is to remove the fantastical idea that a knowledge of the records of a tribe of Asiatic semi-savages, to quote Archdeacon Farrar, "the most scientifically ignorant people of one of the most scientifically ignorant ages," is in any sense a necessary part of a child's intellectual outfit.

There are those who profess a fervent admiration for the Bible as literature, and would have it retained in the schools on that ground. I cannot rank myself as amongst

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that number. To me it has always been apparent that by far the larger part of the charms attributed to the Bible are due to the accidental circumstance that our version was translated during what was, perhaps, the highest period of English literature. Its grace of style can be seen to an equal, if not greater, extent in the best Elizabethan writers, while as to subject matter, as Nordau says: "It has been excelled by every first-class piece of literature produced during the last three centuries." And I do not hesitate to say that if a truly literal translation of the Bible in contemporary English were forthcoming, it would charm but few, and would certainly bore a large number. Even as it is, if we discount the number that read it from a feeling of superstitious veneration, or a spirit of stupid imitation, and count only those that have, so to speak, discovered the Bible, where one reads it with pleasure and instruction, twenty read Shakespeare with greater pleasure and greater profit.

Candidly, I cannot but regard these protestations of affection and veneration for the Bible as due to the operation of the very feeling the League should aim at destroying. If the suggestion were made to introduce the Koran into the schools it would be received with either indignation or contempt by the larger number of those who spend their ingenuity in devising schemes for the retention of the Bible. Yet both these books belong to the same class of literature, their only difference being a difference of local color, not of substance.

I do not at all admit that it is necessary in public schools to teach the Bible to children in either an unenlightened or an enlightened manner. I believe the world to be large enough, varied enough, and human nature inventive enough, to produce cartloads of moral fables and maxims without introducing, in the remotest manner, the Bible, with its evil implications and associations; and I cannot but regard with a certain amount of distrust professing Rationalists who appear to regard the book as such a powerful educative force that it must be utilised in some shape, and at all costs.

The mere selection of the Bible for use in the schools in any form, even if it did nothing else, must inevitably breed the sectarian spirit in such as come under its influence, and turn them out blind partizans of a sect rather than well-trained mental athletes in the struggle for existence. But it does more than this. A fictitious reverence for the book is created, its selection is a practical admission that it stands on a higher level than other writings, and the clergy find it pretty easy to work in after years upon the suggestions revered by the mind in its more plastic condition of existence.

The game of the clergy is simple. They support the book because the book supports them. It is a case of "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." The policy of the thorough-going Secularist is equally plain. We want the book out of the schools because, once admitted, on any pretext, no regulations under the sun can prevent supernatural beliefs being impressed upon the uncritical mind of childhood. Time will show which party will ultimately succeed. The party that is trying to keep the world swathed in the grave-clothes of a dead Jew, and to guide its aspirations by a literature which is chiefly remarkable for its evil influence upon the course of European history, or the party that is seeking to make education what it should really become—an instrument to train the child in the right use of brain and muscle, and thus secure a new and powerful factor in the progress of the world.

In this matter no compromise is possible or advisable. The matter was tinkered with in 1870, and we have had nearly thirty years' religious squabbling, with a consequent injury to education as the result; and it is to be hoped that the Moral Instruction League will neither mar the usefulness of its work, nor alienate the more robust of its supporters, by unwise concessions to a party which is the hereditary enemy of education, or to a set of feelings it should be our chief object to destroy. C. COHEN.

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Theodore F. Seward, the organiser of the "Don't Worry" clubs, tells a good story of a little boy who had reached the multiplication table in the course of his education. One night he was sitting anxiously over a paper of figures, when his mother came along and said: "Johnnie, do you find your arithmetic very hard?" "Yes, indeed, mamma, I do," was his reply. "It was so awful hard that I prayed to God to help me, but he's made three mistakes already."

## HELPS TO HAPPINESS.

*A Lecture delivered before the Paine Hall Society, Boston, March 13, 1898.*

*(Continued from page 475.)*

I HAVE never seen any divine opinion on the subject of food that I thought revealed much consideration for a hungry person. I believe that more happiness can be extracted out of life if men and women have plenty of good, wholesome food to eat than if they are obliged to live on bread alone, and not much of that. I should say to man:—Eat, drink, and wear the best that you can afford. There is nothing too good for man. Do not starve your body or mind. Fasting is a sin as much as feasting. I believe in everybody enjoying life that can, and in making conditions that will enable more to do so. Poverty is a curse, to be borne, if necessary, but to be removed, if possible. Life is a poor gift if it knows no fate but poverty. Poverty is the "great desert" of modern civilisation, whose burning, blinding sands overwhelm thousands every year. I will not deny the cruelty of nature. There is no use to tell a lie in the face of the truth. But nature is not alone cruel when winter's cold hand is laid upon the earth, when the very sunshine seems to have frozen in the sky; not alone cruel when the merciless heat dries up the land, when all the beauty and glory of earth is turned to premature death, and the golden promises of a harvest are dry and withered lies; not alone cruel in storms, in earthquakes, in lightning's fatal flash, in the pitiless teeth of wild beasts, and in serpents' fangs.

Nature is cruel in all this, but far more cruel when man is born weak, unable to fight successfully the battle of life. Thousands are born, not only with plenty beyond their reach, but with everything which makes life beautiful beyond their reach. It is true that they may breathe the air, walk the earth, and see the stars; but man cannot eat the earth, cannot clothe himself with air, or live on stars.

Nature is on the side of the strong, the fair, the sound, and healthy. There is no pity in nature for the poor in body or mind.

We have been taught to believe that "all men are created equal"; but the truth is, that men are not created at all. Men are born, and they are not born equal either. There is as much inequality in birth as in life. Some are born with music in their hearts, and others with sorrow and tears. Some are born with power to conquer, and others with that weakness that is easily enslaved.

I do not believe in denying facts. It is a hard, cruel fate to be born unable to turn life into joy, into victory; but thousands every year are thus born. These unfortunates help swell the ranks of poverty, help increase the vast army of the poor. I do not say that they ought not to be born, but I do say that they ought to be better born.

I do not say that a person who is poor may not enjoy life, but there can be no general happiness where there is general want and misery. I know that we have the Bible's assurance that we always have the poor with us, but that should not prevent us from trying to reduce their numbers. But nature is not alone cruel. Man is cruel also. The indifference of man to the suffering, the wretchedness of his brother-man is as cruel as frost, as drought, as famine.

> Man's inhumanity to man
> Makes countless thousands mourn.

I am on the side of anti-poverty, but I do not believe that the way to abolish the poverty of some is to abolish the property of others. I want to see labor independent. I want to see the working man own the house he lives in. I want to see him well dressed and well fed, and his family well educated and with pleasant surroundings. There is no beauty in the face of poverty. You may sing of honest poverty, and, while we may applaud the singer, we do not like the song. Honest poverty is far better than dishonest poverty, but we do not want any. It has no business in a country like this, where the earth holds out its hands every year full of grain, full of fruit, full of riches of all kinds.

No problem of more gigantic proportions, or of more solemn import, confronts the nineteenth century than how to secure justice to those who toil. It is a most astounding condition of things when those who work must go hungry. The fruit of the world should not be withheld from the hands that gather it. To-day the good things of earth are

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taken by the idlers, while the workers own not the soil under their feet or the roof over their heads.

I do not blame people for complaining of injustice. There are wrongs in this country which must be righted, or the bold notes of freedom will not be heard much longer in the land. The fact that one man can, in less than thirty years, obtain possession of one hundred million dollars shows that all stealing is not yet looked upon as a crime. Men are poor to-day because they are robbed, because they are oppressed, because there are men who will take advantage of the necessities of their fellow-beings. The dictionary may not define such an act as a crime, but the human heart does, and I believe that, if we condemn the acts of the rich which cause suffering to the hearts of the poor, we shall make no mistake.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not endorse the mad rush for wealth that is seen in nearly every avenue of business to-day as sensible or commendable; but money, in our present state of civilisation, is one of the best friends of man. A dollar is the symbol of labor, and should be the reward of labor alone.

I want to see every dollar in the world an honest dollar, honestly earned, honestly held, and honestly spent, a dollar that will not be ashamed to own how it comes or how it goes. I would like to see a desire among men to enforce this sentiment, to rescue money from avarice, from vice, from oppression, from speculation, from everything that dishonors, disgraces, and debauches man.

While I hold that happiness has a material basis, I do not assert that it comes only on the wings of wealth. I believe in all the comforts of life, and believe that money is wisely used when it adds to human enjoyment or human satisfaction; but there is one thing that riches cannot purchase, and that is—manhood. Money can buy the gems of earth and of the sea, but it cannot buy the gems of the soul. It cannot buy the brain of Shakespeare, the soul of Shelley, the heart of Burns. It cannot buy love, nor peace, nor happiness.

There must be a broader, a deeper, and a sounder idea of the worth of money than prevails throughout society to-day, and the common hypocrisy in dealing with this question must be condemned. Let us all frankly own that we enjoy what are called worldly things, that we like good homes, good clothes, good food, and good things generally, and let us manfully defend this taste as nowise contrary to what is right and just.

I do not like the ethics of poverty which are taught by the Christian Church. I do not like to hear a minister pronounce a blessing upon the poor. Let us be honest, and honestly confess that the patched-up morals of the New Testament are not fit for this century. We do not believe in them, we do not respect them, we do not care for them, we do not practise them. They were intended for men and women without moral independence, for a state of society which has mostly passed away, and the man who professes to honor the moral teachings of Jesus in this age is a hypocrite. Do not tell me that the Christian Church has any sympathy for the poor. The sufferings of men, women, and children in every land where Christianity has an altar or a pulpit prove that the professors of this religion love money more than they love man. In every Christian nation on this earth people are in want, while there are millions upon millions of dollars' worth of yellow gold piled up by the hands of Christian greed.

When anything becomes more sacred than man, more sacred than the life and happiness of human beings, it is time to break the idol that protects it. There is property enough on this globe, consecrated to God, to relieve all the want and poverty on this globe. Let the Church set the example of justice and stop taking the hard-earned wages from the aching hands of the poor. When Christians ask me to go to their church, I tell them that I want nothing to do with a God that takes money from a washerwoman.

I would rather see the priests in rags than working men. I would rather see the houses of God tumbling down than the homes of men. I would rather hear thanks to man than praises to God. If human beings have enough to eat, we need not worry if the gods all starve. One dollar spent for earthly happiness is better for mankind than a thousand dollars spent for heavenly joys.

I pity the sad army of the poor, and sometimes feel as though I wronged my race by being comfortable when so many have but little to cheer and enjoy. I would see the sunshine—that jewel of the universe—adorn every human life. I would put a virtue where there is a vice, a good habit where there is a bad one, and happiness where there is misery. But to change human fate imposes the task of changing human conditions and human lives. The kingdom of poverty cannot be overthrown or conquered while men have habits that keep them poor.

Man needs every human help that he can have, every aid to a higher life, to a better home, to a more cheerful view of existence. Those persons who have the world at their feet should abdicate their advantage. Any person who possesses a noble power is under obligation to make a noble use of it. The man or woman who has the power to help a fellow being, to do what will make it easier for that fellow being to live, has a sceptre that he should wield with magnanimity. Must we go falling for ever over stones in our search for stars?

Nothing is more needed than a gospel of charity. We are human, and humanity means imperfection. Because men sometimes do wrong, sometimes yield to the fair persuasions of temptation, they are not to be denied sympathy and help. Failings ought to be treated with kindness. In all justice there is charity. If those who have always done right were the only ones to punish those who do wrong, not many would be punished. There are fictitious dangers that need to be stripped of their terrors, false ideas of things that need to be corrected. It is religion that has painted pleasure as an evil and enjoyment as a vice.

On general principles we may defend our humanity. Human nature is filled with good intentions. I say this with full appreciation of all the contemptible things that mankind have done. It is an up-hill job to be a man; but, at the same time, I believe that everyone makes the attempt. Every failure to reach a satisfactory life is a tragedy of suffering. We have to begin this life of ours without experience. No one is born wise. We may inherit the face, the form, the strength or weakness of our fathers and mothers, but we have each and all to acquire a wisdom of our own. I do not believe that any preceding generation possessed all the knowledge that this generation needs to have. If we were not to surpass our ancestors, we should not have been born. We are told that we are disrespectful to grey hairs when we assert opinions contrary to those held by age. Grey hairs do not know everything. All the fools are not young. A great many people die, after having lived eighty years, only a little way from where they were born. It depends upon what heads grey hairs grow whether they are to be reverenced. Age in itself is always to be treated with respectful consideration, but age alone does not represent wisdom. There is no authority in the grey hairs of history. There is no infallible age. We stand to-day nearer the light, and can see things as they are better than the men of any past time.

Most of the wisdom of life is learned by the few and repeated to the many. Tell the world a truth, and it is too dull to perceive it or too weak to comprehend it. Truth is like gold; a few find it, but everybody has the use and benefit of it. L. K. WASHBURN.

—*Boston Investigator.*

*(To be concluded.)*

## Death: Christian and Pagan.

DEATH AN ENEMY.

For, since by man came death, the last *enemy* that shall be destroyed is death.—*St. Paul.*

DEATH A FRIEND.

What is it to die? If we view it in itself, and stripped of those imaginary terrors in which our fears have dressed it, we shall find it to be nothing more than the mere work of Nature; but it is a childish folly to be afraid of what is natural. Nay, it is not only the work of Nature, but is conducive to the good of the universe, which subsists by change. Do not despise death, but accept it willingly; look upon it as part of the product of Nature, and one of those things which Providence has been pleased to order. For such as are youth and age, growth and manhood, and all natural actions and incidents of life, so also is dying. He must look upon death as Nature's business, and wait her leisure, as he does for the progress and maturity of other things.—*Marcus Aurelius.*

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## ACID DROPS.

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen." Thus begins the will of the Right Reverend Edward Twells, formerly vicar of St. John's, Hammersmith, and latterly Bishop of Orange Free State. The personal estate of this minister of the gospel of blessed-be-ye-poor is valued at £25,478 16s. 8d. There may be destitute curates knocking about in England, but some of the black fraternity find it pays extremely well to preach the religion of poverty.

It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Bishop Twells knew it, but he took his chance; and, if some other Bishop will only die and leave us £25,000, we will take it and all the risks with the greatest cheerfulness.

The Yankee soldiers who gathered in the camp at Tampa, in preparation for fighting the Spaniards, appear to have "made things hum." "Never was Tampa so wicked as now," wrote a correspondent of the New York *Christian Herald*. That is one view. Now for the other. "But, at the same time," this correspondent wrote, "never was Tampa so good and virtuous and Christian as now." These two views appear contradictory, but a considerable acquaintance with the history of Christianity satisfies us that they are very likely both true.

Monday was the day of St. James the Great, the patron saint of Spain. At a famous battle, more than a thousand years ago, he fought on the side of the Spaniards, and slew 60,000 Moors with his own hand. He appears to have got out of practice since then, judging by the recent encounters between the Spaniards and the Americans.

The clergy of Ipswich are protesting against the establishment of a Sunday omnibus service in the town and vicinity. They say it "will injuriously affect the Christian observance of the Lord's Day." We hope it will. But is not this a sectarian and professional objection? Competition is a good thing for the majority, however it may threaten the antiquated business of a small minority.

Despite the abolition of Church Rates, the good old Church of England has all along been legally quartered on the parish of Marylebone; but so much objection has been raised of late years that the Church deems it prudent to beat a retreat. This strategic movement, however, is being covered by a special Bill, which will mulct Marylebone in something like £100,000. It costs a pailful of blood even to get rid of these blood-suckers.

The Darwinian theory, which teaches the kinship of man with all other forms of life, seems to be illustrated by the case of Henrietta Whitaker, of 41 Stanley-road, Wakefield. This lady had a stomach something like an ostrich's, minus its enormous powers of digestion. For three years she had suffered from pains in the stomach, and the post-mortem made for the inquest revealed the fact that she had swallowed hundreds of fruit stones, pins, and pieces of straw. She must have had a curious appetite.

Replying to a correspondent who asked him to allow the recitation of the Athanasian Creed to be henceforth optional, instead of obligatory, the Archbishop of Canterbury states that he "has no legal power to authorise the omission of the Athanasian Creed." Of course he hasn't. The matter is settled in the Prayer Book, and the Prayer Book was settled by Parliament. Until the legislature chooses to make an alteration, the Athanasian Creed will continue, like a tiger, to hold on by its damnation clause.

The Rev. Hon. J. G. Adderley, to whom we devoted a couple of paragraphs in our last issue, is "actively pursuing his crusade against the Secularist movement." So says the *Daily Mail*, which also states that he draws very large crowds in Hyde Park on Sunday afternoons, and that animated discussions follow his addresses. We hope this is all true. It always pleases us to see the clergy attacking Secularism. They advertise it to many people who might not otherwise learn that there was such a sensible system in existence.

"Father" Adderley states, through the *Mail*, that he began by answering the Secular lecturers; but, as he only got five minutes to the lecturer's hour, he decided to set up his "own tub," and now, he says, "I take my own time." He considers the apathy of the Church very reprehensible, and declares that Secularism should be fought with its own weapons—whatever that may mean. As far as we know, the weapons of Secularism are honest investigation and fair discussion. If these are the weapons referred to, we hope "Father" Adderley will continue to employ them against Secularism.

By the way, if "Father" Adderley is so fond of discussion, it is a pity that he does not take steps to have enough of it. Should he be prepared for a set debate on Christianity and Secularism, we venture to say that he can soon be accommodated with a capable and representative opponent.

Russia is the land of strange Christian sects. The following is the official report of some of them: Several of these sects go to an extreme degree of fanaticism; such as the Skoptzy (self-mutilators), Khlysty (flagellants), Stefnovtsy, who abandon their children in forests to be devoured by wild animals; the Raziny (gapers), who, on Maundy Thursday, stand with open mouths in expectation that the sacrament will be administered to them by angels; the Stundists, who refuse to recognise the priesthood or the sacrament, and reject all outward forms of worship; the Molokany (milk drinkers) and the Doohobortsy (wrestlers of the spirit), who deny the Holy Ghost.

The Stundists are the most persecuted of these Russian sects. They refuse to recognise the priesthood, and that touches the Church in a most vital spot. The worst heretics are always the practical ones—those who threaten the trade of priestcraft.

Five thousand pounds was wanted to restore Holy Trinity Church at Stratford-on-Avon. A strong appeal was made to the public for this amount, but the *Church Gazette* says that "the result has been very disappointing." "It looks," our contemporary says, "as if Shakespeare was more talked of than appreciated." This is bad grammar and bad logic. Shakespeare's admirers may not be particularly interested in the restoration of churches.

Père Didon made a speech the other day which has caused a great sensation. He advocated the subordination of the civil to the military power in France. Père Didon is a fashionable and popular Catholic orator, and author of the *Life of Christ*, which is a counterblast to Renan's famous book on the same subject. His speech, therefore, is significant of the aim of the Church, which, with all its fine, specious pretences, is always at heart the enemy of free thought and free government.

Athol Forbes, in the *Weekly Sun*, asks why a Bishop "cannot behave as a gentleman to those in the humbler positions in life." Another writer, signing himself "A Bishop's Chaplain," declares that the men who mount the episcopal benches "are transformed into veritable caricatures of humanity."

John Kensit, the Protestant champion, comes out with a half-page advertisement on the front of the *Rock*. He refers to John Wickliffe, who wanted to place England in such a position that other nations would "have to acknowledge that a God-fearing people should rule the universe." Surely this is a very large order. We always thought that ruling the universe was the business of God Almighty. John Kensit probably meant the "world," but his enthusiasm (or his want of education) ran away with him, and he wrote it "universe."

Honest John asks for the modest sum of £10,000 to carry on the work of the "Reformation" in England. He proposes to spend this sum, apparently, at his own sweet will. He doesn't know whether he will obtain it or not, but "we leave the matter in the Lord's hands," he says. Yes, but the money will never get there. Besides, if the matter is in the Lord's hands, why should John Kensit worry? Can't the Lord do what is wanted without John Kensit's puny assistance? A flea assisting an elephant is nothing to John Kensit helping God Almighty.

"The Protestant crusade" goes on merrily. There was very nearly "a shocking scene," as the *Westminster Gazette* puts it, at St. Michael's, Shoreditch, on Sunday. Mr. Upton, refusing to listen to an official, was assaulted, and this led to a general scrimmage. Miss Roberts joined in it to assist her young man, and she was turned out by the 'stalwarts of the Guild of St. Michael." When the policemen came and the row got ended, the Rev. F. Weston preached a sermon on "What is Truth?" What is common-sense? or, What is decency? would have been a more appropriate question.

Mr. George Wise, at Liverpool, headed 4,000 Protestant lambs in a raid upon a High Church opposite the Bishop's palace. A row was prevented inside; but outside there was a wild scene of confusion, and the police were quite unable to deal with the crowd. The Rev. Cyril Wilkins was very roughly handled, and would have been seriously injured, if not killed, had it not been for the interference of two stalwart policemen, who carried him off into a mews. He was struck with sticks and stones, and bled profusely. Altogether it was a lovely spectacle, reminding one of the good old days when Christians were always fighting and murdering each other.

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Another demonstration took place at St. Columba's Church, Sunderland. Mr. Herbert J. Jowett jumped up and formally denounced the vicar as "a perjured traitor," in the service of the devil. How these Christians do love each other, to be sure! And how urbane they are when they happen to differ!

Mr. Jack, a Congregational minister, rose and "protested" at St. Miriam's Church, Whitby, and his friends congratulated him on his "courage and fearlessness." It does not appear, though, that he ran any particular risk.

If this sort of thing goes on every High church will have to keep its organist in readiness to play up strongly when the "protestors" begin business. We look forward to great developments in this direction. There is a splendid opening for brass bands. One of Booth's bands would settle any protestor in a jiffy. We have seen a jackass bray like thunder at the crazy cornet and the offensive big drum. Even *he* couldn't stand them. But they played him down.

The *Christian World* welcomes the publication of the *Polychrome Bible*. Henceforth, it says, it will not be so easy to talk about the Pentateuch as the "five books of Moses." Children ought not to be told lies, and "to speak of the great Book as in itself the Word of God, or as written by the finger of God, or as an infallible revelation, is not an accommodation or an 'economy'; it is a lie."

Is the Church of Rome coming round on the question of cremation? "There is no need," says Professor Schell, "to attack cremation as a thing internally objectionable to the Church. Ecclesiastical custom and decrees ought to be respected, but they are not unalterable."

A Bombay magistrate has fined a well-known bookselling firm, Messrs. Thacker and Co., the sum of five hundred rupees for selling Zola's *Pot Bouille*, which he described as "a licentious novel written with no moral or decent object." The same worthy magistrate would not entertain the charge against the same firm of selling Casanova's Memoirs, because it was sold at the high price of three hundred rupees. Apparently, therefore, the "obscenity" of a book in the eye of the law depends upon what it costs. In other words, it is the poor, not the rich, whose morals must be protected against corruption.

The Watford Board of Guardians has had an application from the Rev. H. Goodwin, chaplain, for an increase of stipend. The reverend gentleman says he has striven to fulfil his "arduous and trying duties" for eighteen years, during which time he has had the pleasure of seeing everybody's salary raised except his own. Mr. Gilliat, one of the Guardians, pointed out that the man of God's salary was £150, which he described as "enormous," and so it is for a preacher of "Blessed be ye poor." The decision on this weighty matter was postponed for a fortnight.

John McNeill, the evangelist, has got married, and his sister Kate bursts out in verse over the event in the *Christian Budget*. The last four lines are remarkably rich:—

> God's bounty will so far exceed
> The widest prayer I might repeat,
> If for a planet I should plead
> He'd roll a system to your feet.

We suggest one improvement in the second line. "Widest" should read "wildest." The verse reads all right then. Evidently the gushing poetess has an extravagant opinion of the merits of her new-married brother, or she looks upon "systems" as ridiculously cheap. After all, we guess the worthy John doesn't want a lot of worlds at his feet. He is probably satisfied with a tolerably good share of this one. It is more profitable to serve the Lord than to serve a Railway Company in the capacity of a porter.

Rev. Hugh Price Hughes has been elected President for one year of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. We shall have to bring out a new edition of our exposure of his "Atheist Shoemaker" story.

Mr. Hughes complains of four great dangers. One is the popular love of physical amusements. People like a football match better than a religious service. Another is the liquor trade—which the first Christians did not patronise because they had Jesus at hand to manufacture them good tipple out of cold water. Another danger is "daring and aggressive Romanism," which is not even afraid of the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The fourth is the "constant attacks made upon the sacredness of the Lord's Day." Mr. Hughes casts an angry eye at the "increase of secular concerts" on Sunday. He declares that they are really for profit. And why not? What on earth do ministers preach for? Is nobody to earn a living on Sunday but themselves?

We have been told that Mr. Hughes is an eminent Wesleyan minister, who is entitled to be believed upon his word. It would, therefore, be rash to question his statement, based, as he says, upon personal observation, that the visitors of museums, libraries, and art galleries on Sundays are eccentrics, foreigners, and hobbledehoys. Still, we cannot help saying that if *such* people, and such people *only*, visit the said institutions, it is rather difficult to see why Mr. Hughes is so eager to have them closed.

The late Rev. Dr. Binney published a series of discourses on *How to Make the Best of Both Worlds*. A copy of it, with five other books, was included in a recent sale lot, and advertised as follows: "Binney's how to make the best of this world and the next, and five others."

Heresy-hunts are not as popular as they used to be. The Presbyterian Church smothered the attempt to arraign Dr. Watson, of Liverpool; and now the Wesleyan Church has smoothed down the controversy over Dr. Beet's *Last Things*. The Churches know that they want all their forces to meet the common enemy.

There seems likely to be another split in the Liberal party. A number of Liberals, both clergy and laity, of the High Church party have sent Sir William Harcourt a strong protest against his utterances on Ritualism. They are Churchmen first, and Liberals afterwards, as he will probably find.

The Federal delegates out in Australia solemnly resolved to "recognise the Supreme Being in the Constitution," whereupon the *Sydney Bulletin* poetises as follows:—

> The politicians, grave, who nod,
> Assembled in convention,
> Have voted to the Most High God—
> An honorable mention!
>
> The news was spread at night. Alone
> I lifted up my eager gaze,
> And saw the constellations blaze,
> And heard a cheering round the Throne.

The Catholic Church in America is not going to abate a jot of its spiritual claims. One of its organs, the *New World*, Chicago, while admitting that the outcome of Protestant principles is secular education, declares that Catholics will never submit to have this in their schools. Religious belief, it says, it is a matter of authority; and for each man to judge for himself is so obviously foolish, that "the wonder is how any rational being can accept it." Having renounced as folly the right to think for himself, the good Catholic is content to accept the teaching of the Church, and will fight to the death rather than not see it imparted to his children.

The Rev. Dr. Daniel C. Potter, of the Tabernacle Baptist Church, New York, has been found guilty of conduct "unbecoming a Christian minister," such as drunkenness, lying, dishonesty, and undue familiarity with the women of his congregation. The said women, however, do not appear to have satisfied the reverend gentleman's Old Testament proclivities. He was also charged with attending questionable resorts for immoral purposes.

The Edinburgh School Board is going to prepare an expurgated edition of the Ten Commandments for the use of its school children. The best course would be to banish this absurd document altogether, but if it must be used the seventh commandment should certainly be omitted. Why should little children be taught not to commit adultery?

## The Bedborough Case.

Application was made on Monday, before the Recorder at the Old Bailey for an adjournment of the trial of this case, in consequence of the delay in the production of the indictment. The Recorder granted an adjournment until the September sessions. An application will be made to remove the trial to the Court of Queen's Bench, where it would come before a special jury. We are desired to state that funds are urgently needed by the Free Press Defence Committee, who are watching this case and providing funds for Mr. Bedborough's defence. The honorary secretary's address is —Mr. H. Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, Islington, London, N.

Scene—A Schoolroom. Teacher—"Who was the first man?" Little Boy (at rear of class)—"George Washington, ma'am." "Why do you think George Washington was the first man?" "Because he was first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen." Another boy raises his hand. "Well, Johnny, who do you think was the first man?" "Don't know what his name was, but I know George Washington wasn't the first." "What makes you so positive?" "Well, my history says that he married a widow, so there must have been a man ahead of him."

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

August 7, Hyde Park; 14, Clerkenwell-green and Regent's Park; 21, Finsbury Park; 28, Victoria Park.
September 4, Peckham Rye.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

W. H. Deakin, sending £1 for himself and wife as members of the Secular Society, Limited, says: "Freethinkers should rally round and take the opportunity of supporting this most excellent scheme, which seems to be so ably thought out for the benefit of their cause. Carping criticism is cheap. To stand by and wait to see what is going to happen will not help matters much."

A. U. Brown, becoming a member of the Secular Society, Limited, says: "I heartily congratulate you on the inauguration of this scheme, and hope it will prove an unqualified success. I hope the Freethinkers of the country will rally round you in a most significant manner."

C. Mascall, Wood Green Branch, joins the Incorporated Society.

Charles A. Watts, applying for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, writes: "Your far-reaching scheme should transform the outlook of Freethought, and I, as a modest worker in the Rationalist movement, desire to heartily thank you. Henceforth there should be no difficulty on the part of our more wealthy friends in leaving a portion of their estate for the sustenance of Freethought propaganda."

J. F. Quirke.—We have not been able to see the Belfast paper you refer to.

E. Hart.—We have received no complaint, and there is no need of excuse in the absence of accusation. The lecturer you refer to, however, is not one of "our lecturers," to use your own expression—that is, he is not a member of the National Secular Society.

Frederick Morgan, becoming a member of the Secular Society, Limited, says: "I hope the scheme will be well supported, as I think it will place the Freethought party in a better position—on a solid basis."

John Davis.—See the *Freethinker* for May 22. The passage Mr. Holyoake cited as proving that Mr. Wheeler could "write with authority in thought" was this: "To me, it appears that the necessity man is under of interpreting things outside himself in terms of his own consciousness is a sufficient explanation of the origin of all theistic beliefs."

Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, of Bolton, send us their applications for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. No two members will be more welcome.

J. E. Edgley.—Better let the discussion end than continue it with any loss of good temper.

C. H. Turner.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. Umpleby (Blackburn), a veteran Freethinker, and one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, joins the Secular Society, Limited. If a number of friends cannot be got to give £50 each, he will be one of ten to give £10, and will be glad to forward his cheque.

J. Keast.—Better leave the fellow alone. Mr. Foote will certainly pay Bristol a visit before Christmas.

R. Forder, secretary *pro. tem.*, has received the following applications for membership in the Secular Society, Limited: R. Taylor, C. J. Whitwell, George Ward, Elizabeth Robins.

Jas. G. Finlay (Coolgardie), subscribing to the Wheeler Fund, says: "He was a valiant and efficient soldier in the small Freethought army, and did his duty manfully and well. May we all do likewise."

Mr. Foote's annual holiday has to be mixed up with the active editing of the *Freethinker*. On both accounts he hopes his critical readers will not be too critical for a couple of weeks.

A. W. Marks sends £1, the entrance fee for himself and wife in the Secular Society, Limited. "We have great hopes," he says, "of the usefulness of the new movement, and shall give it all the help we can."

R. P. Edwards, 2 Fernhead-road, Harrow-road, W., is the new secretary of the West London Branch. Members and friends please note.

Francis Neale.—Thanks for the cuttings. Should be glad to receive something from your own pen more frequently.

H. R. Clifton.—Thanks for the August number of the little *Secular News*.

T. Wilmot, 9 Haydock-street, Cliftonville-street, S.E., is the new secretary of the Camberwell Branch.

J. Ross.—Date booked.

A. H. Kisber.—The hot weather seems to have got into your letter. Mr. Foote has closed the Athenæum Hall for a few Sundays only, and during that time he will be speaking at large open-air demonstrations in various parts of London, probably to thousands of people. How is that going backwards? Pray think the matter over again. With regard to the other point, this is not the time of year to make successful appeals, and we distinctly said that we should not *press* the appeal for the Secular Society's objects until a little later in the year.

John Hughes.—Received. Certificate of membership in the Secular Society, Limited, will follow in due course.

George Potter.—Too late. This number of the *Freethinker* is not on sale till the day after your meeting.

E. Lawson.—We answer here for the possible benefit of others. You have overlooked Article 25, which gives the Board power to suspend or expel any member. The other point does not need a special article. Any member can leave the Society, legally, by a written notice to the Board, or by not renewing his annual subscription. This is a matter of course.

"Freethinker" Circulation Fund.—We have received the following:—Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, 10s.; P. Sabine, 2s. 6d.

H. G.—(1) You ask what we think of the pamphlet. Well, we think it contemptible. The Bible suffers most from its friends. (2) We have referred times out of number to the nonsense that Ingersoll is *afraid* to answer Father Lambert. He has crossed swords with Judge Black, Dr. Field, Gladstone, and Cardinal Manning. These, especially the last two, were champions. Father Lambert is an insignificant priest. He is also ill-tempered and scurrilous.

Papers Received.—Liberator—Lancashire Daily Express—Lucifer—Freidenker—Isle of Man Times—Referee—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Awakener of India—Public Opinion—People's Newspaper—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Christian Budget—Progressive Thinker—Der Arme Teufel—Free Society—Crescent—Sydney Bulletin—Watford Observer.

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

## SPECIAL.

In the *Freethinker* of May 15 I stated that I should have to open a Fund for the regular judicious advertising of the *Freethinker*, for promoting its circulation in other ways, and to aid in its competent maintenance until these agencies produced the desired effect. That appeal, however, was brushed aside for the time, because I wanted to give a fair opportunity to the appeal on behalf of the widow of my dead friend and colleague, Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. It is now necessary to bring my appeal to the front again. This can be done without injury to the Wheeler Fund, which I propose to keep open until (say) the end of August. By that time everybody who means to subscribe to it may fairly be presumed to have done so.

Since my sub-editor's death I have been working like a galley-slave. I was not in a position to engage a new sub-editor, and another Wheeler will not turn up in a hurry. For the first month I paid his weekly salary in full to his widow; since then I have paid her one-half that amount regularly, as her affairs were not settled. The amount left for myself from the paper is the veriest trifle, and I am making arrangements for some paid assistance, as it is impossible to go on working at this rate much longer; in fact, nature is giving me plain warnings, which I dare not disregard.

I invite those who can spare a subscription, without injury to any other object, to send it to the "*Freethinker* Circulation Fund," and all I receive shall be duly acknowledged in these columns.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

The Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, being closed for a few weeks during the sultriest part of the summer, Mr. Foote is arranging a number of Freethought open-air demonstrations in various parts of the metropolis, in which important work he will be assisted by Mr. Charles Watts, Mr. C. Cohen, and other speakers. Mr. Wilson has kindly promised horses and brakes when necessary. The following places and dates have been already fixed by Miss Vance in concert with the local friends:—August 7, Hyde Park; August 14, Clerkenwell Green and Regent's Park; August 21, Finsbury Park; August 28, Victoria Park; September 4, Peckham Rye.

Mr. Foote proposes to finance these demonstrations in this way. Miss Vance and other ladies will take up collections where they are permitted, and out of the proceeds he will authorise the payment of an honorarium to the lecturers who assist in the work. He proposes to take nothing himself. Miss Vance will keep a record of the collections, and the debit and credit statement will ultimately be handed over to the N.S.S. Executive, and figure in the N.S.S. accounts. Any donation to supplement the collections, and to pay the part rent of the Athenæum Hall meanwhile, should be sent direct to Mr. Foote, who is personally responsible in this matter.

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The last number to hand of Mr. Joseph Symes's *Liberator* (Melbourne), dated June 18, contains a letter from R. Forder announcing the death of J. M. Wheeler. Mr. Symes adds the following himself:—"Excepting Mr. Bradlaugh's death, this is the saddest blow I have ever received. I first made Mr. Wheeler's acquaintance in Glasgow about twenty-one years ago. For a time we did not very warmly fraternise, as neither of us had had the opportunity of knowing and understanding each other. But all that soon passed away, and we became lasting friends. I valued him and his abilities and acquirements at a very high rate, as my readers must have judged from the number of most excellent articles from his pen which I copied into the *Liberator*. I am extremely sad to think nothing more is to come from his pen. Mrs. Wheeler and the friends in England have my deepest sympathy in this time of trouble and loss. It is a bit maddening that useless and mischievous quacks and things should live on to old age, and a man like Wheeler go under in the very prime of life."

The New York *Truthseeker* begins the publication of a new series of cartoons by Watson Heston. The first represents Uncle Sam giving thirteen dollars a month to a soldier who goes to fight the Spaniard, and a hundred and twenty-five dollars a month to a sky-pilot who stops at home to pray for the other fellow's success.

Secularists in West London are requested to attend the outdoor lecture at Hammersmith this evening (July 31) in order to protect the lecturer against the rowdyism which has been rampant there of late.

We make this request as desired; at the same time we venture to remind lecturers that tact goes a long way with all sorts of public meetings. Intelligence, sympathy, and patience are admirable devices for keeping order. But, of course, organised ruffianism must be checked by organised protection.

The Bradford *Truthseeker* for August contains a portrait of Mr. Charles Watts, with a brief biographical sketch contributed by Mr. A. B. Moss. Mr. William Heaford, in the same journal, appeals to Freethinkers to avail themselves of the "unique chance" afforded by the incorporation of the Secular Society, Limited.

"Mr. Charles Watts," the *New Age* says, "has done us the honor to reply in the *Freethinker* to our recent article on the 'Divorce of Religion and Politics.' Mr. Watts is a courteous controversialist, and we have nothing to complain of in the tone of his article." Apparently the editor of the *New Age* (Mr. A. E. Fletcher) is going to reply to Mr. Watts's criticisms.

## WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

South Shields Admirer, 5s.; J. Fothergill, 2s. 6d.; A. C. Brown, 2s.; Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, £1; J. G. Finlay, £2; A. T. Smith, 1s.; John Hughes, 10s.; P. G. Meek, 10s.

## Cut it Short.

A newly-appointed minister paid a visit to an elderly female of his flock. The guid wife was in the midst of her spring cleaning, and the minister met with somewhat brusque attentions. Finding her quite the reverse from gossipy, the reverend gentleman, before taking his leave, mildly offered to pray, when, to his surprise, he was sharply told: "Very well, minister; but ye maun cut it short, as I ha'e ma whitin'-brush oot by the oor."

Elias Howe, the inventor of the sewing machine, proved his patriotism during the war by enlisting and by frequent heavy contributions from his private purse. In November, 1862, his regiment was in Virginia, suffering great discomfort. Not having been paid off, and the men needing money, Private Howe advanced $13,000 due them. He sat at a table handing out the money, when a clergyman asked him for a subscription towards a new church. "Oh," said Howe, "this is war time." "Yes," the clergyman replied, "but we need churches, and hope you will give us something for St. Peter's." "Well, St. Peter will have to wait," said Howe. "Just now my money is being spent on saltpetre."

Minister—"I don't see how I am to get through my sermon to-day. It's almost church time." Fond Wife—"What is the text?" Minister—"It is about the wise and foolish virgins." F. W.—"But you were writing at that sermon last night. Why didn't you finish it?" Minister—"I couldn't; the lamp went out."

## DEATH OF DR. HUNTER.

Dr. W. A. Hunter, whose death has just been announced, was a man of great learning and greater ability. He represented Aberdeen in Parliament for many years, but he never filled a public office, although he was better qualified for it than most of the "successful" politicians. Two things kept him back—his lack of physical stamina and his well-known lack of religion. Dr. Hunter belonged to the philosophical school of Bentham, Mill, and Grote. He was a personal friend of another sterling Freethinker, Professor Alexander Bain. It was quite fitting that he should take charge of the motion which Charles Bradlaugh could not look to because he was dying—the motion that the unconstitutional resolutions which excluded him from his seat should be erased from the books of the House of Commons. Dr. Hunter interested himself in the attempted abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. Besides backing more than one Bill with that object, he published a valuable essay on the subject, and recommended that the laws against Blasphemy and Heresy should be absolutely and entirely repealed. At the time of my prosecution he wrote a vigorous letter against these odious laws in the *Daily News*. It was my good fortune to know him personally when he was editing the *Weekly Dispatch*. He did me the favor of allowing me to consult him whenever I pleased on any matter affecting the legal status of Freethought. I always found him most genial and full of that modesty which is so charming in men of great ability and high character. The last time I had the pleasure of seeing him was at Charles Bradlaugh's funeral. I rode down to Woking in the same carriage with him. A few other M.P.'s were in the company, including an Irish representative who spoke of him quite reverentially. I had a letter from him about a year ago, in which he regretted that he was quite incapacitated and could not advise me as to my scheme of a Secular Incorporation. I shall always remember him as in every way one of the best men I ever knew.

G. W. FOOTE.

## NOTES ON CHRISTIANITY, THE CHURCH, AND SLAVERY.

The following pretends to be nothing but a few memoranda from my note book, which were jotted down during a study I had occasion recently to make concerning the relationship of the Church to the institution of slavery.

It is repeatedly asserted by Christian apologists that Christianity abolished slavery. It will, however, I think, be seen that those who make such an assertion do so in reckless disregard of facts. Slavery in America was first introduced by a Christian country. Christian England exported 300,000 slaves from Africa between 1680 and 1700, and between 1700 and 1786 England imported no fewer than 610,000 into Jamaica alone.*

Slavery found its greatest support and justification in the Bible. The Christian Church not only supported it, but possessed slaves, and gave its whole influence almost against the abolitionist. The principal abolitionists in America were more or less heretics, and were denounced by the Christians as infidels.

Channing, Bryant, and Longfellow were Christians; Whittier a heretical Quaker, Emerson a Transcendentalist, Whitman a sceptic, Parker a Theist. Lloyd Garrison—who often had to deliver his lectures in the lecture halls of Secularists, because every church was closed to him—was a heretic; like Theodore Parker, he rejected every cardinal doctrine of the Christian creed. In his address at the sessions of the New England Anti-Slavery Society at Boston, May 31, 1860, after referring to Parker's religious belief, he said: "You may quarrel with that theology if you please. I shall not, I like it; I have great faith in it; I accept it."

Wendell Phillips said: "If there is anything of value in the work I am doing to-day, it may, in an important sense, be said to have had its root in Parker's heresy."†

* See Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, vol. ix., p. 500.

† Address delivered at the service to commemorate Parker's death, held in Music Hall, Boston, June, 1860.

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The author of *Aspects of Religion in the United States of America*, a Christian and an abolitionist, attended one of the abolitionist meetings held in Boston, at which Wendell Phillips, Garrison, and Parker Pilsbury spoke. During the speech of Pilsbury, the writer says, "he declared himself an infidel, professed to be at war with all creeds, and wished to punish the slavery party in this world, as he had no terrors of orthodox perdition in the next to shake over their heads." Of Garrison the writer says: "He animadverted in very strong language on the attitude of the orthodox Churches. He said that they had been experimenting with orthodoxy for two centuries, and, though it was a failure, America was bound by it hand and foot. He was violent, though not profane, in his language; but it was too evident that his aimings were against true religion." Wendell Phillips was the next speaker. "He abused religion, hurled maledictions against the Churches, declared his soul was under no trammels.....He stigmatised Washington and Jesus Christ as traitors to humanity; the one as the author of the Constitution, the other of the New Testament, both of which encourage slavery."*

The Bible was the slave-holder's text book, and from its sacred pages he forged his strongest weapons with which to fight the abolitionist. Instead of Christianity abolishing slavery, the Christian Church declared it to be a divine institution established by God himself. It upheld and aggravated slavery, and immeasurably delayed the day of freedom. More than this, slaves in Christian countries were subject to far greater cruelties than slaves were ever subjected to in Pagan countries. The authorities quoted in support of these statements, it must be remembered, are almost in every instance Christian.

It is anything but a difficult task to prove that the Bible was quoted time after time in support of slavery. When Theodore Parker published his pamphlet entitled *A Letter to the People of the United States Touching the Matter of Slavery*, he received among the many letters in reply one from a Christian slaveholder, who, addressing Parker as the representative of Beelzebub's heart, said: "You Negrophilists may write and publish for ever in your style, and with your matter, without striking the southern heart or enlisting its sympathies. Until, and only until, you prove by the Bible collectively—for it is a collection of theologic truths in its own stability unschismatic—that God did not allow slaves through Moses' prophetic writings to the Israelites, and that Jesus Christ, instead of being silent, and St. Paul coherent, had been of your own conclusion, that it was a sin without excuse. This is the great point you have evaded. Indeed, the whole controversy between slaveholders and anti-slavites hinges on the proofs from God's Word—God's Will—for either side! Till then, heaven forbid we should arrogate to condemn Moses, and to sneeze, as you, at the Creator!"†

In further proof that the Bible was the text-book of slavery, I quote the following from a defence of slavery by a Christian writer‡: "Ah! if the slave would only read his Bible, and drink its very spirit in, we should rejoice at the change, for he would then be a better and a happier man. He would know his duty, and the high ground on which his duty rests. He would then see, in the words of Dr. Wayland, that 'The duty of slaves is explicitly made known in the Bible. They are bound to obedience, fidelity, submission, and respect to their masters, not only to the good and the kind, but also to the unkind and forward; not, however, on the ground of duty to man, but on the ground of duty to God.'" The largest supporters of slavery were found among Bible-readers. In Bible-reading America there were four million slaves up to thirty-five years ago, while in "Infidel" France they were freed in 1815,§ and in 1848 slavery was abolished in every part of the French dominions.

"It is noteworthy that the anti-Christian French convention, influenced by the teaching of Rousseau, decreed (February 4, 1794) that slavery should be abolished throughout the French colonies, and all slaves admitted to the rights of French citizens."‖

It is admitted by a Christian traveller in America¶ that "The churches here, with one accord, maintain a general silence on the subject of slavery, unless provoked by some peculiar circumstances to a public declaration on the subject, and then it is in palliation of this 'domestic institution,' as it is called, and in denunciation of abolitionism." The following is taken from the *Southern Christian Advocate*, the Methodist journal of the South: "The Georgia Conference, a year ago, declared that slavery, as it exists in the Southern States, is not a moral evil."

The South Carolina Conference, at its sessions shortly afterwards, had the following proceedings on the subject:—

Resolved 1st: "That it is the sense of this Conference that slavery as it exists in these States is not a moral evil."

Resolved 2nd: "That we view slavery as a civil and domestic institution, with which, as ministers of Christ, we have nothing to do, further than to ameliorate the condition of the slave by endeavoring to bring him and his master under the benign influence of Christianity."

Bishop Hopkins of Vermont was asked: "What effect had the Bible in doing away with slavery?" He replied: "None whatever."

Missionary, Tract, and Bible Societies were all abettors of slavery. Frederick Douglas, the runaway slave, cried out in one of his eloquent speeches: "They have men stealers for ministers, women whippers for missionaries, and cradle plunderers for church members. The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week fills the pulpit on Sunday, and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus.....We have men sold to build churches, women sold to support the gospel, and babes sold to purchase Bibles for the poor heathen!.....The slave auctioneer's bell and the church-going bell chime in with each other, and the bitter cries of the heart-broken slave are drowned in the religious shouts of his pious master..... The dealer gives his bloodstained gold to support the pulpit, and the pulpit in return covers his infernal business with the garb of Christianity."*

The Charleston Union Presbytery of April, 1836, resolved: "That, in the opinion of this Presbytery, the holding of slaves, so far from being a sin in the sight of God, is nowhere condemned in his holy word; that it is in accordance with the example and consistent with the precepts of patriarchs, apostles, and prophets."

The Holywell Presbytery, South Carolina, said: "Slavery has always existed in the Church of God, from the time of Abraham to this day."

The Presbyterian Synod of Virginia resolved, unanimously: "That we consider the dogma that slavery as it exists in the slave-holding states is necessarily sinful, and ought to be immediately abolished, and the conclusions which naturally follow from that dogma, as directly and palpably contrary to the plainest principles of common sense and common humanity, and the clearest authority of the word of God."

The Charleston Baptist Association, in 1835, resolved: "That the right of masters to dispose of their slaves had been distinctly recognised by the Creator."

Not only the orthodox churches, but the Unitarian Church at its meetings again and again fiercely attacked the anti-slavery movement. Even Dr. Channing's congregation would not allow an anti-slavery meeting to be held in their chapel, nor the announcement of one held elsewhere to be made from the pulpit.†

When Theodore Parker first began to preach against slavery, he had to use great circumspection, and his biographer tells us that "the very mention of slavery as wicked at first offended all hearers. Some said they could see no odds between claiming freedom for a negro slave and 'stealing one of our oxen'; the right to own cattle including the right to own men.....He seldom entered his pulpit without remembering that he did so in a land where churchgoers were not more numerous than slaves."‡

Time after time the abolitionists, wherever they went, were met with the reply: "Why endeavor to disturb an institution that Scripture sanctions?"

W. WITT LEAVIS.

*(To be continued.)*

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* Pp. 84, 85.

† Quoted in *Life and Teaching of Theodore Parker*, by Peter Bayne, p. 181.

‡ *Liberty and Slavery*, by Dr. Bledsoe, 1856; p. 124.

§ See article "Slavery," *National Encyclopædia*.

‖ Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, vol. ix., article "Slavery."

¶ J. S. Buckingham, in *Slave States of America*, vol. i., p. 88.

* Quoted by G. W. Foote in his pamphlet, *Will Christ Save?* containing a mass of valuable information on this and other subjects.

† See *Life and Teaching of Theodore Parker*, by Peter Bayne, p. 180.

‡ *Ibid*, pp. 177, 178, 179.

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## THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

*(Company Limited by Guarantee.)*

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION.

1.—The name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.

2.—The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.

3.—The objects for which the Company is formed are:—

(*a*) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.

(*b*) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.

(*c*) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.

(*d*) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.

(*e*) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.

(*f*) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.

(*g*) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.

(*h*) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.

(*i*) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.

(*j*) To employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants for the same end.

(*k*) To publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals.

(*l*) To assist, by votes of money or otherwise, other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects.

(*m*) To have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

(*n*) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred society in any part of the world.

(*o*) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

## It's in the Bible.

How Christians Know the Scripture.

One would have thought that all those right-thinking and artistic ladies and gentlemen who form the National Trust for the Preservation of Places of Natural Beauty and Historic Interest would know their "Keats," of all poets, and especially his best-known and most frequently-quoted line. The National Trust held its annual meeting at Grosvenor House recently. The Duke of Westminster was in the chair, and he was supported by the usual crowd of lords, ladies, bishops, and artistic folk. Sir Wilfrid Lawson was down to speak in support of a resolution. In the course of his address a happy thought struck him. It was appropriate, he said, on that occasion to quote a line "in some book—I don't know which, and which runs 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.' No doubt the noble chairman knows who wrote it?" Sir Wilfrid paused and smiled as he turned to the Duke. The Duke also paused and smiled—and shook his head. So did a certain bishop who sat on his left. The audience looked at one another, and also smiled as much as to say, "Of course we know." But for a few seconds no one spoke. Then the silence of embarrassment was broken by somebody who said, in a voice perfectly audible throughout the famous Reubens Room: "It's in the Bible!" A lady who was sitting in the front row turned to her neighbor and said, with an air of surprise: "*How* funny! Do you know, I always had an idea that Mr. Keats wrote that!"—*Westminster Gazette.*

## GEMS FROM INGERSOLL.

Custom meets us at the cradle, and leaves us only at the tomb.

Nothing is so egoistic as ignorance.

The infidels of one age have been the aureole saints of the next.

The altar and the throne have leaned against, and supported, each other.

Liberty is the air of the soul, the sunshine of life.

Credulity is not a virtue, and investigation is not a crime.

The idea of immortality is the rainbow—hope shining upon the tears of grief.

All progress in legislation for centuries consisted in repealing laws.

Education is the most radical thing in the world.

There are in nature neither rewards nor punishments; there are consequences.

Our first questions are answered by ignorance, and our last by superstition.

Epithets are the argument of malice.

In the name of universal benevolence Christians have hated their fellow men.

Arguments cannot be answered with insults.

## Safe Until Needed.

Here is a queer story from the wilds of Oklahoma about a Methodist preacher. While the latter was returning home one evening he had the misfortune to fall into an abandoned well. For some time his cries for assistance brought no response, but at length Alkali Ike chanced to pass by on his homeward way after an evening of pleasure at the Blue Ruin fortune parlors.

"Help! Help!" cried the clergyman in a hollow voice.

"Who's that?" demanded Ike in return.

"It is I, Rev. Jenks."

"That so? Wal, whur are you, anyhow, an' what's the trouble?"

"I am down in Bill Gaw's old well, and——"

"Any danger of drowning?"

"No; the well is almost dry, but I——"

"Huh!" broke in Ike, who entertained a grudge against the minister. "Stay thar, then. We don't particularly need you till next Sunday."—*Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.*

## A Samaritan Missionary.

Sergt.-Major Fraser, of the Border Mounted Rifles, who arrived at the Richmond Camp in advance of his regiment, tells an extraordinary story of his treatment by a missionary on his way down from Polela. The Sergt.-Major, it appears, was caught in Monday night's downpour, and after a long ride in the darkness he gave up the idea of riding straight through. He therefore made for the nearest dwelling, which happened to be a mission station, where he not unreasonably hoped to be provided with shelter and refreshment. In this he was disappointed, the missionary turning him away into the storm, though he was drenched to the skin, and both he and his horse in need of rest and food. The story has been quickly circulated from tent to tent, and the feeling aroused, and the description of comment indulged in may be easily imagined.—*Mercury.*

One day a young man dropped in upon Walt Whitman at his humble home in Camden, N.J., introduced himself as a poet, and begged to be allowed permission to read selections from a bundle of manuscripts which he carried. "No, thank you," said Whitman, courteously, but firmly; "I have been paralysed twice."

Years ago, as a New England sea captain was signing a contract at a shipping-office, he was observed by the official in charge to be writing a string of names. "Only sign for yourself, Cap'en," cried the officer; "not for the whole crew!" The captain grimly pointed out the heading—"Name in full"—and went on writing his piece, which, when he had done, the officer, after some trouble in the deciphering, found to read thus: "Through-Much-Tribulation-We-Enter-Into-the-Kingdom-of-Heaven Clapp." "Will you please to tell me, Captain Clapp," said he, with as demure a face as his violent inclination to indulge in a hearty laugh would allow him to put on, "what might your mother have called you in your infancy, to save herself the trouble of repeating a sermon whenever she had occasion to name her darling?" "Why, sir," replied Captain Clapp, with laughable simplicity, "when I was little they used to call me Tribby, for shortness."—*Household Words.*

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# CORRESPONDENCE.

## CHRISTIANITY AND THE CHILDREN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is the tenth day of our holiday; the heat almost unbearable, and we have come in to an early, leisurely tea. Our child May, aged four, is playing on the carpet, finding endless uses for the string, paper, labels, etc., of parcels just received. I look in her face. We think her pretty. She is delightfully happy. In the ten long, hot days she has never been disobedient one moment. As I look at her, bright, happy, and content, she pauses in her play, and with thrillingly affectionate look, asks: "Well now, dada?" I had been ailing, and was lying down. I said: "Yes, darling, thanks"; and then I thought of her future, and wished that she could always be happy. Suppose, when she is old enough to think and reason, she is unable to believe those dogmas which her parents have rejected? Is she then to be damned? Is that beautiful form and character to be but fuel for an eternal fire? Certainly such *is* the teaching of Christianity. For, after all the special pleading of Christians whose humanity is more noble than their religion, salvation *is* "by faith (belief), and not of works, lest any man should boast." And does not every one of the sects sincerely believe that each and all of the legion of other sects would become better in the eyes of God, and surer of salvation by *believing* their particular *belief*? Our darling knows nothing of *beliefs*, and she is happy and content; and, rightly or wrongly, I am persuaded that, if no one poisoned her mind with these superstitions, she would never need them, and would be more likely to remain bright, and good, and happy.

If I am wrong, I will thank any intelligent Christian to correct me. HORACE DAWSON.

## "MR. KENWORTHY'S 'IMMEDIATE REASON.'"

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Will you permit me to make some short comments on Mr. Gould's article headed "Mr. Kenworthy's 'Immediate Reason,'" in your issue of July 17?

Mr. Gould has dealt with one address only—and that the preliminary one—out of a series of five. Had he heard one or two of the others, or had he even adequately considered the short syllabus of the lectures given on the handbills he would not have written his article as he has done. And I feel also that he himself is so occupied with his particular view of the origins of the Gospels that he has by no means given due weight and place to certain things said in the one lecture he did hear.

My own view of the origins of the Gospels, the view I was at pains to state in the lecture, is very much in accord with the rational and lucidly-stated view given by Mr. Gould in his own first paragraph. I cannot well understand how Mr. Gould could have imagined that I am concerned with "Christian evidence" or "Christian apologists."

But, as to "historical criticism," I think he undervalues this. Since the Rationalists of last century began their first, very right in direction, but necessarily crude, attack on Bibliolatry, men of all kinds, in many countries, have spent their lives in honest attempt to discover the historical truth about the gospels. At the present moment a concensus of scholarship—the scholarship of men who are honest scholars, whether religious or anti-religious—exists as to what I have said—namely, that the Gospels were produced, much in their present form, between the years 60 and 100. I have been at some pains to obtain a general view of the subject, as it stands to-day in the minds of men qualified to judge, and, despite the author's regrettable attachment to his University and Church, I feel that Professor Sanday, in his 1894 Bampton Lectures has summed up the situation fairly, and given us a view of the Gospel origins which harmonises with discovered facts, and with the historical and psychological necessities of the case. The evidence, as I have followed it for many years past, points to much more, very much more, than Mr. Gould's "certain vague and thin legends" as having existed during the latter half of the first century.

But Mr. Gould is troubled that I concern myself with such matters. Well, I, who believe that the worst enemies of Christ are the "Christians," feel it to be my duty to know their own business better than the "Christians" themselves do. Not that a right view of the origins is necessary to an understanding of the Gospel teaching, but it is useful and proper to know what one is talking about, in every possible way. So, I am prepared to take the very position established by their own leaders and luminaries, and from those positions demonstrate (to put it very plainly) that the so-called "Christian Churches" are precisely anti-Christian. I put Christ against the Christian; the Gospel teaching against Theology.

Mr. Gould is dissatisfied with the conclusion of that day's lecture. "I wanted to get on," he says; "I wanted to attack the great problem of poverty, commercialism, and ignorance." Well, why did he not come on the following days, when just that very attack was delivered, the ground having been prepared? Then I showed how the applied teaching of Jesus must absolutely overthrow the whole system of property and commerce, Church and State. I have yet to meet a man who goes a step further than I do in his conception of the overturn which must come to the present system, when, under our distresses, we again discover what Mr. Gould so well calls "the hopes and fears and pity and ideals of the poor people who created the Christian religion." Surely he does not call "the intellectual condition" of those first Christians "darkness of the first century"? Rather it is the light which we have had and lost, and to which we must return. The world must ever look backward through time to its Buddha, Lao-tze, Socrates, Jesus; because these lights of the ages, behind us in history, are yet our leaders in life.

There is in the teaching of Jesus that which I can understand by my reason, apply in my life, and prove and know by experience. But this teaching is so different from the mask of miracle and theology which passes for "Christianity" that it becomes heresy and rebellion to Church and State to-day, just as it was about A.D. 33, when Church and State murdered Jesus.

There is some probability of the Essex Hall lectures being printed. I should be glad if their reproduction serves the purpose of producing a better understanding between Mr. Gould (and, perhaps other "Freethinkers") and us, who are, we trust, "Christians" of a quite rational and serviceable kind. JOHN C. KENWORTHY.

## CHRISTIAN LECTURERS AND MR. WHEELER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The other Sunday the lecturer of the Victoria Park Branch of the Christian Evidence Society informed his audience that the late sub-editor of the *Freethinker* suffered from melancholy, and that this caused his death. This alleged melancholy was advanced as a proof of the evil effect of Atheism. As his authority for this piece of Christian evidence, the lecturer referred to your own statement on the matter in the *Freethinker*. On turning to your statement (*Freethinker* for May 8, p. 297), I find the origin of this latest Christian myth. You spoke of the absence of Mr. Wheeler's article, and said that "the reason of this is melancholy." The level of the intelligence (or of the honesty) of the Christian lecturer may be gauged by the fact that he had converted the adjective melancholy into a substantive, and so represented a melancholy event as a personal state of melancholy. As this piece of Christian mendacity or stupidity (or both combined) may be repeated until it becomes a stereotyped story of sadness and death caused by the acceptance of Freethought principles, I may as well place on record my contradiction as well as explanation thereof. I have known Mr. Wheeler for a long time, and was intimately associated with him in the work of the *Freethinker* for some years. I never know him to be melancholy or despondent. On the contrary, he was always cheerful, kindly of heart, and companionable. He was too much interested in his work, and cared too much for his wife and friends and books to be troubled with melancholy. He was certainly anxious and depressed at one time when his wife was seriously ill, and we all know that his nervous organisation was not capable of sustaining severe strain. But this is not melancholia, and I have not even heard that his mental disorder ever took that form. That Mr. Wheeler's original breakdown was due to Christian bigotry and persecution was, of course, left carefully unmentioned by the lecturer. The beam in his own eye is the last thing in the world that a Christian Evidence advocate would ever notice.

On the previous Sunday another Christian lecturer, speaking from the same platform, triumphantly quoted your statement, or damning admission as he assumed it to be, that Mr. Wheeler was unable to bear *his friend's* misfortune like a Christian. This showed how inferior Atheism was to Christianity. Mr. Wheeler could not even bear his friend's misfortunes, much less, of course, could he bear his own. So the lecturer urged, and his audience heard him gladly. The sarcasm of your remark, obvious enough except to persons of the most limited intelligence, failed to penetrate the thick hides of these chuckling Christians. The lecturer jumped eagerly at your words, and quoted them just as Christian simpletons are occasionally asinine enough to quote some of Gibbon's deadliest sarcasms and ironies without any suspicion of their true meaning. W. P. BALL.

## Orthodox Hypocrisy.

"It is time that there should be an end of the cant which lifts up its hands at the crimes of Republicans and Freethinkers, and shut its eyes to the crimes of kings and churches."—*Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., "Miscellanies," vol i., p. 111.*

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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, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Display of Animated Photographs.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, R. P. Edwards; 6.45, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Bible Heroes." Peckham Rye: A. B. Moss—3.15, "Darwin and Design"; 6.30, "The Christian Creed."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey; 7, R. P. Edwards. August 8, at 8, A lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, E. Pack.

FINSBURY PARK (near bandstand): 3.15, C. Cohen, "Secularism."

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7, Stanley Jones.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture; 3.30, Stanley Jones.

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, A lecture.

KINGSLAND (Kidley-road): 11.30, C. Cohen.

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, Stanley Jones. August 2, at 8, A lecture.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "A Stroll through the British Museum."

COUNTRY.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "The Truth About Monastic Life."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Lecture-room, corner of Raby and Parker-streets, Byker): 8, Members' monthly meeting, excursion, and other business.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Members' and friends' excursion to Strines *viâ* Bradfield Reservoirs, and return *viâ* Hollow Meadows. Meet at 1.40, corner of Norfolk and Arundel-streets, conveyances start at 2 prompt.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—July 31, m., Kingsland; a., Finsbury Park; e., Victoria Park. August 7, m., Camberwell; a. and e., Peckham Rye.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—July 31, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell.

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## FUNERAL ORATIONS, ADDRESSES, ETC.

BY

## COLONEL INGERSOLL.

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# The Freethinker

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## BISMARCK.

GLADSTONE'S death has soon been followed by the death of Bismarck. The former was the greatest English statesman, the latter was the greatest statesman in Europe. Both played a large part in human affairs, both lived to a ripe old age, and both died in retirement from the busy scene of their political labors. Gladstone was the greater orator; Bismarck was the greater man of action. They disliked each other very cordially, and this was perfectly natural. Gladstone would regard a man like Bismarck as brutal, and Bismarck would regard a man like Gladstone as a mere word-spinner. No doubt the German colossus chuckled over Disraeli's famous *mot* about the sophisticated rhetorician inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity; and no doubt the English old parliamentary hand turned up his eyes in horror when he read the terribly frank things which the great Chancellor used to say from time to time in and out of the German parliament. And the cream of the joke was that each felt he was acting under the inspiration of God.

On the popular side Gladstone bore the bell. He belonged to a different stage of political growth, and moved amid a different environment. He addressed the vast public, triumphed in general elections, and formulated policies for the hour. Bismarck lived and worked under a real, not a sham, monarchy. When he could not get a parliamentary majority he did without it, and used the power of the crown. He was thus able, as long as he held the ear of the king, and afterwards of the emperor, to carry out a settled policy which could only be realised in the course of many years. His achievement was certainly far greater than Gladstone's. You may trace the one man's influence in recent English history, but the other was the supreme factor in the making of modern Germany. Whatever may be thought of the value of his work, there can be but one opinion as to its immensity. There has been no such potent, commanding figure in European politics since the fall of the first Napoleon. That he hated England, or that he was hated by France, is no part of *this* question. Nor need *we* be too pharisaic in our estimate of his methods. England is happily protected by that streak of silver sea. She has no foreign question, as the great European nations have. Were she situated as Germany is, between France on the one side and Russia on the other, with uncertain states to the south, and smaller uncertain states to the north, and only the imaginary line of a frontier as a barrier against them, she would have to pursue a different policy, and her strongest statesman would necessarily be of a different type from Gladstone.

Bismarck's work was really done when he was dismissed by the young Emperor. United Germany was in existence, strong, self-reliant, and full of ambition. Nothing short of a cataclysmic European war could ever undo that. It was perfectly safe, therefore, to drop the pilot, for the ship was in port. But there was something inexpressibly disgusting in the young Emperor's treatment of the veteran to whom he owed his imperial crown, and it will be remembered against him as long as he lives.

Those who thought—as many Socialists did—that a more liberal spirit would prevail in Germany when Bismarck went, were egregiously mistaken. A brave man is rarely cruel, and a strong man is seldom unnecessarily oppressive. But there is no end to the tyranny of a weak, vain man in power. Emperor William has had more people imprisoned than Prince Bismarck. Prosecutions for "blasphemy" have also multiplied, and there is less freedom in Germany to-day than there was ten years ago. Your really big man does not act in this way. Cromwell smote down his enemies remorselessly on the battlefield, but he did not erect scaffolds in the public squares—except for one man, Charles Stuart; nor did he fill prisons with people who did not like him or his government. He let them talk as long as they kept the peace. Frederick the Great did just the same. But the young German Emperor's only resemblance to Frederick the Great is that he is a Hohenzollern.

We are glad that Bismarck has left orders that he is to be buried beside his wife, and we hope the family will not give way to the Emperor's wishes. Gladstone ought to have been buried at Hawarden. It was cruel to drag his poor old wife to London; it was morbid for thousands of Cockneys to file past a coffin. Gladstone was not in it. Nothing was there but his rotting remains. And the people who filed past the coffin were Christians, who are always reviling the living body and celebrating the glory of its immortal soul!

We desire to say a few words on another point before concluding. Gladstone and Bismarck were both Christians; that is to say, they both called themselves by that name, believed in the deity of Jesus Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, and a future life such as the New Testament promises. Gladstone has been praised as the ideal Christian statesman. But what about Bismarck? He was as good a Christian as Gladstone, but how different were his principles, his objects, and his methods! The truth is, the very phrase "a Christian statesman" is absurd. It can only mean that the statesman in question was a professed Christian. There never was, and there never can be, such a thing as Christian statesmanship. The case is one in which the adjective is the natural enemy of the noun. Statesmanship means doing the best for a nation in given circumstances. Its objects and methods are purely secular. But what does "Christian" mean? The question is answered in scores of different ways. To say a man is a Christian is to tell us nothing about him except that he wears a particular label. He may be Liberal, Conservative, or Radical—Individualist or Socialist—Reactionary or Progressive—anything or nothing. It is time to have done with such nonsense.

G. W. FOOTE.



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## ETHICAL SANCTIONS.

THEORETICALLY, if not practically, the present is pre-eminently an ethical age. Most persons are anxious to be thought to act morally, even if they fail to be consistent with their avowed desire. In the various phases of public life there is more than ever a manifest wish to have an ethical basis for human conduct. In the House of Commons the principle of utility finds more favor than the old theological standards, although it must be confessed that in too many instances our legislators are still actuated more by the law of expediency than by any high code of morals. It is also gratifying to note that in Christian controversy the ethical value of religion is deemed of greater importance than its historical accuracy. Take, for instance, the genuineness and authenticity of the various books of the Bible. Twenty or thirty years ago these questions were frequently discussed, but now they seldom form the theme of debate. With the majority of thinkers to-day the important point is not where or by whom the Bible was written, but rather what is the service of that which is written in the formation of upright character and in elevating human conduct. Herein is a proof of the existence in our midst of a decidedly improved ethical tone.

It is interesting to inquire into the cause or causes of this beneficial change. The impartial investigator will no doubt discover that the modern breaking up of old creeds, and the marked cessation that has taken place in relying upon their teachings, are the result of the increased Secular tendencies which, for some time, have manifested themselves. The once cherished sanctions for right doing are practically ignored, and, instead of accepting the notion that morality finds its basis in supernatural religion, it is recognised more and more that ethical standards are in human nature, and that what is termed morality is independent of the Christian or any other religion. There is no lack of evidence that this is the conclusion at which some of our greatest thinkers have arrived. Lecky remarks: "One of the first facts which must strike a student who examines the ethical teachings of ancient civilisations is how imperfectly that teaching was represented, and how feebly it was influenced by the popular creed. The moral ideas had at no time been sought in the action of the gods; and long before the triumph of Christianity polytheism had ceased to have any great influence on the more cultivated intellects of mankind." Baron D'Holbach asserts: "Religion enslaves without rendering better. It makes a herd of ignorant slaves, whom their panic terrors keep under the yoke of tyrants and of priests. It forms stupid beings, who know no other virtue than a blind submission to futile customs to which they attach a much greater value than to real virtues, or to the duties of morality which have never been made known to them." George Forster asks: "When will the time come when men will learn that the spring of the noblest and the most sublime actions has nothing to do with our notions of God and of a life after death?" Fichte observes: "The moral man obeys the duty in his breast absolutely because it is law unto him, and he does whatever reveals itself unto him as his duty simply because it is duty. Let not the impudent assertion be repeated that such an obedience, without regard to consequences, is in itself impossible and opposed to human nature." And Faraday remarked: "Morality, philosophy, commerce, and the various institutions and habits of society are independent of religion, and may exist without it." Professor Knight, Professor Tyndall, Dr. Martineau, Herbert Spencer, and even eminent orthodox Christian writers, may be quoted to the same effect. We therefore allege that the ethical principle was established, not by religion or by priestly sanctions, but by reason and experience, and that it has been transmitted by heredity and perpetuated by natural selection.

According to George Eliot, persons possessing the strongest moral character act, as it were, intuitively, and it is only when the moral nature is weak that we look to a moral guide or rule. There is, no doubt, some truth in this, although we cannot accept it as stated. Our intuitions are the result of our organisation, training, and general environment, and where those factors are of a superior order they prompt ethical conduct apart from any other sanctions, but where such agencies are of an inferior kind moral actions will be proportionately defective. To say that morality is intuitional without the above qualification is, in our opinion, misleading, for, if it were intuitional, it would commend itself alike to all, and no nation or race would be without it. We therefore consider that, while the ethical sanction is in human nature, it requires, in order to give it proper force, education and experience. Secularism commends itself to our judgment as being the best philosophy to afford a moral basis, inasmuch as it does not confine the ethical sanctions to any one factor. The great mistake of orthodox Christians upon this subject has been that they have based their morality entirely upon the emotional side of humanity, and the consequence has been that their efforts to raise society to a high moral state have been a decided failure. Ethics, as we understand them, should be based upon both the emotional and the sterner faculties of humanity. Theologians well know that, once the emotions are aroused into full play without due intellectual surveillance, a proper mental discrimination is absent, and mere assumption is often treated as if it were a demonstrated fact.

Mr. Benjamin Kidd, in his work on *Social Evolution*, places before his readers the proposition that "there is no rational sanction for social conduct in the individual," and he further states that "there is no rational sanction for the moral conduct of the individual in the social organism." This may be ingenious upon Mr. Kidd's part, but it appears to us to be exceedingly fallacious. Apart from the individual and the social organism, where are ethical sanctions to be found? True, he asserts that religion alone provides a restraint, and regulates the conduct of individuals for the welfare of society; but the question arises, What religion? Is it that of humanity apart from, and independent of, theology? If so, the sanctions *are* in the individual and the social organism. If, on the other hand, supernatural religion is meant, then history is against Mr. Kidd's assumption. He admits that all such religions have assumed that actions are good or bad according to Divine will; that Divine powers have decided what is good and what is bad, and perhaps revealed their conclusions to human beings; that good actions please the divinities, and are rewarded; that bad actions arouse their fury and displeasure, and are punished. Thus morality to religionists, after all, no matter how much they try to conceal the fact, is simply a question of policy, a blind observance of such conduct as will be rewarded, and a departure from which means punishment, after death, in a life about which, as yet, very little is known. Supposing it were admitted that "a divine revelation" had been made to men, even then the nature of the sanctions would depend upon the organisation, etc., of the individual, and the conditions of the social organism. For, be it remembered, the character given to all supposed "divine revelations" has depended upon man's interpretation of them, and not upon the revelations themselves.

As to the idea that the sanctions of so-called supernatural religions have been of an ethical nature, their histories prove the very opposite. The eminent Theist, Professor Newman, says: "Devotion to duty is to mankind in all stages a uniting and spiritual force. But can we say the same thing concerning a belief in God? Alas! the appeal to history will elicit a most painful reply, that religion often perverts fatally the sense of duty. Enmity, violence, intense cruelty, bigotry, have in past ages so often issued to mankind from theology, as such, that the argument with the Atheist on this head becomes extremely difficult. He is able to assert, and it is hard to confute him, that, when good appears to come from a theology, it really comes solely from the moral truths that happen to be taught along with the theology" (*Theological Review*, 1879). Lecky, in his *History of European Morals*, also writes that "during more than three centuries the decadence of theological influence has been one of the most invariable signs and measures of our progress. In medicine, physical science, commercial interests, politics, and even ethics, the reformer has been confronted with theological affirmations that have barred his way, which were all defended as of vital importance, and were all compelled to yield before the secularising influence of civilisation" (vol. ii., p. 18).

CHARLES WATTS.

*(To be concluded.)*

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Blind is that sight that's with another's eye.—*M. Drayton.*

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## SOME REAL AND ALLEGED ATHEISTS.

(By the late J. M. Wheeler.)

In days when Christianity was triumphant no charge was attended with more opprobrium than that of Atheism. To be even suspected of the "crime" was to be condemned and suppressed with horror and indignation. Atheism was thought the *ne plus ultra* of Satanic wickedness, and its supposed apostles were execrated as monsters doomed to eternal torments. The world branded and banished and the Church burnt them. Of the heretics who were burnt as Atheists it is not easy to say how many were really deserving the name.

The Manicheans, Bogomiles, and other heretics, who were relentlessly pursued to death during the Middle Ages, were commonly charged with Atheism. The disciples of Amaury de Chartres, who were burnt for Atheism at Paris in 1209, were probably only early philosophic reformers. Sagarel, who was burnt alive in 1300, held the heresy of the Everlasting Gospel, and probably, in holding that the Father and Son would give place to the Holy Ghost, meant that the reign of spiritual love would supersede dogmatism. Francis of Poitou, a Franciscan, who was also burnt for this heresy, was rather a mystic than an Atheist. Marguerite Porrete, burnt at Paris in 1300, was an Antinomian mystic. Lollard Walter, or Gauthier, burnt at Cologne in 1322, was apparently an Epicurean Deist. He asserted that God did not know of the evil done on earth, and denied all the distinctive dogmas of the Church. Many of his followers were also burnt. Herman de Ryswick, burnt at Hague in 1512, was a Deist and disbeliever in hell. The Anabaptists were commonly charged with Atheism, even while they were most religiously striving to emulate the primitive simplicity and community of the first Christians. Louis Berquin, the friend of Erasmus, who was burnt in 1530, was only a monk-hater. Quintin of Picardy, the chief of the Libertines, who was burnt at Tournay in the same year, probably gave color to the charge of Atheism by declaring the falsity of the Gospel. Gruet was burnt in 1549, more probably for his enmity to Calvin than for any distinct opinions. Etienne Dolet, who was burnt at Paris in 1546, was probably a sceptic of the type of his friend Rabelais. As a friend of heretics he was suspected, as a printer he was hated, as a satirist he was feared, and he was burnt for having wrongly translated Plato, whom he had made to say: "After death *tu ne seras plus rein du tout*—you will be nothing at all." The last three words were declared a damnable addition to the text, and cost him his life. Geoffroy Vallée, who was put to death in 1574, was not an Atheist, but an Epicurean Deist. He wished men to believe in God without fearing him. Had the dialogues for which he was condemned appeared in our own time, they would have been considered but mildly heretical.

Giordano Bruno, burnt at Rome, February 17, 1600, has been placed in all catalogues of Atheists down to modern times, and there are still many who hold with the Church and Lord Beaconsfield that Pantheism is only Atheism in domino. Lucilio Vanini, burnt at Toulouse, February 19, 1619, wrote in favor of the existence of God; but then Atheism has had no more powerful auxiliary than certain demonstrations of the existence of God. Father Mersenne, who shared in the *rabies* common to Atheographers, declared that Vanini set out with twelve apostles to convert the world to Atheism, and that in 1623 there were fifty thousand Atheist followers of Vanini in Paris alone!

Manzoli, a marquis of Florence, was burnt for Atheism in 1637. But the real cause was probably his having spoken and written against the Pope. Renault de Poitou and Jacques Dupain, of Sens, also burnt at Paris, 1646, may have only blasphemed the Trinity, the Virgin, or the saints. Kuhlmann, burnt at Moscow in 1689, was, according to the Christian accounts, rather a fanatic than an Atheist.

One of the last cases of capital punishment for Atheism is also one of the most dubious. In 1688 a Polish knight named Casimir Liszinski was cited for Atheism by the Bishops of Wilna and Posnovia. He was excommunicated and condemned to be burnt alive. According to his defence, his only crime was having made a compilation of arguments for Atheism in order to refute them, and having written in the margin of a theological work that the arguments were inconclusive. Unfortunately for Liszinski, he had not commenced the second part of his work. By grace of the king, he was decapitated before being burnt (at Grodno, March 30, 1689). His ashes were placed into a cannon and scattered to the winds.

When so many suffered the extremest penalty of the law for alleged Atheism, it cannot be wondered if many real Atheists carefully concealed their opinions. It is not entirely without reason that the charge has been made at least against five popes—viz., Sylvester (999–1003), Boniface VIII. (1294–1308), John XXII. (1410–1416), Alexander VI. (1492–1503), and Leo X. (1513–1522). Sylvester probably incurred the charge for his patronage of learning. Against Boniface and Leo X. there is some evidence, while John and Alexander were denounced for their crimes.

Atheism is by no means the abnormal state of mind that some theologians would have us believe, and there can be little doubt that thinking men in all ages have often been troubled with doubts as to the religious opinions of those around them. Practical Atheism, or living without God in the world, has indeed been the unacknowledged creed of most of those who, concerning themselves with the things of the world, have helped forward its progress. The name, however, can only philosophically be applied to those who deny a personal intelligent first cause, and it is best restricted to those only who willingly accept it.

With many zealous Christians the charge of Atheism has been used in a most indiscriminate manner. Of course, there is a certain sense in which every man is an Atheist to every other, since no two men's gods are exactly alike. To the Swedenborgian, who believes not only that Jesus Christ was God, but that he was Jehovah, the one only God, every Jew, every rejecter of Christ, must be strictly an Atheist. Unitarians may be said to be Atheists to the Trinitarian God; nor have the orthodox hesitated to press the charge even against fervent believers in Theism. Berkeley and Bentley both called Anthony Collins an Atheist, and even at the present day we occasionally find Paine and Voltaire termed Atheists in the religious press.

Christians should, however, bear in mind that the charge of Atheism was one of the commonest that was brought against the early Christians by the Pagans. The Emperor Julian charged the "Galileans" with borrowing their Atheism from the absurd religion of the Jews. Father Arnobius complains to the Gentiles: "You call us impious, irreligious, and Atheists." The same charge of Atheism against the Christians is put into the mouth of Cæcillius in Minucius Felix; and in Eusebius's *Evangelical Preparation* a Pagan is introduced, speaking as follows:—

> "Ought not those men to be considered altogether irreligious and Atheistical who desert the customs of their forefathers, by which every nation and every city hath been preserved? What good can reasonably be expected from those who oppose our saviors and reject our benefactors, and thus make themselves enemies of our gods? And can they deserve pardon who adopt whatever is impious and Atheistical among men, having turned away from the worship of beings honored everywhere, from time immemorial, both by Greeks and barbarians, with all sorts of sacrifices, rites, and mysteries, by all kings, legislators, and philosophers?"

Clement of Alexandria even claims many of the so-called Atheists of Paganism as being rather Christians in advance of their times. Yet there is little reason to doubt that Diagoras, Theodorus, Bion, Nicagoras, and Hippo, and even Pliny the Elder, rejected all idea of God. Euhemerus was called an Atheist for assigning a human origin to the gods. The opinions of Leucippus and Democritus were Materialistic rather than strictly Atheistic. There are Materialistic Theists like Priestley, just as there are deniers of a personal God who yet believe in a future life, like Hudson Tuttle, G. Barlow, A. P. Sinnett, and G. St. Clair. Epicurus and his followers relegated the gods to a remote sphere without influence on the conduct of men. Yet the Atheistic poem of Lucretius opens with an invocation to Venus. The real gods of Horace were Mecænus and Augustus. The Atheistic character of Buddhism has often been contested, yet Max Müller says: "The fact cannot be disputed away that the religion of Buddha was from the beginning purely Atheistic." The Southern Buddhists have most closely kept the teachings of Gautama, and they neither worship any god nor seek for a personal continued existence. Gautama, how-

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ever, does not seem from his discourses to have challenged the existence of the Vedic gods, but simply to have contended that they must be subject to the universal law of *Karma*.

Confucius spoke of Heaven (*Tien*), but did not use the name of the personal God (*Shang-te*). When asked about serving the spirits of the dead, he answered: "While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?" Ke-Loo added: "I venture to ask about death." He was answered: "While you do not know life, how can you know about death?"

Julius Cæsar was almost certainly an Atheist. He questioned a future life even before the Senate. Augustus and Tiberius were sceptics. Pyrrho was so complete a sceptic that he would have doubted the truth of Atheism had he known he would be classed as an Atheist.

Among moderns, the Atheism of the sceptics Hobbes, Bayle, and Hume may be questioned. Hobbes' principles may lead to Atheism. His questioning the existence of Satan may be applied to Satan's antagonist; but Hobbes himself professed to be of the religion of the State, whatever that religion might be. Bayle's articles tend to scepticism and Manicheism. Hume refutes the theistic positions only in dialogue. The fact that his posthumous essays are more decidedly sceptical than those published within his own lifetime confirms the view that Professor Blackie is right in classing him with real Atheists. It must not be forgotten that in Hume's time Woolston, Ilive, and Annet were imprisoned for milder heresies than Atheism.

Spinoza, the God-intoxicated, as Novalis calls him, was generally termed an Atheist in his own time, and nothing could more strikingly illustrate the progress made in thought than the invariable respect with which this great thinker is now everywhere mentioned, and the pains which are taken to distinguish his opinions from absolute Atheism. Toland, like Spinoza, though sometimes classed with the English Deists and sometimes with the Atheists, is rather to be classed among the Pantheists. N. Saint Glain, the translator of Spinoza into French, must also be acquitted of the charge of Atheism along with his master.

It may be contested how far Averroes, Pomponatius, Cæsalpinus, and Telesio, with their various shades of Pantheism and Materialism, come strictly within the category. The same may be said of Claudius Berigardus, Nicolaus Taurellus, the first German philosopher, and John Gerard Rom. Campanella's *Atheismus Triumphatus* might be better entitled *Atheismus Triumphans*. But no doubt his twenty-seven years of imprisonment had not induced any desire for further martyrdom. Though termed Atheists by their adversaries, all these, no doubt, would have denied the hard impeachment.

Matthias Knutzen, of Holstein, it is said, openly professed Atheism, and had upwards of a thousand disciples in Germany about 1674. He travelled to make proselytes, and his followers were called Conscientiaries (*Gewissener*), because they held there is no other deity than conscience. Whether Knutzen escaped the penalty of his opinions is uncertain, and his sect, if indeed he formed one, does not appear to have lasted. His contemporaries, Friedrich Wilhelm Stosch and Theodore Ludwig Lau, are also accused of Atheism.

It is not until the dawn of the age of reason in the eighteenth century that Atheism appears openly and undisguised in scientific garb. Lamettrie, La Grange, Holbach, Naigeon, and Diderot wrote as Atheists, yet their pronounced writings were published under assumed names. They had no desire for martyrdom. The *System of Nature*, which appeared in 1770, attributed to Mirabaud,* who died in 1760, helped to rear a school of acknowledged and unacknowledged Atheists. Its real author was Holbach, one of the most militant Atheists that ever lived, and he was assisted by the friends whom I have named. The influence of the work was profound. Priestley said that all the philosophers and men of letters he met with during a visit to France were Atheists. Rousseau declared he had only met three priests who believed in God.

The great French Revolution has often been called an Atheistic movement, yet some of the most noted actors were Deists rather than Atheists. Dr. James Buchanan, indeed, in his *Faith in God and Modern Atheism*, describes the first French Revolution as actuated by anti-Christian Deism, and the second French Revolution by Atheism! Robespierre was a militant Deist, and paved the way for his own fall by pompously acting the Pontiff at the feast of the Supreme Being. Billaud-Varennes said: "*Avec ton Etre Suprême tu commences m'embêter.*" Marat, Couthon, Sain-Just, Fouquier-Tinville, and the Jacobins generally knew how to conjure with the name of God. Mirabeau, Danton, Brissot, Vergniaud, Guadet, Clootz, and Chumette were Atheists. Miss Blind calls Madame Roland an Agnostic, yet she frequently spoke of God, the soul, and a future state, at a time when Mongez, a member of the Institute, could say he "had the honor to be an Atheist."

At the suggestion of his friend and fellow-Atheist, Lelande, Pierre Sylvain Maréchal compiled a Dictionary of Atheists, to which Lelande added a supplement, in which he states that he is prouder of his Atheism than of his scientific attainments, and that, although at the age of nineteen he thought, with the rest of the world, that the heavens prove the existence of God, he now sees in them nothing beyond matter and motion. The *Dictionnaire des Athées* has often been ridiculed for its debaptising so many Christians to insert them in its catalogue. Thus we find in it most of the Fathers—Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Sts. Chrysostom and Augustine! Luther, Melancthon, Pascal, Bossuet, Jurieu and Fenelon! our own Locke, Newton, Berkeley, Clarke, Cudworth, Hall, and Sherlocke!—nay, even Paul of Tarsus, John the Evangelist, and Jesus Christ! The name of God the Father ought to have been added to complete the list of notorious Atheists!

It is only fair to Maréchal to note that one of the purposes of his collection was to point out how many even of the supporters of theology had rendered themselves liable to the charge, and allowed some glimpse of philosophy to stand out in contradiction to their superstition. Pascal is included for saying that we neither know the nature nor the existence of God, and that reason is unable to demonstrate the being of a God. Jesus Christ is included, apparently in joke, for saying: "Take eat; this is my body." The remark is appended that to make bread into God is going further in materialism than Spinoza. In short, the *Dictionnaire des Athées* is not to be taken too seriously. We find the word OR (*gold*) included for the purpose of introducing some lines declaring that most of the world treats gold as God.

Many of the names most unjustly entitled Atheists in Maréchal's work are copied from previous Atheographers. Father Hardouin, the Jesuit, had stigmatised Jansenius, Malebranche, Quesnal, Pascal, Nicole, and others, as Atheists. The Protestant Reimmann, in his *History of Atheism*, had enlarged his list with the names of many Catholics, as Bembo, Bellarmine, Malebranche, Leo X., Father Sanchez, etc. Buddeus enumerates a number whose Atheism is doubtful. Indeed, it may be said there is hardly a single philosopher of ancient or modern times, who has shown any originality of thought, who has not been accused of Atheism by one of the Atheographers Garasse, Mersenne, Voetius, Kortholt, Calver, Parker, Struve, and Jenkin Philipps.

In England, Shelley was one of the first to openly accept the name of Atheist. The Atheism of James Mill, of Bentham and Grote, though often suspected, was scarcely known in their own lifetime. A proof of how slowly the *odium theologicum* passes away in England may be found in the fact that many of the most astute Atheistic productions have been published anonymously or under pseudonyms. I may mention the *Inquiry into the Influence of Natural Religion*, by Bentham and Grote; the examinations of Mr. Gillespie's argument *à priori* by "Antitheos," "Aliquis," and "T. S. B."; the astute examination of the Rev. B. Godwin's lectures on Atheism, published at Bradford; and the examination of Theism, by "Physicus." A hundred years after the death of Hume an able lady writer thinks it necessary, in criticising the design argument, to call herself by the pseudonym of "H. Lawrenny." Of those who have followed Shelley in proclaiming their Atheism, several have come to prefer some other designation. This was the case with Richard Carlile. Charles Southwell argued that it was absurd for anyone to call himself an Atheist, since it meant but the negation of nothing. Atheism was impossible, because Theism was unthinkable. Mr. Holyoake, who has refuted Paley and written *The Trial of Theism*, prefers the designation of Secularist. Professor Huxley has coined for himself the name Agnostic, a term accepted by Leslie Stephen, Mrs. Lynn Linton, and other followers

* Mirabaud may have been an Atheist, but he is not to be confounded with Gabriel Honoré Riquetti Mirabeau, who certainly was one.

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of Spencer and Darwin. John Stuart Mill, despite the dubious character of his posthumous essay on Theism, would probably have accepted the designation of Agnostic; and the same may be said of Lord Amberley and Professor Clifford, though we think the last would not have refused the more definite appellation of Atheist. The position expressed in the lines, "I say not that there is no God, but that I know not," is the one adopted by almost all who profess and call themselves Atheists. Some there are who, looking upon the idea of God as the foundation of all superstition and slavery, say, with Proudhon, "*Dieu c'est le mal.*" Men like Bakounine may rather be called anti-Theists than Atheists. They do not so much question the existence as the authority of God.

Many of the French Freethinkers frankly call themselves Atheists; nor is the term refused by scientists such as Hovelacque, Letourneau, and Lefevre. Caro considers Renan, Taine, and Vacherot as representing three types of opposition to Theism. Comte declared that the heavens declared only the glory of Kepler and of Newton, and it is not easy to see how the confinement of attention to phenomena can be reconciled with Theism. None the less, his Atheism has been questioned, and his followers—Littré, Lafitte, Bourdet, Wybouroff, Blignières, Bridges, Beesley, Kaines, Congreve, and Harrison—prefer the designation of Positivists.

In Italy many are ready to recite their creed in the words of the poet Guerini: "*Primo di tutto, dico, che non credo in Dio*"—"First of all, I say I do not believe in God." In Germany, Büchner, Schlaeger, Specht, Vogt, Moleschott, and Czolbe, though properly called Materialists, do not object to a name which has been applied not only to Feuerbach, Strauss, and Schopenhauer, but to Fichte, Schelling, Krause, and Hegel.

As the odium attached to the term Atheist slowly dwindles, we may expect to find less heed given to its repudiation. A very large number who refuse the appellation only do so because they so cordially agree with M. Buzot when he refused an article on the existence of God, sent to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, on the ground that "the question lacked actuality."

## HELPS TO HAPPINESS.

*A Lecture delivered before the Paine Hall Society, Boston, March 13, 1898.*

(*Concluded from page 486.*)

I THINK we make a mistake by loading the minds of the young with the rubbish of the past. The young are taught dead languages, dead religions, dead morals, and taught to venerate dead gods. I want to see this generation alive with its own thoughts and purposes, with an ear for the living truth, with lips that will speak what its own brain inspires, and with a heart that will yield to the impulse of charity. I sometimes think that it would be an advantage to the world to destroy everything on earth that is more than two hundred years old. Let us forget what Moses said, and say something ourselves. Let us forget what Jesus did, and do something ourselves.

The mind to-day is mostly a chamber for ghosts. Knowledge is regarded as familiarity with tombstones. Out upon a church that would make science apologise to fable. We have paraded the bones of our ancestors through the streets long enough. Let us stop the march of dead men. I admit all the greatness of the past, but I do not want it used to belittle the present. I do not want a coffin placed in the path of every undertaking, nor have every endeavor opposed by an order to keep off the grass. Every great man of the past is looked upon as a policeman to forbid human freedom. Does the commonwealth of mind need to be patrolled by the authority of opinion? Liberty will afford this world more opportunities for happiness than all the straight and narrow paths of dogma and creed. The intellect of man should be respected more by our teachers. Any instruction that is calculated to enslave the mind or degrade the majesty of reason is to be denounced. Knowledge tends to promote the happiness of the individual and of the race. Philosophers make a better use of life than do monks. Learning opens more doors of pleasure than does ignorance.

I want to see everyone anxious to know something and willing to trust their own reason. It comes to this:—We must be our own masters or others' slaves. There is no authority in the world but that of the human mind. We cannot exaggerate the mischief of human credulity. A too-ready belief has fastened upon mankind a load of superstition that will take centuries to throw off. Fear has been the cause of as much unhappiness and sorrow as have wars, and it has been excited in the name of God. Let us be guided by what is kind and just, not by what is cruel and base. The best thing for all men is to be honest, and to take the fate of honesty here and hereafter—honest intellectually, honest morally, honest in every way, and then nobly to bear whatever comes.

Every man ought to solve the problems of life for himself, or try to do so. He should not whip his reason into obedience of another's command, or too easily surrender his right of independence. Let us not adopt anyone's opinion unless it satisfies our own mind.

I hate the Church for a good many reasons, but I hate it for one reason in particular, and that is, for putting fear of God and fear of the future in the human heart. That is the blackest of a thousand black things which this black power has done. No one will know how much happiness has been strangled by the cruel hands of fear. A Church that can live only by murdering joy in the human heart is the offspring of a fiend.

I consider it my duty to deny the teachings of the Christian Church as long as I live; to tell men and women to have nothing to do with priests and ministers. The Christian Church has taught that, if man enjoyed himself here, he would have to suffer hereafter; that, if he sowed the seeds of gladness in this life, he would reap the fruit of sorrow in another life; but, if he would deny himself while living, go hungry, ragged, and ignorant, and give what he earned to the Church, he would enter into bliss eternal when he died.

I am willing to confess that I do not know what lies one inch beyond the borders of the grave, that I am in the dark in regard to the future; but I believe that, if man is to live again, the best way to be happy hereafter is by being happy, and making others happy, here. I do not believe that we can lie down in heaven and wake up in hell. My doctrine is this:—The best preparation for a good time to-morrow is to have a good time to-day. If the Devil goes to the theatre, and God to the prayer-meeting, the Devil shows the better taste of the two. I do not think much of a God who is afraid of a laugh on Sunday. The good men do not all go to church, nor do the bad ones all stay away.

I want to say that the old notion of religion, that a bright, sunny, happy life is opposed to what is highest and truest and best, is false. I would trust the dog that wags his tail at my approach sooner than the one that scowls and growls. I believe the Church is the enemy of the poor man, the honest man, the happy man, and, for this reason, I want to see the poor, the honest, and the happy ones of earth stop giving to the Church.

I go upon the ground that men wish to know what is right, that they wish to be told what is true, and that they are willing to be corrected. This is not a corrupt world, although the history of vice and crime is in more than one volume. Instead of regretting that men are no better, let us rejoice that they are no worse. In a life where so many things take the shape of temptation it should be no surprise that man makes mistakes. It is only surprising that he does not learn from his mistakes. Happy is the man who does not learn the right by doing the wrong. There is a wisdom which the schools do not teach, but which life recommends, and which all good influences help to conserve. It is the wisdom of innocence that plants itself upon the right without question, without argument, and says No! without debate.

To have the fewest faults possible is the utmost that man can do; not to have any is not to be human. One of the most cruel things in this life is the unkindness of the fortunate to those who are less so. Kindness is the best preacher, the best instructor. It is an education. Kindness is more than a kind speech. We are to share what we get, not as an offering, but as a pleasure. We want no altars in this age, whether they be called churches or charities. The victim has always been man, and selfishness the god to whom he has been sacrificed. Whatever tends to make man better, and life better for him, I would see preserved; but what adds nothing good to humanity we do not want. There are but two duties that are supreme—duty to ourselves and to our

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race. We owe God nothing. Let the world stop giving in that direction. There is a better way to invest its money. The more the Church gets, the more the world has to go without. If there were none who wanted bread, who wanted clothes, who wanted the comforts of life, if there were no sick without medicine, no poor without homes, I could see the rich, proud temples of worship with less indignation.

I find that worship of the cross makes victims for it. I believe in art, in beauty, in fair things for the eye, and grand things for the soul. I admire the marble thoughts that genius shapes for man's delight, the structured grandeur that adorns our cities, and the magnificent homes that are built for human beings to live their various lives in. But I do not admire poverty, ignorance, and vice; I do not believe in women and children going hungry; I do not believe in men, women, and children suffering and starving; I do not like the hovel, the den, and the brothel, the wretched surroundings where other human beings live their various lives.

If anyone must wait in this world, let it be God instead of man. I wish that there could not be another church built in this country until every man was able to own a home of his own. I wish that Christian ministers would stop trying to save men's souls, and endeavor to improve their earthly estate. Religious problems can wait for a solution, but material ones cannot. It would benefit mankind far more to discover a remedy for scarlet fever or pneumonia than to find out who wrote the Pentateuch. Men and women are helping the Church more than the Church is helping them. Man works for the Church in this world, and the Church promises to pay him in another world. I would not accept a draft drawn on the hereafter. A person who deposits his money on earth and expects to draw interest in heaven has more faith than the man who invests in the gold mines of a frog pond. Tell the priest that you will give your notes for the salvation he offers, payable when you receive the goods. Do not postpone your happiness. When the Church promises joy hereafter for faith and cash here, it promises more than it can perform. The only vital point of time is the present. Our hopes and desires may extend beyond the hour, but our hand can do no work to-morrow until to-morrow comes. It is what is hard to bear now that demands courage, not what will be hard by-and-bye. We cannot weep over future pains. What we have not done, or what we are going to do, requires no strength. Our forces should all be brought to bear upon present duties. It is difficult for men to divest themselves of the past, or to ward off the shadows of the future. It is the fear or hope that to-morrow will bring some great blessing or some great sorrow that invests it with its peculiar attraction; but the future is distorted by either hope or fear. Nature gives us only opportunity, and time is occasion simply. The whole universe is composed of the same material, and we can be just as happy on earth as anywhere else.

What a blessing it is that all men die. The only way that the world has advanced is by one man dying and another being born. Think what a world this would be if all the brutes that have lived in the past, and written their deeds in the blood of their fellow-men, were living now! Those fiends that burned Bruno, those fiends that lighted the fires of Smithfield, those fiends that led the massacre of St. Bartholomew, were stopped in their fiendish work by death. Death is the missionary of progress. He took away Calvin, Cotton Mather, and Jonathan Edwards. He removed that pious wretch—Pius IV.—who ordered every Protestant in Italy to be butchered. He removed that infamous Catholic, the Duke of Savoy, by whose command men, women, and children were tortured and killed in every brutal fashion imaginable. He removed every one of those heartless fiends who, in the name of God, for ten centuries wronged, persecuted, maimed, and killed in the most terrible manner everybody who was honest enough and brave enough to think and live outside of the pale of the Roman Catholic Church. Nothing could have saved the world from these brutal wretches but death. *Let us drink to the health of death.*

The value of everything on earth must be determined by its value to man—by its worth to human life. When this valuation prevails, homes will be more sacred than churches, mothers holier than nuns, science worth more than fable, and the splendor of a moral life will outshine the false glory of pious performances. L. K. WASHBURN.

—*Boston Investigator.*

## HE WASN'T BAD ENOUGH; OR, THE UNCONVERTED COSTER.

THERE was a chap named Muggleton, a costermonger bloke,
A reg'lar scorcher, 'cording to report;
'E used to frequint pubs., and cuss and swear, and drink and smoke,
And do a lot o' fings 'e didn't ort.

One Sunday morn 'e sat at 'ome a sufferin' from the blues,
And a broodin' o'er the error of 'is wyes;
The night before 'e'd been and 'ad a hextry-speshul booze,
As 'e always used to do on Saturdyes.

So there 'e sat a broodin'—for 'e'd nuffink else to do—
Till suddingly outside 'is 'ouse there comes
A squeakin', squallin', caterwaulin', rahdy dahdy crew,
With concerteeners, tamborines, and drums.

They sang an 'ymn, which sed as 'ow they'd been an 'ad a wash
In the sanguinerry flooid of a lamb;
But, judgin' from their pussonal appearianor, by gosh!
For cleanin' fices 'tisn't wuth a damn.

Now Muggleton—a sittin' with 'is winder open wide,
Just a coolin' of 'is beery, muddled 'ed—
Was spotted by Salvation Sal, a brizen-lookin' jide,
And she spoke to 'im, and this is what she sed:—

"Oh, come and be a soldier in the Army of the Lawd,
Of the livin' waters come and 'ave yer fill."
Said Muggleton: "I'm bally dry, I am, so 'elp me Gawd;
As the pubs. ain't open yut, I fink I will."

'E was dahn the stairs and with 'em in the twinklin' of a heye,
"Praise the Lawd," and "'Alleluyer" they did bawl;
Then the concerteeners sahnded, and they marched 'im right awye,
And they brought 'im to their 'Alleluyer 'All.

An 'ymn or two was sung, and then upstarted "'Appy Jack,"
And a list of all 'is sins 'e did recite;
The chaps in Newgit Calendar are painted rather black,
But, compared with *'im*, they all were snowy white.

Some other "soldiers" got upon the pennytenshul stool,
And they tawked abaht their life of sin and crime;
'Twas enough to make a coster "scorcher" feel a trifle cool,
And enough to make a statchoo blush with shime.

"Oh, 'ang it all," sed Muggleton, "you ain't the sort for me;
Wot! join yer Army?—Demmy if I do;
I thought that I was jist abaht as bad as I could be,
But I'm bothered if I'm bad enough for *you!*"

ESS JAY BEE.

## ACID DROPS.

THE Legion of Honor Committee in France has disgraced itself by striking Zola's name off the list on account of his action in the Dreyfus case. The pretence is that he has been "convicted" by a legal tribunal. Well, most members of the Legion of Honor actually worship as god a dead Jew who was "convicted" by a legal tribunal at Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago. After all, the man who is so bravely calling upon France to recollect justice and honor can do without these social distinctions. He is ennobling his name, and the word "Zola" needs no decoration in the eyes of the civilised world.

M. Jules Barbier, the well-known dramatist, has done a brave thing by protesting so practically against the expulsion of Zola from the Legion of Honor. He has forwarded his own resignation to the President of the Council with a letter of pointed though dignified rebuke. "There are some men," he says, "whom the Cross honors—such as your humble servant—and there are some who honor the Cross, such as that great man, Zola, who is ready to wash France from the mud which covers her, and which is thrown by the bad shepherds who pretend to guard her." M. Barbier adds that he must retire from an Order from which Zola is excluded, and ends with the fine statement: "I feel as much pleasure in giving up my officer's rosette as I did in receiving it." A good many public men who are not politicians might do France a real service at this crisis by following M. Barbier's example.

M. Pressensé, the foreign editor of the *Temps*, has followed M. Barbier's example and resigned his riband of the Legion of Honor. This is good news indeed.

Björnstjerne Björnson, the great Norwegian novelist (and Freethinker), in a long letter published in the Paris *Temps*, declares that the behavior of France in the Dreyfus affair

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is condemned by the unanimous opinion of the world outside. "It would be criminal," he says, "to leave France in ignorance of this state of things, for it is an incalculable injury to the world at large to see France at the beck and call of reaction. And why? To screen the general staff." Björnson says that the general staff of the French Army is already so compromised in the eyes of Europe and America that there could be nothing to lose or risk in a revision of the Dreyfus case.

The way in which the screw is applied in France by the Government, in the interest of the Army, is well illustrated by the case of M. Paul Stapfer. This gentleman is a great scholar and the author of many valuable historical works. He is also senior professor at Bordeaux University, and in this capacity he had to deliver the funeral oration at the grave of his old friend, M. Couat, the Rector of the University, who died recently. M. Couat often said during his last illness that his death was hastened by seeing his country depart so flagrantly from the paths of truth and justice. This referred to the Dreyfus affair, and when Professor Stapfer spoke of his old friend's love for truth and justice it was taken as a covert insult to the Army, and the result was a storm of abuse. Nor was this all, or even the worst. Professor Stapfer has actually been "suspended" for six months. And this under a Republic! At this rate, we may soon look to find the words "Truth" and "Justice" proscribed in France as treasonable.

The Rev. Archibald Fullarton, of Greenock, died suddenly on Sunday evening while conducting a service in the chapel of the infirmary. The event was perfectly natural, as the reverend gentleman suffered from heart disease. But just imagine the rumpus there would be in the religious world if a Freethought lecturer were to drop dead upon the platform. No amount of heart disease would prevent its being regarded as a "judgment."

There was an unemployed Baptist minister knocking about in the Eastern States of the great Republic of the Stars and Stripes, and his name was P. Jernegan. Now the pious but out-of-work Jernegan did not like this state of things, so he resolved to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. With this object he devised a scheme which was worthy of the scientists in *Gulliver's Travels* who occupied themselves in extracting sunshine from cucumbers. He proposed to extract gold from sea water, and to carry out this magnificent scheme he started a Company with a capital of ten million dollars. Offices were opened at Boston and works established at Lubec, Maine, where it was claimed that the sea was richest in auriferous elements. Shareholders were invited down to Lubec to witness the gold fishing. Alleged accumulators were let down into the sea at high tide, and a diver, appropriately named Fisher, who was stationed below, removed the mercury they contained and substituted other mercury highly charged with gold. All sorts of people, including bank directors, were bamboozled, and a million dollars' worth of shares were taken. But about a fortnight ago the Rev. P. Jernegan and his brother drew over $200,000 from the Boston banks, purchased negotiable Government bonds with the money, and then set sail for Europe in the *Navarre*. Probably he will be extradited by the French authorities and dealt with in the land where he perpetrated his swindle At this point, however, our interest in the matter ceases. The swindle was a remarkably "thin" one, and we can only account for its immense success amongst the wide-awake Yankees by the fact that the swindler was a minister of the gospel, who could "bless it and approve it with a text."

The Pope has addressed a long letter to his bishops in Scotland, and a precious rigmarole it is, although couched in the pretentious language which the Vatican affects. He longs for the return of the Scottish people to the religion of their forefathers. They are "naturally inclined to embrace the truth," but they have somehow been deluded ever since the Reformation. However, there are "signs" which afford him "hope," and Papa Pecci calls upon all good Catholics to "constantly offer prayers and supplications to God" for the speedy conversion of the land of kilts and thistles. But the case seems really a hopeless one, and old John Knox must be smiling grimly in his grave at the Pope's hallucination.

Dr. Sinclair, Archdeacon of London, has been repeating Bishop Moorhouse's oft-exploded nonsense about the immoral results of "godless education"—that is to say, secular education—in Australia. Were it not for the Church schools, he said, this awful experiment might be tried in England. One would think, to hear this man, that there was no such thing as religious instruction in the Board schools; whereas Sir John Gorst has only recently declared, in the House of Commons, that the religious instruction in the Board schools is infinitely superior to that given in the Church schools. The fact is that in the vast majority of Board schools in England the first and brightest hour of the children's day is wasted in teaching them the supernaturalism—in religion, ethics, and history—of semi-barbarians, who lived from two to three thousand years ago.

"They could not have morality without religion," said Archdeacon Sinclair. This is the great falsehood on which the Churches live amidst the decline of dogma. Every man of sense is fully aware of its absurdity. We might even remind Dr. Sinclair that there is often precious little morality *with* religion. Men of God, and pious laymen, figure in the police-courts quite as frequently as other people, in proportion to their numbers. Even when they don't figure in police-courts they sometimes achieve an unenviable notoriety in other ways. Dr. Sinclair and his colleagues are face to face, for instance, with the problem of Mr. Hooley's communion plate at St. Paul's Cathedral. That little matter ought, in common decency, to be settled before a dignitary of St. Paul's gases any more about religion being the parent or even the guardian of morality.

We daresay the religious teaching is fairly well looked after in the parish of St. Laurence, Birmingham, but, from the secular point of view, this parish is a disgrace to civilisation. Out of 1,225 families 700 are often in receipt of Poor Law relief. The death-rate is double that of the more respectable parts of the town. Hardly any of the people eat their meals at a table. They take their food on the doorsteps. Most of the women are ignorant of cooking; one actually threw away some tapioca which was given her because she did not know what to do with it. Archdeacon Sinclair should give the parish of St. Laurence his attention when he has settled the problem of Hooley's communion plate. Indeed, it seems to us that St. Laurence and the Hooley communion plate, taken together, form a splendid illustration of the doctrine of "no morality without religion."

We regret to see that Frederick Murray Browne, of Ashingdon, is in trouble again. He has been once more arrested and committed for trial on the charge of writing offensive postcards. It is certainly disgraceful to Christianity that the worst of the words complained of are quoted from the Bible. It is positively damnable that a book containing such obscene language should be forced into the hands of little children. No expressions could be too strong to characterise the hypocrisy of Christians who themselves brand certain parts of their Bible as obscene and at the same time compel children to read it without the slightest expurgation. But this does not justify Browne in playing the dirty fool, and if he *will* do so he must take the consequences. Indeed, he is not a man whom it is possible to help. He professes himself an Anarchist, and his theory is that he has a right to do whatever he pleases without regard to other people, but that other people are bound to come to his assistance whenever he gets into trouble. He had to be placed in the asylum during his previous term of imprisonment, and it is probable that his mind is seriously unhinged. The letters he sent to Mr. Foote and Mr. Forder were never quite sane. His wife should try to get him away from that part of the country, and keep him quiet for a while; otherwise it is to be feared that he will go from bad to worse.

It is most amusing to watch the professional and amateur exhorters at the seaside offering up "a few words of prayer." With what a confidential air they tell Omniscience of a lot of things with which, of course, it must be perfectly conversant! One of these gentlemen, last Sunday afternoon, outdid in this line all we had ever witnessed before. He actually told the Lord, with the accurate expression of a profound arithmetician, that there were some thousands of people on the sands; and added—for the Lord's more precise information—that they consisted of men, women, and children. "O Lord, save them!" he exclaimed, in a somewhat perfunctory manner. At that very moment he raised his hand to scratch the side of his face, which was either troubled by an insect or itching on its own accord; and the scratching was obviously a great deal more sincere and vigorous than the praying. Another screw-eyed prayer-monger worked away with both hands at the brim of his straw hat—a thing he could not possibly have done if his mind, as well as his tongue, had been thoroughly occupied with what he was saying.

We regret to see that Mr. George Henry Baker, who is a worthy man, though somewhat excitable, has been fined forty shillings, with the alternative of twenty-one days' imprisonment, for using indiscreet language "calculated to provoke a breach of the peace" in Hyde Park. Mr. Baker is a Freethinker, and he appears to have been put in a passion by Mr. A. J. Waldron, a Christian Evidence Society's lecturer. Some day or other, perhaps, we shall have even-handed justice dealt out, and then a goodly number of Christian Evidence lecturers will come under the magistrate's animadversion.

It is only fair to say that Mr. Baker, whom we have seen since the above paragraph was written, absolutely denies

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having used the language which the police and the Christian Evidence people swore that he *had* used. His denial was supported in court by two witnesses, both of whom were Christians, but the magistrate took no stock of any testimony but that of the prosecution.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor standing up in the House of Commons for compulsory vaccination is a spectacle for gods, men, and little fishes. "Tay Pay" has a rather graceful knack of writing without saying anything, and on this little achievement he has built up a large and profitable reputation. But he is as shallow as a saucer, and his opinion on any subject is really worthless. There is no need, therefore, to waste any denunciation upon his attitude towards the dirty practice of inoculating human beings with filthy matter from diseased cows.

The Saint Marylebone Churches Bill has passed the House of Commons by a majority of 152 to 81. Mr. Carvell Williams called it "an act of ecclesiastical brigandage." And so it is. The Church Rate was doomed, and the Tory-Church party has got it commuted for £80,000. Poor Marylebone! And poor England! where such clerical blood-sucking is so easy.

Crawley Church was struck by lightning while the congregation was at worship, and the clergyman had all his work to prevent a serious panic. Christians don't like going to glory even from a church.

The London School Board applied to the Education Department for leave to build a school in Cuthill-road, Camberwell, in order to provide accommodation for a number of children for whom there was no room elsewhere. A provisional order was issued approving of the site and purchase. But the Vice-President of the Council, instigated by Lord Hugh Cecil, Lord Salisbury's son, struck out the Camberwell site, without even giving notice to the Board. "Meanwhile," the *Daily News* says, "the children of the district are deprived of education by a rank clerical job."

One of the persons mixed up in the Hooley scandal is the Church-and-State junior member for Northampton. Charles Bradlaugh, who occupied that seat before Mr. Duncker, was free from all financial suspicion. But then he was an Atheist.

New Testaments are used as swearing-blocks at the Old Bailey, as in other courts in Christian England, and more lies have been told over them than over any other volume on this planet. They have been so long in use that nobody knows who bought them, or whose business it is to keep them in decent repair. The result is that they are now in a state of indecent dilapidation; so much so that Mr. Justice Grantham has drawn attention to the matter, and suggested that "for the future new books should be provided once a year." This ought to be accompanied with a rider that each copy should be fumigated once a week.

Bailie Mathers, in the Dundee Police Court, had to try Thomas Myers, who was charged with selling lottery envelopes to boys in the Greenmarket. The culprit was sentenced to pay a fine of half-a-guinea. "It is just the same as the lotteries at church bazaars," said the Bailie, "and I wish I had some of the ministers before me; I would give them the benefit of the full penalty—£10 or forty days."

The Mullingar Guardians resolved to punish Mr. J. P. Hayden, M.P., for his "vile anti-clerical speech" by withdrawing its advertisements from his paper, but the matter was made one of "privilege" in the House of Commons, and the Mullingar Guardians climbed down. They have rescinded their resolution.

Events march so rapidly that many Englishmen probably forget M. Casimir Perier, the late President of the French Republic, who took office when Carnot was assassinated, and resigned it a few months afterwards. He went straight to his country estate, where he enjoys the respect and admiration, and even the affection, of his fellow-citizens of the whole district. He is a man of fine presence, great abilities, and incorruptible honor. It is commonly reported that he was sickened by what he saw going on around him, and what the Constitution gave him no power to check. The Dreyfus affair is said to have disgusted him. He retired with dignity from a position which he found intolerable.

The egregious and obstinate blunder of the medical profession with regard to vaccination, and especially with regard to *compulsory* vaccination, causes a good many thoughtful people to look suspiciously upon their other nostrums. There is a tendency amongst doctors to rely upon the efficacy of "something in a bottle," and now that sensible people have grown doubtful as to the value of drugs, the doctors are puffing the merits of "anti" this and "anti" that, in the form of some mysterious, but always filthy, concoction. A few years ago the "great" Professor Koch, of Germany, was reported to have found a cure for consumption. It was some dirty stuff—*serum* they called it—once more in a bottle, though, instead of being swallowed, it had to be injected. By-and-bye, however, this nostrum died a natural death, and the "great" Professor Koch went off to South Africa to find an equally scientific cure for the rinderpest amongst the cattle. What has become of him since we don't know, and are not very anxious to learn.]

Recollecting these things, we were rather amused to see the announcement of a new Association for the Prevention of Consumption and other forms of Tuberculosis, signed by the Presidents of the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Surgeons. These gentlemen point out that consumption is not an inherent, but a communicated, disease; which, we suspect, is only half the truth, after all. They also state—and this is a matter of great importance—that the "open-air treatment" of this disease is highly necessary. Exactly so; in other words, nature must be given a chance. That is what should be done in the case of all maladies. Not so many years ago the doctors murdered small-pox patients wholesale by closing the doors and windows of their rooms, keeping them as hot as Hades, and dosing them with stimulants. But all that is changed now, thanks to the general spread of a knowledge of the elementary laws of hygiene.

Doctors naturally like to keep up the "mystery" of their craft, but the most knowing amongst them are well aware that the only real good a doctor can do for a patient is to see that he eats appropriate food, and lives amidst cleanliness and fresh air. That is giving nature a chance. Whatever vitality the patient has finds an opportunity of asserting itself. And nearly everything else is only superstition or imposture. Of course an exception must be made in surgical cases, but even there the medical profession, especially in hospitals, seems to have a perfect craze for using the knife.

The truth is that the medical profession, like every other, is bound to go wrong unless the general air of the intellectual and moral world passes through its lungs. A close corporation of doctors play the devil with the community, just like a close corporation of priests. Freedom and common sense are always necessary to the world's welfare.

The Wesleyan Methodist Conference has resolved to raise (of course, if possible) a Twentieth Century Fund to the tune of a million guineas. It has also resolved that Sunday freedom—if it means anything but liberty to go to church—should be put down. The National Sunday League came in for special condemnation, but it will doubtless go on as before with its summer excursions and winter concerts on the Lord's Day. These sour and gloomy Methodists, who hate every form of amusement but prayer-meetings, tea-fights, and muffin-struggles, would like to revive the old Puritanism which made the English people solemn and drunken. Fancy a genial gentleman like Hugh Price Hughes regulating the recreations of this nation! What a time we should all have! Why even hell would be a change for the better—especially in the matter of company.

Both the Government and the London County Council are formally called upon by these Methodist bigots to put a stop to the use of the Alhambra Theatre by the Sunday League for Sunday concerts. Price Hughes himself uses licensed premises on Sundays at St. James's Hall. He calls his performance a religious service, but he has a large choir and a big band, which draw the public far more than his own exhorting. True, he doesn't charge at the door, but he makes a collection; and what on earth is the difference, in principle, between taking the audience's money before the show begins and taking it half-way through or at the finish?

Theatres and music-halls may be used for evangelistic meetings and revival services. That is *all* right. But they mustn't be used for any *secular* purpose on Sunday. Nothing but religion on that blessed day. Oh dear no! And what is religion? Why, the *trade* of these gentlemen, who call upon the Government and the County Council to stop the awful doings of the Sunday League. There never was a greater piece of humbug and hypocrisy.

## The Ethics of Christianity.

There is no counting with certainty on the justice of men who are capable of fashioning and worshipping an unjust divinity, nor on their humanity so long as they incorporate inhuman motives in their most sacred dogma, nor on their reasonableness while they rigorously decline to accept reason as a test of truth.—*Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., "Voltaire," p. 241.*

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, August 7, Hyde Park; 14, Clerkenwell Green and Regent's Park; 21, Finsbury Park; 28, Victoria Park.
September 4, Peckham Rye.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Lecturing Engagements.—August 7, Hyde Park; 14, Clerkenwell Green; 21, Finsbury Park; e., Secular Hall, Camberwell; 28, Victoria Park. September 4, Victoria Park.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Victoria Park Friend, 2s. 6d.; W. Steward, 5s.

Constant Reader.—Why should we comment upon it? The writer is in agreement with most of what is propounded in our own columns.

W. W. Leavis writes: "Allow me to point out a mistake in the article on 'Church and Slavery.' The writer says that the principal Abolitionists in America were heretics, but adds that Channing, Bryant, and Longfellow were Christians. Instead of *Christians*, I should have said *Unitarians*."

C. E. Hall (Huddersfield) joins the Secular Society, Limited, sending 10s., the entrance fee.

F. S. Edwards.—Marriage at a Registrar's office is legally the same as marriage in a licensed church or chapel. You need have no doubt whatever on this point.

W K. Lewis.—Mr. Foote has written you by post. Some correspondence stands over in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence from London.

"Freethinker" Circulation Fund.—Lancashire Friend, 10s.

Papers Received.—Ethical World—Liberator—Sydney Bulletin—University Magazine—Boston Investigator—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Freidenker—Public Opinion—Zoophilist—Progressive Thinker—Torch of Reason—Secular Thought—Islamic World—Crescent—People's Newspaper—Truthseeker.

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

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

*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.

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 is due.

The National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

London Freethinkers within reasonable distance of Hyde Park should wend their way there this afternoon (August 7), when a Freethought Demonstration will be held, the speakers including Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Heaford. Proceedings will open at 3.30, and the meeting will take place near the Marble Arch, as far as possible from the West London Mission lot, who go in for unlimited singing, and thus do their best to destroy the value of the spot for open-air addresses.

These open-air Freethought Demonstrations will be continued throughout August, and full details will appear from week to week in the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Joseph Symes continues to make a gallant fight at Melbourne. "Let it be known to all our friends," he says in the *Liberator*, "that we are sadly in want of money. How to get money for current expenses is *the* problem." We should be very glad to hear that some wealthy Freethinker had come along and provided Mr. Symes with the sinews of war. He is not so young as he was, and it is a pity that the remainder of his life should be, to any extent, rendered unfruitful by financial worries.

The *People's Journal* (Rockhampton, Queensland) writes as follows on the death of our late sub-editor:—"I learn with profound grief that Joseph Mazzini Wheeler, sub-editor of the *Freethinker* (England), is dead. Mr. Wheeler has been for many years a worthy soldier in the great army of progress. He was one of the many men whose worth is greater than their fame. Many a man's name sounds throughout England and Australia to-day who never served the world half as much as Joseph Mazzini Wheeler served it. He believed in freedom, and laboured for its realisation. He hated cant and cruelty, and his pen was ever wielded on the side of toleration, liberty, and humanity. He was a man of wide reading and marvellous culture, and it was his joy to give his fellows the fruits of his untiring industry. I never knew so much learning combined with so much modesty. On the subject of comparative religion and mythology he simply knew all that there was to know—if not a little more. No man ever did more to popularise learning and scholarship than Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. I have read his writings for years, and I speak the unexaggerated truth when I say that they have ever tended to make me a wiser and a better man."

The Oregon State Secular Union recently held its tenth annual convention, and, according to the *Torch of Reason*, it was "a decided success in every particular." We are glad to note from this journal that progress is being made with the Liberal University Scheme.

Mr. A. B. Moss has gone to the seaside for his annual holiday, and we hope he will have a good time there. On Sunday last he delivered three open-air lectures in London under a broiling sun—which is worse than the work of a galley slave, not to mention the risk of sunstroke, apoplexy, and other dangers. In the afternoon Mr. Moss had a good audience on Peckham Rye. His lecture was frequently interrupted, and at the end the Christian rowdies made a rush for the platform. One old Secularist was badly knocked about by the mob, and Mr. Moss had to fight his way outside. It is to be hoped that this platform will be well supported by the local Secularists.

It has been pointed out to us that, as August is a very poor month for subscriptions, so many people being holiday-making, it would be better to keep the Wheeler Memorial Fund open until the end of September. No doubt there is a good deal in this suggestion, and we shall adopt it; but, as the Fund cannot be kept open indefinitely, we beg so say that it must be closed by the end of September. All who have not yet subscribed, but mean to—and there should be many—will please note this date.

## NEGRO HUMOR.

In Mr. Henry Kirke's just published *Twenty-five Years in British Guiana*—the author was formerly Sheriff of Demerara—are some very good descriptions of the manners, customs, and humours of social life in that tropical British Colony, of which the following is a specimen:—

"Sometimes they can find reasons for their eccentricity in the choice of names. A country parson was once taken aback when the happy father, presenting his tenth son for baptism, announced that he had selected for the unfortunate infant the name of Judas Iscariot. Said he: 'Dat's the boy's name. Judas hez been slighted. Nobody hez eber had de immortal courage to name a chile from dat man. But dat ain't de main reason why I named him Judas; I'se got de Bible ter 'stain me in gibben de chile dat name.' 'How does the Bible sustain you in desiring to perpetuate that name?' asked the astonished parson. 'It's dis fack; Christ, in remarking ob Judas, said it would hab been better for dat man ef he hadn't been born.' 'Well?' 'An' considering how many mouths is opened at de do' when I goes home wid a side of meat, it would be better fur dat boy of mine ef he had nebber seen daylight. I takes de Scripture fer de references. In de fucher, ef I finds dat de boy hez made improvements on hisself, den I change his name ter Jim.'"

Henry Smith, Professor of Geometry, the wittiest, most learned, and most genial of Irishmen, said of a well-known man of science: "His only fault is that he sometimes mistakes the Editor of Nature for the Author of Nature." A great lawyer, who is now a great judge, and has, with good reason, the highest opinion of himself, stood as a Liberal at the general election of 1880. His Tory opponents set on foot a rumor that he was an Atheist, and when Henry Smith heard it he said: "Now that's really too bad, for —— is a man who reluctantly acknowledges the existence of a Superior Being." At dinner at Balliol Dr. Jowett's guests were discussing the careers of two Balliol men, the one of whom had just been made a judge and the other a bishop. "Oh," said Henry Smith, "I think the bishop is the greater man. A judge, at the most, can only say, 'You be hanged,' but a bishop can say, 'You be d——d.'" "Yes," characteristically twittered the Master, "but if the judge says, 'you be hanged,' you are hanged."

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## NOTES ON CHRISTIANITY, THE CHURCH, AND SLAVERY.

*(Continued from page 491.)*

In an article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Dr. Ingram admits that "Even the Christian Churches in the slave States used their influence in favor of the maintenance of slavery."*

In America, says Theodore Parker,† the many held down the few; the twenty million chain the three, and the priest says nothing against it. What does he care? He goes on appeasing the wrath of God, administering salvation, explaining and communicating scripture, and turns round and says: "This is all just as it should be, a part of the revelation." "There are in Boston a hundred ministers; you could hardly know it except by the calendar. .....But how little do they bring to pass. The kidnapper seizes his prey, and they have excuses for the stealer of men, but cannot put up a prayer for his victim; nay, would drive the fugitive from their own door." This is how Christianity was abolishing slavery! Says an English writer, and a Christian, who was, in 1858, making a study of the religious life of the United States: "The pulpit exercises a most powerful influence in America; I doubt whether any practice could stand for many years before its denunciation, if pronounced unanimously. And here the great crime and plague spot of the American Churches is seen. The great progress made by the slave power during the last thirty years is mainly to be attributed to them. Formerly the Southern planters whined over slavery as a weakness and as a disgrace, as an unavoidable evil, which they would willingly be rid of. If the Churches had then taken a decided line, as they were bound to do, I believe slavery would be either now in process of abolition, or that the whole public sentiment of America would be arrayed against it. But under their influence, and with the sanction of the clergy, the South has come to regard slavery as a patriarchal institution, an ordinance of God, an equal advantage to the master and the slave.....The Churches are bound up with the system; they are rich in human property; the bishops and clergy of the different denominations, the office-bearers, and communicants are slaveholders, and buy and sell their fellow-men, whom they profess to recognise as 'temples of the Holy Ghost.' I have heard slavery extolled in Southern pulpits as the 'only successful missionary institution which the world has ever seen.' I have heard these words used in prayer in a Presbyterian church by a minister of whose personal piety I entertain no doubt: 'We thank thee, O Lord, that from a barbarous land, where idols are worshipped in blood and flame, thou hast brought a great multitude to our shores to sit at our feet and learn thy gospel.'.....I believe the Southern Churches deserve all the accusations which the eloquent tongue of Cheever has brought against them. They are the mainstay and backbone of slavery; they have led the South to review the subject, and, by declaring slavery to be an ordinance of God, fostered by the New Testament, and a noble missionary institution, they have turned the tide of popular feeling, and have done more to perpetuate the system than the whole mass of Southern politicians.....The ministers of the Churches which profess to expound the will of God have aided, with all their might, to rivet the curse upon Him and His posterity for evermore."

And yet we hear repeated again and again from that cowards' castle, the pulpit, that Christianity abolished slavery. Verily, the ignorance of the ordinary parson is only excelled by his unblushing cheek and impudence.

Mrs. Beecher Stowe gives page after page, in her key to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, of resolutions passed at different Church conferences in favor of slavery. At the end of chapter i., part iv., she thus reviews the declarations made by the Southern Church:—

1. That slavery is an innocent and lawful relation, as much as that of parent and child, husband and wife, or any other lawful relation of society (Harmony Pres. S.C.).

2. That it is consistent with the most fraternal regard for the good of the slave (Charleston Union Pres. S.C.).

3. That masters ought not to be disciplined for selling slaves without their consent (New School Pres. Church, Petersburg, Va.).

4. That the right to buy, sell, and hold men for purposes of gain was given by express permission of God (James Smylie and his Presbyteries).

5. That the laws which forbid the education of slaves are right, and meet the approbation of the reflecting part of the Christian community (*ibid*).

6. That the fact of slavery is not of morals at all, but is purely a question of political economy (Charleston Baptist Association).

7. That the right of masters to dispose of the time of their slaves has been distinctly recognised by the Creator of all things (*ibid*).

8. That slavery, as it exists in these states, is not a moral evil (Georgia Methodist Conference).

9. That, without a new revelation from heaven, no man is entitled to pronounce slavery wrong.

10. That the separation of slaves by sale should be regarded as separation by death, and the parties allowed to marry again (Shiloh Baptist Association and Savannah River Association).

11. That the testimony of colored members of the churches shall not be taken against a white person (Methodist Church).

In addition to this, it has been plainly avowed by the expressed principles and practice of Christians of various denominations that they regard it as right and proper to put down by lynch law all inquiry upon this subject.*

In regard to the slavery of ancient times, Christianity did not abolish it. It was upheld by many of the great leaders of the Christian Church. Chrysostom thought that slavery was advisable, so that men should see how truly a slave could enjoy liberty of soul. Constantine allowed poor parents to sell their children as slaves. St. Basil taught that slavery was a divine institution. In all ancient Christian literature, says Renan, "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."

It is true that during the Middle Ages there were those in the Church who did something to liberate Christian slaves, but they never seemed to recognise the *right* of the slave to liberty. They were bought and freed as acts of charity, and often were liberated to fill the monasteries. Right along, from the time of primitive Christianity until quite recent times, divines have taught that slavery was no sin. In England the Quakers were the only religious body who, as such, petitioned the House of Commons on the subject.

Now let us compare the manner in which slaves were treated by Christian and Pagan countries, and see whether it is not true that the slaves in Christian America and other Christian countries were treated with far greater cruelty than they were ever subjected to in Pagan countries.

In Greece, and especially in Athens, slaves were treated mildly, and enjoyed a large share of legal protection; according to Demosthenes, a slave at Athens was better off than a free citizen in many other countries.†

The same is true of Roman slavery; Christianity did not abolish it. A. W. Benn points out‡: "Slavery was first condemned as a violation of natural right by certain Greek philosophers, long prior to the Christian era, and legislation favorable to emancipation was initiated by Roman jurists before Rome was Christianised. Under the peaceful sovereignty of Rome personal slavery had been almost suppressed."§

Virgil made a slave of his a poet; Horace was the son of a slave. The slaves were often educated persons holding high and responsible positions; ofttimes they were physicians and surveyors, clerks and preceptors, architects and singers.‖ "You cannot name an occupation connected with agriculture, manufacture, industry, or public amusement, but it was the patrimony of slaves."¶

The slavery of the Mohammedan East is usually not the slavery of the field, but the slavery of the household. The slave is a member of the family, and is treated with tenderness and affection. The Koran breathes a consider-

* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, p. 142, vol. ix.
† *Theism, Atheism, and Popular Theology*, pp. 291 and 294.

* Key to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, p. 470.
† See Chambers's *Encyclopædia*, "Slavery," vol. ix.
‡ In *Academy*.
§ *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. vi., p. 351.
‖ See *Rome*, "Story of Nation" series.
¶ *Curiosities of History*, by John Timbs, F.S.A.

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ate and kindly spirit towards the class, and encourages manumission.* The child of a slave girl by her master is born free, and the mother is usually raised to be a free wife.†

Speaking of domestic slavery in Turkey, a well-informed writer‡ says: "Domestic slavery, however, as practised in Moslem Turkey, differs widely from the same institution as it existed until recently in Christian America. In Islam slaves are protected by many humane laws, and are, on the whole, treated quite paternally. Their condition has nothing specially humiliating about it; they form, as I have just said, no class apart, and speedily become merged in the free and native population. Whatever may be the faults, shortcomings, and infirmities of a domestic slave, she cannot be turned adrift, as her owner is responsible for her maintenance. Nor can she be supplied with food of an inferior quality, and insufficient in quantity, for the Prophet has commanded that a slave shall fare as well as her owner. At the end of seven years' servitude she may claim her freedom, and generally obtain with it a *trousseau* and a husband. It is considered by Moslems a pious and meritorious act—one of their 'good works,' in fact—to free a slave, and Turks on their death-beds frequently bequeath their liberty to the slaves of their household."

W. Witt Leavis.

*(To be concluded.)*

## TAMING A PHILISTINE.

*Characters:—*

Mr. Jeremiah Fogg *(from the Country).*
Mr. Luke Sharpe *(from London).*

Scene: A Country Road.
Time: Sunday Afternoon.

Mr. Luke Sharpe (*discovered sitting on a bench. He is busily engaged drawing all sorts of fantastical figures on the ground with the end of his stick. Suddenly he looks up and pulls out his repeater*): Here I have been waiting ten weary minutes, and that girl has not turned up yet. There are two things a woman can never keep—a secret and an appointment. (*Heaves a sigh.*) I suppose I must wait. Everything comes to him who knows how to wait, except the thing he is waiting for. (*Draws more hieroglyphics on the ground, and looks up again after a while.*) I'm blowed; if it isn't that old stick-in-the-mud making tracks in this direction! If he begins with any of his religious nonsense, I'll give him what ho!

Mr. Fogg (*approaching, and wiping his forehead with a red handkerchief*): Good afternoon, sir.

Mr. Sharpe (*indifferently*): Good afternoon.

Mr. Fogg: Isn't it a lovely day?

Mr. Sharpe: Yes, it is so lovely that you do not require any bore to tell you so.

Mr. Fogg: But is it not *hot?*

Mr. Sharpe: It is not *hot*, it is *warm.* You see I call a warm day one on which you can move about and do a little work and consume plenty of refreshments! I call it *hot* when you feel inclined to remain all day long up to your neck in an ice-cold bath with a big cask of ale at your side!

Mr. Fogg: H'm! You Londoners are an awful thirsty people.

Mr. Sharpe: Yes; and we never really begin to drink till we are nearly half seas over.

Mr. Fogg: You should become a teetotaller like me, and drink water.

Mr. Sharpe: Men drink beer, women tea, children lemonade, fools water. Shall I define you a teetotaller?

Mr. Fogg: Yes, do.

Mr. Sharpe: A teetotaller is a man who would change our public-houses into cattle-troughs if he only had the chance.

Mr. Fogg: I am afraid you are a bit of a cynic.

Mr. Sharpe: A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything and values nothing. No; I am only sarcastic at times.

Mr. Fogg: Sarcasm is a dangerous weapon.

Mr. Sharpe: Except in the hands of those who know how to use it properly. (*A pause.*)

Mr. Fogg: I did not have the pleasure of seeing you this morning at church.

Mr. Sharpe (*aside*): He is at it again. (*Aloud*) Where did you say, at church?

Mr. Fogg: Yes.

Mr. Sharpe: Why should I go to church?

Mr. Fogg: To pray.

Mr. Sharpe: To whom?

Mr. Fogg: To God, to be sure.

Mr. Sharpe: God? I have not the pleasure of the gentleman's acquaintance. Who is he?

Mr. Fogg: Good gracious me, what a question to ask! Why, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Mr. Sharpe: What do you mean by creator or creating? Making something out of nothing?

Mr. Fogg: Precisely.

Mr. Sharpe: And do you believe it?

Mr. Fogg: Of course I do.

Mr. Sharpe: I forgot. There are people insane enough to believe anything.

Mr. Fogg: Have you ever heard of a little word called "faith"?

Mr. Sharpe: Oh yes; faith is to pretend to believe that which you cannot understand.

Mr. Fogg: I am afraid you are getting frivolous.

Mr. Sharpe: I am never so much in earnest as when I am frivolous.

Mr. Fogg: Do you know what you are? You are a wicked sinner.

Mr. Sharpe: And I suppose you are a saint?

Mr. Fogg: A saint is a sinner with a past.

Mr. Sharpe: And a sinner is a saint with a future.

Mr. Fogg: Where do you expect to go to when you die?

Mr. Sharpe: That is more than you can tell me.

Mr. Fogg: Yes I can. You will go straight to hell.

Mr. Sharpe: How nice! At any rate, I shall be amongst splendid company!

Mr. Fogg: And you will have lost paradise.

Mr. Sharpe: I don't want to go there at all! Can you give me any idea of paradise? Do you know what the beautiful cuckoo-land above is like?

Mr. Fogg (*stammering*): Well, you see—you know—we can't—we don't ——

Mr. Sharpe: I understand. It is such a beautiful place that no human tongue can describe it. Shall I give you my idea of paradise?

Mr. Fogg: Yes, I should like to hear it.

Mr. Sharpe: To sit comfortably with one's wife near one's fireside, smoking a full Havana, without worries of any kind, and without the fear of being molested either by clamorous creditors, the undertaker, the broker's man, or a German band.

Mr. Fogg: You are a gross materialist. Your maxim is: Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

Mr. Sharpe: Bosh! Now, suppose your paradise were all an illusion, eh?

Mr. Fogg: I should lose nothing by the deception.

Mr. Sharpe: Except that you will have made yourself miserable in this world by torturing your flesh. You believers are too ambitious. To us Freethinkers this world is good enough; we do not trouble about the next.

Mr. Fogg: But perhaps the next does not trouble itself about you.

Mr. Sharpe: In that case, neither of us has to complain.

Mr. Fogg: You are a thoughtless lot, you sceptics.

Mr. Sharpe: It is you who do not think; you are looking in the clouds for what you have at your feet.

Mr. Fogg: It is of no use arguing with you.

Mr. Sharpe: You are afraid I might convert you.

Mr. Fogg: I like your impudence.

Mr. Sharpe: I prefer yours.

Mr. Fogg: Enough! (*Dips into his pocket.*) In conclusion, permit me to present you with this pamphlet, *The Way to Heaven.* (*Mr. Sharpe takes it.*)

Mr. Sharpe (*producing a pamphlet from his pocket*): And since exchange is no robbery, allow me, likewise, to present you with Ingersoll's *Faith and Fact.*

Mr. Fogg (*stepping back*): No, thank you. I'll not read any trash written by that arch-infidel Ingersoll!

* See Koran, chaps. iv.-xxiv.
† *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Slavery," vol. ix.
‡ Miss Lucy Garnet, "Women under Islam," *Nineteenth Century*, 1895.

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MR. SHARPE (*replacing the pamphlet in his pocket*): You are right. You would not understand. It requires brains.

MR. FOGG (*highly indignant*): Sir!

MR. SHARPE: All right, old chappie! don't put yourself in a passion; it's so *hot* to-day, you know! (*Just then a sweet damsel, dressed in white, and wearing a huge hat, is seen coming up the hill. Mr. Sharpe recognises his sweetheart at once, and turns to Mr. Fogg.*) Here comes my girl; we must postpone our discussion until some future date—let us say in a hundred years from to-day! Good-bye, so long! (*Disappears in the distance.*)

MR. FOGG (*sitting down, and fanning himself with his hat*): If that young man is a specimen of the modern Londoner, God have mercy on his soul! Now I understand why it rains almost every day in the metropolis; the rain-drops are simply the tears of the angels weeping over the wickedness of London! F. MALIBRAN.

CURTAIN.

## THE CHRISTIAN HELL.

UNTIL recently all were under the shadow of a vast superstition, in which death was regarded as the most dreaded of all evils. Men were taught that they were born to die, and over that all the terrors that theology could gather from savage nations were added to increase the gloom. The notion of hell, to which the sky-pilots still cling so fondly, worked on the terror and superstition of the human mind. Even little children were frightened with hell-fire, and often spent years of misery in consequence. Who can forget Colonel Ingersoll's reference to the little child who, out in the brilliant sunshine, and surrounded by the whispering trees, could think of nothing but the "worm that never dies"?

Let us turn for a moment from the horrible conceptions of the priests of the Most High to the ideas of the poets. Remembering even Milton's "Lycidas" and Shelley's "Adonais," no poet peers with such longing and audacity as Walt Whitman into the "superb vistas of death." Whatever else may be said of Whitman's poetry, it must be conceded that he has treated this eternal theme of death with a new power and significance. The awful dreams that may come in that sleep of death have no terror for this poet, nor does he trouble himself with the fond breast on which the parting soul relies. Death to Whitman is "lovely and soothing"; it is the "dark mother always gliding near with soft feet," and the body, weary with life, turns, like a tired child, "gratefully nestling close" in the bosom of this soothing motherhood. The dead are made one with nature. In all this death-poetry of Whitman what St. Paul calls the "last enemy" is presented as no enemy at all, but a friend. Whitman has left the priests far behind. Beyond the hells, the purgatories, and the paradises, the death-songs of Whitman flood the night and pour their serene melody over the world.

It was the Christian conception of hell which drove John Bunyan to frenzy and William Cowper to insanity.

## The Reason.

Two old women, on their way home from church, in a country district of Scotland, were speaking of Napoleon's overthrow by the allied troops at Waterloo. The minister had been pointing a moral by aid of the Corsican hero's defeat.

"Hoo is it," said one in her narrow way, "the Scotch aye win their battles?"

"Weel, ye ken, it's because they aye pray afore they go in the fecht," replied the other.

"Ay! But mercy, wuman, canna the French pray as weel?"

"Nae dooht they dae; but wha could understan' they jabberin' bodies?" snapped the interrogated one in peremptory answer.

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A writer in the *New Century Review* tells the following story concerning Jack Russell, the famous rector of Swinbridge. Being called to the bedside of an old parishioner, the Rev. Jack started cheerily: "What ails the', old chap?" "Ah, passen, awm afeard awm dyin'!" "Well! all o' us 'a got to die, and thou's had a fair look in!" "That's right, passen! but awm afeard." "What's the' afeard o'? Hasn't murdered anybody hast the'?" "Naw." "Robbed anybody?" "Naw." "Allus paid th' tithe?" "Ias." "Hasn't meddled with any other man's wife!" "Naw." "Then tell the devil to go to hell." The patient, apparently impressed with the suitability of the remark, subsided, and shortly after passed away peacefully.

## THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

*(Company Limited by Guarantee.)*

### MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION.

1.—The name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.

2.—The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.

3.—The objects for which the Company is formed are:—

(*a*) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.

(*b*) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.

(*c*) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.

(*d*) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.

(*e*) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.

(*f*) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.

(*g*) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.

(*h*) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.

(*i*) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.

(*j*) To employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants for the same end.

(*k*) To publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals.

(*l*) To assist, by votes of money or otherwise, other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects.

(*m*) To have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

(*n*) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred society in any part of the world.

(*o*) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

## A Question of Locality.

Several clergymen got in a street-car in Boston one day, and one of them, hearing that Wendell Phillips, the great opponent of slavery, was in the car, got up and asked the conductor to point him out. The conductor did so, and the minister, going up to the orator, said:

"You are Mr. Phillips, I am told?"

"Yes, sir."

"I should like to speak to you about something, and I trust, sir, you will not be offended?"

"There is no fear of it," was the sturdy answer.

And then the minister began to ask Mr. Phillips earnestly why he persisted in stirring up such an unfriendly agitation in one part of the country about an evil that existed in another part.

"Why," said the clergyman, "do you not go South and kick up this fuss, and leave the North in peace?"

Mr. Phillips was not in the least ruffled, and answered smilingly:

"You, sir, I presume, are a minister of the Gospel?"

"I am, sir," said the the clergyman.

"And your calling is to save souls from hell?"

"Exactly, sir."

"Well, then, why don't you go there."

## Atheism.

The deepest controversy that lies before modern society is, Can the social union subsist without a belief in God?—*Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., "Miscellanies," vol. 4, p. 78.*

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## BOOK CHAT.

THE *Literary Guide* (Watts and Co.) for August is an excellent number. The opening article is from the pen of our friend Charles Watts, and it quite took our breath away. We always thought he was an Atheist himself, but in this article he speaks of "the dogmatism of the Theist and the Atheist," and declares that many Atheists "deny the existence of a God." What Atheists does he refer to? Not Bradlaugh, Holyoake, or Ingersoll. What is said in this article of Agnosticism is precisely what has been urged by every philosophical Atheist. And, as a matter of fact, Agnosticism is as much as Atheism an attitude of practical dissent from Theism. The really *middle* course, so to speak, is Positivism, which sweeps aside all transcendentalism and metaphysics. Mr. Watts writes lucidly enough, but in this case his thought does not seem to us precisely clear. Mr. Gould contributes an interesting "Chat" with Mr. J. A. Hobson, who is one of George Meredith's admirers. There are other good articles and a number of well-written paragraphs on various topics.

* * *

*Humanity*, organ of the Humanitarian League, for August, is bright and practical. It ought to be in the hands of reformers, who should also try to circulate it amongst their friends and acquaintances. We are glad to note that amongst the literary men who have recently responded to a circular, and sent donations and expressed sympathy with the objects of the League, are George Meredith and W. M. Rossetti.

* * *

The August number of the *Adult* contains a good portrait of Mr. George Bedborough. There is an interesting letter from M. Maeterlinck, who has been called the Belgian Shakespeare, to Mr. William Platt, one of whose stories in the *Adult* has been included in the "obscenity" indictment. M. Maeterlinck says he "cannot understand the accusation." "Nothing in the details," he adds, "and particularly nothing in the lofty spirit which animates it, could justify the least suspicion." The other contents of this magazine are of the usual character. Mr. Henry Seymour acts as editor during the prosecution of Mr. Bedborough.

* * *

The religious novel has mostly proceeded from the pens of tenth-rate writers. *The Sorrows of Satan*, a schoolgirl's paraphrase of Goethe's *Faust*; *The Sign of the Cross*, worse even than the play of that name; *John Ward Preacher*, who was true to his title, for he did nothing else but preach; and the rest of the clotted bosh, should have surfeited even the subscribers of Mudie the Magnificent, or Smith the Sanctimonious.

* * *

But now Mrs. Humphry Ward has come along. Remembering the immense success of *Robert Elsmere*, she tries once more a religious theme, and *Helbeck of Bannisdale* is the result. It is true the Grand Old Man has gone and not left his address behind him, but Mrs. Humphry Ward no longer needs booming. She has now earned a position from which no hostile criticism could shift her. She is, without doubt, the best woman writer among her contemporaries. She is a head and shoulders above the Corellis, the Braddons, and others of that ilk. She commands attention.

* * *

In this, her latest volume, she gives a most powerful study of the terrible mental conflict 'twixt love and faith. In *Robert Elsmere* it was the man who was the sceptic, the woman who was firm to her faith. Here the positions are reversed. Alan Helbeck is a sincere Catholic, of the most unbending order imaginable; in some respects, more religious than the priests themselves. This man succumbs to the passion of love. The subject of his passion is an Agnostic—a heretic. Helbeck struggles manfully, but the onlooker perceives from the first that there can be but one ending. True, he remains firm to the faith of his fathers, but his surrender in other respects is all the more complete. Laura Fountain, the girl who had unwittingly altered his whole view of life, was herself commencing to feel a new passion she feared, though scarcely understanding, and quite unsuspecting where it would lead her. Alan Helbeck and Laura Fountain become engaged. What follows, which goes over to the other, and how matters end, the reader must seek himself. Suffice it to say that Mrs. Humphry Ward sacrifices nothing to a conventional conclusion.

*

The *University Magazine* for August opens with an article by "Democritus" on the Bedborough prosecution, which is very much behind date as to details, and repeats the inaccurate statement that Mr. Bedborough's bail was fixed at £2,000. Dr. Park concludes his essay on "The Science of the Emotions." Mr. Usher's book against Malthusianism is answered by "Macrobius," and amongst the other contents may be noted an interesting article by "T. H. W." on "The Moral Indifference of Nature."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### IN REPLY TO MR. KENWORTHY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have looked through Professor Sanday's Bampton Lectures on "The Gospels and the Acts" (Lecture vi. in the 1893 series). The Professor considers that "the great mass of the narrative in the first three gospels took its shape before the destruction of Jerusalem." His proofs are of the thinnest and most ghost-like character. The most brilliant appears to be this: that, as various texts in the gospels make mention of the altar, etc., the temple must still have been standing when they were composed. Now, I do not see any reason against the origin of a number of maxims and reflections before the capture of Jerusalem in the year 70; but I do not see that this concession leads us on to admitting the existence of the larger portion of the gospel narrative before the date named. The fact is, the whole question as to when the gospels assumed their present shape is in the cloudiest possible condition. I have spent many hours in the valley of the shadow called New Testament criticism, and when I emerged I felt like a man dazed. The world seemed to be made up of "possibly," "probably," "perhaps," "it may be," "perchance," "peradventure," "in all likelihood," "conceivably," "with considerable hesitation," "it is not irrational to suppose," and similar phrases suggestive of puzzledom and fog.

However, I am glad to find that Mr. Kenworthy does not lay any special stress upon these literary conundrums. I confess I thought he was in danger of wasting time when he entered upon a discussion of the dates of the gospels. I thought him too honest and valiant a man to go sailing on such a Dead Sea. And I note that he says: "A right view of the origins is not necessary to an understanding of the gospel teaching." I quite agree; I believe Mr. Kenworthy's interpretation of the early Christian doctrine is quite correct. I believe the first Christians meant all classes—rich, middle-class, lower middle-class, or proletariat—to become absolutely money-less.

I cannot sympathise with Mr. Kenworthy's respect for the first Christians as "our leaders in life." I do, indeed, honor these first Christians for their sincerity and courage; and so do I honor Buddha, Lao-tze, or Socrates. But why should I be bound to do a thing just because the first Christians tell me to? The fact that they lived in the first century gives them no claim upon my obedience. They tell me to turn my cheek to the smiter. My compliments to the first century, but I shall do no such thing. I would do it if I thought it a likely way to bring about a general disarmament, for I am an anti-militarist. But I expect no good to come of submission to the insults of ill-bred people. I concede the value of a measure of forbearance, and the power of self-restraint and cool judgment; but that is the gospel of Marcus Aurelius, not of Jesus. Mr. Kenworthy will say I am wrong: he can show me a more excellent way. Very well; but let us leave these Christians out of the debate. Let us talk out our moral and social difficulties without constantly running to the Bible. If a rule of conduct is right, it is made no better by its insertion in the New Testament; and if it is not right, the New Testament will not make it just. Let us use our "immediate reasons." Let 1898 legislate for 1898. I have a great reverence for the past; in that sentiment I follow Auguste Comte. But reverence, while it leads me to admit the self-devotion of my forefathers, will not induce me to bow to their obsolete maxims. The little boat that carried the twelve apostles across the Sea of Galilee may have been a useful craft in its way; but it will not bear the modern life and intellect. I think it too frail to serve so brave a soul as Mr. Kenworthy.

F. J. GOULD.

### A Revised Version.

Two little tots were to be put to bed, and were kneeling at their mother's knee saying the Lord's prayer. The eldest one was repeating it after his mother, and when he reached the passage, "Give us this day our daily bread," what was the mother's surprise when the other little chap said: "Hit him for pie, brother; hit him for pie!"

---

"Well, Uncle Rasbury, how did you like the sermon?' "It war a pow'ful sermon, Marse John." "What was it about?' "It war 'bout de mir'cle ob seven thousand loaves and five thousand fishes bein' fed to the twelve 'postles." "Seven thousand loaves and five thousand fishes being fed to the twelve apostles. But where does the miracle come in?" Uncle Rasbury scratched his head a few moments meditatively. Then he replied: "Well, Marse John, de mir'cle, 'cordin' to my peyception of de circumstances, is dey all didn't bust."

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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.**

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen. Peckham Rye: 3.15 and 6.30, C. Cohen.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, W. Heaford; 7, A lecture. August 10, at 8, A lecture.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, Mr. Ramsey.

FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, E. White.

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7, R. P. Edwards.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 3.30, A demonstration.

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, A lecture.

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, A. B. Moss; August 9, at 8, A lecture.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Religions of the World."

**COUNTRY.**

DERBY (Central Hall, Market-place): Afternoon's picnic to Duffield, 2.50 train.

OX-HILL AND STANLEY SECULAR SOCIETY (Board-schools): August 18, at 7, J. Reid, "Christian Ethics *versus* Secular Ethics"; 6, Business meeting to make final arrangements for trip.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "Atheism and the French Revolution."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business meeting.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—August 7, m., Camberwell; a. and e., Peckham Rye.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Croydon-road, London, S.E.—August 14, m., Finsbury; 21, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 28, m., Wood Green. September 4, m., Mile End; 11, m., Mile End; 18, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 25, m., Finsbury; a., Victoria Park.

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# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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## DEATH THE DEMOCRAT.

"The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master."—*Job.*

"O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet!*"—*Sir Walter Raleigh.*

"The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings;
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade."
—*Shirley.*

"Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away."
—*Shakespeare, "Hamlet."*

EVERYONE has heard of the great Saladin, the Mohammedan ruler, whose humanity was such a striking contrast to the brutality of the Christian Crusaders. When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem, they turned it into a shambles; when Saladin recaptured it he did not shed a drop of gratuitous blood; on the contrary, he spent a large sum of his own money in redeeming captives, whose misery filled his heart with compassion. At his death this splendid "infidel" ordered charities to be distributed to the poor, without distinction of Jew, Christian, or Mohammedan. This was a sublime act in that age and in those circumstances. But I have always more admired—if that be possible—the poetical inspiration of another death-bed act of his. "Take this cloak," he said to his servant, "show it to the faithful, and tell them that the ruler of the East could take but one garment with him into the grave."

There is something in the lofty and stern monotheism of Islam more favorable to the sentiments of democracy than anything to be found in the Christian religion; and doubtless this was in part the inspiration of Saladin's death-bed message to the world; but another, and probably a larger, part of it was due to his own superiority of nature. He had something of the poet in him. He saw through the shows and masks of things. He perceived their naked reality. He knew what life is, and what death is. We are all equal at birth, all senseless and helpless; and afterwards, beneath all the distinctions of society, we are less unequal than we appear; and when death comes the equality is once more pronounced. A husband standing beside his dead wife is just the same sad picture in a palace or a cottage. A mother weeping over her dead child recks not whether the furniture of the room be mean or sumptuous. The accidents of life sink into nothingness when the essentials assert themselves. And then comes the final and eternal equality of the grave. All fare alike at that last supper—"not where he eats, but where he is eaten." Nay, a tall pauper inherits more earth at the finish than a shorter nobleman; and the little worm knows no distinction between king and peasant.

Death makes all odds even. Hats off, then, to Death the democrat! Death the leveller! compared with whom the most fanatical Socialist on earth is mild, and the wildest Anarchist an old-fashioned reactionary.

It must be this sentiment, however unconsciously it operates, that prompts the Frenchman to lift his hat and stand still when a funeral passes. The rougher Englishman is apt to think this theatrical, but it is nothing of the kind. France is the land of social equality. Economical and class distinctions obtain there as elsewhere, but the moral distinction between the various sections of society is comparatively slight. This is partly a legacy of the Revolution, and partly owing to the genius of the people. It is one of the best features of the French character. For my part, I think the better of my kind when I see the Frenchman's lifted hat and bent head. Let the coffin be poor or costly, death is there, and love and grief, which make us all akin.

Nothing I have read about the dead Colossus of Germany has touched me like the following story told by one who knew him well. Bismarck was a good family man, and kind to his poor neighbors. Away from the turmoil of politics, and the glare of high public life, he found his humanity. When his old wife died, the veteran diplomatist sat in his nightshirt, with naked feet, on her bedside, weeping like a child. That is a sad-sweet picture, but I like the other better. Here it is, in the very words of the narrator:—

> "In the home circle he was perfectly charming, easy-going, and good-natured. He was passionately fond of children, and I have seen him over and over again have a game with the little ones of his gardener, who were very familiar with him, and would not hesitate to climb upon his knee. Once, when his gardener's little girl died, the great statesman went to condole with him. He was dreadfully upset, and, whilst holding the poor father's hand, burst into tears, for he was very fond of the child. He kissed the little corpse, and himself placed a bunch of roses in its hand."

This is true life. This is eternal. Those tears of sympathy with a poor brother man in his distress are better to think of than all the blood shed at Gravelotte and Sedan. Weaving the threads of subtle diplomacy, flashing the sword of conquest, changing frontiers and making empires, are great things in the eye of the world. But the finest thing Napoleon ever said was, "Respect the burden, madam," as he drew aside a proud lady who stood in the way of a loaded laborer; and the finest thing I have read about Bismarck is this story of his sharing the sorrow of a poor father over the corpse of his little child.

Standing out against all the bloody villainies of David is his grief over his favorite child. "O Absalom, my son, my son; would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son." And through all the tumultuous glories of Rome, and the shouts of her legions, and the ring of their swords on hostile helmets, pierces the musical wail of Catullus over his dead brother—a note of immortal love and grief that will find an echo in human hearts for ever.

Walt Whitman was well inspired in singing a hymn to Death. It is the great democrat and the great leveller. And it is the great softener of the human heart, as it is the great renewer of humanity. Death removes, and birth supplies, and thus the human race is kept ductile and progressive. Death also demonstrates our common nature by proving our common mortality. How absurd are pompous inscriptions on tombstones! Great, was he? a whole hand higher than his fellows? Yet he lies here, and all his pride has dwindled to those fading lines on that crumbling stone. We turn away to memorials more in keeping with the scene; to simple words of grief and affection, of rest and peace. All sprang from Nature and had their little day of mingled pleasure and pain, and all return for their last long sleep to her bosom.

G. W. FOOTE.



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## ETHICAL SANCTIONS.

(*Concluded from page 498.*)

As we pointed out in our article last week, we fail to see that Mr. Kidd, in his *Social Evolution*, has proved his allegation, that ethical sanctions are not to be found either in the individual or in the social organism. It is not clear that he believes in any supernatural being, and, if he does not, from what source are the sanctions derived? We have already showed that they could not have emanated from any of the alleged supernatural religions. Mr. Kidd himself admits that "a rational religion is a scientific impossibility." If so, how can moral sanctions be obtained therefrom? The very fact that different religions have prescribed different moral codes shows it to be impossible. The same with the Bible. In one passage the killing of human beings is forbidden by God, and in another passage special instructions are given by the same being to commit the prohibited crime. Conflicting injunctions are also to be found in the "inspired word" in reference to adultery, lying, retaliation, love, forgiveness, individual and general salvation, and many other acts which form part of the conduct of human life. Even Christianity itself has very wide and contradictory interpretations of the rules of morality. The Roman Catholics consider celibacy in male and female votaries, confession, penance, mortification, and even self-inflicted scourging, as being highly moral practices; whilst the Protestant sections of the same Christianity regard some or all of these usages as the most immoral. Buckle says: "The inquisitors were remarkable for an undeviating and uncorruptible integrity. Their most bitter enemy does not even insinuate a charge against the moral character of the inquisitors; whilst execrating the cruelty of their conduct, yet nothing can be said against the purity of their intentions." Many of the primitive religions had nothing whatever to do with what is regarded to-day as morality. Was not Professor Richie right in saying: "It has often happened that, from foolish, cruel, or degrading ceremonies being ranked as duties, the influence of the belief in the supernatural objects of worship has had a distinctly pernicious effect, the moral judgment being warped, and an unworthy standard being maintained"? And Emerson said: "Whatever is called religion effeminates and demoralises."

Briefly stated, those acts may be termed moral which tend to promote the happiness and general well-being both of individuals and of society at large. To this probably no exception will be taken; but the disputed point is, What are the sanctions for such ethical conduct? The theologian tells us that morality consists in obeying "the will of God." This, however, we deem a fallacy, inasmuch as, granting a God exists, we have no means of ascertaining what his will is. In the Bible, as we have already said, many wills contradictory in their nature are ascribed to its deity. Now, as they are all given upon the same authority, and as all cannot be obeyed, it is difficult to select any one that would not be annulled by complying with the others. Besides, in acting in accordance with what was thought to be in harmony with this conjectured will, conduct the most foolish, cruel, and pernicious has been the result. Apart from the long catalogue of such deeds as are recorded in the Bible, the belief in "God's will" as an ethical sanction has caused an untold sacrifice of human life. Under its influence mothers have cast their babes into rivers, fathers have plunged their knives into their innocent breasts, bodies have been mutilated, thousands of innocent persons have been sent to their graves for the imaginary crime of witchcraft, slavery has been perpetuated, and the worst forms of brutality have destroyed the happiness of numberless homes. Sir Thomas Browne, in his *Lectures on Ethics*, has shown that the "will of God" is no sanction for right doing. His words are: "The mother, though she should at the moment forget altogether that there is a God in nature, would still turn with moral horror from the thought of murdering the little prattler who is sporting at her knee, and who is not more beautiful to her eye by external charms and graces than beautiful to her heart by the thousand tendernesses which every day and almost every hour is developing; while the child, who perhaps has scarcely heard that there is a God, or who at least is ignorant of any will of God, in conformity with which virtue consists, is still in his very ignorance developing those moral feelings which are supposed to be inconsistent with such ignorance, and would not have the same feeling of complacency in repaying the parental caresses with acts of intentional injury as when he repays them with expressions of reciprocal love. Of all the mothers who, at this moment, on the earth are exercised, and virtuously exercised, in maternal duties around the cradles of their infants, there is, perhaps, not one who is thinking that God has commanded her to love her offspring, and to perform for them the many offices of love that are necessary for preserving the lives which are so dear to her." We are aware that a small section of those who are termed "advanced Christians" have now given up the will of God as the groundwork of their morality. This, however, seems to us inconsistent with their faith, for the following reasons: (1) If the Bible God be the father of all, surely to act in accordance with his will should be the best guide in life; (2) Christian morality is supposed to consist of the teachings of the Bible, the alleged record of the will of God; (3) If God's *will* is not the basis of Christian ethics, what is, from the Christian standpoint?

By many persons it is affirmed that the faculty termed conscience determines right from wrong, and therefore it is that which forms the best sanction for ethical conduct. Certain theologians speak of conscience as the voice of God in man—a tribunal to which all the affairs of life may be brought with equal certainty of righteous settlement. Man's errors and sins have been looked upon as evidence of his deafness to this divine voice. It could never err, but man has always erred, it is alleged, because he has invariably rebelled against, and defied, its dictates. It is urged that, because the voice of conscience has been unheeded, Paganism became rife, and that the lofty Theism of the ancient Jews degenerated into superstitious idolatry—that the later Jews rejected the Messiah, and that Rationalism spreads to to-day. As the voice is the voice of God, its directions, it is contended, must be sound, and its commands must be just; the fault must always be in men, and the seat of this fault is in wilfulness and independence. Such a contention appears to us utterly fallacious when we remember the fact that the deeds of some who believed they obeyed the divine commands have been condemned by others who were no less confident that they were true to this divine voice within them. There is also the fact that many a man does, with the firmest conviction that he is obeying this inner guide, what at a later period he would give anything to undo, feeling that this, were it possible, would be his first duty. Moreover, the uncivilised man, whose conscience has had nothing of civilised education, considers it highly meritorious to deprive his enemy of his scalp as soon as he has the power to take it; and on the most trivial provocation, as well as in war, this and many other murderous acts are in perfect harmony with the conscience of savage men. Further, it must not be overlooked that the conscience of one period in the history of mankind has been passed, and left far behind by the conscience of a subsequent period; and what was done by the purest and noblest in one age, in another age is not done at all, another standard of morality having been reached. Just as opinions upon all intellectual matters change from generation to generation, so feelings on the question of duty, conceptions of righteousness, the nature and sense of obligation and responsibility change also, and from period to period there has been an evolution of morals and a deepening and strengthening of the sense and area of obligation.

Inasmuch as conscience is an educational result, and that education differs among men and nations, conscience cannot be logically accepted as an ethical sanction. Not only do the inhabitants of different countries vary considerably in regard to the dictates of conscience, according to the nature of their education, but the people of the same country will be found to be by no means agreed as to what is right and what is wrong, except in a few well-marked deeds. One man feels a conscientious objection to doing that which another man will positively believe to be a praiseworthy act. In this, as in other matters, education is all-potent over the mental character. We agree with the following statements by Mrs. Besant in her *True Basis of Morality*, a pamphlet written when she was a student of reason, and not simply an ardent devotee of emotion. The lady wrote: "It is often said that conscience directs man to hate evil, and to love good. There is considerable confusion of thought in this idea. Conscience does not enable a man to discern between good and evil; the decision as to

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the morality or immorality of an action is made by the reason, whether that reason be enlightened or unenlightened. All that conscience does is to urge the man to follow that which the reason declares to be right. When the brain has declared 'such and such a thing is good,' then the conscience says, 'do it.' If the reason judge falsely, the conscience will then point to the *wrong* action as a duty, and thus it has happened that some of the worst actions in the world have been done at the command of conscience. The most cruel persecutions have been carried out with perfect conscientiousness; and priests, with streaming eyes and bleeding hearts, have burned heretics to the 'greater glory of God.' Conscience is not a safe guide—in fact, it is no guide at all; it is not the eye which chooses the path, but the foot which blindly carries us wherever the brain directs."

Our conclusion is that it should be the aim of every member of the human family to attain a high ethical standard. The sanction of such culture we regard to be the usefulness of our actions in promoting the happiness and the highest possible development of the physical, intellectual, and moral character of every man, woman, and child. In other words, the best and, as we think, the only trustworthy guide in human conduct is cultivated reason and a properly disciplined intellect.

CHARLES WATTS.

## MORAL INSTRUCTION AND THE BIBLE.

SUPPOSE we succeed in introducing "non-theological" (I prefer to say secular) moral instruction into the State-aided schools of this country. Then shall any use be made of the Bible in such instruction? Mr. Cohen says No, and I say Yes. As Mr. Cohen and I are both Freethinkers, both in favor of abolishing the conception of God, and both opposed to special veneration of the Bible, our divergence of opinion seems to need explanation.

The Executive of the Moral Instruction League met on July 19, both Mr. Cohen and I being present. When the question came up whether the Bible should be placed in the children's hands during the moral instruction, we decided no. We were, in fact, agreed that, at present, no book—the Bible or any other book—need be recommended for use during the special moral lesson hour.

Then the question arose, Shall the teacher be allowed to include the Bible among the general literature from which he may draw illustrations for his lessons? The majority of the Executive answered Yes. Mr. Cohen has, in oversight, regarded the decision as much kinder to the Bible than it really was. We certainly did not resolve that the Bible should be employed as "a basis" of the instruction, and I trust to make this point quite clear as I go along.

The League has accepted, in general outline, a plan of teaching in personal and social duties. It comprises all the salient points of conduct—temperance, courage, kindness, truthfulness, industry, justice, refinement of taste, and the like. Everybody recognises that these ideas must be clothed with suitable illustrations. These illustrations will embrace stories from history and biography, fables, fairy tales, myths, and legends, interesting matter relating to science, natural history, etc. This is the method followed by any literary man who understands style—that is to say, who understands how to touch the feeling and imagination. The whole of literature will therefore be available for the teacher's use. As samples of books which I have myself borrowed from in preparing secular moral lessons I may mention Plutarch, Plato's *Dialogues*, the Talmud, the Buddhist *Birth-stories*, Æsop's Fables, Krilov's Fables, the Percy Anecdotes, Smiles's *Self-help*, the *Dictionary of National Biography*, the Bible, etc., etc. And why not the Bible, so long as the teacher uses it as but one among many sources? May he not point to Abraham's treatment of Lot as a case of magnanimity? May he not tell the legend of Lot's wife to show how foolish is the spirit of shilly-shally and half-heartedness? May he not cite Moses relinquishing the honors of a palace as an example of a pioneer's loyalty to his cause? May he not ask the children to admire the generosity of King David in refusing to drink water which had been procured at the risk of human life? May he not quote Jeremiah's boldness in rebuking a king? May he not tell of Daniel's temperance, and Job's patience, and the good Samaritan's charity? May he not indicate the democratic significance of a legend which represented a hero as born in a stable and laid in a manger? May he not even use Peter's dream on the house-top to suggest the coming age when no sincere opinion shall be counted vulgar or unclean?

Now, on Freethought principles, I protest against a veto on such a use of the Bible. If the teacher is left free to choose illustrations from the whole garden of literature except from the Bible, you will be treating the Bible as a Forbidden Tree, and saying: "In the day that thou quotest therefrom thou shalt surely be reprimanded by the School Board." Is this what Mr. Cohen wants? But will such a method secure his real object of the secularisation of the Bible? If the elementary school excludes the Bible, the Church will still proclaim it as the "word of God," and Freethought will have lost a chance. Yes, I repeat, lost a chance. It will be a death-blow to Bible-worship if ever we can set up a system which will place the Bible on the level of general literature. When the teacher can cite stories and maxims with equal freedom from Plato, the Bible, or (say) Jules Michelet's *History of France*, etc., the children will see things in the right proportion, and the "word of God" will be recognised as having no greater value—and often less—than the word of Victor Hugo, or Geoffrey Chaucer, or the Indian Hitopadesa.

And, besides all this, there is a fatal objection to the veto on the Bible—viz., that it is impracticable. In some form or other all the narrative and ethical portions of the Bible will be found interwoven into general literature. I do not refer to word-for-word quotation, but to allusion, commentary, and paraphrase. An immense amount of Biblical material could be recovered from the writings of Deists, Atheists, and Agnostics. The wonderful adventures of the Gadarene Pigs could be extracted (with pungent annotations!) from the pages of Huxley. If you drove the teacher away from the Gospels, he might find all he wanted in Renan! Kicked out of the Pentateuch, he would seek the Ark of Refuge in Colenso! And, warned off from the Prophets, he would dig for treasure in Paine's *Age of Reason!* For the Fall of Man he can have recourse to Milton, and for the Destruction of Sennacherib to Byron. Or he can select lines from the libretto of Handel's oratorios, or he can show pictures of Michael Angelo's Moses, or of Rubens' "Descent from the Cross." Is all this to be prohibited? I think we had better pause before we ask the Moral Instruction League to undertake so wild a crusade.

The Executive of the League does not propose the Bible as a *basis* of instruction. No basis is proposed except a certain plan, or syllabus, or detailed list of subjects. Let me take an example. Suppose a teacher is required to make the meaning and duty of Veracity clear to his scholars. Then the basis will be the principle of Veracity, and the illustrations from the classics, the Bible, history, biography, etc., will hold the second place. One teacher may choose this illustration, another may choose that, but both alike have to pursue the same end—the explanation of Truthfulness in word and conduct. The present system goes quite the other way about. It lays the Bible on the school desk, and demands that the children shall study that as a text, and draw from it whatever wit and wisdom they can. They fish for whatever comes up, and thus enormous areas of life and morals never get considered at all.

I add another important argument, though, so far, the League has pronounced no opinion on it. It is my conviction that the way of educational safety lies only through the Education Department—*i.e.*, Government control. The Moral Instruction must be made part and parcel of the national code. The whole school-time must be placed under the supervision of the Government. At present the religious instruction, when and wherever given, stands outside the limits of Government inspection. From personal observation, I can vouch that all that part of school-work which is included under the view of the Department is practically and satisfactorily secular. When the Moral Instruction is ranked with other Code subjects, it will, by that very fact, drop all supernaturalism, and the teacher who imparted a sectarian (*i.e.*, orthodox, Jewish, Christian, or Theistic) twist to any Biblical or other illustration would break the law. Of course, this surrender of the whole school-time to the Parliamentary Code will not happen for years to come. Meanwhile, the League can go

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on with its propaganda, and secure many a concession by the partial secularisation of even the existing system. I am well aware of the numerous difficulties in the way. I do not know what Freethought is here for unless it is to remove such difficulties. F. J. GOULD.

## METHODISM AND THE SLAVE TRADE.

THE methods of Christian advocacy are, like the habits of Bret Harte's cat, strange and peculiar. From time to time one finds a handful of professing Christians, influenced more by the spirit of their times than the genius of their creed, taking part in various reform movements; and, notwithstanding that their conduct may have been totally opposed to Christian tradition and doctrine, it is still brought forward by after generations of believers as ample evidence of the progressive nature of Christianity.

That these men were fiercely denounced by the vast majority of their co-religionists, who based their denunciations upon the clearest declarations of the Christian scriptures, matters little; they called themselves Christians, and that is quite sufficient for the hard-pressed apologist, anxious to place to the credit of Christianity a reform it was not strong enough to strangle.

Of course, to any rational student of social phenomena, the carrying out of a reform in the name of a religion that is strongly opposed to it is a circumstance that admits of easy explanation. In a country that is professedly Christian, and where not one in a thousand base their profession of faith upon a conscientious examination of its principles, it is perfectly natural that the larger part of all that is done should be done in the name of the current religion, and that there should be attributed to it that which is really the result of altogether another set of forces. A Mohammedan in Turkey would be as ready to ascribe to the influence of the Koran any progressive work he was engaged in, as a Christian in London would be to attribute it to the influence of the Bible; both of them being equally blind to the operation of those social forces which, however much religion may distort, cannot be altogether suppressed.

All this, however, is a closed book to the ordinary Christian advocate, and thus we find that ideas which very slowly fought their way into public favor in the face of Christianity's organised opposition are afterwards claimed as a direct result of the benign influence of the Christian creed.

The case of the abolition of slavery is a good illustration of this. Nothing is clearer than that the Old and New Testaments furnish an emphatic endorsement of the slave system. The former contains a large number of regulations upon the subject, some of them unsurpassed for their brutality; and the latter, in addition to the policy of non-resistance laid down by Jesus, contains emphatic injunctions to slaves to give to their masters, good or bad, the same unquestioning obedience they are commanded to render to Christ himself.* It is certain, also, that the early Church showed no decided opposition to the slavery it found established in the Roman Empire. Lecky notes that the emancipatory legislation that had been going on for several centuries before Constantine came to an abrupt stop with the conversion of the Empire, that the number of slaves was greater under Christianity than under Paganism, that "slavery was distinctly and formally recognised by Christianity, and no religion ever labored more to encourage a habit of docility and passive obedience."†

And when we add that the black slave trade was inaugurated by Christian Spain in the sixteenth century, that the great Bossuet declared that "to condemn slavery was to condemn the Holy Ghost," that a century later the English Church was transporting Irishmen and Scotchmen as slaves to Barbadoes, that millions of money had to be spent and hundreds of lives lost to compel Christians to abandon the traffic in England and America, and that in the latter country the work was practically commenced by Thomas Paine in 1775, and finished by Lincoln, who, when charged on the political platform with unbelief in Christianity, declared that he would die sooner than deny it, it would appear that the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus have little to pride themselves upon in this matter.

But the ways of God are not more puzzling than the reasoning of some of his followers, and the Rev. Dr. Hamilton, American delegate to the Methodist Conference just concluded at Hull, once more dragged in the abolition of slavery as a piece of Christian evidence, with the difference that, whereas others are content to put it to the influence of Christianity in general, Dr. Hamilton seemed inclined to go the whole hog and place it all to the credit of the Methodist Church.

That John Wesley was so far untrue to his Bible as to brand the slave trade as "the execrable sum of all villainies," is a circumstance for which all right-thinking men will render him due credit; but when Dr. Hamilton adds that in America "Methodist preachers went everywhere, stirring the conscience against slavery," and further informed his hearers that "no slaveholder was allowed to be a member of the Methodist Church, while its preachers were accustomed, in their sermons, to speak of the injustice of slavery," one can only charge him as being either ignorant of the history of his own Church, or the possessor of a memory singularly and conveniently weak.

The plain fact of the matter is that when the principles laid down by such men as Paine, Washington, Franklin, and Jefferson—none of whom were Christians—and the example in Europe of the French Revolution, began to show their effect in a growing dislike to the slave traffic, the abolition movement in America found a strongly organised Christian opposition that proved itself to be the greatest obstacle to its work of emancipating the slave. Lloyd Garrison, believer as he professed to be, was driven to admit that "American Christianity is the main pillar of American slavery," and that the Church, "whether Unitarian or Orthodox, Baptist or Methodist, Universalist or Episcopal, Roman Catholic or Christian, is the stronghold of slavery."*

I have no intention in this article of dealing with the opposition the Abolitionists received from all branches of the Christian Church; it would require a bulky volume to do the subject justice. My purpose is to show the relation the American Methodist Church bore to the movement of emancipation, and the following *official* utterances of that body will put Dr. Hamilton's statement in its true colors. It is to be noted that the expressions of opinion which follow are not from individuals, but the deliberate convictions of conferences brought together for the consideration of the subject.

In 1836 the Georgia Annual Conference, finding that some evil persons had charged the Methodist Episcopal Church with believing slavery to be an evil, resolved: "That it is the sense of the Georgia Annual Conference that slavery, as it exists in the United States, is not a moral evil." Further: "That we view slavery as a civil and domestic institution, and one with which, as ministers of Christ, we have nothing to do."†

The South Carolina Conference went further still, and declared: "That without a new revelation from heaven no man was authorised to pronounce slavery wrong." In the same year the Wesleyan Methodist Church, of which Dr. Hamilton is a member, held its annual session in Cincinnati, and resolved as follows: "Resolved by the delegates of the Annual Conference, in general conference assembled, that they are decidedly opposed to modern abolitionism, and wholly disclaim any right, wish, or intention to interfere in the civil and political relation between master and slave as it exists in the slaveholding States of this Union." And this resolution was followed by the Conference issuing an address to the Churches exhorting members "to abstain from all abolition movements and associations, and to refrain from patronising any of their publications." Yet again, in the same year, at another conference held in New York, it was decided that no one should be elected to any office in the Church unless he gave a distinct pledge that he would refrain from discussing the subject.‡ In New Hampshire, Methodist bishops issued a pastoral letter against abolition, and warned preachers against placing their pulpits at the disposal of its advocates. At the same time, Garrison characterised Wilbur Fisk, President of the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., as an "abusive and malignant opponent of abolition."§

* See Ephesians vi. 5, 1 Peter ii. 13–20.
† *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., pp. 64, 66, 70.

* *Life*, by his children, vol. i., pp. 479–80.
† Quoted in Key to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, p. 386.
‡ Quoted in a pamphlet entitled *The Church the Bulwark of Slavery*, by the Hon. J. G. Birney.
§ *Life*, vol. ii., p. 139.

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Four years later (1840) one of the largest of the *Northern* Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in Baltimore, publicly disclaimed any fellowship with abolitionists, and at the same time fully endorsed the prohibition of the testimony of a colored person against a white in courts of law.* And when, five years later, the Northern Churches began to show signs of a better spirit, the immediate result was the secession of a number of organisations from the general body "to be known by the style and title of the Methodist Episcopal Church South."† Fifteen years later (1860) an attempt was made to induce the clergy of the Methodist Church to sign a protest against slavery. The ministry was then 14,000 strong, but only 241 would append their signatures to the document.‡

The Leeds Anti-Slavery Society's report for the same year contains a letter from the Rev. H. Mattison, of New York, travelling preacher in the Northern Methodist Episcopal Church, from which I take the following :—

> "I am fully satisfied from figures that we cannot have to-day less than 10,000 slave-holders and 100,000 slaves in our Northern Methodist Episcopal Church, and the number is rapidly increasing every year. And, still worse, our people raise, and buy, and sell slaves as others do, without rebuke or hindrance."

My next instance will show that Mr. Mattison was not exaggerating. On the twenty-sixth day of the Methodist Conference, held at Buffalo in 1860, the report of a committee on the subject of slavery was brought before the meeting. The temper of the Conference may be gathered from the fact that, when one delegate declared it to be their intention to place on the minutes of the Conference a prohibition of slavery, it was authoritatively said that not ten men in the meeting would support such a proposal.

"I subscribe myself," said the Rev. J. C. Tortell, Methodist minister of South Carolina, "the friend of the Bible and the enemy of abolitionism." The rev. gentleman was to be congratulated upon the frankness of his speech and the clearness of his views. The friends of the Bible were the enemies of the abolitionists, as the latter testified over and over again. And so certain were the champions of slavery of the support of the Bible that the Young Men's American Bible Association issued a special edition of the New Testament, with marked and annotated passages, as an anti-abolitionist pamphlet.§

It is needless to multiply instances. Pages might be filled with conference resolutions and sermons condemning abolition, or urging obedience upon the slaves, and that without travelling outside the Methodist Church. I have confined my remarks to this body, not because it was the greatest sinner in this matter—many other churches were worse, and the Presbyterians worst of all—but so that readers of the *Freethinker* might see how much truth there is in the statement that "Methodist preachers went everywhere stirring the conscience against slavery," and that "no slaveholder was allowed to be a member of the Methodist Church." And a timely comment upon the influence of Christianity comes in the daily papers of August 3, which contain accounts of two thousand negroes and whites in New York engaged with knife and revolver in ventilating the race hatred which Dr. Hamilton believes Christianity has destroyed.

That there have been good men in the Methodist Church, whose common sense was stronger than their religious beliefs, is gladly admitted ; but nothing can be more absurd than to take these few exceptions, whose bitterest opponents were found among the members of their own body, and apply their action to the whole of the Methodist connection. In the main, the Methodist Church has been pretty much as other churches. Where there has been no public outcry against an abuse, it has been, at best, passively acquiescent in its existence. It has only yielded and joined in the cry for reform when the force of public opinion has made the reform more or less imperative, and therefore more or less profitable.

Fundamentally, the Methodist Church has the same beliefs as other Christian bodies ; it has the same Bible to guide its counsels and direct its actions, and it cannot, therefore, pride itself upon any religious superiority over its neighbors. And if the Methodist, in common with other Churches, has turned its back upon the plainest teachings of the religion it professes to expound and has given up slavery, as it was forced to give up witchcraft, the belief in a flat earth, special creation, etc., etc., there is here only one more instance of the manner in which even the most cherished religious convictions are modified, and finally swept on one side, by the diffusion of knowledge and the development of society.

C. COHEN.

* *Journal of General Conference*, p. 109.
† *American States, Churches, and the War*, by J. W. Bulme, p. 244.
‡ *Report of New York Anti-Slavery Society, 1860*, p. 282.
§ *Ibid*, p. 281.

## ROMAN CATHOLIC, ANGLICAN, AND NON-CONFORMIST.

FREETHINKERS who are familiar with the works of the late Cardinal Newman will remember how exceedingly useful they are to the Rationalist. In his efforts to demolish Protestantism, the Cardinal places in the hands of sceptics all sorts of useful weapons. In *The Present Position of Catholics*, for instance, he fairly smashes his religious opponents ; but, in doing so, he furnishes the Freethinker with a large number of arguments with which to assail Catholicism. Indeed, it is not too much to say that every argument and illustration he uses against the Protestant tells with at least equal effect against the Roman Catholic Church. Take, for example, what he says about the establishment of Protestantism. Protestantism, he argues, would never have been anything like the force it now is in England if it had not been established and endowed by the State. It was, he says, established by force and fraud, and is maintained by the same means. That the Cardinal is right here admits of no denial ; but his remarks on this head are equally true of Roman Catholicism. Where would Roman Catholicism have been if it had not been established and endowed by Constantine, Charlemagne, and others ? Christianity—*i.e.*, Roman Catholicism—was established, as the late Justice Stephen well said, by exhausting all the terrors of this world and the next. The persecution of Catholics by Protestants in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a mere nothing as compared with Charlemagne's treatment of the Saxons ; and, as regards the continuance of fraud as a means of maintaining Protestantism, well, "Mumpsimus still reigns," as the Cardinal wittily remarks. But what shall we say of such stories as that so solemnly told about the Holy Shroud ?

Newman points out how fallacious it is to suppose that the age of a system or creed proves its truth. Referring, by way of illustration, to the Pharisees, he says :—

> "They profess to speak for themselves, they bear witness to themselves, they are their own evidence, and, as might have been expected, they are not trustworthy. They are mere frauds ; they came, indeed, down the stream of time, but that is no recommendation, it only puts the fraud higher up. It may make it venerable ; it can never make it true. Yet it is remarkable how positive and fanatical the Pharisees were in maintaining the fraud ; they were irritated, nay, maddened, at hearing themselves denounced ; they rose up fiercely against their denouncers, and thought they did God a service in putting them to death."

How peculiarly applicable these words are to the Roman Catholic Church.

The Catholic who places Newman's works in the hands of a Rationalist acts like a general would in putting additional guns at the disposal of the enemy. The Cardinal wrote, of course, to convince Protestants, and his books would no doubt be of great service in this direction if only Anglicans and Nonconformists were amenable to argument. Let a Protestant set aside prejudice, let him read carefully and consider candidly what Newman says in *The Present Position of Catholics* and *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, and the chances are that he will not remain a Protestant. It will probably occur to him that, since he takes so much on faith, there is no reason why he should not believe more ; and that, given the premises on which both Catholic and Protestant are agreed, all the extras believed in by Catholics are but logical developments of these premises. In the alternative he may be led to inquire further, with the inevitable result of finding that what is called Christianity by both Catholic and Protestant is just a refurbishing, under a new name, of myths and legends which antedate the Christian era by thousands of years. Unfortunately, however, neither Anglican nor

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Nonconformist is inclined to give the Catholic a fair hearing.

The Anglican, of course, has no reply to offer. The Church of England is undeniably the creature of the State, and can only do what its creator allows. It owes all its power to what John Bright called its "adulterous connection" with the State, and apart from the State it is nothing.

The Nonconformist, however, holds that Newman's strictures do not affect him, inasmuch as Nonconformity has never been established or endowed. Nonconformists, we are told, are more numerous than either Catholics or Anglicans, and yet Nonconformity has never received State patronage. This proud boast is so frequently heard at the present time that it may be worth while to briefly notice it.

What, then, is meant when it is said that Nonconformity has never been established or endowed? Nonconformity, as distinguished from both Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism, means:—

1. The right to adopt *any* mode of divine worship.
2. The right to set up *any* method of church or chapel government.
3. The right to *privately* endow any church or chapel organisation.

This is what differentiates Nonconformity from Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism, and if Nonconformists would only bear it in mind they would see that they have little to boast of. It is not to their *religion* that they owe their numerical strength; they inherited their religious ideas from the Roman Catholics. It is to the Roman Catholic Church they are indebted for the Bible, on which they profess to take their stand. As for the right of private judgment, that is a principle distinctly denied by Christ. Here are the words, put into the mouth of Jesus, in Mark xvi.:—

> "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe. In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

Now, this is plain language, and if it be true it follows that no honest man can be saved unless he believes these words. But how *can* an honest man believe them? Certainly, the Nonconformist does not, though he *professes* to, believe in Christ.

The Peculiar People would appear to accept what Christ says as to the treatment of the sick, though even they would probably object to drink "any deadly thing," notwithstanding his assurance that "it shall not hurt them."

The right of private judgment is not a Christian principle; it is an affirmation of the supremacy of fallible human reason. And it is to their assertion of this Secularist principle, as against Pope and Prayer Book, that the success of Nonconformity is due. Nonconformity has now been established by law for centuries; and, more fortunate than the Rationalist, who is still outside the pale of the law, the Nonconformist has for long enjoyed perfect security, in so far as the right of private endowment is concerned. This is the real secret of his success. Had Nonconformity been harassed and hampered as Rationalism has always been, Nonconformists would, no doubt, still have been very numerous; but, in all probability, they would have been very much in the same position as Rationalists now are so far as effective organisation is concerned. In religion, as in commerce, money is essential.

ANDREW LIDDLE.

## Atheism and the French Revolution.

"The first political demonstration of Atheism was attended by some of the excesses, the folly, the extravagances that stained the growth of Christianity. On the whole, it is a very mild story compared with the atrocities of the Jewish records or the crimes of Catholicism. The worst charge against the party of Chaumette is that they were intolerant, and the charge is deplorably true; but this charge cannot lie in the mouth of persecuting churches."—*Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., "Miscellanies," vol. i., p. 77.*

## SECULAR FACTS AND CHRISTIAN FICTIONS.

*(The S.P.C.K. recently celebrated its bi-centenary.)*

You've heard of the funny "Society
For promoting Christian Knowledge,"
A mixture of mercantile piety
And ignorance learnt at college.
It publishes booklets and tracts
Of fairy tales, sandwiched with facts;
The facts are selected,
The tales are "explained";
When clear, they're rejected;
When vague, they're retained.

This solemnly silly Society
For promoting Christian fictions
Attunes, for the victims of piety,
Inconvenient contradictions;
This foolishly artful Society
For promoting Christian fables
Pretends to remove contrariety
By adjusting names and labels.
This mixture of science and myth—
The sop it soothes simpletons with—
It gives to our ignorant youth
As "knowledge" that's "Christian" forsooth!
Of knowledge that's "Christian" there's none;
The true tree of knowledge is *one;*
'Tis rooted in nature molecular,
A secular growth that is secular.

As "knowledge," this faction professes
That Satan all madmen possesses;
It says that a man was a "dummy,"
Through having Old Nick in his "tummy."
It grants that the earth is a ball,
And teaches directness of light,
Yet says that a man saw it *all*
At *once* from a definite height.
It teaches the "constants" of science,
Including, of course, "uniformity,"
Yet preaches what bids them defiance—
A pious, but lying, enormity!
It states contradictories sweetly,
As if it were stating the truth,
And wraps them up—O so discreetly!—
With much that's attractive to youth.

In Truth all its trust is,
Till policy stops it,
And then, like Procrustes,
It lengthens and lops it.
With business acumen,
It strives to combine
Its facts, which are human,
With falsehoods divine.
By Folly 'twas founded,
By Fraud it was led,
Its praise is still sounded,
For neither is dead.

So, pious Deceit the perennial,
And Folly the multi-centennial,
Are loudly acclaiming to-day
This faction malarian,
This bi-centenarian,
This S. for promoting C. K.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## ACID DROPS.

ZOLA has gained a verdict with damages against the libellers of his long-dead father, which shows that there is some sense of equity still left in the French courts. Some "popular" journalists took it into their heads that the best way to answer Zola's defence of Dreyfus was to say: "Your father was a thief." It doesn't seem to have any sort of connection with the guilt or innocence of Dreyfus, and, besides, it is an infamous falsehood. But the mere fact that such vile weapons are resorted to shows the frightful virulence with which Zola and his friends are assailed.

M. Judet is one of the journalists against whom Zola obtained a verdict for libelling his dead father. Although this man's conduct was so infamous, he was vociferously applauded by the mob as he left the court, while a bystander who raised a cheer for Zola had to run for his life. But worse than this remains. It is stated without contradiction that the Ministry of War allowed M. Judet free access to the documents on which he professed to found his lying accusations against Zola's father, while it refused a sight of them to Zola. In the name of the honor of the Army the honor of France is being sacrificed.

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The anti-Dreyfus fever—that is to say, the Army fever—is raging very badly in France. Even a scientific man like Professor Grimaux is not left unmolested. He was President of the Scientific Congress at Nantes, and because he was known to sympathise with Zola the mob made a rush for him at the railway station, and the police had great difficulty in protecting him from their fury. M. Guyot, who accompanied him, was severely injured, and narrowly escaped lynching. All the signs in France point to a catastrophe. The Church, the Jew baiters, and the Army are the masters of the nation by commanding the passions of the multitude, and something or other is bound to happen.

The House of Lords has been true to itself and its traditions. In spite of Lord Salisbury's appeal, the hereditary Landlords' League has thrown out the Conscience Clause from the new Vaccination Bill. Their lordships are satisfied that vaccination is a good thing, and that the rule should be "You've got to have it whether you want it or not." Of course the Bill will have to go back to the House of Commons, where the Conscience Clause will no doubt be reinserted. Will the Lords reject it again? Or will they take Lord Salisbury's advice and let it pass? In any case, they will never be able to force the vaccination nostrum upon the English people. The thing is doomed. It is dying of being found out.

As we go to press we see that the Lords have swallowed the Vaccination pill. Lord Salisbury gave them another talking to, and the Government bill was carried by a majority, Conscience Clause and all. This will be a sore affliction to the great "Tay Pay."

All the gods in the world were created by fear. So said the Roman poet, and it is true to the point of demonstration. As far as the mass of mankind are concerned, it has always been necessary to frighten them into religion. You may brimstone them into it, but you will never treacle them into it. They have always been very indifferent about heaven. The way to excite and secure them is to preach hell hot, without sugar. If *that* fails, the case is hopeless, and the game must be given up as utterly played out.

The truth of this is curiously exemplified by a letter in last week's *Christian World*. A "Pastor" says that he used to preach the Gospel of terrors, but for ten years he has discarded it for "the more tender and reasonable message" of God's fatherhood. But he finds that this message "only appeals to the few." "Somehow," he says, "it does not lay hold of the masses like the older, even harder, Gospel." Crowds come to hear, but no souls are "saved." The poor "Pastor" confesses that he is "perplexed, humbled, and pained."

The truth is that Christianity is doomed unless it can resuscitate the Devil and rekindle the fires of Hell. You may give treacle *with* the brimstone, to make it a little more palatable to the fastidious, but it is always the brimstone, and not the treacle, which is the active ingredient.

A Ritualist manual states that "The Devil was the first Protestant." This shocks the true blue Protestants. They forget—perhaps they don't know—that the older Protestants used to say that the Devil was the first Papist.

Dr. Johnson said that the Devil was the first Whig, and no doubt the Whigs thought he was the first Tory.

They do some things better in France than in England. In our country condemned prisoners who are afterwards found to be innocent are facetiously "pardoned" and liberated without the slightest compensation. Three persons condemned at Rouen in 1893 have just been re-tried and acquitted, and the Court awarded the two men 30,000 francs each, and the woman 10,000 francs, as compensation.

Extremes meet. The *Christian World* announces a bazaar at South-place Institute, and immediately afterwards the opening of a new Peculiar People church at Southend. Evidently the "Peculiars" have not been suppressed by the Old Bailey verdicts of manslaughter.

A Nonconformist journal complains that in over 8,000 places in the country, and in 13,000 elementary schools, Nonconformists are refused appointments as teachers. It does not chronicle the fact that Freethinkers are refused appointments in what the man in the street calls "the blooming lot."

The death of Dr. Aveling, so soon after the suicide of Eleanor Marx, closes a melancholy story. Aveling did not possess much originality, but he had a very decided capacity for popularising other men's teaching, especially in science. He might have earned a good income, and been of considerable service to the progressive movement, if he had only possessed more stability of character.

A Mormon was preaching on Tunbridge Wells Common, and in the course of his address he used the phrase, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," when a wag in the audience shouted: "And one wife."

The United States government thought it had settled polygamy in Utah, but it has done nothing of the kind. The State administration is wholly in the hands of Mormons, or their nominees, and over two thousand men have returned to the polygamous status in Salt Lake City. Elder Roberts openly advocates "plural marriage." Indeed, he declares that "modern Christians must either have to tolerate polygamy, or give up for ever the glorious hope of resting in Abraham's bosom." Mormon missionaries are said to be making many converts all over the States.

"Much indignation," says the Boston *American Sentinel*, "is expressed over the execrable taste of the men in the post-office department at Washington, who have put on the new one cent postage stamps a purely Jesuit picture—that of Marquette, with his crucifix, etc. There is not in this world anywhere another nation that would be guilty of such a thing—certainly no so-called Roman Catholic nation such as Mexico, or Belgium, or Italy. Why a Jesuit denominational picture should be put on public paper is a problem. Of all times in our history this is the very worst for such a lamentable display of ignorance or truculency."

Of course the *Rock* is a peaceful paper, when its blood is not up; but its sanguine fluid gets sanguinary hot when the missionary business is interfered with. Russian insolence and aggression in the east of Asia are bad enough under any aspect, but the *Rock* says: "It must not be forgotten that higher than commercial interests are at stake. Russian control means a closed door to Evangelical faith." Evidently the *Rock* is willing to see a big war, if necessary, for the Evangelical faith. So should we be, if Christian ministers did all the fighting.

Brighton-street E.U. Congregational Chapel, Edinburgh, a few years ago, cut off from its membership one who had outraged the feelings of his minister and kirk-session by becoming a shareholder in a brewery. Recently the chapel was put up to auction and sold for £2,650 to Mr. William Menelaws, of the firm of James Gray, Sons, and Company, wholesale wine and spirit merchants. It will be used as a storehouse of liquor. Once the building was full of the spirit of the Lord; soon it will be full of another spirit called whiskey.

"Pride of the Oval, Lord of Lords." This is a blasphemous line from a poem in the *Daily News* on Dr. W. G. Grace. Shocking! shocking!

Major Boitscheff, who was recently hung in Bulgaria for the brutal murder of Anna Szimon, asked to have his hands free at his execution, because he wished to make the sign of the Cross when he died. Mr. Wilson Barrett ought to work that into his famous play somehow.

The dear old orthodox *Rock* complains that "Professors Cheyne and Driver, and others, coolly relegate the Bible to the position of old wives' fables." As for Dean Farrar, he "babbles about the mythological origin of the Book of Daniel." All such divines are "dethroning God and rejecting his revelation." What a happy expression! *Dethroning God!* If he does not exist, you can't dethrone him; and if he does exist, how the devil are you going to do it? Messrs. Cheyne, Driver, and Farrar, or perhaps the *Rock*, should explain the process.

It is stated, and there is reason to believe that the statements are correct (the *Rock* says), that there are 1,000,000 villages in China in which the Gospel has never been proclaimed; that the Bible has only been translated into about seventy of the 591 languages and dialects that are found in Africa; that in Japan there are 185 times as many heathen temples as there are Protestant Christian workers; that in one province of India, containing 24,000,000 people, there are only six missionaries of any Church or Society; and that every hour 2,570 people die who have not even been told about the Savior of the world.

"This man Hooley," the *Daily News* says, "was for a short time the idol of a very vulgar, greedy, and contemptible section of London society. They patronised him, and he lined their pockets. He was a pillar of the Church, and a benefactor of St. Paul's Cathedral."

The Catholic Church does not recognise that animals have any rights; God gave them to man to use at his pleasure. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Society for the Protection of Animals has such a warm time in Naples. An attempt was made to assassinate its honorary director, Mr. Leonard T. Hawksley, who has only just recovered, after five months' illness, from the effects of his wounds. During

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the last two years no less than thirteen drivers have been prosecuted for knocking out their horses' eyes, and four for beating them till they fell dead in the street.

Thomas Jones murdered Mary Barton, with whom he lived after deserting his wife. He had a quarrel with the poor woman, and the next morning her body was discovered in the snow on a secluded hill in the neighborhood, all but naked, and covered with wounds and bruises. Jones was hung at Carnarvon Gaol on August 3. He solemnly protested his innocence, and frequently appealed to heaven to bear out his protestations. But a judge and twelve jurymen were of a different opinion.

A pious adventurer has been sentenced at the County of London Sessions at Newington to five years' penal servitude and two years' police supervision. His real name appears to be Samuel Lee. He wore in the dock a black uniform of semi-clerical cut, his cap and sleeves being elaborately ornamented with blue and gold bands, and crosses with the words "Jesus Only' and "Salvation Catholic Church." The charge against him was obtaining six cycles by false pretences. After the verdict of Guilty, a police inspector gave the court a long account of the prisoner's career. In 1878 he was sentenced to two months' hard labor; at Durban, South Africa, in 1880, three months; at Hants Assizes in 1883, twelve months; and in 1885, at Wolverhampton, five years' penal servitude. He was released on licence, but shortly afterwards was sent back to complete his sentence. At Richmond, in 1891, he was ordered three months' imprisonment; and the same year, at Dublin, he received a second term of five years' penal servitude for fraud. Then he posed as "Rev. S. Stanhope, B.A.," and, for the purposes of obtaining charitable contributions by false pretences, started a bogus mission, a convalescent home, and schools. Released in 1895 on ticket-of-leave, he again got into trouble, and, besides being sent back to finish his sentence, was ordered fifteen months' extra punishment. With the exception of a sentence of 336 days, passed for deserting the Army at Durban, all convictions of the prisoner have been for fraudulent practices, generally bogus missions, in which the prisoner represented himself as a clerk in holy orders. He had used the aliases of the "Rev. Glenwood" and the "Rev. Nicholson," and the police further alleged that everything he got he obtained by fraud. When his five years' retirement is over he will probably go to work in the Lord's vineyard again.

A *Daily News* man has been interviewing the little band of Tolstoi Christians at Purleigh, in Essex. One of them declared, as Tolstoi does, that the use of all force is immoral. "But," said the interviewer, "if you saw a ruffian jumping on a woman's chest, would it be immoral to interfere?" The Tolstoi Christian answered "Yes," but he admitted that "the old instinct would probably assert itself." We should hope so.

When the Yankees were first at Manila, the Archbishop of that city called upon the inhabitants to fight against the enemy, whom he described as cruel and bloodthirsty savages. This same Archbishop has now sought the protection of the Yankees against the native insurgents, who have threatened to massacre all the Catholic priests.

The followers of the meek and lowly Jesus still pursue their ghoulish methods over the dead bodies of their opponents. The death-bed lie has been used about Bradlaugh so much that his daughter has been compelled to publish a pamphlet setting forth the truth, which Christian men and women do not want to hear. Bismarck, a man of powerful physique, died recently, and, it is said, in agony. The leading Catholic paper, published in Berlin, actually states in a leader on the subject that it was owing to his opposition to the great lying Catholic Church. Poor Bismarck, the hyænas are upon you! If things go on at this rate, a new and enlarged edition of *Infidel Death-Beds* will be necessary, with an appendix on Christian lies about Christians.

The Dean of Winchester caused a sensation recently by his remarks at a certain temperance meeting. But, not content with this notoriety, he creates a terrible commotion about the behavior of the Winchester children on the occasion of the visit of Princess Beatrice to that town. It appears that the "young barbarians all at play" shouted and cheered in childlike and indecorous fashion. This so annoyed the reverend gent that he wrote a letter to the local papers stigmatising the behavior of the children as disgraceful, and calling on the police for protection. In addition, he launched into a denunciation of the training of the children on the part of parents and teachers. Probably the Dean wants to go back to the good old Bible methods of crushing little children, and is praying for the bears of Elisha and the sword of Herod.

Mr. Edmund Tearle produced a play at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Birmingham, called "The Christian's Cross and the Martyr's Crown," which goes "one better" than Mr. Wilson Barrett's "Sign of the Cross" in the way of physical horrors. It was severely criticised by Mr. Howard Gray in the *Birmingham Post*, and as the gate-money fell off Mr. Tearle brought an action against that journal, obtaining a verdict and £40 damages. No doubt the jury were good Christians, but their verdict is ridiculous. They appear to think that the duty of a critic is only to praise. Mr. Tearle has his £40 and his pious blood-and-thunder play. Let him make the most of it. And let the newspapers leave him severely alone. The man who accepts praise and treats criticism as libel should be left to stew in his own juice.

Springburn Parish Church has a new minister, who, according to the local *Advertiser*, is "a young man with all the ardor of his years"—or his want of them. In the course of a recent sermon on "Christ and the Democracy," the Rev. Mr. Dickie was good enough to say that "the most aggressive Atheists, such as Mr. George Jacob Holyoake [heaven save the mark!] and Mr. Foote, the editor of the *Freethinker*, were almost in despair at the rapid growth visible in the Christian religion, even in this intelligent, civilised, and highly sceptical age." How strange that this news should come to us all the way from Scotland! We know Mr. Foote pretty well, but we were ignorant of his being afflicted with this particular form of "despair." We have consulted him on the subject, and he tells us that Mr. Dickie is romancing. Mr. Foote does not believe that Christianity is growing, but that it is dying.

Mr. Dickie told his congregation, who were probably all as ignorant as himself, that "the first hospital in existence on the globe was built at Edessa by the early Christians." As a matter of fact, public hospitals, for animals as well as human beings, were erected by the Buddhist King Asoka in India in the fourth century before Christ. In Greece, too, every temple of Æsculapius, the god of healing, was really a free hospital. Mr. Dickie may have all the ardor of his years, but it is a poor substitute for accurate information.

Yankees are all right when the fighting is on, but what bletherinskites are the men of God they leave behind them! There is the Rev. W. C. Blakeman, for instance, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, New York. Just hear him! "In the victories of Manila and Santiago," he says, "God has shown his hand. Dewey and Sampson have been handling God's lightnings." The reverend gentleman overlooks the fact that "God's lightnings" were wielded against a poor decadent nation like Spain, and that they wouldn't have been quite as effective against a live nation with first-class battleships, up-to-date guns, and gunners who could shoot. Besides, we thought the Spaniards were more pious than the Yankees. Anyhow, they are *very* pious, and God oughtn't to be down upon them so badly.

Rev. B. Nagarkhar, of the Brahmo-Somaj, has been preaching eloquently in a Unitarian church on the Isle of Wight. He maintained that the "inner spirit" was the test of all revelation, and that the time was coming when universal Theism would prevail in all civilised countries. But what is this "inner spirit" save the light of man's natural intelligence? To call it a "revelation" is to talk mysticism, which has always been one of the curses of India. Men go listening to the oracle in their "innards" until they become blind and deaf to the truths of nature.

An unusual incident, the *Daily News* says, occurred on Sunday morning at a Dissenting chapel in East London. A member of the congregation was called upon to offer up a prayer, and after addressing the Lord for a quarter of an hour he began to invoke the divine blessing on the members of the Royal Family, whom he proceeded to mention in detail. He got as far as the Duke and Duchess of York, when a gruff voice exclaimed: "Pile 'em together." This brought the prayer to a hasty conclusion.

Rev. John Davis, rector of Llanynyr, Ruthin, went out for a walk, but did not return, and his body was found in the river some miles from his home. His son committed suicide in London some years ago. Query for Talmage, Were the father and son both Atheists?

According to the *North China Herald*, the Shanghai magistrate issued a public proclamation about the approaching eclipse of the moon, which he describes as going to be "eaten up." All loyal citizens are called upon to help him to make as much noise as possible "to rescue the devoured luminary." What a chance for the Salvation Army! They are magnificent at noise, and the Shanghai magistrate would probably pay a decent, if not a fair, price for their services. General Booth ought to see to this.

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, August 14, Clerkenwell Green and Regent's Park; 21, Finsbury Park; 28, Victoria Park.

September 4, Peckham Rye.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 14, Clerkenwell Green; 21, Finsbury Park; e., Secular Hall, Camberwell; 28, Victoria Park. September 4, Victoria Park.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

ISHMAEL.—We have taken all the precautions you suggest in the Brown case. All the details were carefully ascertained, including copies of the postcards for which Brown was prosecuted. We are perfectly satisfied, and cannot do more.

STUDENT.—Dr. Skeats' edition of Chaucer in one volume at seven-and-six is probably the best for you. The library edition is expensive. The Globe edition of Spenser is a good one, though the type is rather small. It is a disgrace that we have no really cheap complete editions of the Elizabethan dramatists, excepting Shakespeare. The Mermaid Series of select plays is an excellent and cheap collection.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Pleased to learn that you endorse our advice to open-air speakers on the Freethought side, especially in Hyde Park. Tact and good temper are always necessary in addressing miscellaneous, and often hostile, gatherings. No doubt Christian Evidence speakers are sometimes very provoking, but two bad tempers do not make a good one. It is far better to leave an insulting Christian speaker severely alone. Our people should really be discreet enough to do this, instead of helping him to get an audience. Mr. Waldron, for instance, is not exactly a genius. He would hardly set the world, or even Hyde Park, on fire by himself. If he indulges in personalities, it is foolish to pay him any sort of attention. The best plan is to let him find his own level.

R. W. D. NANKIVELL.—Received with thanks.

G. J. WARREN applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. He writes characteristically: "Sorry you have had such a rough time lately. Used to a bit, I know; but a little brighter period will be welcome and deserved. I had doubts whether the old laws could be dodged, but you appear to have managed it. You are entitled to the whole credit of launching the scheme, and I fancy I can see in it a good chance of reunion." Mr. Warren adds: "I must do a little for the Wheeler Fund."

H. PERCY WARD.—Pleased to hear you are getting fairly established at Birmingham.

W. SIMONS.—Your lecture-notices arrived on Wednesday last week. They should reach us by Tuesday morning at the latest.

LINCOLN FREETHINKER.—The late Professor Henry Drummond was speaking as a professional Christian when he said that "the partial, and then the total, eclipse of virtue always follows the abandonment of belief in a personal God." He was paid to say that sort of thing. It is great nonsense.

HORACE suggests that certain victims are going to heaven, for does not Holy Writ say that "They shall cry aloud, Hooley! Hooley! Hooley! night and day without ceasing"?

"GEORGE," 20 Rhodeswell-road, Poplar, E., has the *Freethinker* for 1882-6 inclusive, with Christmas and summer numbers, complete, excepting Nos. 76 to 82 and 138. Unbound, fair condition. They are for disposal, and the proceeds will be given to the cause.

J. ROSS, Liverpool, sends applications for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, on behalf of himself and four others—namely, T. Pruett, George Allan, Thomas Harrison, and John Howard. Other applications will follow in the course of the month. Certificates in all cases will be duly forwarded after the next Board meeting, which takes place in a few days.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—Sydney A. Gimson, £1; J. Fish and W. Todd, 10s.

W. FRASER.—Mr. Andrew Lang's new book on *The Making of Religion* is in opposition to the evolutionary school of Herbert Spencer. It is well written and clever, but not convincing. We hope to review it shortly.

J. FISH.—Have we done right? If not, please advise us. Mr. Foote will try to offer Chester a date in October.

E. G. JAMES.—Always glad to receive useful cuttings.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Sydney Bulletin—Boston Investigator—New Century Review—Bonnie Scotland's Resorts—Liberator—New Century—Ethical World—Freidenker—Isle of Man Times—Tit-Bits—Freedom—Springburn Advertiser—Progressive Thinker—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Midland Evening News—Crescent—Secular Thought—Truthseeker.

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

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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.

## SPECIAL.

I VENTURE to press the "*Freethinker* Circulation Fund" a little more strongly on the attention of the friends of this journal, both at home and in distant parts of the world—for it goes to almost every part of the globe that the Post Office reaches. I have kept this flag flying for sixteen years, amidst trouble, danger, and many vicissitudes. There is no fear of its being hauled down, and as little fear now of its being shot away. But it is always more or less a matter of difficulty to maintain Freethought journals. I have seen many come and go in my time. Unfortunately, a large number of Freethinkers do not buy them. They get saved from superstition themselves, and are careless about the duty of saving others; or they get so absorbed in political and social movements that they lose sight of "the good old cause." There are other hindrances, too numerous to recite. Besides, explanations do not remove difficulties. What I want my friends to do is to help me to push forward the circulation of the *Freethinker* by regular judicious advertising, which I propose to commence the first week in September, and to assist me in upholding the paper at its present level until the improved circulation renders further aid unnecessary. Only once before in the history of this journal have I ever asked for such help. I ask for it now because it is wanted again. I am not a capitalist, bloated or otherwise. No man can be who gives his life to Freethought. Time, energy, devotion, and whatever ability I possess—these I have always taxed to the utmost. I cannot possibly tax them more, but I may make them go further by attending a little to the *commercial* side of the *Freethinker*. Will my friends enable me to do this? I feel certain that the coming winter season will pretty well suffice for the effort I have in view. That is to say, if I am reasonably supported. And considering the amount of gratuitous work I have done, and am still doing, for the Secular cause, I do not think I am exactly *begging* when I make this appeal. G. W. FOOTE.

(28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.)

## SUGAR PLUMS.

SUNDAY'S weather was not favorable to open-air meetings in London. There was to have been a Freethought Demonstration in Hyde Park in the afternoon, but the rain came down steadily until five o'clock, an hour and a half after the gathering was announced to take place. Mr. Watts, who was to have been one of the speakers, came to Mr. Foote's house for an early dinner, his own residence being so distant that he would otherwise have had to attend the meeting late or starving. Mournful looks were directed towards the window during the mealtime. The sky was in a steady ill-temper, and the weather grew positively worse just as Mr. Foote and Mr. Watts should have started. Nothing was to be done, therefore, but to give it up as a bad job, as an audience was not to be expected in a shower-bath. It is to be hoped that the weather will be more propitious to-day (August 14), when *two* open-air Demonstrations are arranged to take place—in the morning at Clerkenwell Green, and in the afternoon at Regent's Park. Messrs. Foote and Watts will speak from a brake kindly supplied by Mr. Wilson at both places. Messrs. Snell and Forder also speak in the morning, and Messrs. Cohen and Heaford in the afternoon.

The Sunday evening lectures at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, will be resumed next Sunday (August 21). Mr. Foote will occupy the platform and deliver the first of a special course of lectures, which will be duly announced in our next issue.

The Camberwell Secular Hall re-opens on Sunday evening, August 21, when Mr. Charles Watts will occupy the platform.

The New York *Truthseeker* says that "Mr. Watts's many friends in this country will be glad to know that he is in good health, and hard at work in the Secular field. He hopes to come over here again, and we are certain his friends will be glad to see him."

Mr. Edward Truelove is the oldest of the National Secular Society's vice-presidents, being in his eighty-ninth year. The last time we saw him was at the South-place Institute meeting to protest against the Bedborough prosecution. He was obviously unfit to be out by himself, but he said he "felt that he must come." Mr. Truelove has been a bold

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and brave reformer all his life. He worked with Watson, Hetherington, Southwell, Cleave, and others who championed the freedom of the press in the bad old days of oppression. He was himself imprisoned for publishing a very sober pamphlet on the population question by Robert Dale Owen, who had been an Ambassador of the United States. Of course the infirmities of old age are creeping over our veteran friend, and it appears that he now needs the constant attendance of a nurse. His daughter's increasing blindness renders her service inadequate. In the circumstances, it has been thought advisable to solicit help from those who know something of Mr. Truelove's career. A Truelove Aid Committee has been formed, consisting at present of Messrs. G. J. Holyoake, Alfred Marsh, George Anderson, George Howell, and R. Applegarth. The Treasurer *pro tem.* is Alfred Marsh, 62 Pentonville-road, London, N., to whom subscriptions should be forwarded. According to the circular, immediate help is most necessary, and surely it will be forthcoming.

The first General Members' Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, must be held within four months of the date of incorporation—that is to say, before the end of September; and it is highly desirable, from every point of view, that a good number of members should be enrolled by then. A fair number have joined already, but that number should be at least doubled. We earnestly appeal to Freethinkers in this matter. The new instrument of Secular organisation ought to be taken in hand and operated with vigor and enthusiasm. Next month we shall return to the matter of *donations*, which we prefer to let rest during the holiday time. But in the meanwhile the great thing is to get *members*. The entrance fee is 10s. for the first year, and 5s. a year afterwards. There are scores, nay hundreds, who can afford to pay such a subscription immediately. Let them do so, and participate in the election of the Board of Directors, who will conduct the Society's affairs during the ensuing twelve months.

"The Secular Society, Limited, is making slow but solid progress. It should transform the outlook for Rationalism. Hitherto it was all but impossible for friends to set apart a portion of their estate in behalf of the movement. Now all this is changed. The Secular Society is a legally incorporated body, and bequests in its favor will be secure against the machinations of ecclesiastical bigots. Mr. G. W. Foote, who is responsible for the launching of the scheme, has succeeded where others have failed, and we very heartily offer him our congratulations."—*Literary Guide.*

Mr. Avory applied on Tuesday morning for a writ of certiorari to remove the Bedborough trial from the Old Bailey to the Court of Queen's Bench. Justices Kennedy and Matthew refused the application. The trial will therefore take place at the Old Bailey in September.

The Free Press Defence Committee has arranged for another public meeting to protest against the Bedborough prosecution. It will take place on Monday evening (August 15) in the French Salon, St. James's Hall, the entrance to which is from the Restaurant in Piccadilly. The chair will be taken at eight o'clock, and the admission is free. Mr. Foote will be one of the speakers. We would gladly announce other names if they had been supplied to us.

Since the above paragraph was in type we have been informed that Mr. Frank Harris, editor of the *Saturday Review*, has consented to take the chair at the St. James's Hall meeting on Monday.

The Sheffield Secular Society takes an excursion to-day (August 14). Members and friends meet in front of the Midland Station at 1.40 to go by train at 1.55 to Rotherham, for New Park and Museum, and from there to Mr. Brooker's, Harold Croft, Greatbro', at 5 for tea, etc.

The East London Branch goes on excursion by brakes to Harlow on Sunday, August 21, starting from Mile-end Waste at 8.30. Tickets, 3s. each, can be obtained at the Mile-end, Limehouse, and Victoria-park lecture stations; also from J. F. Haynes, 212 Mile-end-road, and J. Neate, 385, Bethnal-green-road.

Mr. Joseph Symes's *Liberator* (Melbourne) for July 2 is just to hand. Our old friend was always a brave man, and he seems to need all his courage at present. Owing to the bad times, a great many Freethinkers have left Melbourne. Mr. Symes says he has lost scores of friends in this way during the last six or seven months. "No rich Freethinker," he says, "seems disposed to help me in my struggle, and I must get on as I am able. Indeed, rich and well-to-do Freethinkers—and there are plenty of them—might help me immensely without injury to themselves or friends. But, while I am expending my life in their own cause, they are too careless to do their duty, or too selfish to assist." We are sorry to hear this, and hope there will soon be a change for the better.

## AN EXPLANATION.

In last week's *Freethinker* the editor penned a brief critical note upon my article on "Atheism and Agnosticism" which appears in the current number of the *Literary Guide*. Unfortunately the article is not printed exactly as it was written. I regret that several words which were intended to explain my object in writing were inadvertently omitted. The consequence is that, upon one important point, my meaning seems rather obscure. It was my intention, while not objecting to the use of either term, to state what is supposed by some persons to be the difference between Atheism and Agnosticism. I quite agree with Mr. Foote's remark that, "as a matter of fact, Agnosticism is as much as Atheism an attitude of practical dissent from Theism."

It is true I know of no *prominent* Atheist of the present day who plainly denies the existence of God, although I frequently meet with comparatively unknown Atheists throughout the country who openly avow their denial of the existence of such a being. Many years ago Mr. Charles Southwell, who was then the popular representative of Atheism, boldly denied that any God existed. He wrote a pamphlet curiously entitled *The Impossibility of Atheism.* His "argument" was that Atheism meant the denial of the existence of any God; but, as there was no God to deny, Atheism was therefore impossible. Mr. George Jacob Holyoake very appropriately termed Southwell's pamphlet "A Fourpenny Wilderness." Personally, I have, ever since I accepted the Atheistic position, regarded it to be equally dogmatic either to affirm or to deny that of which we know nothing. So far as I am aware, no knowledge exists of what is called God, and therefore the Agnostic position upon the subject seems to me to be a rational one.

I thank Mr. Foote for giving me an opportunity of making myself clear upon this point. Like himself, I am a pronounced Atheist—that is, I have no belief in the existence of any "God"; I am an Agnostic—that is, I know nothing of the alleged supernatural, or of a future life. Further, I am a Secularist—that is, I believe in making the best physically, morally, and intellectually of what is known, leaving conjectures as to the unknown to those imaginative individuals who prefer to indulge in speculations rather than in the realities of life. These are the views which I have held for over forty years, and the longer I live the more convinced I become that they have truth for their basis and usefulness for their recommendation.

CHARLES WATTS.

## MILTON'S PLEA FOR LIBERTY.

LIBERTY was not utterly unknown in England before the age of Milton. Not only was it frequently claimed by Wicklif and his followers in religion, and by the popular party in rebellion after rebellion against royal and aristocratic tyranny, but the House of Commons itself, notwithstanding the restricted suffrage and the high-handed methods of Feudalism, was always a citadel of freedom, as far as it was then capable of being understood. During the reign of the Tudors English liberty was at a low ebb; yet there was great intellectual movement in that fateful period, and the seeds were then sown of the epoch-marking revolution of the seventeenth century, which saw the beginning of all the liberties we now enjoy. From the moment the Long Parliament met, the fate of kingcraft and priestcraft was sealed. Religion itself was, it is true, only tentatively and hesitatingly discussed by a few bold spirits; but the principle of authority was everywhere challenged, and in that principle lay the secret strength of every form of despotism. There could not be a fitter moment for a vindication of liberty, not in the style of apology, but in the lofty manner of a prophet. Fortunately, the hour had found its man. The greatest genius in England, he who is reckoned with Shakespeare a twin pillar of the mighty temple of English poetry, sprang to fulfil the task. What could be better than that the noblest of causes should be championed by the noblest of men? Milton's *Areopagitica* was the first set defence of liberty in our English tongue, and, although it has been supplemented, it can never be superseded. It is a splendid arsenal from which whole generations of the soldiers of freedom have

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selected their choicest weapons; Damascene blades of rhetoric that flash gloriously as they cut and parry, exquisitely fashioned stilettos of sarcasm for close thrusts, superb long-range rifles of argument, and mighty artillery of sonorous and majestic eloquence.

Old Henry More, the Platonist, who wrote many a bulky volume himself, described his own time with disgust as "this scripturient age." The sneer is common, and it always comes from the greatest sinners. Carlyle expressed a wish that the tongues of one whole generation might be cut out, and all printing suspended, to give an age "run to tongue" an opportunity of digesting its knowledge in silence. Yet the Sage of Chelsea himself, in less splenetic moments, when the hag Dyspepsia relaxed her hold upon him, allowed that "of the things which man can do or make here below, by far the most momentous, wonderful, and worthy are the things called Books,"* and that the noble art of printing "is like an infinitely intensated organ of speech, whereby the voice of a small transitory man may reach not only through all earthly space, but through all earthly time."† Ephemeral literature may be superabundant, but every good thing has its price. How many ephemeral lives are there for one immortal? How many myriad miles of flats and bogs and swamps for a Mont Blanc or a Chimborazo? Why complain, then, if a myriad commonplace men scribble for every man of genius? It is Nature's method. Enough that the better *does* exist! The trashy books, like the trashy lives, pass and perish; but a good book, as Milton finely says, "is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up to a life beyond life."

Yet all books were once treated as interlopers, or like foreigners in a despotic country. They had to carry a passport, and conform to the most rigorous conditions on pain of capital punishment, without a trial by judge and jury. Church and State looked upon them as the chiefs of a black tribe might look upon a casual white man straying in Central Africa. They were to be closely watched, if not suppressed, and care was to be taken that they did not multiply. They only existed on sufferance, and the men who wrote them were regarded as pestilent busybodies or imps of Satan, born disturbers of the peace, and natural enemies of "the powers that be." While custom kept men placid it was easy to govern them, but who could rule them when they were set thinking? It was like sailing a ship in the Maelstrom.

As the venerable and sagacious Blackstone tells us in his *Commentaries*:—

> "In England, as in other countries, the art of printing, soon after its introduction, was looked upon as merely a matter of State, and subject to the coercion of the Crown. It was therefore regulated with us by the King's proclamations, prohibitions, charters of privilege, and of licence, and finally by the decrees of the Court of Star Chamber, which limited the number of printers and of presses which each should employ, and prohibited new publications unless previously approved by proper licensers."

Henry VIII., as head of the Church as well as the State, assumed absolute control over all printing, both lay and ecclesiastic. Letters Patent were at first granted for the exclusive right of printing the Bible, and to this day the Authorised Version is only issued by the Queen's printers. In the reign of Mary (1555) the Stationers' Company was established, with a monopoly of printing presses, but subject to the regulations of the Star Chamber. The number of men and presses was strictly limited, and nothing was to be printed without the licenser's approval. In 1585 the Star Chamber restricted all presses to London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and undertook to examine all manuscripts that were candidates for publication. Archbishop Laud is said to have instigated the first establishment of regular licensers, a trick of tyranny borrowed from the Inquisition. According to the decree of the Star Chamber in 1637, all books were to be examined before being entered with the Stationers' Company, by some of the following officials: the Lord Chief Baron or one of the Chief Justices for law, the principal Secretaries of State for history and politics, and the Archbishop of Canterbury (that is, the noble Laud himself) for divinity, physic, philosophy, and poetry. The number of master printers was limited to twenty, and of printing presses to forty; and restrictions were put upon type-founding. Laud was evidently resolved that the flock God had given him should not suffer from book-headache.

Laud being settled, and the Star Chamber itself abolished, the English press burst into the most exuberant freedom. The licensers were disregarded, the Stationers' Company treated with disdain, and illicit publishers openly put their imprint on works that stooped to no tribunal but the public. Among these were Milton's two *Tractates on Divorce*, which roused the ire of the Westminster Assembly, who named him in a batch of eleven "sectaries and heretics." On August 13, 1644, Mr. Herbert Palmer, preaching to the two Houses of Parliament, denounced Milton's second *Tractate* as "a wicked book abroad and uncensured, though deserving to be burnt." Following this, the Stationers' Company, egged on by the Presbyterian divines, petitioned the House of Commons to put a stop to such flagrant violations of the law, and of their trade privileges, as were involved in the wholesale circulation of unlicensed books. Milton was particularly mentioned as a peccant author. The House referred the matter to the Committee of Printing, and they judiciously let Milton alone.

G. W. FOOTE.

*(To be continued.)*

* *Lectures on Heroes*, v.

† Essays on *Early German Literature*

## NOTES ON CHRISTIANITY, THE CHURCH, AND SLAVERY.

*(Concluded from page 507.)*

BUT how did Christians treat their slaves? An English gentleman and a Christian,* travelling in America during 1855, though anxious to prove that many of the stories of cruelty on the part of the slaveholders were false, is, nevertheless, forced to admit that in a good many instances the slaves were subject to the utmost cruelty. He says: "I must, however, state that, in speaking of the sufferings or injuries to which the slave is liable, I am not proclaiming them merely on the authority of the northern abolitionist, or on the deductions which I have drawn from human nature; many travellers have made similar charges." Miss Bremer writes: "I beheld the old slave hunted to death because he dared to visit his wife—beheld him mangled beaten, recaptured, fling himself into the water of the Black River, over which he was retaken into the power of his hard master—and the law was silent. I beheld a young woman struck, for a hasty word, upon the temples, so that she fell down dead—and the law was silent. I heard the law through its jury adjudicate between a white man and a black, and sentence the latter to be flogged, when the former was guilty—and they who were honest among the jurymen in vain opposed the verdict. I beheld here, on the shores of the Mississippi only a few months ago, a young negro girl fly from the maltreatment of her master—and he was a professor of religion—and fling herself into the river" (*Homes of the New World*).

The same writer gives another instance of a lady of New Orleans who was accustomed to strip and flog a slave for the pleasure of witnessing sufferings which she endeavored to make more acute by rubbing soft soap into the broken skin. Where, let me ask, can such diabolical cruelty be equalled, let alone surpassed? This was in a Christian country, whose Christianity, it is said, abolished slavery. And there was even Biblical authority for such cruelty; for, according to the Old Testament, although a slaveholder was to be punished for instant murder of a slave, he was not to be punished for torturing and slowly murdering his slave. "If a man smite his servant or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand, he shall be surely punished; notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished, for he is his money." Many Christians, I know, frown at this horrible passage; but, all the same, it is there in black and white between the covers of God's most holy book.

It is impossible for any pen to transmit to paper anything like a correct description of the horrors and cruelties of the Christian slave-trade in Africa and America. The greatest sinners were Christians. The largest dealers in human flesh and blood were Christians.

Thomas Fowell Buxton, in his book on *The African Slave*

* Hon. H. A. Murray, *Lands of the Free and the Slave*, vol. ii., p. 222.

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*Trade*, in summing up the extent of the trade says: "It is of material importance that the reader, for the purpose of following the argument, should now fix and ascertain the number which seems to him the reasonable and moderate result from the facts and figures which have been produced. To me it seems just to take annually:—For the Christian Slave Trade, 150,000; for the Mohammedan Slave Trade, 50,000; total, 200,000."

Bruce, describing the slave-hunting expeditions in Abyssinia, says: "The grown-up men are all killed, and are then mutilated, parts of their bodies being always carried away as trophies. Several of the old mothers are also killed, while others, frantic with fear and despair, kill themselves. The boys and girls of a more tender age are then carried off in brutal triumph."

T. F. Buxton gives page after page of the most revolting cruelties inflicted by Christian slave-holders upon the poor negroes.

Captain Hayes, R.N., mentions the case of a slaver having a large cargo of human beings chained together. "The master of the vessel, with more humanity than his fellows, permitted some of them to come on deck (but still chained together) for the benefit of the air, when they immediately commenced jumping overboard hand in hand, and drowning in couples." He explains the cause of this circumstance by saying: "They were just brought from a situation between the decks, and to which they knew they must return, where the scalding perspiration was running from one to the other, covered also with their own filth, and where it was no uncommon occurrence for women to be bringing forth children, and men dying by the side, with full in their view living and dead bodies chained together, and the living, in addition to all their torments, laboring under the most famishing thirst, being in very few instances allowed more than a pint of water a day." He goes on to say: "I have now an officer on board the *Dryad* who, on examining one of the slave vessels, found not only living men chained to dead bodies, but the latter in a putrid state; and we have now a case which, if true, is too horrible and disgusting to be described."*

Allison, in his *History of Europe*, says†: "Such are the sufferings of the poor wretches crammed into these holes, where they are for days and weeks enduring the agonies of suffocation, that they are sometimes driven by the madness induced by suffering into revolt; but in such cases the arms and discipline of the Europeans generally prevail, and, after forty or fifty have been massacred, the rest are flogged in so merciless a manner that death would be a relief to their prolonged sufferings."

"Those who were thus executed were heavily ironed; a rope was then put round their necks, which was rove through the yard arm, and they were run up from the deck. By this means they were not hanged, they were strangled or choked, and in that state, while still alive, they were run up in the same manner, until their legs were laid across the rail of the bulwark on the ship's side, and then they were broken and chopped off to save the irons. In this way the bleeding body of a negro was thrown overboard to make way for another. The legs of about a dozen were chopped off in that manner. When the bleeding feet fell on the deck, they were picked up by the Brazilian crew, and then thrown overboard after the body; sometimes they pelted the body with them in sport, while it hung half alive. The women were shot in the neck, and thrown over while still living. Several of them were seen to struggle in the water some time before they sunk. After the slaughter was done, about twenty were brought up and flogged. The women were flogged as well as the men. Such was the severity of the flogging they received that they were obliged to lie on their bellies during the remainder of the voyage, and on the backs of some the flesh had putrified and fallen off in pieces of six or eight inches in diameter."‡

And all this taking place, remember, after eighteen centuries of Christianity. If the genius of Christianity is so opposed to the institution of slavery, how is it that after eighteen centuries slavery was not only not abolished, but that the most diabolical and unspeakable cruelties formed part of this nefarious trade under the shadow of the cross?

Such, O Christian, is what your religion has done for slavery. You tell us that Jesus Christ is living to-day, that he is in heaven, equal to God Almighty in wisdom, power, and love. Can you believe this in face of these awful facts, in face of this diabolical trade carried on in his name, with his blessing invoked upon it? Where was Jesus Christ while all this was going on? Are we to believe that he knew all this, and that, having the power to stop it, did not, but looked on and allowed it? Are we to believe that the savior of men, who *could* save, did not? Doth God care for oxen? asked Paul. Doth God care for slaves? Apparently not. I cannot believe that God Almighty died to save these men's souls, and left their bodies to the care of inhuman, hard-hearted monsters. I can see no fatherly love in that. I cannot believe that such a God would stand by in silence while husbands were torn from wives, sisters from brothers, and children from their mothers' breasts; to be packed away in the hold of a slave ship bearing his name, having his professed followers in command; torn from their native land by selfish, mercenary traders to toil among the dreary rice swamps of Carolina, or the lonely sugar plantations of Alabama.

It was not man's Christianity, but his humanity, that abolished slavery.

What has Jesus Christ or his gospel done for the slave? It was on earth the cry of the slave was heard, not in heaven. From man came salvation, not from God.

The Rev. Calvin Fairbanks was a Christian and a man. He received for his work in the cause of abolition seventeen years in gaol and 37,000 lashes from his fellow Christians. The following scene—described in his own words—took place in a Christian State. "Early in May, 1834," he says, "my sympathy and patriotism were roused on behalf of one of the most beautiful and exquisite young girls, only one-sixty-fourth African. She was self-educated and accomplished, and her jealous mistress doomed her to be sold, hating her for her beauty and accomplishments. There were two thousand people at the sale, representing the wealth and culture of America. A short, thick-necked, black-eyed Frenchman from New Orleans was determined to secure her. Upon the block stood the auctioneer by his victim, who seemed ready to drop to the earth. He directed attention to her excellent qualities as a mistress for any gentleman. This he kept prominent in the vilest manner, outraging all decency. Bids began at $250, and ran up to $1,400. The Frenchman from New Orleans alone bid against me. I bid $1,450. My contestant stood silent. The hammer trembled, lowered, rose, fell, and the fiend flushed, and quick as thought dropped his hammer. 'Look here, gentlemen! who is going to lose such a chance as this? Here is a girl fit to be the mistress of a king!' A suppressed cry of shame rose through that throng. Southern women blushed. Bids rose to $1,475. There was again a lull. Then the auctioneer turned his victim's profile to that excited crowd.....exclaiming, 'Ah, gentlemen, who is going to be the owner of this prize? Whose is the next bid?' The Frenchman bid $1,480. The hammer rose high, quivered, lowered; Eliza gave me an appealing look. 'Are you all done? Once, twice, do I hear no more, three'; and the hammer quivered as the Frenchman's face flushed with triumph; three, and the hammer fell down. 'Fourteen hundred and eighty-five!' The Frenchman turned away. The hammer fell; she was mine. She fainted. 'You've got her d——d cheap, sir. What are you going to do with her?' 'Free her, sir!' I cried."

Now, where was Jesus Christ while this was going on? "Oh," replies the Christian, "Jesus Christ put it into the heart of his minister to buy her and free her." Did he? But what would have become of her had he not been there? For all Jesus Christ would have done, sold into shame and slavery. But he *was* there in the person of the Rev. Calvin Fairbanks. In this case, it is true, she was saved; but this was no isolated case. In hundreds of instances there was *no* savior there, and the poor victims were sold with prayers upon their lips; prayers to a God powerless to hear them, a Savior powerless to save.

But it may be asked, What does all this prove? Why refer to this awful chapter in the history of Christendom? We answer, Because Christianity is extolled as the great enemy of slavery and of tyranny of all kinds; whereas the facts referred to here show conclusively that Christianity, unless humanised, is the reverse of what its paid exponents claim. The history of slavery proves this religion to have been the supporter of tyranny, the abettor of immorality, the opponent of learning, and the enemy of humanity.

W. Witt Leavis.

* Page 155. † *History of Europe*, vol. iv., p. 71.

‡ Account of the treatment of the slaves on board Lenordi Fonsecca's ship; quoted by Allison.]

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## BOOK CHAT.

LET our readers who wish to have a clear idea of the secular progress made during the last hundred years read *The Wonderful Century*, by Alfred Russel Wallace (Swan Sonnenschein and Co.). The advance of civilisation since 1800 has been tremendous. It is not enough, Mr. Wallace assures us, merely to say that our century is superior to any that have gone before it, for it possesses a record of progress which will bear comparison with that of the whole preceding period of human history. In order to justify this sweeping assertion, he first gives a sketch of the practical inventions and the theoretical discoveries of science which have made the present century memorable, and then proceeds to compare them with those of preceding ages. Here is his list of the thirteen inventions and practical applications of science which have, in so many respects, changed the outward forms of our civilisation since the century began :—Railways, steam navigation, electric telegraphs, the telephone, friction matches, gas lighting, electric lighting, photography, the phonograph, the Röntgen rays, spectrum analysis, which so greatly extends our knowledge of the universe; and, finally, the use of anæsthetics and antiseptics, which render the most severe surgical operations painless, and so extend the means of saving life. It is a splendid record, and one which could be easily extended by including other inventions of minor importance. But it is sufficient for the author's purpose, and against it in all preceding time there were, he points out, only seven inventions of the first rank—the telescope, the printing-press, the mariner's compass, Arabic numerals, alphabetical writing, the steam-engine, and the barometer. *The Wonderful Century* is a book for everybody to read, and is worthy of the reputation of the distinguished traveller and naturalist, the co-discoverer with Darwin of the theory of development by natural selection.

* * *

Before quitting this very remarkable book we wish to draw particular attention to Mr. Wallace's chapters on "Vaccination a Delusion: its Penal Enforcement a Crime," in which he smites the vaccination party hip and thigh, and speaks of their pestiferous work as causing "one of the foulest blots on the civilisation of the nineteenth century."

* * *

The French have a laudable habit of naming their streets after their distinguished men and women. It is pleasant to find that we are doing the same in England. In Leyton, for instance, we find roads named after Huxley, Faraday, and Murchison.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### MORAL INSTRUCTION AND THE BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is unfortunate that Mr. Cohen does not see eye to eye with the Moral Instruction League as regards the use of the Bible. Mr. Cohen's chief concern is to exclude the Bible from the schools. The Moral Instruction League's chief concern is to introduce Moral Instruction. Mr. Cohen objects that the Moral Instruction League refrains from attacking the Bible. It was not constituted for that purpose. The Moral Instruction League does not propose to "teach the Bible" free from all supernatural sanctions. They take the position that the Bible may be used equally with other books as an aid *to the teacher* for the *teaching of morality*. The way in which this may be done without supernatural or theological implications is shown in Dr. Adler's *Moral Instruction for Children*. If, after systematic Moral Instruction were instituted in the schools, teachers were to use the Bible for imparting supernaturalism and theology, there would be no more determined opponents than the Moral Instruction League. In the meantime, it is found that we may move more rapidly if we travel on the lines of evolution rather than revolution. Mr. Cohen may rely on it that, if the object of the League is not sudden death to the Bible as he would wish, it is certain death in the long run. There will be so many and much better books for teaching morality. Meanwhile, why should we raise unnecessary opposition? It is more important to get systematic Moral Instruction into the schools than to get the Bible out, and if the former is attained the latter will be much easier.

It should be remembered that the *object* of the League is not to get the Bible out of the schools, and it is unreasonable to quibble because they do not attempt it. It is as if the supporters of Anti-vivisection and Prevention of Cruelty Societies should be taunted because they do not help to put down a more widespread form of cruelty and become vegetarians. They and the Moral Instruction League do a useful work as far as they go, and each has a well-defined and well-directed purpose. I cannot avoid the impression that Mr. Cohen evolves out of his own imagination all sorts of fanciful notions about the League because they prefer to concede liberty in the restricted use of the Bible. There is no ground for assuming that they have "fervent admiration, veneration, and affection" for the Bible, and wish to retain it.

THOMAS ADAMS.

### MR. JUSTICE DAY'S SENTENCES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Justice Day—a notoriously severe judge, and our greatest flogger—has made another speech lamenting that the Legislature does not give him more elbow-room in the matter of punishments. In sentencing a prisoner at York Summer Assizes for a criminal offence on a young girl, he said there would be a speedy disappearance of such offences if the Judge had power to order a flogging, and so forth.

As far as I have observed, Mr. Justice Day's sentences of imprisonment or penal servitude are quite as severe as those of the average judge, and, where he can, he adds the flogging which such men as Sir Henry Hawkins omits. I think Mr. Justice Day should be called on to give a statement of the sentences passed by him which included flogging, with the crimes of which the prisoners were convicted, and let the public see whether his sentences are really deterrent, or more efficacious than the sentences of less severe judges who do not flog criminals.

Note should also be taken of the Home Secretary's omission to remit floggings in cases where he knows well that no other judge on the Bench would have passed the sentence.

JOSEPH COLLINSON.

## CHRISTIAN HYÆNAS.

PRIESTS seldom appear so disgusting as when acting as hyænas over the dead bodies of their opponents. There seems too good reason to believe that Sir Richard Burton was smuggled into the great lying Church at the last moment, at a time when he was unconscious. It may be pleaded in excuse that his wife was anxious for the welfare of his soul; but the spectacle of a Christian hyæna administering the Last Sacraments to the unconscious man who had fought against his Church in the full strength of his manhood is none the less odious.

The priests did the same thing with Prince Jerome Napoleon. Prince Napoleon was all his life an anti-clerical in politics, and a Freethinker in religion. The priest, of course, gave out that at the time the Prince was in full possession of his faculties. We prefer to rely upon the repeated rejection of the services of the priests by the Prince during his illness. According to the priest, the Prince said that he died adhering to the principles of the Concordat—*i.e.*, the Concordat of Napoleon I., under which Catholicism was restored as a national faith. Further, that he was imbued with the religious sentiments of the Bonapartes—that is, with the sentiment that religion is a cheap and effective police service in the interests of the governing classes. Further still, the Prince declared that he inclined towards the doctrine of Rousseau—the same Rousseau whose books were solemnly condemned by the Archbishop of Paris. The Church has no room for the disciples of Rousseau in their lifetime, and it is grimly farcical to lay hold of them *in articulo mortis*. It is such death-bed scenes as those of Sir Richard Burton and Prince Jerome Napoleon which keep alive the irreconcilable enmity of Freethinkers to clericalism.

MIMNERMUS.

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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.**

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. Heaford, "Common Sense *v.* Religion."

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, R. P. Edwards; 6.30, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "Protestant Persecution." Peckham Rye: E. Pack—3.15, "The Futility and Evil of Prayer"; 6.30, "Where's yer Mor'l Code?"

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, Freethought Demonstration, Messrs. Foote, Watts, Snell, and R. Forder.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, C. Cohen; 7, W. Heaford. August 17, at 8, C. Cohen.

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7, Mr. Davis.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): Lucretius Keen—11.30, "Why Christians were Persecuted"; 3.30, "Inspiration of the Bible."

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, R. P. Edwards, "Stroll through the British Museum."

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, E. Pack. August 16, at 8, C. Cohen.

REGENT'S PARK: 3.30, Freethought Demonstration, Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, and Heaford.

**COUNTRY.**

FAILSWORTH SECULAR SCHOOL (Pole-lane): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh-Bonner—2.30, "The Aim of Life"; 6.30, "School-taught Morality."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—August 14, e., Bethnal Green; 16, Limehouse; 17, Mile End Waste.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—August 14, m., Finsbury; 21, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 28, m., Wood Green. September 4, m., Mile End; 11, m., Mile End; 18, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 25, m., Finsbury; a., Victoria Park.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—September 11 and 18, Manchester.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## NATURAL MORALITY.

*A Sketch of Morality Independent of Obligation or Sanction.* By M. Guyau. Translated from the French by Gertrude Kapteyn. (London: Watts & Co.)

JEAN-MARIE GUYAU was born on October 28, 1854. At the age of twenty his health broke down. For the rest of his short life—he died at thirty-three—he was more or less an invalid, residing on the shores of the Mediterranean. His first work was written at the early age of nineteen, and was "crowned" by the Academy of Moral and Political Science. It was a careful study of the Utilitarian moralists from Epicurus to the school of Bentham, and was afterwards expanded into two separate treatises. His pen was very active during the time allowed him to think and write. Amongst the several books he published were three which have been translated into English. The principal of these, Guyau's masterpiece, is the *Irreligion of the Future*. We reviewed it at considerable length, in the pages of *Progress*, on its first appearance in French. The English translation, which is ridiculously expensive, was published about twelve months ago. *Education and Heredity*, translated by W. J. Greenstreet, was published in the "Contemporary Science Series" in 1891. Now we have a translation of Guyau's chief ethical treatise by Gertrude Kapteyn. This remarkable writer is therefore accessible to English readers who wish to master his leading ideas.

Guyau was something more than a philosopher, in the ordinary meaning of the word. He wrote a little volume of verses that proved him to be a genuine poet. This aspect of his genius gives a delightful tone to his prose writings. The literary flavor of every page distinguishes him from the common run of writers on philosophy. He is never at a loss for appropriate and illuminating imagery. And the result is not only charming, but stimulating. Guyau's appeal is not merely to the intellect, which he does not undervalue, but to the whole mind, including the imagination, which gives wings to the intellect, and changes plodding into soaring.

Let us take an illustration, almost at haphazard. Guyau has been speaking of self-sacrifice as often the highest assertion of life, while apparently its negation. One moment of your life may be so intense and noble that all the rest may seem colorless and empty.

> "There are hours in which the intensity of life is so great that, placed in balance with the whole possible series of years, these hours will turn the scale. One passes three days in climbing to a high summit of the Alps; one finds that the short moment passed on the white summit, in the great calm of the sky, is worth these three days of fatigue. There are also moments in life when we seem to be on the mountain-top—when we soar; compared with these moments everything else becomes indifferent."

Scores, perhaps hundreds of such similes, may be found in this little volume. Guyau reasons like a mathematician and writes like a poet.

But before we go further let us say a few words about the English translation. Here and there we have marked a bit of slipshod, but on the whole the work is admirably well done. It might have been a little more idiomatic with advantage. Now and then the French phrase is transplanted rather than translated into English. But the author's meaning always seems adequately conveyed; and, after all, that is the point of greatest importance.

One-third of Guyau's book consists of an elaborate Introduction, in which he discusses the current metaphysics of morality. Optimism, he asserts, is really based upon religious ideas. God is looking after the affairs of the universe, and everything must be for the best. Even if they appear to be otherwise, there is the doctrine of immortality to supply the explanation. What is crooked now will be put straight hereafter, what is confused will be made orderly, what is dark will be made clear. Death brings the solution of all mysteries. Yes, says Guyau, but is it not a fact, after all, that God is little more than the hypothetical guarantee of this very immortality?

> "In reality, humanity cares little enough about God; not one martyr would have sacrificed himself for that recluse of the skies. What was looked for in him was the power to make us immortal. Man has always been wanting to scale the heavens, and he cannot do it quite alone. He has invented God in order that God may stretch out a hand to him; next he attached himself in love to this divine Savior. But if to-morrow one were to say to the four hundred millions of Christians, 'There is no God; there is only a paradise, a man-Christ, a virgin mother, and saints,' they would very quickly be consoled."

The ethical vice of optimism is that it encourages supineness, content, and callousness. If everything is for the best, the passion for reform is both blasphemous and ridiculous. Pessimism is as false as optimism, for the persistence of life proves that it contains a balance of satisfaction. Nevertheless, the pessimist may well be more moral than the optimist. He rebels against the evils of life, and if he cannot hope to make it happy he may try to make it less miserable. The truth lies in the third hypothesis of the indifference of nature. Man gives her an aim, conceived from his own wishes. But she has no aim. She is infinite and inexhaustible. Nothing is fixed, all is fluid. Man is but one of her productions. The time was when he was not, and the time is coming when he will not be. She existed without him once, and she will exist without him again. It is useless to say "Conform to nature." We do not know what this nature is. What we are sure of is her indifference to man's aims and aspirations. Yet there is such a thing as natural morality, in the sense of an ethic based upon the laws and conditions of human life.

Guyau's sketch of this natural morality — without religious obligation or metaphysical sanction—is a fine performance. The reader may not find it convincing; he must find it suggestive. Guyau is a Utilitarian in the sense that he believes morality to be purely social in its origin and development. But he denies that human activity is exercised *for the sake* of happiness. "Life," he says, "unfolds and expresses itself in activity because it is life. In all creatures pleasure accompanies, much more than it provokes, the search after life. Before all we must live; enjoyment comes after." Life becomes moral by an inevitable necessity as it intensifies and expands. It has a power of fecundity as well as of self-preservation. This finds its first outlet in generation. Then follows a fecundity of intellect, of sensibility, of emotion, and of will; and all this is impossible except under the forms of sociability. Finally, ideas of ethical possibility arise, and these necessarily tend to realise themselves. They become psychological forces. "I ought, therefore I will," is a less potent formula than "I can, therefore I must." One is always impelled to fulfil the possibilities of one's nature.

Guyau is rigorously logical. Dismissing the idea of



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duty, he discovers its equivalent in the forces of life. Not only is the most intense and energetic man in the main the most sociable man, but human beings love risk as well as enjoyment; and this, we may remark in passing, is at the root of a great deal of gambling, which is too generally supposed to spring merely from a desire to obtain other people's money. There is a certain charm to strong natures in danger. It calls forth their energies and capacities. It makes them live intensely, and intense life is always a delight. Guyau observes that intrepidity and self-sacrifice, even in the face of the final risk of death, is "not a mere negation of self and of personal life; it is this life itself raised into sublimity." Everything, in short, which unites the individual to his species, and makes him subserve its interests, has its root in nature, and is susceptible of a rational explanation.

Dealing with the *penal* side of morality, Guyau remarks that punishment sprang originally from the useful animal instinct of self-defence, which took the form of attack upon aggression. A caress elicits a caress, a bite provokes a bite. Retaliation is at bottom a sound instinct. When a boy says, "He hit me first," he gives what for him is an excellent reason. But when intelligence comes to the aid of instinct, we learn that retaliation is a useless expenditure of force. We content ourselves with simple defence, and we even become capable of pitying the offender. Crime should therefore be dealt with in a social spirit. We should treat it as we now treat leprosy or insanity. "Charity for all men," Guyau says, "whatever may be their moral, intellectual, or physical worth, should be the final aim to be pursued even by public opinion." Humanity must not follow the bad example of Christianity, and set up a social doctrine of grace and election. God, if he exist, only damns himself in damning a sinner. From his height the outcasts should never be anything but unfortunates. The very heart of morality is pity or compassion. Higher than any Western prayer (we may add) is the great Eastern prayer: "O God, be merciful to the wicked. Thou hast already been merciful to the good."

G. W. FOOTE.

## SECULAR AND THEOLOGICAL FORCES.

FOR untold ages two prominent forces have been in operation in the realms of human thought. They are known as secular and theological. The one belongs to man, the other is said to pertain to God. Each has played an important part, for good or for evil, in moulding and regulating the human mind. Invariably the two forces have been in conflict with each other, and frequently the good achieved by the one has been checked, and sometimes entirely counteracted, by the evil wrought by the other. It was thus during the period known as the "Dark Ages." And even to-day what is the ethical condition of the masses, who exist in the midst of an extensive theological propaganda? Read the records of the police-courts, and the vice and depravity which are constantly being made known through the medium of the newspapers. Visit the rural districts of "Christian" England, and the painful fact will be too apparent, that thousands of its inhabitants are sunk into the deepest ignorance and most depraved wretchedness. Theological teachings can have had but little influence for good upon the morals of a people when we find that, after centuries of the rule, discipline, teaching, and example of the many clergymen, besides dissenting ministers, the very classes of society which have been most under their control are the greatest stigma upon our social condition. The lesson of history is that when the force of theology was at its highest pitch morality was at its lowest ebb, while falsehood, fraud, and general licentiousness prevailed even amongst professed Christians. Hence the orthodox writer, Dr. Gregory, in his *History of the Christian Church*, states that as early as the second century the Christians considered that "it was lawful to deceive in order to advance the history of religion.....many of the practices encouraged by the Christians of the fourth century were far from conducing either to piety or good morals." He adds that in the ninth century "the priests and monks, in order to avoid perishing through hunger, abandoned themselves to the practice of violence, fraud, and every species of crime" (vol. i., pp. 85, 176, and 467). The pious Mosheim also admits that for many centuries the Christians were guilty of "lying, deceit, artifice, fraud," and numerous other vices. He tells us that "the Church was contaminated with shoals of profligate Christians.....It cannot be affirmed that even true Christians were entirely innocent and irreproachable in this matter" (see Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i., pp. 55, 77, 102, 193). Salvian, a clergyman of the fifth century, writes: "With the exception of a very few who flee from vice, what is almost every Christian congregation but a sink of vices? For you will find in the Church scarcely one who is not either a drunkard, a glutton, or an adulterer.....or a robber, or a man-slayer, and, what is worse than all, almost all these without limit" (Miall's *Memorials of Early Christianity*, p. 366). And Dr. Cave, in his *Primitive Christianity* (p. 2), observes: "If a modest and honest heathen were to estimate Christianity by the lives of its professors, he would certainly proscribe it as the vilest religion in the world." Referring to a subsequent period, Wesley gives the following picture of society as it existed under the influence of theology. After stating that "Bible-reading England" was guilty of every species of vice, even those that nature itself abhors, he says: "Such a complication of villainies of every kind considered with all their aggravations, such a scorn of whatever bears the face of virtue; such injustice, fraud, and falsehood; above all, such perjury, and such a method of law, we may defy the whole world to produce" (Sermons, vol. xii., p. 223).

Such was the condition of the community when theology was in full force. Those persons who desire to extol the power of theology for good will have to account for the fact that when it had the opportunity of exhibiting its legitimate influence the general welfare of the people made little or no headway. It was not until secular agencies supplanted the influence of theology that national progress really commenced. If the reader has any doubt as to the accuracy of this statement, he should read carefully vol. ii. of Lecky's *European Morals* and Buckle's *History of Civilisation*, and he will there find ample evidence of the truth of our allegation. As Lecky observes: "During more than three centuries the decadence of theological influence has been one of the most invariable signs and measures of our progress" (p. 18). Not less significant is Buckle's testimony as to the beneficial force of the great secular factor of scepticism. "The more," says he, "we examine this great principle of scepticism, the more distinctly shall we see the immense part it has played in the progress of European civilisation. To state in general terms what in this introduction will be fully proved, it may be said that to scepticism we owe that spirit of inquiry which, during the last two centuries, has gradually encroached on every possible subject; has reformed every department of practical and speculative knowledge; has weakened the authority of the privileged classes, and thus placed liberty on a surer foundation; has chastised the despotism of princes; has restrained the arrogance of the nobles, and has even diminished the prejudices of the clergy. In a word, it is this which has remedied the three fundamental errors of the olden time; errors which made the people, in politics too confiding, in science too credulous, in religion too intolerant."

Let us take another historical illustration of the superior force of secular agencies over those of theology. Some writers have made it the great reproach of the reign of Charles II. that it was "godless"; but the fact is, its godlessness was the one redeeming trait of that "Merry Monarch's" reign. Reckless as he was, during his reign reforms were accomplished the results of which cannot be too highly appreciated. It was during his reign that a law was passed which deprived the bishops of the power to burn those who differed from them in theological opinion. It was during his reign that the clergy were deprived of the privilege of arranging their own taxation, and were compelled to submit to the ordinary mode of assessment. It was during his reign that a law was passed forbidding bishops to administer the oath by which the Church had hitherto compelled suspected persons to criminate themselves. It was during his reign that it was settled that the taxation of the people should be decided by their own representatives, and it was during his reign that certain restrictions on the press were removed, whereby knowledge had a better opportunity of being disseminated among the masses of the people. Notwithstanding the calamities occasioned by the great Plague and the Fire of London, more improvements, says Buckle, were

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effected and more progress was made during this reign than had been accomplished during the twelve previous centuries of English history. The character of Charles II., as a whole, was one not to be emulated; but, living amidst a profligate court, venal ministers, and constant conspiracies, he was enabled to recognise two great obstacles to the nation's welfare; these obstacles were the spiritual tyranny of the priests and the territorial oppression of the nobles. Having but little regard for theological dogmas, he was determined that such evils should be swept away. If additional proofs are required in favor of our contention, they are furnished in the recently-published work, *The Wonderful Century*, by Alfred Russel Wallace. It is therein shown that during the present century, which is pre-eminently a secular age, more solid progress has been accomplished than was achieved in all previous ages, when theology was paramount and unrestrained. We call the special attention of the expounders of "Christian evidences" to the truths here recorded, inasmuch as they demonstrate the utter fallacy of the Christian claims on behalf of the force of theological teachings.

Despite these facts, orthodox writers still indulge the delusion that theology is essential to human advancement, and that secular teaching, even when allied with moral culture, is impotent in the promotion of personal and national welfare. Hence, in a book recently issued, *The Return to the Cross*, by the Rev. Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, we read: "Rely upon it that the people of Wales, who have listened to the noblest pulpit eloquence in the world, do not ask from you secular teaching.....No teaching that is purely ethical or intellectual, or the result of the exercise of the human reason, will do other than lay waste the supernatural Church.....All human imaginings and suppositions are as idle as the chattering of sparrows" (pp. 12, 13, and 15). Here is the great theological error that permeates most of the orthodox literature. Human effort is depreciated and robbed of its intrinsic vitality. It is true "the exercise of the human reason" may lay waste the pretensions of "the supernatural," but it does more; it discovers and consolidates all those agencies which exalt personal character and augment the happiness and well-being of a nation. As we have shown from the pages of history, it is to the secular, not to the theological, force that we are indebted for the progress that has been made through all time towards civilisation.

CHARLES WATTS.

## IRRATIONAL RATIONALISM.

IF the English people represented a community in whose life supernaturalism played no part, where stories of gods and ghosts, of heaven and hell, were regarded as furnishing material only for the student of folk-lore or the mental pathologist; if, in brief, society had been completely rationalised, then Mr. Gould's criticism on my article of July 31 would be as incontrovertible as the article itself would have been unnecessary. But, as we happen to be living in a community where such a condition of affairs does not obtain, but the very reverse, I cannot but regard the objections raised as being somewhat wide of the mark. Indeed, the chief fault I have to find with Mr. Gould is that he writes without the least reference to the obvious dangers surrounding the retention of the Bible in the schools, so long as it is regarded by the majority of the population as a revelation from God to man.

My contention was a very simple one. The Bible represents the only official and authoritative form of supernaturalism that Freethinkers in England have to face. The clergy and the whole of the Christian Church regard that book as the sole foundation of their claims; our social institutions, legal procedure, and daily lives are more or less tainted with this conception of the Bible, and these circumstances alone lift it from the ranks of ordinary literature, and render it necessary to deal with it as a class apart. Mr. Gould's counter-contention is that the Bible is to him only ordinary literature. Granted; it is only ordinary literature to me; but Mr. Gould must see that the Moral Instruction League was not founded to deal with people who take that view of the matter, but for the much larger class who will not and cannot regard the Bible in the same light without at the same time surrendering their position as Christians. It is, therefore, the claims put forward on behalf of the Bible that we have to attack if we would not stultify our understanding and impair our work.

I do not see that Mr. Gould anywhere faces this simple position, except to say that the League only advocates the use of the Bible as one among other books, and upon the same grounds. Mr. Gould will excuse my saying that a resolution of the League does not alter the existing condition of affairs. A "pious opinion" that the Bible is only as other books is well enough when Mr. Gould and myself are concerned, but when we come out into the world of strife, and have to buckle on our armor to smite the advocate of Bible-worship, then so long as attack and defence are necessary the Bible is not on the same level as other books. It can only be that when its present position is destroyed; and when that is accomplished the necessity for a Moral Instruction League will have ceased to exist.

Mr. Gould's plea for the use of the Bible "on Freethought principles" is strangely negative. I am asked, "Why should we not use the Bible in elementary schools?" Surely the first question should be, "What reason is there for including the Bible in the list of books drawn up for the teacher's guidance?" The fact that the Bible is already in the schools is, to my mind, a very strong reason for putting it out. For it has been there under evil auspices; it has been the creator of evil influences; and it is certainly not worth while, to a Freethinker, retaining a book with such dangerous associations for the small amount of good that might be derived from its perusal.

Mr. Gould may reply that, dissociated from supernaturalism, one can get many good things from the Bible. I have no doubt that an expert in the art of deducing moral lessons from non-moral, or immoral, narratives might get good from any book under the sun; but that is surely hardly sufficient ground for recommending every volume for the special guidance of teachers. It would be pretty easy to show that, even as a book, when one has divested Biblical stories of their coating of superstition, separated myth from fact, and faced the risk of encouraging the efforts of supernaturalists, the amount of good teaching fit for children that could be obtained would scarcely be worth the trouble of getting it.

My critic fails to see any reason for the exclusion of the Bible, and asks: "May he (the teacher) not point to Abraham's treatment of Lot as a case of magnanimity..... to Moses as an example of a pioneer's devotion to his cause .....to the democratic significance of a legend which represents a hero as born in a stable and laid in a manger?" etc., etc. Now I think that, even upon the bare statement of the matter, a strong case against these stories might be raised by pointing to the inability of extreme youth to distinguish between history and myth, and the consequent mental confusion generated; but when we reflect, further, that these incidents are treated by the current religion as historic verities; that, above all, the "hero born in a manger" is regarded by the majority of people as "very God of very God"; that the story of his birth, life, and death is so closely interwoven with supernatural occurrences as to be almost inseparable, that belief in him is said to be of the most profound importance here and hereafter, and that millions of pounds are spent annually in the training of men and women to perpetuate these beliefs, then I say emphatically that whatever good might be derived from the "democratic significance of the legend" would be far outweighed by the evil inflicted in the direction of preparing the child for the superstition of the outer world. It is simply growing the harvest for the parson to reap.

I am not quite clear as to the manner in which Freethought will "have lost a chance" if the Bible is excluded from elementary schools. Mr. Gould says the clergy will still proclaim the Bible as the "word of God." Of course they will; it is their business to do so. There is nothing more impressive in that than there is in Beecham advertising his pills. The proclamation will be made in any case, only it seems to me that the strength of the proclamation will be increased a hundred-fold by the scholar's knowledge that he is being fed with illustrations drawn from the Bible, and that it is one of the books which the Education Department regard as so important to the child's moral and intellectual welfare as not to be omitted on any account.

It is not as if the teacher were authorised to warn his scholars that the Bible is on the same level as any other book, worse than some, better than others, and full of the

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errors, violence, and crime inseparable from early civilisation. The teacher's knowledge on this head must be kept carefully to himself; the book is to be utilised in the schools without any attempt being made to correct the false views of the Bible entertained by the outside world, in most cases by the child's own parents. And against the absence of any plain statement from the teacher as to the real nature of the Bible there is to be placed the active operations of the religious world, impressing upon the child untruthful and dangerous views of a book that has already been favorably introduced to it by Quixotic Rationalists. It surely ill becomes Freethinkers to strengthen the forces of Irrationalism in such a manner.

Mr. Gould's next contention, that the exclusion of the Bible is impracticable, because many of its legends are accessible in general literature, does not strike me as possessing very great strength, for three reasons. First of all, if a teacher is so determined upon giving his scholars instruction in Biblical legends as to rush to ordinary literature when warned off the Bible, the evil influence of such a man—granting has appointment as a teacher—will certainly be augmented if you place in his hands, as an official recommendation, a book which he will doubtless regard as the fountain-head of these legends. So that even here the exclusion of the Bible will be something gained. It will minimise the supernaturalism, even if it does not destroy it.

Secondly, it is not the mere repetition of a legend, as such, that we have to guard against. Childhood is naturally fetishistic, and satisfies its cravings in various directions. Children hear the story of *Puss in Boots* or *Jack the Giant-killer* time after time without retaining a belief in the reality of either through their lives. *None of these stories are supported by the public sense or by social intercourse*, and they drop off quite naturally as the child approaches maturity. What renders the Biblical stories specially dangerous is the fact that they are supported by the public sense, or lack of it, directly and indirectly; the daily intercourse of life enforces a belief in their truthfulness, and therefore, as both Mr. Gould and myself believe it one of the functions of education to arm the child against possible errors in after life, if we cannot warn the child at school against the Bible, let us at least put it on one side altogether.

And, finally, Mr. Gould, in his closing paragraph, effectually knocks the bottom out of his own argument. If effective Government control can and does secure that the education given under its directions shall be thoroughly secular, with the Bible in the school, it will surely be as easy to see that the education continues to be secular when the Bible is excluded. Mr. Gould himself, then, supplies evidence that the teacher, after being warned off the Bible, will not be allowed to drag in the Gadarene pigs from Huxley, the Ark from Colenso, or the Fall of Man from Milton.

I do not think, after what I have written above, that Mr. Adams's letter calls for any special reply. Mr. Adams believes that "it is more important to get systematic moral instruction into the schools than to get the Bible out, and if the former is attained the latter will be much easier." Mr. Adams's method is simplicity itself. Get systematic moral instruction, free from supernaturalism, established in the schools, and then quietly inform the supporters of the Bible that there is no time and no inclination to attend to their client. Excellent! only the Bible is *already* in the schools, it is in possession, its advocates are watchful and more keenly alive to everything that affects their interest than are, I am afraid, many Rationalists to theirs; and if Mr. Adams believes that he can get systematic non-theological moral instruction introduced into the schools before he has got the Bible out, I can only congratulate him upon the simplicity of his plan, while at the same time insisting upon the impossibility of its realisation. C. COHEN.

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The executive of the Legitimation League will be glad to learn that the League propaganda has met with favor in the South Sea Islands. The following is a specimen of a marriage certificate of an illicit union common in that region: "This is to certify that ——, daughter of ——, is illegally married to Mr. —— for one week, and Mr. —— is at liberty to send her to hell when he pleases. ——, Witness.

## MILTON'S PLEA FOR LIBERTY.

*(Concluded from page 523.)*

THE Committee of Printing were, in fact, a new censorship. This novel licensing board was appointed by Parliament in June, 1643, to "prevent and suppress the license of printing"; in other words, to prevent the diffusion of Royalist tracts and journals. The Ordinance declared that no "Book, Pamphlet, Paper, nor part of any such Book, Pamphlet, or Paper, shall from henceforth be printed, bound, stitched, or put to sale by any person or persons whatsoever, unless the same be first approved of and licensed under the hand of such person or persons as both or either of the said Houses shall appoint for the licensing of the same, and entered in the Register Book of the Company of Stationers according to ancient custom." The Wardens of that Company, and certain officers of Parliament, were ordered to ferret out contraband literature, and to bring the writers, printers, publishers, and dispersers before either of the Houses or the Committee of Examinations. Justices of the Peace, Captains, and Constables were to assist in this laudable work, to apprehend offenders, and, in cases of opposition, to break open doors and locks.

Within a week after the passing of this Ordinance the licensers were appointed. Divinity, being a burning question, was thought to need the service of twelve examiners. Seven of them, if not eight, were members of the Westminster Assembly, and all the rest were parish ministers in or near London.* These were good securities for orthodoxy, and Milton had excellent reason for thinking that "New presbyter is but old priest writ large." Miscellaneous literature was handed over to three other licensers; law-books to certain Judges and the Serjeants-at-Law; mathematical books, almanacks, and prognostications to a Reader of Gresham College, or a certain Mr. Booker, who was perhaps thought to be skilled in the black art; and "small pamphlets, portraitures, pictures, and the like" to the Clerk of the Stationers' Company.

These licensers went to work, and the result was that, while only 35 books were registered in the first half of 1643, no less than 333 were registered in the second half. Yet the new law was defied by several publishers, and among them Milton's. After the petition of the Stationers' Company in 1644, both Houses of Parliament assisted in strengthening the law, but prosecutions were stayed by Cromwell's great Toleration motion which passed the Commons on September 13, and "caused a sudden pause among the Presbyterian zealots," being, indeed, "a demand generally for clearer air and breathing-room for everybody, more of English freedom and less of Scottish inquisitorship."† The Scotch were, in fact, carrying their "guid conceit o' theirsels" too far. They joined England in the revolt against their Stuart king, but fancied they could bind England afresh in their Presbyterian chains. Eventually they saw their mistake, but it was not until Oliver Cromwell had frightfully pounded them at Preston, Dunbar, and Worcester.

Milton's natural bent was "beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies," but he loved liberty sincerely, and knew that she and truth were inseparable twins. For this reason he had avoided the Church, for which his parents destined him, perceiving that "he who would take orders must subscribe slave," and preferring "a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking bought and begun with servitude and forswearing." For this reason also he had joined in the controversial fray, forsaking poetry for the "cool element of prose," and undertaking tasks wherein, as he himself says, he had the use but of his "left hand." And now for the same reason Milton forged on the strong anvil of his mind a new thunderbolt of freedom. Utterly repellent to his broad spirit was the notion of handing all the wits and thinkers in England over to the tutelage of a body of orthodox gentlemen, who were empowered to stifle the offspring of laborious brains, and to act as mental abortionists. On November 24, 1644, appeared his *Areopagitica*, "A Speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, to the Parliament of England." The book bore the name of no printer or publisher; in defiance of old laws and new, it was unregistered and unlicensed. The title-page bore

* Masson's *Life of Milton*, vol. iii., p. 270.
† Masson, iii., 275.

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four lines from Milton's favorite "Euripides," which he rendered into English as follows:—

> This is true Liberty, when free-born men
> Having to advise the public may speak free,
> Which he who can, and will, deserves high praise,
> Who neither can, nor will, may hold his peace;
> What can be juster in a state than this?

It was a fashion of that time to give Greek names to books. Milton's title was borrowed from an oration of Isocrates, addressed to the Areopagus of Athens.

Professor Masson says he has "sometimes been angry" at the public choice of the *Areopagitica* as the one of Milton's pamphlets "by which to recollect him as an English prose-writer." Yet, if a choice must be made, how could there be a better? It is, as Professor Masson allows, "the most skilful of all Milton's prose-writings, the most equable and sustained, the easiest to be read straight through at once, the fittest to leave one glowing sensation of the power of the author's genius." Certainly it is the *Areopagitica* which most fully justifies Macaulay's eulogy of Milton's prose-writings. "As compositions," he says, "they deserve the attention of every man who wishes to become acquainted with the full power of the English language. They abound with passages compared with which the finest declamations of Burke sink into insignificance. They are a perfect field of cloth of gold. The style is stiff with gorgeous embroidery."*

Milton opens with a handsomely turned compliment to the Parliament. Allowing that the Commonwealth ought to have a vigilant eye on books—of which more anon—he recommends wariness, for "as good almost kill a man as kill a good book." True, no age can restore a life, yet "revolutions of ages do not often recover the loss of a rejected truth." Readers of Mill's *Essay on Liberty* may remember how he elaborates this striking truth.

Next, an appeal is made to history. Licensing was unknown to the ancients, and even Constantine and his successors only condemned books to be burnt after they were "examined, refuted, and condemned in the general councils." According to Milton, this discipline was not more severe than what was formerly in practice; but the voice of history is against him on this point. When he rushes on to the policy of the Popes he reaches firmer ground. The Papacy and the Inquisition were safer objects of attack than the early Church, and Milton baits them mercilessly, laughing at their "purgatory of an index," and mocking their last invention of ordaining that no book should be printed "unless it were approved and licensed under the hands of two or three gluttonous friars." This is followed by a specimen of their *imprimatur*. "Sometimes," says Milton in a rollicking vein, "five imprimaturs are seen together, dialogue wise, in the piazza of one title-page, complimenting and ducking to each other with their shaven reverences, whether the author, who stands by in perplexity at the foot of his epistle, shall to the press or to the sponge."

Knowing his audience, and having a personal inclination that way, Milton quotes from Scripture, dwelling especially on Paul's "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," and "To the pure all things are pure." Knowledge cannot defile unless the will and conscience are defiled already. Besides, good and evil grow up inseparably in the field of this world. Virtue consists in seeing and knowing, and yet abstaining. Ignorance is not innocence. "I cannot praise," he exclaims, "a fugitive and cloistered virtue unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."

Milton then proceeds to examine the alleged mischiefs of free printing and free reading. If the spread of infection be feared, the censorship will have to be very drastic; the Bible itself will have to be removed, "for that ofttimes relates blasphemy not nicely, it describes the carnal sense of wicked men not unelegantly, it brings in holiest men passionately murmuring against Providence through all the arguments of Epicurus"; and for these causes the Bible was put by the Papists in the first rank of prohibited books. Besides, if the English press be gagged, objectionable foreign books will creep in, and these will be read by the learned, who will distil their poison for the illiterate. Learned men must therefore be most closely fenced round, and to do this the licensers must assume "the grace of infallibility." This capital point has also been enforced by Mill. Further, such restraint will lead to "the fall of learning and of all ability in disputation." This is obviously unjust. Why should one man wear a strait waistcoat because another is mad? "If it be true," says Milton, "that a wise man, like a good refiner, can gather gold out of the drossiest volume, and that a fool will be a fool with the best book, yea, or without a book; there is no reason that we should deprive a wise man of any advantage to his wisdom, while we seek to restrain from a fool that which, being restrained, will be no hindrance to his folly."

Why also, Milton asks, should we stop at books? All our surroundings influence us, and to be consistent the State must meddle everywhere.

> "If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we must regulate all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No music must be heard, no song must be set or sung, but what is grave and Doric. There must be licensing dances, that no gestures, motion, or deportment be taught our youth, but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such Plato was provided of. It will task more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, the violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers?"

And so on for a couple of pages. "Reason is but choosing," Milton finely says, and you cannot remove more than a fraction of life's temptations by the most rigid censorship. Besides, virtue consists in motive, and depriving men of all opportunity of evil would not rob them of their evil inclinations. "Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure," says Milton, "he has yet one jewel left; ye cannot bereave him of his covetousness."

As for the "preventing of schism," Milton reminds the Parliament that Christianity itself was once a schism, and the licenser who is "to sit upon the birth or death of books" needs more than human wisdom never to suppress the truth in his prevention of error. Ten to one he will stifle all novelties, and every truth is a novelty at first. "The hide-bound humor which he calls his judgment" will let him pass nothing but "what is vulgarly received already." For this reason Sir Francis Bacon said that "such authorised books are but the language of the times." Licensing treats learned men like children; it is a burden on "the hapless race of men whose misfortune it is to have understanding," and it is also "an undervaluing and vilifying of the whole nation."

Milton beautifully says that truth is like a streaming fountain; "if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition." A man may be a heretic in the truth. How many Protestants, who rely upon their pastors, show as much "implicit faith as any lay papist of Loretto."

> "A wealthy man, addicted to his pleasure and his profits, finds religion to be a traffic so entangled, and of so many piddling accounts, that of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. What should he do? Fain he would have the name to be religious, fain he would bear up with his neighbors in that. What does he, therefore, but resolves to give over toiling, and to find himself out some factor to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; some divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys, into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion; esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is become a dividual movable, and goes and comes near him according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped, and sumptuously laid to sleep; rises, is saluted, and, after the malmsey or some well-spiced bruage, and better breakfasted than He whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem, his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop trading all day without his religion."

This capital passage is one of the few in which Milton displays a sense of humor. The climax is especially shrewd.

Milton has another gird at the Presbyterian divines, and twits them with being blinded by the blaze of Calvin's beacon. "The light which we have gained," he says, "was

* Essay on Milton, *Essays*, vol. i., p. 27.

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given us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge." He protests against "the forced and outward union of cold and neutral and inwardly divided minds," and warns the new tyrants that it is necessary to reform even the reformation itself. After a noble apostrophe to London, then the vital centre of the new freedom, he argues that differences are a good sign of health and vigor, and utters the fine aphorism that "opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making." He is dull-witted who groans over "parties and partitions." "Fool!" exclaims Milton, "he sees not the firm root out of which we all grow, though into branches." England is not decaying, but casting off the old skin of corruption.

> "Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam, purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms."

This magnificent passage is one of the ultimate glories of our literature. Surely the man who wrote it deserves a niche in the sanctuary of every English heart.

The rest of the *Areopagitica* is a direct and noble appeal to the Parliament to abolish the licensing system, to let books enjoy the same freedom as men, to give them liberty, and punish them only when they have sinned. "Liberty is the nurse of all great wits," says Milton. "Give me," he exclaims, "the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." Aye, and "though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worst in a free and open encounter?"

Unfortunately, Milton himself halted in sight of the goal; he hesitated to run the whole course, and fight the good fight to the end. At the very outset he seems to approve the Grecian laws for the suppression of "atheistical and blasphemous" books, and at the conclusion he will not hear of tolerating "popery and open superstition," still less what is "impious" and "against faith." He only pleaded for charity and peace among dissentient Protestants. Great as was his genius, noble as was his nature, he could not absolutely free himself from the prejudices of his age. He showed that the horizon of the very loftiest is bounded. Yet in pleading for such liberty as he thought desirable he was obliged to maintain principles that overshot the mark he aimed at. The full meaning of a great idea cannot be perceived at once. Milton saw deeper than most of his contemporaries, though his vision was still limited; he felt more than they of the spirit of liberty, though it did not animate his whole nature. Sufficient unto the day was the service he performed. Other ages brought other tasks. The time came when other hands hurled the thunderbolts he forged at other barriers to freedom than those he assailed, when his own lightnings were darted to every point of the compass; for at last Liberty, like Wisdom, is justified of *all* her children.

G. W. FOOTE.

## The British Method.

Mr. John Burns has been explaining to some friends, including a *Daily News* writer, the difference between the British and Continental ways of dealing with Socialism. This is what he is reported to have said:—

"If you are a Socialist on the Continent, you find people crying: 'Shoot him down.' In this country they say: 'You want to manage the world, do you? Well, here's a bit of it; try your hand at that.' If he succeeds, they give him a bigger bit, and so on till he is up to his ears in work, and has no time to think about revolutions. Oh, the British people are an artful lot."

"Artful" is John's fun. Really the British method is common sense. Let us have free speech all round, and danger ceases on every side. John Bull never did, and never will, fancy *theories* in politics. He is for moving a step at a time, with one foot always on the ground. Socialists who learn this are able to do a considerable amount of good. They keep on prodding John Bull, and make him take up one practical question after another.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of Executive Meeting held August 11; the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair.

Present:—Messrs. E. Bater, C. Cohen, F. Schaller, C. Watts, W. Heaford, E. W. Quay, C. Quinton, M. Loafer, P. Sabine, W. Leat, J. Neate, B. W. Munton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement read and adopted. The sub-committee's minutes were read and adopted.

Correspondence from Mr. G. J. Warren was read, asking the Executive to send a strong protest to all cemetery authorities against the prohibition of Sunday burials, and it was decided that, the present not being the most favorable time to agitate upon this point, the matter should be again adjourned.

The Excursion Committee reported that, in view of the lateness of the season and other circumstances, it would be inadvisable to arrange for an excursion this year, and it was then proposed that an outdoor excursion should be arranged for the children of members, to take the place of the usual Children's Party. After some discussion, Messrs. M. Loafer, W. Leat, P. Sabine, H. Brown, E. W. Quay, C. Cohen, F. Schaller, and Miss A. Brown were elected as a committee for this purpose, and instructed to arrange for a day's outing by brakes as early as possible in September. Donations towards the Children's Excursion should be sent to the Society's Treasurer, Mr. S. Hartmann, 29 Gubyon-avenue, Herne-hill, S.E., or to the Secretary at 377 Strand, W.C., who will be pleased to forward collecting-cards.

Mr. Cohen reported his attendance at the meetings of the Moral Instruction League.

The President then called the attention of the meeting to a circular issued by friends of Mr. Truelove, and personally moved that the sum of £5 should be voted towards the Fund being raised on behalf of Mr. Edward Truelove, in recognition of his long and constant service to the cause of Freethought. This was seconded by Mr. Charles Watts, and carried unanimously. The meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

## ACID DROPS.

THE Dean of Manchester has been denouncing certain novels and plays (without naming them) which have a tendency to harden the moral sense. People read them, he said, on the ground that they must know what was going on in the world; but they might as well wish to see the Devil. And why not? we ask. The clergy talk a great deal about the Devil, and it would be interesting to interview him and get his opinion of *them*.

There are worse things in the Bible than in any modern novel or play. Why does not the Dean of Manchester look a little nearer home? Let him begin with his own "blessed book." To make it fit for children to read is a hopeless task, but it might be made fit for adults.

According to the *Washington Post*, a census of the whole world's population is to be taken in 1900. We don't quite see how it is to be done. But what a change since old Yahveh, the God of the Jews, slew seventy thousand of them because King David reckoned up the number of his subjects! If a slaughter like that occurred every time the census was taken, a lot of people would emigrate beforehand.

A rumor was spread at Avignon that the synagogue had to be pulled down, and that the Mayor was about to give the Jewish congregation the site of a chapel in order to build a synagogue. A priest wrote to the *Journal du Midi* a letter dealing with the proposed profanation, which fairly bubbled over with Christian charity. The Rev. Jules Bauer the Rabbi of the town, sent to the same paper a reply, in which, in denying the rumor, he said: "Let me express to you my painful surprise at the phraseology used by a priest in speaking of a religion to which he is indebted for his God, his Bible, and the principal articles of his faith."

Canon Barnett writes in the *Sunday Magazine* on "Women in the Light of the Cross." "What," he asks, "is the relation of Christ to this women's question?" But, instead of appealing to the alleged words of Christ in the Gospels for an answer, he repeats the old Christian Evidence statements about the historic influence of Christianity. "It is indisputable," he says, "that Christianity raised the status of women, and that the Christian clergy fought, firstly, against the power of the father to sell his daughter; and, secondly against that of the husband to ill-treat his wife."

Now we rather like that "indisputable." It is a fine way of evading discussion. It also informs the reader, without

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a positive lie on your part, that everybody agrees with you. But everybody does *not* agree with Canon Barnett on this point. Principal Donaldson, who is also a Christian minister, has publicly declared that he used to believe that Christianity had elevated the position of women in Europe, but that on looking into the evidence he found that Christianity had lowered it considerably. Canon Barnett should try to answer Principal Donaldson instead of re-asserting what *is* disputed, and calling it "indisputable."

Professor Mommsen is a great historian, but we regret to notice his Anglophobia. Being interviewed at Vienna by the *Neue Freie Presse*, he said: "I do not believe in the possibility of a union between England and America, and still less in a great alliance uniting the Anglo-Saxons and Germans. The English certainly need allies, because they are threatened by France and Russia; but what European Powers will do Britain's dirty work? My impression is rather that France, Russia, and Germany will combine to divide the British Empire among themselves. France would take Egypt, Germany Cape Colony, and Russia England's Asiatic possessions."

Now we hate war and love peace as much as anybody, but we venture to remind Professor Mommsen and his like that John Bull is not at all likely to take all that lying down. Before you divide the bear's skin you have got to kill the bear, and in this case the job is far from easy. There are millions of British hearts, in and outside the motherland, who would feel in her extremity what George Borrow felt as he stood upon the Rock of Gibraltar. He hoped for England a long and glorious future, but he added: "Or if thy doom be at hand, may that doom be a noble one, and worthy of her who has been styled the Old Queen of the waters! May thou sink, if thou dost sink, amidst blood and flame, with a mighty noise, causing more than one nation to participate in thy downfall!"

There would be blood and fire from one end of the earth to the other if ever old John Bull were forced with his back to the wall. Rivers and seas would be reddened. He might summon armed and drilled hosts from Asia and Africa to fight his European foes. And at the end of the struggle he might possibly stand, breathless and exhausted, but victorious. It would be a terrible business, anyhow, and the reactionary European powers had better think the matter over very carefully before they take the first step.

Besides, it isn't quite certain that Uncle Sam would like to see the British Empire divided up between Russia, France, and Germany. He might prefer to see the Union Jack flying instead of more Eagles. He has an Eagle of his own to fly, you know; and he might take it into his head that he would get along better and more comfortably with the Union Jack.

Uncle Sam is thought to be a practical man, and so he is; but, for a practical man, he has an astonishing lot of sentiment. And it is a lie that interest only rules the world. John Bull has acted like a true friend towards Uncle Sam lately, and Uncle Sam is not the man to forget it. He may have a long memory for wrongs, but he has a long memory for friendship too; and if ever the European Eagles gathered against old John to beat him down and divide him up, it is conceivable that Uncle Sam would let loose his Eagle too if it seemed at all necessary. There are millions of free men in America who know that England, with all her faults, is still a home of freedom in comparison with Russia and Germany, and even France, and their hands would itch if they saw her involved in a life-and-death struggle against awful odds.

But let us hope that Professor Mommsen's dream is *but* a dream, and that the peace of the world will not be so wantonly broken. It is a pity that patriotism should override humanity.

Mr. Walter Wren, who died recently, was a famous and successful "coach" for the Indian Civil Service and other public departments. According to Sir Walter Besant, the mother of one of his pupils once complained that her son did not go to church. "Madame," replied Wren, "my business is to fit your boy for the Indian Civil Service, not for the Kingdom of Heaven."

"The Devil came to me, and I put the purse in my pocket," said Ellen Gittings, an elderly lady, who was charged at the Marylebone Police-court with robbing Miss Mary Picton. It is all very well to make this sort of allegation against the Devil, but we suggest that his Satanic Majesty ought to be allowed to make a denial in court, like the gentlemen who contradict Mr. Hooley's assertions in the Court of Bankruptcy.

Professor Sayce, who is also a clergyman, does his best to minimise the heterodox results of Biblical criticism. Even the *Daily News* is obliged to reprove him in reviewing his new work on the *Early History of the Hebrews*. His attacks, it says, on German professors are "ill-mannered and unfair," and he "differs from the men he attacks in being at once less candid and less thorough."

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have set aside a portion of the money realised by the sale of Addington Park for the provision of a suitable residence for the Archbishop of Canterbury, within the precincts of Canterbury Cathedral. The new building is to be quite a palace. "Blessed be ye poor."

It is usually assumed that the clergy are educated men. For some years past *Lloyd's Newspaper* has had a weekly sermon from the pens of a large number of prominent sky-pilots. For poverty of ideas and general imbecility it would be difficult to match them even from the dustbins of departed ignorance. After reading these precious effusions one can understand Tennyson's terrible sarcasm when he said: "The general English view of God is as of an immeasurable clergyman."

Tolstoi's views on marriage do not seem to be spreading in the Church of England. Dr. Johnson, who has been twenty-two years Metropolitan of India, and is now turned seventy, is about to marry Miss Grace Murray, daughter of the Receiver of St. Paul's.

Christian missionaries compare badly with Mohammedan missionaries, at least in the opinion of the *Lagos Weekly Record*. Money and church building are the Christian missionary's leading object, and "his report is never complete unless it contains some reference to *contributions*." One soul-saver, who "intends building a large church," calls upon all the two thousand people in the district to pay a shilling a quarter until the work is finished. On the other hand, the Mohammedan missionary makes no fuss and asks for no gifts. He lives in an ordinary native thatch house, and his mosque is an open shed sprinkled with sand. Yet he catches ten times as many natives as his Christian rival.

Is this a Christian country? The Rev. Arthur Perowne wants to know. He is staggered by the fact that the great railway companies have come to an agreement not to issue cheap tickets to persons attending religious gatherings. But is it not just possible that the railway companies have a reason for this policy? Perhaps they suspect that the religious gentlemen who got hold of the cheap tickets would combine serving the Lord with doing a little business "on their own."

The Rev. Marmaduke Hare, rector of Bow, has disappeared. "Private money troubles" are said to be the cause. "It is a curious fact," the *Bethnal Green News* observes, "that Mr. Hare's predecessor left the parish under peculiar circumstances, while the extraordinary resignation of the Rev. J. H. Scott, late rector of Spitalfields, will be fresh in the public mind. East London is unfortunate with some of its rectors."

Holy Russia is a paradise for priests, but a hell for those who want to think for themselves. Just look at the following Article (196) from the Russian code:—"Any person legally convicted of propagating, or attempting to propagate, heresy among orthodox believers, or of establishing, or attempting to establish, a new creed or sect to the injury of the Orthodox Faith, shall be liable to the deprivation of all civil rights and to perpetual deportation. If the convicted sectarian reside in European Russia, he shall be deported to Transcaucasia; if he be living in any of the Caucasian or Transcaucasian Governments, he shall be transported to Siberia; and if he be resident in Siberia, he shall be banished to one of the most remote settlements of that country."

Deprivation of civil rights means that the offender has henceforth no redress for any wrong, and no legal protection against any enemy. He may be abused, robbed, or even murdered, with impunity.

Under this infamous Article prosecutions are being carried on by the Holy Synod against the unfortunate Stundists, a harmless body of Nonconformists who want to worship God in their own way. Seven of them were tried recently at Trubtschevsk, the case being heard with closed doors. The crime alleged against them was "proselytism." All were sentenced to the deprivation of civil rights and deportation to Transcaucasia. Their wives and children have asked for permission to accompany them, but this may not be granted. Thus the poor wretches are robbed of everything that makes life valuable, and all because they spoke to their neighbors about the merits of their own opinions!

How nice this reads from Manila! "The bulk of the priests, officials, and military monopolise the food supplies,

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while a quarter of a million of the population are starving." Priests will have grub while there is any going.

"The idle monks," the *Daily News* says, "have eaten the heart out of the Philippines." Happily there is now a chance of these drones being expelled.

"Providence" has been very impish in Austria. After a spell of intense heat there came a fall of the thermometer, with snow and hailstorm, and the temperature at freezing point, in the month of August! Immense damage was done to vineyards, orchards, and corn crops.

Fearful hurricanes have raged in Poland. Houses had their roofs blown off, bridges were destroyed, and trees uprooted, much of the harvest was rendered worthless, and many persons were killed. "He doeth all things well."

The heat wave in the south of England has been very trying, and several men and women have succumbed to its influence. The Greenwich thermometer actually registered 142·9 degrees in the sun. It is a wonder that Prophet Baxter did not get out a new edition of his end-of-the-world prediction. We have been pretty near the temperature of the final conflagration.

Rev. Dr. Welldon's appointment to the Bishopric of Calcutta recalls the appointment of another famous headmaster. Dr. G. E. Cotton, of Rugby, was made Bishop of Calcutta in 1858. In October, 1866, he consecrated a cemetery at Kushtin. Returning to the steamer in the evening, he slipped on a platform of rough planks, and fell into the Ganges. He was carried away by the strong undercurrent and never seen again. When he consecrated the cemetery he was a supernatural personage; when he fell into the Ganges he was a common mortal.

Richard Davis, aged seventeen, a colored page boy, came over to London from Jamaica, and, being destitute, he knelt down and prayed on the pavement in Lavender-gardens, Clapham Junction. The Lord did not send him anything, but a policeman came along and took him into custody, and he was charged before the magistrate with wandering about without visible means of subsistence. The *invisible* means didn't count.

Rev. J. W. Nixon, vicar of Roberttown, has been preaching about the New Woman. He doesn't like her. She rides bicycles like a man, plays cricket like a man, and wants to preach like a man—which really shows her bad taste. Mr. Nixon scorns the idea of attracting congregations by "placing brazen-faced women in the pulpit," which should be reserved, we suppose, for brazen-faced men. The reverend gentleman reminds the fair sex that "The woman is of the man, and derives her authority from the man," and that "Her attitude should be one of trust, and dependence and humility, and modesty." Evidently he never had his mother-in-law in the house for a fortnight.

Archbishop Walsh has subscribed £25 to the Wolfe Tone Memorial. A correspondent of the *Times* gives some extracts from Tone's diary, showing that he was not fond of priests. "The Catholic clergy," he wrote on July 18, 1792, "have almost totally lost their influence since the people have got arms so fatal to superstition and priestcraft is even the smallest degree of liberty." On August 1 he writes: "Damn all bishops." On Sunday, August 19, he writes: "Go to mass; foolish enough; too much trumpery." Wolfe Tone clearly did not belong to the school of Archbishop Walsh.

"Dred" in *Daylight* (Norwich) flagellates the Yarmouth magistrates who are upholding Sabbatarianism at the expense of honest citizens who earn a part of their living on "the Lord's Day." Mr. De Caux and others seem to have made a gallant fight for freedom, but they have been overborne by the overwhelming number of bigots.

Murderers die piously in America, just as they do in England. Martin Thorn murdered William Guldensuppe. He and a woman enticed the victim to an unoccupied house, killed him, cut off his head, and threw the body into the East river, New York. For this exploit Thorn was electrocuted at Sing Sing prison. His last hours were spent in pious meditation and prayer. He wasn't fit for earth, but he felt quite fit for heaven.

Colonel Ingersoll was not allowed to deliver an oration in the Temple of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Chicago. The uncommonly good people swore it would be a profanation. It was no profanation, however, to have a debt of more than a million dollars on the building. The Union is unable to pay this sum, and the Temple will probably be lost. Ingersoll may lecture in it after all.

The American religious journals claim that the victories of the Yankee admirals are really due to prayer. This leads Mr. W. H. Burr to send a pat story to the *Boston Investigator*. It is as follows: "Grant Thorburn, a Scotch Presbyterian, was notorious for traducing and libelling Thomas Paine, after whose death he had to make an humble retraction of a libel against Mme. Bonneville, Paine's legatee. Thorburn visited Scotland. On the return voyage a mutiny occurred. The captain called on the passengers for help to quell it. Thorburn was a very little man. He turned to a burly Scotchman, and said: 'You go below and help the captain while I go into the cabin and pray.' The mutiny was quelled, and on the arrival of the ship at New York it was announced that the honor of quelling it was due to Grant Thorburn."

Ballington Booth, who broke away from his father, the "General," and set up a rival body, the Volunteers of America, doesn't mean to lay himself open to the suspicion of having any sympathy with the original organisation, so he is going to discard uniform and give up drums. For his own sake, however, he should stick to the drums. Revivalism can't get on without a good noise, and the drum is its indispensable basis. Give up the drums, Ballington, and you'll have to apply to the old man for a job in the old concern. What is worse, you'll have to eat the fatted calf.

Professor Ludwig Vincenzi has made the "alarming" discovery that holy water is often a cause of infection. He has found a large quantity of bacteria in the holy water submitted to him for examination. The diphtheria bacillus was particularly vigorous. Many worshippers are in the habit of placing their fingers on their lips after immersion, and thus run the risk of being poisoned in the worst possible way. We suppose it would be too ghastly a sarcasm to have the holy water disinfected.

The ministers and messengers of the churches in the Particular Baptist Association, Monmouthshire, have published a Letter to the churches they represent. These gentlemen see that bagging the children is the surest way to success. "Bring before your children," they say, "as much Baptist literature as you can; enforce upon them what we profess to believe." That's the style. Force it on them. Ram it down their throats. Manufacture little Baptists. Catch them young, and make them believe before they can think. Of course it is rough on the children, but it makes life easier for the Baptist ministers.

Mr. Harrison Weir, in the *Standard*, gives a recipe for the cock-crowing nuisance. He proposes a kind of wire muzzle, large enough to let the bird feed and drink, but small enough to prevent him from opening his beak to crow. Peter would have given a trifle for such a muzzle when that old rooster opened fire upon him outside the Jerusalem police-court.

## A FRENCH PRIEST RESIGNS.

Maurice Perrin, Catholic priest, and vicar of Bourg-de-Péage, Drôme, has sent his resignation to the Bishop of Valence, with the following letter, which we translate for the benefit of our readers:—

"For a long time I have ceased to believe the Catholic faith. I am absolutely convinced that most of the dogmas taught by the Church are mere human inventions, superstitions born of the ignorance of past centuries, and consequently unworthy of human reason and of an enlightened and unprejudiced intelligence. To teach what one does not believe, to present to the public ideas and doctrines which one rejects inwardly—what torture, sir, what anguish, for a man of any feeling who is obliged to undergo such a martyrdom! That torture and martyrdom were mine, and it is in order to endure them no longer that from this day I throw off my frock, that I return entirely to civil life, and that I begin to live in harmony with principles that are diametrically opposed to those of the Romish Church.

"Certainly my conscience had to speak loud and strong before I could summon courage to take this decisive step. The fear of throwing desolation into the heart of my good parents held me back for a long time. I also recognised that the public—at least a certain public, burning with sacerdotal zeal—would cover me with curses, maledictions, and all the anathemas of which it has such a rich abundance.

"All that I can say to this public is that, in acting as I have done, I have a perfectly clear conscience, which is in no wise disturbed by all those thunders which are now quite impotent.

"Consequently I have the honor to tell you, and to emphasize the statement, sir, that I tear myself freely and voluntarily away from the clerical and sacerdotal yoke, and that I consider myself entirely liberated from all the iniquitous and musty obligations which the Church once imposed on my youthful ignorance and inexperience."

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, August 21, Finsbury Park; 28, Victoria Park and Athenæum Hall.

September 4, Athenæum Hall; 11, Athenæum Hall; 18, Birmingham; 25, Liverpool.

October 2, Glasgow.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 21, Finsbury Park; e., Secular Hall, Camberwell; 28, Victoria Park. September 4, Victoria Park.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

J. G. BARTRAM.—We hope the Newcastle, South Shields, and Stanley friends will have a good time at Durham. We should like to be with them, but it cannot be.

R. P. EDWARDS, supported by a few friends, informs us that he intends to give a few Freethought lectures at Hampstead Heath. If the experiment succeeds, other lecturers will be invited. Freethinkers in the locality will please note.

JOHN ROSS.—Don't be discouraged. It is an "apathetic" time of the year.

ISAAC JACKSON (Delhi), applying for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, and sending his subscription for the first three years, writes: "I must congratulate you on the successful termination of your labors in connection with the inauguration of the new Society, and hope that you will be zealously supported by all true friends of the cause. There will, of course, be cavillers in every public movement, and there is no reason why ours should be an exception. You are fortunately above being affected by such trifles, but should you ever happen to feel that your equanimity is being disturbed, it will be comforting to remember that you have friends out here who have the utmost confidence in your leadership."

H. SEAL.—We would gladly have answered by letter, but we reply here as you request. Members of the Secular Society, Limited, will not have to attend any Board meetings. Only the Directors will have to do that. Members elect the Directors at the annual General Meeting, and also vote on all business submitted to that General Meeting, or to any special General Meeting that may be summoned. Members have no other duties or responsibilities under the Society's Articles; and their liability, in case the Society should ever be wound up, is limited to a maximum of £1, which cannot be exceeded under any circumstances whatever.

J. JONES (Monmouth).—Have we your name rightly? Is it "J." or "T."? Pleased to know you are joining the incorporated Society, and glad to have your favorable opinion and good wishes.

G. CROOKSON.—It is a very old story, and appeared in our columns years ago. What do you mean by our "ignoring" whatever comes from Barnsley? We do nothing of the kind. It is quite a mistake to suppose that we entertain any ill-feeling.

F. BOORMAN.—Thanks for the Chatham list of subscriptions to the Wheeler Fund, which are acknowledged in detail in another column.

T. J. THURLOW, whose letter appears in another column, joins the Secular Society, Limited. The word "share" in his application induces us to repeat that the Society has no share capital. Its resources will be derived from members' subscriptions, donations, and legacies.

L. MARTIN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

E. O. GREENING.—We should have been happy to insert the notice of the Co-operative Flower Show at the Crystal Palace if it had reached us earlier. It would be useless in this week's *Freethinker*, as you will see by the dates.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—E. Lawson, 10s.; D. R. Sweetland, 5s.; C. Shepherd, 1s.

H. PERCY WARD.—In our next.

H. R. KNIGHT.—Is your complaint quite reasonable? It is impossible to guarantee that all the addresses printed in the Secular Almanack will be accurate nearly twelve months afterwards. We have notified many changes of address in our Correspondence column.

F. RICHARDSON.—Lewes's *History of Philosophy* is an excellent book. We believe it is out of print. Good second-hand copies, in two volumes, fetch about £1.

C. E. SMITH.—Many thanks. Your enclosures are much appreciated.

W. P. BALL.—We are obliged for your weekly batch of useful cuttings.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Public Opinion—Ethical World—Open Court—New Century—Sydney Bulletin—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—People's Newspaper—Workers' Republic—Liberator—Invention—Daylight—Crescent—Independent Pulpit.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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.

OWING to the remarkably warm weather, it has been deemed advisable to postpone the re-opening of the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, for Sunday evening lectures until August 28, when the platform will be occupied by Mr. Foote. London friends will please note.

It was not wet on Sunday, but a perfect blazer, and both the Freethought demonstrations came off in London as announced, Mr. Wilson kindly supplying a brake and horses on each occasion. The morning meeting was held on Clerkenwell-green. Mr. Forder acted as chairman, and the speakers were Messrs. H. Snell, A. B. Moss, Charles Watts, and G. W. Foote. Of course there was a very large crowd of listeners, and the speakers were much applauded. Miss Vance and other ladies took up a collection for the N. S. S. Some distance off the Secular gathering was another one of Christians. Imitation is the sincerest flattery, and the Christian Evidence people were there with a brake, surmounted by a big red banner, perhaps by way of suggesting the Blood of Christ. Half the Christian Evidence lecturers in London were collected upon it, including one old gentleman who screamed like a passionate lunatic, his shrill accents pervading the whole neighborhood. On the whole it was a lively morning on Clerkenwell-green. A report appeared in Monday's *Chronicle*.

Judging by a suggestive line in the *Chronicle's* report, and by occasional words that reached our own ears, the policy of the Christian speakers was one of reckless lies and slander. Christian Evidence work generally finds a man a blackguard or leaves him so. To answer such fellows is to pay them too much honor. They have no idea of reasoning; their whole stock-in-trade consists of personalities; and to reply to them is to descend to their level.

The afternoon Freethought demonstration was held in Regent's Park, and the Secular platform (Mr. Wilson's brake) was surrounded by an immense crowd. After a while the Christian Evidence lot arrived in their brake, which they drove as close as possible to the Secular platform. Their object was not so much to hold a meeting of their own as to spoil the meeting of their opponents. And then they talk like the hypocrites they are about "love your enemies," and all the rest of the verbiage of the Sermon on the Mount.

Fortunately a Park constable happened to be on the spot. He saw through the Christian little game, and he spoiled it by ordering the "Evidence" van to shift. He moved the "charity" lot a hundred yards away, where they were free to lie and libel, but not to disturb the peace.

Mr. A. B. Moss acted as chairman at the Freethought Demonstration, opening the proceedings with a brief, forcible speech. Mr. Heaford followed in his best vein. One interrupter gave him a good opportunity, which he made the most of. "I was once a Christian myself," Mr. Heaford said. "When?" growled a known Christian Evidence man. "When was I a Christian?" said Mr. Heaford; "why, when I was young and foolish." At which quick repartee there was loud and long laughter all round. Mr. Cohen came next. He also was in his best vein, and the crowd grew during his happy and effective speech. Then came Mr. Watts with a twenty minutes' oration that was very warmly applauded. Mr. Foote wound up with a speech of about the same length. The crowd which was big when he commenced grew larger and larger as he proceeded, and the sea of upturned faces was a fine sight from the platform. The meeting lasted an hour and a half, and the Secular brake drove away amidst cheers and the waving of hats and handkerchiefs.

These demonstrations will do a lot of good, and we must have more of them next summer. One will take place this afternoon (August 21) in Finsbury Park. The position will be just above the bandstand, and the speaking will begin at 3.30. The speakers will be Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Cohen.

This evening, Sunday, August 21, Mr. Charles Watts reopens the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell, when he will lecture upon "Religion: Is it a Blessing or a Curse?" Mr. Watts gives his services upon this occasion, the proceeds going to the funds of the local Branch.

A meeting has been held at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, in aid of American soldiers' and sailors' families. Lieutenant Hobson, who sank the *Merrimac* in Santiago harbor, was announced to take the chair, and Colonel Ingersoll to deliver an oration. Bishop Potter and Archbishop Corrigan were among the other speakers on the program. We wonder what they thought of "Pagan Bob's"

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oratory, and how they relished the applause he was sure to receive.

Freethinkers in Bristol and Reading, who are willing to assist in the work of Secular reorganisation in those places, are requested to communicate with the N. S. S. secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C.

The New York *Truthseeker* will be twenty-five years old next month. We hope it will live another twenty-five anyhow, and that Eugene Macdonald (we don't forget George either) will edit it all the time.

We see by the *Truthseeker* that the widow of its founder, Mr. D. M. Bennett, died on July 31, in the seventy-sixth year of her age. She stood nobly by her husband during his trial and imprisonment. Her last days were spent in Eugene Macdonald's house. "She and I," wrote Mr. Bennett from behind his prison bars, "have lived by ourselves. We have no children, and no other members of our family. She misses me sadly, and mourns over my wrongs. I have been her support, her sunlight, her all, and she has been mine." Another illustration of the horrible character of "infidel homes."

The *Liberator* (Melbourne) reprints Mr. Gould's article on "A Finger Nail Legend" from our columns. Mr. Symes pitches into Ben Tillett for his laudation of Jesus Christ. He says that he invited Tillett to meet him in public debate, but Tillett declined on the ground that he was not a debater. Probably he meant that Joseph Symes was too many for him.

The *People's Newspaper*, Rockhampton, Queensland, reproduces the conclusion of Mr. Foote's essay on "The Doom of Christian Spain." Mr. Wallace Nelson is connected with the *P. N.*, which is a bright journal, conducted on moderate Socialist lines.

The Free Press Defence Committee held a meeting on Monday evening in the French Salon of the St. James's Hall, and a resolution *re* the Bedborough prosecution was carried unanimously. Mr. Peddie occupied the chair in the absence of Mr. Frank Harris, of the *Saturday Review*, who was unfortunately down with influenza and bronchitis. Mr. William Platt, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Foote, and others, spoke to the resolution. It was generally agreed that the ordinary press gave inadequate attention to this attack upon the right of free publication. Perhaps an alteration for the better will take place before Mr. Bedborough's trial in September.

The National Secular Society's Executive has decided to have a brake excursion on a Saturday early in September for the children, and a sub-committee has been appointed to look after the details. Of course the children will go *free*, and provision will be made for their solid and fluid wants. This will involve an expenditure of about £20 for say 200 children, and subscriptions towards it are earnestly invited. It would be easy enough to include 300 children if the necessary funds were forthcoming. Those who intend to give should forward their contributions as quickly as possible, either to Miss Vance, N. S. S. office, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C., or to the editor of the *Freethinker*.

The Newcastle Branch joins the Shields and Stanley Branches to-day (August 21) in an excursion to Durham. The Newcastle brakes start from the Monument at 9 a.m. The tickets are 2s. 6d. each.

*Secular Thought* (Toronto) reproduces Mr. Foote's article on "The Doom of Christian Spain." Editor Ellis seems to be considering the advisability of turning his paper into a monthly, though he will "maintain the weekly issue while it is possible." We hope it *will* be possible; we know it *should* be possible.

The French Federation of Freethinkers organised the usual August demonstration at the statue of Etienne Dolet on the Place Maubert, near the spot where that great scholar and humanist was burnt alive by the Holy Catholic Church. The Prefect of Police, M. Blanc, made elaborate arrangements for the preservation of "order." The demonstrators had to visit the statue group by group, and all speeches were prohibited. Some persons cried out "Vive Rochefort!" and others replied, "Vive Zola!" Whereupon the guardians of the peace fell upon the demonstrators and arrested about thirty of them. Subsequently the various groups assembled in a large hall, where several speeches were delivered.

One of the emblems carried by the demonstrators was this—"To combat an error is to affirm a truth. To Etienne Dolet, burnt by the priests!" Several satirical emblems were seized by the police. Paris has retrograded in the matter of liberty since 1889, but we are glad to see that the Freethinkers do not mean to be suppressed by the Church-and-Army reactionists.

## LAST MOMENTS.

(By the late J. M. Wheeler.)

Nothing could well be more absurd than to judge a man's life by his manner of leaving it. So much depends upon the nature of the causes which occasion death. When nature is exhausted, the body and mind enfeebled by disease, perhaps racked by physical suffering and distracted by anxiety as to loved ones left behind, it is scarcely the time to judge of the character or conduct of a life. Such a method is as unsafe as it is unfair. Yet there are ministers of religion and others who delight in drawing contrasts between the peaceful death-beds of believers and the agonies of sceptics. The goody-goody press teems with the edifying death-bed triumphs of eminent Christians, from Joseph Addison, who (perhaps after a bracing draught of his favorite brandy) sent for his nephew, Earl Warwick, to see how a Christian could die, to the much-belauded Prince Consort, who left her Majesty to the tender care of late Mr. Brown after singing "The Rock of Ages." Yet the biggest scoundrels have died as calmly as the most pious Christians. Monsieur Louis Dominique Cartouche, who, as the pious stories go, began life by stealing a pin and became a prince of robbers, endured the torture with the utmost firmness. In the good old days, when executions were as plentiful as blackberries, it was as common for highwaymen to "die game" as it is now for negro murderers to be "jerked to Jesus" after devoutly singing a hymn. Pious Dr. Johnson, with all his bigotry, was one of the best-hearted men that ever breathed, yet his dread of death was extreme. Indeed, it might almost be said that the more savage men are the less sensitive are they to death, as well as to physical pain. The firmness with which an American Indian will endure torture is almost incredible. Some instances there are of civilised natures able to rise superior to the most excruciating pains. Balthasar Gerard, the assassin of William of Orange, bore the most horrible tortures not only with bravery, but bravado. Giles Dorey, accused by the Salem Puritans of witchcraft, allowed himself to be slowly crushed to death without uttering one cry. So far from Infidel death-beds being especially horrible, the collection of instances published by Mr. Foote affords proof that the end of eminent Freethinkers has usually been as philosophic as their lives.

Of these some are intensely absorbing, as of the martyrs Bruno, Vanini, and poor Thomas Woolston. The execution of Danton, the death-bed of Mirabeau, the tragic ends of Condorcet and Shelley, are of so thrilling a description that, once read, they are never forgotten. Others, as with Goethe, Byron, Spinoza, Buckle, Clifford, Hobbes, Owen, Mill, etc., take their interest from the men and their work. In some cases an interest attaches from an attempt made at their conversion, as with Diderot and Hugo, or from misrepresentation made by the orthodox, as with Littré, Paine, Voltaire, and Gambetta. Some, like Harriet Martineau, R. Cooper, H. Hetherington, and Austin Holyoake, have secured themselves from this by making a profession of faith when approaching their last moments.

The terrors of death have been much enhanced by the superstitions surrounding it, and by the practice of giving over the dying man to the hands of a ghostly confessor and comforter—a practice which Jean Paul Richter compares to the evacuations demanded from a child ere he is allowed to go to sleep. "Are you not afraid to meet your God?" was once demanded of a desperate sinner *in extremis*. The sinner did not exactly say, with Omar Khayyam, "He's a good fellow, and 'twill all be well," but he had heard of easy methods of propitiation, and replied: "No, I am not afraid of God; it's the other fellow I'm afraid of." This anecdote may be apocryphal, but the following one has the authority of Larousse's *Grand Dictionnaire Universel*. When dying, the Abbé Terrasson saw his confessor enter his room, and said: "Here is my housekeeper, Madame Luquet. I forget things; confess her. *C'est absolument la même chose.*" The confessor, seeing himself mocked, insisted on the abbé answering for himself. "*Avez-vous été luxurieux?*" asked he. "Madame Luquet, *ai-je été luxurieux?*" said the dying man. "*Un peu,*" replied she. "*Un peu,*" repeated the abbé; and the confessor abruptly departed, leaving the abbé to die, as he had lived, impenitent.

Boureau Deslandes, in his *Réflexions sur les grands Hommes qui sont mort en Plaisantant*, relates many curious stories, and, among others, one from Brantome, of Mdlle. Limeuil,

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maid of honor to Catherine de Medicis. When the moment of her death drew nigh she called for her manservant, named Julien, who played excellently upon the violin. "Julien," she said, "take your violin and play constantly, till you see I am dead, 'The Defeat of the Swiss.'" This he did, she accompanying him till she came to the words "All is lost," which, after repeating twice, she turned to those about, "All is lost at this push in good earnest," and so expired.

When Malherbe lay dying, his confessor represented to him the felicities of a future state in the customary low and trite commonplaces. "Hold your tongue," the dying critic interrupted; "your wretched style only makes me out of conceit with them." Scarron told his friends, when weeping around him: "Ah, my good comrades, you will never cry half so much for me as I have made you laugh."

A very good story is told of a Freethinker who had been jockeyed out of some property which he expected from a wealthy relative, and which at the last moment had been secured by two priests for the Church. Upon his own death-bed he sent for the same rapacious pair. As soon as they arrived, expectant of further favors from the family, he bade them sit down, one on either side of the bed, and took no further notice of them. Upon their pestering him as to what he had to communicate, he answered: "Nothing; I simply sent for you that I might die like Jesus—between two thieves."

An incorrigible punster, who was told that in heaven he might wear a diadem, replied he did not want to *die a dem* bit. This deplorably bad pun so disgusted the parson and the doctor that they left, and the sick man recovered. Another dreadful example was the Freethinker who at his death-bed absolutely prohibited the approach of any of his sceptical friends, but who said they might send as many sky-pilots as they could find. His malady was contagious.

Some deaths among the ancients are remembered as being peculiarly appropriate. Thus Anacreon choked himself with a grape-stone. Petronius opened his veins and bled himself to death, amusing himself until nature was exhausted by listening to love verses, jocular stories, and laughable epigrams. T. Pomponius Atticus, in his seventy-seventh year, when he found himself attacked by an incurable illness, called his friends around and asked them if they could show any reason why he should not die, as he chose to do, by voluntary starvation. Lucretius was alleged to have died by his own hand, but the story is not without suspicion of having been concocted by some enemy of the Epicureans, as it first appears in the Eusebian chronicle. Epicurus himself is stated to have been afflicted with severe sufferings, aggravated by stone in the bladder. Yet from Diogenes Laertius we learn that he bore his sufferings with a truly philosophical patience, cheerfulness, and courage, and passed away in peace.

King Darius is said to have commanded, as he was expiring, that the following words should be inscribed on his tomb: "I could drink much wine and be sober." Probably that was a famous qualification in his day. Far different is the epitaph ascribed to Cyrus. "O, man! whatsoever thou art, and whencesoever thou comest, thou wilt come to the same condition in which I now am. I am Cyrus, who brought the empire to the Persians; do not envy me, I beseech thee, this little piece of ground which covereth my body." Similarly the Emperor Septimus Severus placed this inscription on his urn: "Thou soon wilt be the habitation of a man the world was too narrow for."

Sydney Smith says: "It seems necessary that great people should die with some sonorous and quotable saying." Mr. Pitt said something not intelligible in his last moments. G. Rose made it out to be: "Save my country, heaven!" The nurse, on being interrogated, said that he asked for barley water. Mr. Foote, in his *Infidel Death-Beds*, has, of course, alluded to Goethe's cry for "More light!" upon which so much has been written. The meaning, of course, was purely physical. Still more absurd is the exclamation of Kant's biographer upon Kant's last phrase, "It is enough." "Mighty and symbolic words!" They probably alluded to the attentions he was receiving.

If the last words of eminent men are often invested with a significance they do not possess, there are no doubt instances of striking expressions having been used at the lightening before death. "Draw the curtain, the farce is played," is credibly ascribed to Rabelais, whose confessor declared that he died drunk. Ignatius Loyola died with the word of his society, "Jesus," on his lips. Edmund Kean's last words on the stage were: "Othello's occupation's gone—I am dying, speak to them for me." Judge Talford died on the bench while remarking that the chief thing required in English society was sympathy 'tween class and class. Muhammed died declaring: "I come among my fellow laborers on high." Scott's oft-recited last words of Marmion were taken from an actual incident in Scottish history. The words of Latimer at the stake, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man: we shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England as shall never be put out," are a part of English history, and will be remembered as long as the Church of Rome endures.

There are many instances, also, of the ruling passion strong in death, from the gaming pedestrian who offered, when an angel, to fly the parson for fifty pounds a side, to Napoleon Buonaparte, whose last words were "*tête d'armée*." Bentham died like a true Utilitarian. He said to a favorite disciple: "I now feel that I am dying; our care must be taken to minimise the pain. Do not let any one of the servants come into the room, and keep away the youths; it will be distressing to them, and they can be of no service. Yet I must not be alone; you will remain with me, and you only, and then we shall have reduced the pain to the lowest possible amount." When the end came, he died imperceptibly without struggle or suffering. Life faded into death as twilight blended day with night.

"Give Dayrolles a chair" were the last words of Lord Chesterfield. Even more urbane was the merry monarch, Charles II., who thought not of his many sins, but apologised to his attendants for the trouble he was causing. He confessed he had been a most unconscionable time in dying, and hoped they would excuse him.

Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, made observations on his pulse almost until it ceased to beat. Bayle, the sceptic, died in harness. So much did he despise life that he would not be persuaded to take anything that might assuage the heat of a slow fever that long had preyed on him. He spent the great part of the night that he died correcting what he had written against Le Clerc, and, just as he had finished his correction, he expired. Petrarch was found dead in his study with his head reclining on a book, as was his wont when studying. William Blake, in the hour of death, lay chanting songs, the music and the verse rippling impromptu from him. He regretted he could not commit those inspirations, as he called them, to paper. "Kate," he said to the faithful wife who consecrated her life to aiding his genius, "I am a changing man—I always rose and wrote down my thoughts, whether it rained, snowed, or shone, and you arose, too, and sat beside me—this can be no longer." Cunningham, in his *Lives of the Painters*, says that his wife, who sat watching him, did not perceive when he ceased breathing.

Haydn, just before death, played his famous "Hymn to the Emperor." Most striking of all were the last moments of Mozart. Calling his friends around him, with them he sung his grand "Requiem." "Did I not tell you it would be my dirge," said the dying musician, and so passed away in melody.

The Chevalier Bayard, when mortally wounded, ordered that he should be laid down with his face to the enemy, saying: "Having never yet turned back to a foe, I will not begin on the last day of my life." When Sir Charles James Napier lay dying, Mr. McMurdo, his son-in-law, seized the shattered, shot-torn fragments of the colors of the 22nd, and waved them over the expiring warrior. A grim smile of satisfaction crossed his face, and so he passed away.

Dying in public has no doubt tended to bring out self-consciousness. John Barnveld, the Dutch statesman, falsely accused of a design to betray Holland to the King of Spain, spoke with dignity before his execution: "I am no traitor. I have administered with justice, and as a good patriot I die." Sir Thomas More was serene until the last. Seeing the scaffold totter, he is reported to have said: "I pray you, Mr. Lieutenant, see me safe up. As for my coming down, I will shift for myself." Stephen Dolet, burnt as an Atheist in 1546, is said to have been heedless of the confessor, and to have joked until the last. To him is attributed the pun, "*Non Dolet ipse Dolet, sed pia turba dolet* (Dolet does not grieve, but the pious crowd grieves)." Lucilio Vanini, also burnt as an Atheist (1619), reminded his executioners that their savior died in despair, while he

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died undaunted. Had Boureau-Deslandes, who relates these and other stories, lived until after the French Revolution, he might have added many other instances. The Girondists went to the guillotine singing—

"Contre nous de la tyrannie,
Le *couteau* sanglant est levé."

André Chenier is said to have recited the first scene of Racine's *Andromaque* on the road to the guillotine with his friend Roucher. "You tremble," said someone to the aged Bailley as he ascended the fatal steps (Nov. 11, 1793). "'Tis with the cold," he replied. The apostrophe of Madame Roland to the statue of Liberty, erected for a *fête* near the scene of execution, is known by all.

## A NEW RELIGION.

After supper three of us—the squatter, his wife, and I—took seats on the doorstep and lighted our corn-cob pipes. Pretty soon the wife observed: "Stranger, Jed and me hev been sorter talkin' it over sence you happened along, and Jed says him will abide by what you say."

"Well, what is it?"

"Hev you got any partickler religion?"

"Well, no."

"But the Methodist is purty good, ain't it?"

"I think it is."

"And the Baptist ain't got no pizen in it?"

"No, indeed."

"And them Presbyterians and United Brethren, they do manage to get into heaven, don't yo' reckon?"

"Yes, I reckon they do."

"And them Universalists stand a fair show, don't they?"

"I always thought so."

"Wall, now, to come to the pint. My Jed is sort of sliding along to'rds the Mormon religun, while I can't abear it. He'un says it's right, but I say it's wrong. What's yo'r opinyon 'bout it?"

"Does the kind you mean permit a man to have more than one wife?" I asked of Jed.

"She do," he answered. "I'm sorter reckonin' on 'bout five on 'em if I go. In course the ole woman will be fust, though she's got to prance around when I talk."

"Did you ever hear of the O.K. religion?" I asked of the wife.

"Never did, sah. Whar is it at?"

"It's coming down through this part of the country in a few weeks. It permits every woman to have six husbands, and in case she's married she needn't keep her old husband at all."

The woman sprang up and ran down to the road and began to look up and down. Jed smoked away in a vigorous manner for a minute, and then called out to her: "What yo' lookin' fur, Sary?"

"For that O.K. religun. I want 'em to put me down fur heaps o' the religun, and from five to eight husbands."

"Yo' cum back yere. What ar' yo' astrivin' fur? Hain't I concluded to calkerlate that I doan' want any o' that Mormon religion?"

"Jed, are the Baptist religion good nuff?"

"Reckon she are."

"The Baptist religion and one wife?"

"Yes."

"Then I'll sot down and finish my pipe, and I consider to believe that we won't hev no trouble in this yere family."

Next morning, when I rode away, Jed walked beside my horse for half a mile, and at parting he said: "Stranger, if yo' should happen to meet with the chap who is interducin' that O.K. religun in these parts, jest tell him whar I live, and that we doan't want a blamed bit of it around our squat."

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"No, I can't subscribe," said the millionaire; "I don't believe in sending out foreign missionaries." "But the Scriptures command us to feed the hungry." The man of wealth shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I'd feed them on something cheaper than missionaries," he rejoined, with the brusquerie that characterises his class.

## ATHEISM IN KID GLOVES.

Professor Huxley conferred a very doubtful benefit on literature when he coined the words "Agnostic" and "Agnosticism." When the word is used the mind inevitably reverts to two historic associations. We know that there was a set of religious thinkers called "Gnostics," who gave a good deal of ecclesiastical trouble; but Huxley clearly did not mean to suggest any contradiction or opposition to such a sect. We also remember that when Paul came to Athens he found an altar with this inscription: "To an Unknown God." Can this, then, be the origin of the phrase? If so, Agnosticism would apparently be a form of religion; for Paul, on this very ground, calls the Athenians very superstitious—a charge which any modern Agnostic would be very apt to resent. To worship an unknown god is one thing; to be doubtful whether there is a god is another. Yet it is the latter phase of mind which is undoubtedly designated by the term in question.

Ask "the man in the street" what an Agnostic means, and in nine cases out of ten he will answer—an Atheist. Religious newspapers give the same reply. Agnostic, Atheist, Unbeliever, Sceptic, Secularist—such terms are used indiscriminately. Small wonder that G. L. Mackenzie, the "Laureate of Secularism," summed up the whole matter in the following lines:—

A boundless sea beyond thee there doth lie;
Give o'er, O man! withdraw thy weary eye;
No mortal mind can reach the mystic *why*:
Our seas, *in seeming only*, meet the sky.
Set, then, thy sail to reach the homely shore;
Truth there alone, and all thou canst explore
Invite thine earnest search—an endless store;
Content thyself with this, not wander more.

Mimnermus.

## BOOK CHAT.

The popular novelists are getting bolder. Taking their cue from the great realistic masters like Zola, Ibsen, Kielland, and Maupassant, they endeavor to find subjects for themselves. Adultery is getting commonplace in novels now. One lady novelist, who writes under the name of "Martin J. Pritchard," will find readers enough for her book, *Without Sin* (published by Heinemann). The author has attempted to translate the central idea of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception into a modern story, and she has done it very well. The book has already run through several editions, and if Detective Sweeney cares to turn his attention from scientific works he may yet advertise this book sufficiently to make the author one of the best known of contemporary novelists.

* * *

When the story opens, the heroine, a little Jewish girl of ten, thinks the Virgin "the goodest woman that ever lived." She is in love with a picture of the Virgin, which bore a resemblance to the girl herself. Thoroughbred Semite as she was, born of a long line of Polish hucksters, she absorbed a strange jumble of the world's legends from one Martin Baird, who, perhaps, had a vague idea of some day converting the little Jewess to Christianity. Her love for the Virgin never falters, and some years after she sits to a young artist, Eliot Mayne, for a picture of the Virgin, and the lilies she held in her hand cause her to faint. The artist, a dissolute, unprincipled man, takes advantage of her helplessness, and seduces her without her knowledge. The continuous brooding on religious matters has unhinged her brain, and she considers that the miracle of the Immaculate Conception has been repeated in her special case. This is the keynote of the story, which is very powerfully worked out to its very striking conclusion. We have no space to summarise the remainder of the plot, but *Without Sin* is a novel of special interest to Freethinkers, being the first work of fiction in English in which a fundamental dogma of Christism is introduced, without fear and without favor, as fit material for a novelist.

* * *

Zola's action in the Dreyfus case has at last been used as the subject of a melodrama, *Zola: the Truth Seeker*, which was produced at the Standard Theatre, Shoreditch. The performance took place in Yiddish, and formed a sequel to the same author's drama, *Captain Dreyfus*.

* * *

Messrs. Methuen's fine edition of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, edited by Professor Bury, of Dublin, has now reached its sixth volume. There are to be seven volumes altogether, so that this compact and excellently edited edition of Gibbon's immortal work will soon be complete.

* * *

Mr. Elliot Stock will shortly issue a rhythmic version of the Book of Job by Otis Cary, a Japanese scholar, under the ironical title, *The Man Who Feared God for Naught*.

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Birthday books threaten to become a little absurd. Mr. Arrowsmith has just issued *The Chamberlain Birthday Book.* Joseph is an interesting figure in the political world, but he has not a scintilla of literary genius, and scrappy extracts from speeches, mostly made in his old Radical days, are not appetising. Take the following beautiful quotation: "I am an English Nonconformist born and bred in dissent, and I am opposed, from honest conviction, to anything in the nature of State interference with or State aid to religion." It only needs the addition of the words "Loud cheers" to make it perfect.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### CHRISTIAN CIVILISATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Puritanical laymen and clergymen, in their fanatical crusade against Turkey, never cease to compare the alleged insecurity of life in the dominions of the Sultan with the immunity from violence which they pretend can be enjoyed in England through the influence of Christianity. But it appears from recently-published reports that there is such a reign of terror now in certain parts of London that respectable citizens are at the mercy of a cruel horde of British savages, against whom they are afraid to appear in the police-courts. In no part of the Ottoman Empire could such a state of lawlessness be found, for one might traverse it from one extremity to the other with more safety than in going through Lambeth and the adjacent districts.

The Church with its immense revenues, and the Nonconformists with their superior virtue, having failed to remove the miscreants, thieves, and murderous ruffians with which this metropolis is infested, what are we to think of the School Board, which was to have reclaimed and humanised the children of the criminal classes? It also has proved false, for it has neglected those for whose redemption it was instituted, in order to cram the heads of boys and girls whose parents are, in innumerable cases, well-to-do and able to educate their own offspring.

To what are we to attribute the inherent brutality of so large a proportion of the population of this country? Is it due to the reading of the Bible, in which the horrible atrocities of the Jews are held up to admiration and the Eternal is represented as a monster whose wrath can be appeased only by blood? Or may it be traced to the blood of Baltic pirates and Norman robbers, whose sanguinary disposition has been inherited by their descendants?

The profession of Christianity in the United Kingdom is merely a cloak to hide the selfishness and rapacity of a greedy and hypocritical class. The "Hooligans" and "larrikins" of South London are in nature no worse than the "gallant warriors" who are on their way now to murder the brave defenders of Khartoum. If the money wasted on such criminal expeditions for the benefit of capitalists had been expended in removing the gutter-snipes and street arabs of the large cities away from their evil surroundings to become colonists in new lands, London might not have degenerated to a level with Sodom and Gomorrha.

I. STOYLESKI SANDERS.

### ARE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS MISTRANSLATED?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The Edinburgh School Board is said to have decided to introduce a new arrangement of the Decalogue into the schools in that city. A committee is probably still hunting around for a satisfactory formula. The idea is not so hopeless of accomplishment as some may think, for it appears to me that the Ten Commandments have been very erroneously translated. I am aware that it is a very bold thing to say that the principal part of the Old Testament, on which, according to all theologians, the duties and the knowledge of the duties of all mankind have for ever depended, has never yet been understood. It is a very important matter indeed, and I ask all who are capable of undertaking the investigation to examine the Hebrew text, and see if what I say is right, or even possibly right. I submit that the first three Commandments should be rendered somewhat this way:—

I. Thou shalt not honor the other gods more than me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any gods that are in heaven above or, etc.

III. Thou shalt not use the name of Javeh thy God for an idol.

In the common rendering the words "before me" make absolute nonsense, as they can only suggest that what is not to be permitted before his face might be lawful behind his back. The Prayer Book version has "but me." This, though supported by the Septuagint, is a dishonest rendering, and is plainly an attempt to make sense of what appeared to be none. The accepted rendering is "before me" (*anti faciem meam*, or, *in conspectu meo*), which, as an old commentator explains, signifies that it is a great sin, *ut si uxor inspectanti marito rem haberet cum alio viro.* You see anything can be explained if you have imagination enough. Besides, it is unfair to leave out the first part, or preface, of the commandment, because it might suggest incongruous ideas. God Almighty might be trusted to state his own commands in his own way.

In the second Commandment the word "thing" is evidently a wrong supplement. Nobody, I daresay, ever made the image of a *thing* in order to worship that thing. It was the mode of worshipping foreign *deities*, in the existence of which the Israelites as firmly believed as in the existence of Jahveh, that was impermissible. The Israelites were forbidden to revile any of the gods (Exodus xxii. 28), and in one case they were permitted to render a certain homage to one of them called Azazel (see Leviticus xvi.).

The third commandment is commonly supposed to forbid swearing. The Jews could not have understood it in this way. They had a multiplicity of oaths, some of which were sacred and others profane, but none were forbidden. "By his name thou shalt swear" was the law and the prophets. The happy time predicted by Isaiah is when "Every tongue shall swear," and the Psalmist asks God to remember how he swore as a reason for granting him a kindness.

W. B.

### THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Doing my mite towards making your effort to establish on a legal basis a permanent association for the carrying on of our distinctive Secular propaganda a success, by becoming a shareholder myself, and asking my brother and sister Freethinkers who have not yet done so to do the same, I am actuated by a two-fold motive. In the first place, I am full of hope that it may be the means of uniting into one compact and effective whole the hitherto only partially organised forces of Freethought, so as to greatly enhance its power as a demolisher of our national superstition. Secondly, I am fully persuaded that, in the event of any reasonable measure of success attending its inauguration, so as to show the religious world the futility of supposed obstacles in the way of Freethought endowment by bequest, the first sure step will have been taken for the final removal of all such obstacles.

We have a remarkable illustration of the truthfulness of this assumption in the case of Mr. Bradlaugh's great work in demolishing the oath obstacle that barred his way into Parliament for so many weary years; for, the moment it became clear that the obstacle in question could not keep a Bradlaugh out, the opposition to its removal virtually succumbed. So will it be with the laws of bequest. Let the Secular Society but prove them to be useless in the matter of the prevention of the endowment of Freethought, and our Christian friends will be just as ready to help in their repeal as they now are to benefit by them. In fine, to my mind, the latter of these considerations constitutes in itself an all-sufficient reason why all genuine Secularists should forget all minor differences and unite in making one grand effort to succeed in this, which I fervently hope will prove itself to be a most useful and enduring enterprise.

T. J. THURLOW.

## SOME SAMPLES OF CHRISTIAN TOLERATION.

THE late-lamented Mr. Gladstone once declared, in an unguarded moment, at the Mansion House, that Christianity carried the blessings of tolerance wherever it went. A glance at the following list (very incomplete) of sentences on Freethinkers during this present century will show the falsity of the Grand Old Man's opinion:—

D. I. Eaton, two years' imprisonment.
R. Carlile, nine and a-half years' imprisonment.
Jane Carlile, two years' imprisonment.
Mary Anne Carlile, two years' imprisonment.
Robert Taylor, three years' imprisonment.
John Cleve, four months' imprisonment and fine of £50.
H. Hetherington, four months' imprisonment.
Chas. Southwell, one year's imprisonment and fine of £100.
G. J. Holyoake, six months' imprisonment.
Adams, one month's imprisonment.
Paterson, eighteen months' imprisonment.
Robinson, one year's imprisonment.
Finlay, two months' imprisonment.
Matilda Roalfe, two months' imprisonment.
Robert Pooley, twenty-one months' imprisonment (five months served).
G. W. Foote, one year's imprisonment.
W. J. Ramsey, nine months' imprisonment.
H. A. Kemp, three months' imprisonment.

It is worth while recalling that Charles Bradlaugh had to win the seat which Northampton gave him in the face of the most bigoted and terrible opposition. Mrs. Besant was deprived of her child by an order of the Court of Chancery, and the Marquis of Queensberry had his seat in the House of Lords taken from him.

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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, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Entertainment.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 6.30, C. Watts, "Religion: Is it a Blessing or a Curse?"

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, E. Pack; 6.30, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "How to Read the Bible." Peckham Rye: 3.15, R. P. Edwards, "Triumph of Rationalism."

EAST LONDON BRANCH: Excursion by brake to Harlow; start from Mile End Waste at 8.30 a.m.

FINSBURY PARK (near bandstand): 3.30, Freethought Demonstration, addressed by Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Cohen.

FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, W. Heaford.

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7, A. B. Moss, "Saints and Sinners."

HAMPSTEAD HEATH: (Fleet-road, corner of Downshire-hill): 7.15, R. P. Edwards, "The National Secular Society."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): A. B. Moss—11.30, "Saints and Sinners"; 3.15, "The End of the World."

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7, A lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Heaford.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Historical Review of the Old Testament."

**COUNTRY.**

DERBY (Central Hall, Market-place): 7.30, W. Whitney, "Anarchist Communism."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): R. Law, F.G.S.—3, "Evidences of Prehistoric Man on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Moors"; 7, "Life in the Tertiary Period and Cause of its Extinction," with lantern illustrations. Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business meeting.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—August 21, e., Bethnal Green.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.—August 21, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 28, m., Wood Green. September 4, m., Mile End; 11, m., Mile End; 18, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 25, m., Finsbury; a., Victoria Park.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—September 11 and 18, Manchester.

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HUMANITY'S DEBT TO THOMAS PAINE. 2d.

ERNEST RENAN AND JESUS CHRIST. 2d.

TRUE RELIGION. 2d.

THREE PHILANTHROPISTS. 2d.

LOVE THE REDEEMER. 2d.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## GENERAL BOOTH AND MRS. BESANT.

GENERAL BOOTH has been visiting Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he was interviewed by a representative of the *Daily Leader*. The grand old showman, who could easily give points to Barnum and Bailey, seems to have begun business by stating that "his latest despatch was from Klondike," where a detachment of four or five of his soldiers had been "well received." They had opened a bold attack upon the drink and gambling in Dawson City, and had made an excellent first collection of "fifty dollars in gold dust and two hundred dollars in money." Surely this is very characteristic. General Booth never sinks the man of business in the evangelist. He keeps one eye on the salvation of souls, and the other on the raising of revenue. Not for him the old pot-luck policy of Jesus Christ. He knows very well that the Salvation Army lives by organisation. Had the first Salvation Army at Jerusalem, or Galilee, or wherever it started, understood this thoroughly, instead of merely beginning to do so under General Peter, it would not have come to grief so badly, nor would its leader have died on the gallows. General Booth could have taught Jesus Christ a thing or two in that direction. He could have shown him how to get a good balance at the banker's, or somewhere safe and accessible; how to hook in the Jerusalem big-wigs as patrons, instead of quarrelling with them indiscriminately; and how to achieve all the successes of salvationism without the sublime folly of martyrdom. Indeed, the General plainly told his interviewer that the army organisation, which people thought a weakness, had been his strength. He understands human nature—up to a certain point, and especially Christian human nature, or shall we say superstitious human nature? Speaking of the Army law of absolute obedience, he said: "My people have come to delight in it. They don't want to be consulted about this, that, and the other. It is a great relief to be told what to do." Of course it is. Nothing is more congenial to the sort of human nature that William Booth deals with. Don't think, don't ask questions, and do as you are told! Such a policy saves a lot of trouble. And it is evidently carried out to perfection, for who ever heard of a man of any mental distinction in the Salvation Army, except William Booth himself?

"I think my uniform," General Booth said, "is very becoming. It improves a woman's appearance, and makes her look younger." Perhaps so, and a lot of the Salvation Army women need it. All of them will no doubt be beautiful in heaven, but some of them will require a good deal of time for the necessary alterations. With regard to the male soldiers, General Booth said that his uniform "shows a man off, makes him look more important." Well, there is something in that. Human nature is very vain. Peacocks are poor competitors with millions of plain men and women. A bit of uniform, or even a recognisable badge, anything that gives a factitious distinction, is dear to the commonplace. As William Booth says, in his knowing way, it makes them look more important; and it often goes a long way in compensating for poor wages and ill-treatment.

The present writer remembers when he put on his first pair of braces. It was a lovely summer day, and he thought it a shame to hoist a jacket over those beautiful articles, which of course all the neighborhood was bursting to behold. So he strutted down the road in his shirt and little trousers, with his hands buried deep in his little pockets, and his elbows stuck out at a tremendous angle. And as he thinks of that precious bit of juvenile vanity he is able to understand the attraction of General Booth's uniform.

The Salvation Army creed was next explained to the interviewer. If a man does good for Christ's sake—that is, because Christ died as a sacrifice for sin—he will be rewarded in heaven; if he does not, he will be punished in hell. "We ring the changes," General Booth said, "on those truths." "We are about the only people left," he declared, "who dare say they believe in hell." "Yes," he added, "we preach everlasting hell." But he was good enough to say that hell was a place of degrees, and that "perhaps the most favored parts of it will be near to the least favored parts of heaven." We may venture to put it in this way: the worst of the saved may have to drudge by the fire in the celestial kitchen, while the best of the damned may have a draughty seat near the infernal doors.

All this is very interesting in its way. It shows that even the Salvation Army is affected by the spirit of compromise. General Booth still sticks to hell, because it is a good thing to work with amongst superstitionists—that is to say, persons of inferior mental development; but the old form of the doctrine of hell and damnation is so utterly played out, with its sheep all happy above and its goats all plagued below, that concessions have to be made even to the intelligence and humanity of the "residuum." Yes, the world is moving, and the Salvation Army has to move with it; which proves the inevitable character of human progress. Of course the Salvation Army thinks it causes a great deal, if not most, of the progress; but that is the way of the fly on the wheel.

Heaven itself, even to the Salvationists, is no longer the simple establishment described in the book of Revelation. The "many mansions" theory comes in conveniently. General Booth, who sees that "the people on this earth don't like the Salvationists," says that "Perhaps hereafter the Lord may give us a planet all to ourselves." Well, we hope this is true. A great many people will be glad to keep off that planet. Perhaps the Freethinkers will have a planet to themselves too. And what a fine society will dwell upon it! Poets, philosophers, scientists, wits, and jolly good fellows. The prospect is really charming.

General Booth gave utterance to a real or pretended Salvation Army belief as follows: "We resolve all sin into selfishness, and all selfishness into sin, and we resolve all religion into benevolence, and all true benevolence into religion." But this is not Christianity. It is Secularism. Ingersoll says it over and over again in the cities and towns of America. It expresses the essence of modern humanitarianism. And the fact that it has penetrated the orthodoxy of the Salvation Army shows that what is sometimes called "the spirit of the age" is more potent than all the creeds that swear by the wisdom and revelations of antiquity.

Unfortunately, the chief of the Salvation Army did not stop at this point. He went on to play the fool—which, of course, is not astonishing; for every Christian, in this age of science and evolution, has a screw loose somewhere. General Booth "waxed eloquent" on belief and unbelief. "He pointed to Mrs. Besant," the interviewer says, "and told how, twenty-five years ago, she had stood with her watch in her hand, giving the Christians' God five minutes to strike her dead. Recently he had asked her if she believed there was any good in prayer to Christ, and she replied: 'Yes, if it were earnest and sincere.'"



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Now we are not prepared or concerned to challenge the second part of this statement. Mrs. Besant is, mentally speaking, a person of considerable eccentricity. Although she uses a good deal of scientific jargon, she has for ten years been in the camp of superstition. She regards Jesus Christ, whose existence she formerly doubted, as a Mahatma, like the mysterious and miraculous gentlemen who inhabit the fastnesses of dirty Tibet; and in *this* sense, though probably in no other, she may look upon prayer to him as a more or less useful exercise. But we *are* prepared and concerned to challenge the first part of General Booth's statement. Twenty-five years ago Mrs. Besant had not mounted the Atheist platform. When she did stand upon it she was never guilty of the crass stupidity which General Booth ascribes to her. That he believes it is just possible, for Christians have a large stock of credulity; but that he should state it publicly, as a positive fact, without a moment's investigation, only shows the common recklessness of Christian advocates. Mrs. Besant never stood, or sat, or reclined, with her watch in her hand, giving the Christian or any other God five minutes to strike her dead. The story is a perfect "chestnut." It was told before Mrs. Besant was born. It is a credit to Christian invention, though not to Christian intelligence, or to Christian knowledge of Freethought and Freethinkers. Every leading Atheist has been the hero of that absurd narrative. It was told of Bradlaugh, of Holyoake, of Mrs. Law, and of many others; it has been told of the present writer; and now it is told of Mrs. Besant, when she is no longer an Atheist, and is perhaps indifferent about its contradiction. We say *perhaps* because we are by no means certain. There is room for hope that Mrs. Besant *will* contradict this fatuous story. She can hardly wish it to be supposed that she displayed folly and bad taste even when she was an Atheist. Meanwhile we may ponder the saying of Herder that "Christian veracity" deserves to rank with "Punic faith." Unscrupulous and even joyful lying about their opponents has always been freely practised by the devotees of "the only true faith."

G. W. FOOTE.

## RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY.

In this age of earnest inquiry and mental activity it is difficult to believe that intelligent persons should attempt to depreciate the advantages of well-conducted controversy. The results of fair and honest discussion have always appeared to us to be of the most beneficial character. It has been aptly remarked that it is "fraud and falsehood only which dread examination. Truth invites it. Public discussion is the spear of Ithuriel; the fiend Imposture starts up, trembling at its touch." Amongst the most persistent opponents of controversy are the clergy of nearly all denominations. It has been so ever since these false leaders of the people arrogated to themselves the function of guiding the human mind. It is true that during the last two or three decades a few ministers of the Christian religion have had the courage to meet their opponents in debate, but their controversial ardor was of brief duration. Some years ago Mr. George Jacob Holyoake wrote a pamphlet asking: "Why do the clergy avoid discussion?" The same question can be very pertinently put to-day, for it would be extremely difficult at the present time to induce a prominent clergyman of the Church of England, or a leading Nonconformist minister, to meet a recognised representative of Secularism in public discussion. The cause of this reluctance upon the part of Christian exponents is not hard to discover. This is a period of intellectual discernment, and the "blind belief" of past ages does not find that ready acceptance amongst the masses that it once did. Unfortunately, mental emancipation from priestly dominion has not reached the point we should desire; still, the freedom is advancing. Progress has ever been of slow growth. One fact is apparent, and that is, the pretensions of Christianity will not stand the test of modern criticism, and its would-be defenders have found this to be the case. Hence the more discreet advocates of Christianity confine their propagandism to the pulpit, the "reserved" platform, and the press, deeming that in the arena of debate "silence is golden." Now we allege that principles or systems that cannot stand the test of honest criticism in temperate discussion have but little claim upon the intelligence of the age. Herein lies the weakness of theology; at its false and absurd teachings "reason stands aghast, and faith itself is half confounded."

The *Church Gazette*, in a recent issue (July 23), published a special article upon "The Value of Religious Controversy," by the Rev. Moritz Kaufmann, M.A. His object was "to show that religious controversy tends more frequently towards retarding than promoting progress in the religious life." While he admits that all kinds of controversy are not to be condemned as useless, yet, "in the nature of things, they tend that way." His principal protest is against theological discussions. But why this exception? If controversy tends to elicit truth, which we allege it does, then it should be regarded as of the highest service in dealing with a subject that is supposed to involve the most important issues pertaining to man's welfare both in this life and in some future existence. If religion were simply one undisputed truth, the case would be different; but, inasmuch as there are many varied and contradictory religions professed, for all of which truth is claimed, it becomes necessary to examine the *pros* and *cons* of each, with a view of ascertaining which is the correct one. We know of no better plan of seeking to discover that which is true than by discussing the merits, or otherwise, of whatever is presented to us for our acceptance. As Dr. Cooper wrote: "Those who are averse to have their own opinions examined are manifestly actuated more by attachment to their own tenets than to truth. They arrogate for themselves a privilege which they deny to their neighbor, and they suggest the suspicious inquiry, Is there any concealed interest in the background that causes discussion to be dreaded and opposed?" Besides, all the alleged supernatural religions make such extraordinary demands upon our credence that it is an imperative duty upon the part of us all to analyse their credentials, and this can only be adequately done by having both sides of the questions involved placed before us. We say with Milton: "Let Truth and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

Let us briefly notice the reverend gentleman's reasons for objecting to religious controversy. He says: "If we had no experience in the matter at all, reason would tell us that in the *heat* of controversy (and controversy without some warmth is scarcely conceivable where men are in earnest) men are too much blinded by feeling, not to say passion and prejudice, to form a just estimate of their own or their opponent's arguments, and that, therefore, conviction of the truth as the end of all controversy becomes at best very doubtful, and hence the debate which began in friendly controversy may end in division and strife, accompanied by bitter recrimination and reprisals, *without producing the result aimed at—i.e., the vindication of truth*..... The united testimony of the History of Religious Opinion tends to show that religious controversies have generally either produced barren results, or have been followed by pernicious consequences, or, at best, have been of doubtful value to humanity at large;.....that the general result of such controversy has rather been unfavorable, leading Christian men 'to hate each other for the love of God.'" Now what is here said furnishes no argument against discussion *per se*, but only against the mode of conducting it. We are certainly not in favor of vulgar debate, or of recklessly indulging in the very objectionable practice, so prevalent amongst a certain class of disputants, of wantonly wounding the feelings of those who differ from them. Such conduct too often influences the passions, but seldom wins the assent of reason. All controversy should be governed by intellectual discrimination, not by angry disputation. Truth should always be the goal in such conflicts, and the best and most dignified means of reaching it is by calm and considerate investigation. To condemn anything because it is abused by some is neither fair nor wise. No doubt Christianity has been abused by many fanatics, but, we presume, the reverend gentleman would not admit that as an argument against the Christian religion. In the domain of freedom many wrongs have been perpetrated, but surely freedom itself would not be condemned on that account.

The reverend gentleman's contention is, however, a severe indictment against the claim that Christianity has a beneficial effect upon the human mind. If the belief in this faith fails to inspire within its adherents patience, love, and kindness, wherein lies its power for good? Moreover, if

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discussion is followed by "pernicious consequences," and if it induces "leading Christians to hate each other for the love of God," as the reverend gentleman affirms, then such discussions ought not to be sanctioned by the Bible. But therein controversy is recommended as plainly as possible, for do we not read: "Debate thy cause with thy neighbor" (Prov. xxv. 9), also "Come now and let us reason together" (Isaiah i. 18)? Even Christ and St. Paul indulged in controversy, for it is said that very early in his career Jesus was found in the temple in the midst of doctors, "both hearing them and asking them questions," and St. Paul "disputed in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him, and spake boldly for the space of three months" (Acts xvii. 17; xix. 8). Notwithstanding these injunctions from the "sacred book," and the "sublime example" given by Christ and St. Paul, it is now discovered that, if the one were obeyed and the other emulated, "pernicious consequences" would be the result. And yet we are told that Christianity furnishes a practical guide of life. This is another instance of the inconsistency of the self-styled followers of Christ.

The conclusion at which the Rev. Moritz Kaufmann arrives is a very peculiar one. He says: "Then let me suggest, in the last place, what is the practical argument in favor of my thesis. Here the question simply is this: *What will work best?* And the answer is not very far to seek. It is better to live down error than to preach it down." If this be so, there is no further use for churches or preachers—a fact we have frequently urged. It would no doubt be a great advantage if the world in general were of the same opinion. Let us have useful conduct, not impracticable sermons; consistent actions, not creeds and dogmas. It is because we believe that well-maintained controversy will tend to produce this desirable change that we urge its claims. Those who fear discussion, and who seek to depreciate free inquiry in debate, expose themselves to the reasonable suspicion of entertaining opinions that cannot logically be defended. For ourselves, we believe with Robert Dale Owen that "the disciple of free inquiry works not out his salvation in fear and trembling, but in boldness and self-possession. Fear may be the friend of orthodoxy; it is the foe of truth. Before the throne of heaven we may kneel, our eyes closed, and our reason prostrated; before the throne of truth we must stand erect, our eyes open and our judgment awake."

CHARLES WATTS.

## THE HYPOCRISY OF RELIGION.

A GLANCE over any of the foremost European countries presents one with a curiously anomalous condition of affairs. On the one side we find it universally admitted that in art, science, and literature the essential condition of improvement is that there shall be perpetual modifications of existing beliefs and institutions in terms of contemporary experience and knowledge. Or, where the ideas of preceding generations are retained unaltered, it is solely upon the ground that they are fully consonant with our knowledge of the conditions of human welfare.

To suggest to the average educated European the advisability of conducting our lives on the same lines as our predecessors would be to invite his contempt or ridicule, and there would be the satisfaction of knowing that it was well deserved. Here, at least, it is frankly recognised that destruction and revision are the two weapons by means of which man cuts his way forward. By destroying what is bad, by improving all that admits of improvement, we purge society of some of the evil it contains, and thus hand on to our successors a purer civilisation than we ourselves received.

But while this much is true in other departments of life, when we turn to that of religion an entirely different set of conditions confront us. Instead of the innovator being welcomed as a blessing, he is viewed as a curse. Criticism of the past becomes the greatest of crimes, slavish submission to it the greatest of virtues. Here we find all the ideas of the most savage and credulous ages—blood sacrifice, eternal torment, virgin births, etc., etc.—holding full sway. Every one of these ideas, which lie at the very foundation of the current religion, can be shown to have had its origin in the barbarism of primitive man; to have been created by his ignorance, fashioned by his fear, and rounded into a coherent system during one of the darkest periods of European history.

Nor is this all. If these doctrines and dogmas were honestly believed in by those who are paid to preach them, or by those who Sunday after Sunday attend church and between the time devoted to the criticism of dress and the exchange of scandal listen to their exposition from the pulpit, the matter might be wholly regarded with feelings of pity. But this is not the case. There is ample evidence to all except the wilfully blind that these beliefs are no longer accepted in a straightforward, honest manner by any but the ignorant and illiterate.

The educated clergy no longer preach these doctrines. They evade them. The old-fashioned doctrinal sermon is nearly as dead as the dodo, and stands about as much chance of revival. Nine-tenths of the modern sermons consist of either a string of the baldest, tamest humanitarian platitudes, or venomous assaults upon other black-coated members of the celestial fire insurance association, who are rather more honest than themselves in their profession of belief. For I venture to say that an uncultured, old-fashioned preacher who loves to dilate upon the power of the "blood," or who preaches "straight-out flat-footed hell," is on the whole more honest than many of our leading Christian divines who give up belief in miracles, witchcraft, the authenticity of the books of the Bible, and exclusive salvation, and then shelter behind the flimsy technicality that they are within their legal rights as ministers of the Established Church. To anyone but a parson it would be clear that the main question is, not whether he is guilty of a legal breach of the principles of his creed, but whether he is honestly representing its spirit and its teaching. But then, as John Morley says, "clergymen are not exactly like other men. They are very apt to look at laws as those people do who can never be taught that it is wrong to smuggle, or to cheat a railway company.....Indeed, one can hardly imagine a more admirable training for a low-class attorney than a short apprenticeship to one of those heroic Anglicans whose whole lives seem to be spent in finding out by how many little devices of costume, lights, banners, processions, practices, postures, they can strain and evade the law without being convicted and punished."* What amount of respect is it possible to feel for a clergy—conformist or nonconformist—that has vigorously opposed every scientific discovery in its early stages, and just as vigorously proclaimed itself its supporters when it paid to do so; who, to take only one instance, were once as ruffianly in their abuse of Charles Darwin as they are now fulsome in their flattery, and whose whole present effort is an attempt to discover by how many wrenchings of texts and ambiguities of language they can read modern knowledge into ancient myths, or allegorise what was plainly written as sober matter of fact.

One must not, of course, altogether ignore the defence made by the clergy that the doctrines of Christianity are to them merely figurative; and, upon second thoughts, one is inclined to believe them, for when one notes the rush for fat livings it would indeed appear that they honestly regard Christian doctrines as figurative, and the larger the figure received the better they are pleased with it; although it is questionable whether, after all, the figure they cut in the pulpit is not worth far more than the financial figure they receive for their mental stultification and moral cowardice.

And the educated laity are quite as much ashamed of the distinctive doctrines of Christianity as are the clergy. The proof of this is seen in the fact that, when upon the Secular platform one deals with the doctrines of Christianity, the cry is at once raised that we are misrepresenting the Bible and caricaturing their religion. It may be cheerfully admitted that these doctrines do misrepresent their real opinions, but they are part and parcel of Christianity, both official and Biblical, and if professing Christians are so heartily ashamed of the doctrines of vicarious atonement, salvation by grace, eternal torment, or the Jehovah of the Old Testament, as to feel, whenever they hear them outlined from a Secular platform, that they are being misrepresented, why not drop them at once and have done with it?

The simple fact of the matter is that the whole set of

* *Struggle for National Education*, p. 53.

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these teachings are out of touch with the life of to-day; and when that is the case, when people who have to deal with the world as it is are saddled with views of life that were getting old-fashioned two thousand years ago, there is bound to be more or less hypocrisy in the attempt to square the two positions.

The modern Englishman no more attempts to guide his life by the Bible than by Homer's *Iliad*; he no more believes in demoniacal possession than he does in the man in the moon; and he would as soon think of trying to walk bare-footed across the Atlantic as he would of turning one cheek when the other is smitten, or of trusting to meekness to secure him the inheritance of the earth.

The whole circle of Christian doctrines comes to us, as I have said, from a barbarous age. The nature of the people they originated with is writ large across their surface; and yet, while we have long ago discarded in practice all their ideas of this life, we still profess to regard them as infallible authorities concerning the next. That is, while they were demonstrably wrong in their judgments concerning the world they *were* living in, they are held to be indubitably right in their judgments of a world they were not living in, and which, for aught we know to the contrary, may have no existence. It is this fact which renders us progressive in everything but religion, and justifies Heine's caustic remark that the most stupid Englishman will say something sensible if you speak to him on politics, but the most sensible Englishman will say something stupid if you speak to him on religion.

By its very nature every religion is bound to be behind the times. Like the nobility, its greatness is of the past. Every god is in the image of the men that made him, and every theology reflects the mental culture of the men that elaborated it. The result is that, while art and science is perpetually purifying itself by an appeal to the facts of life, religion justifies itself by an appeal to the past, by the parading of great names, or by an appeal to the inherited prejudice of the people. The scientist works to discovers truth, the theologian to establish a thesis. The former appeals to the educated few, the latter to the uneducated many. Art and science look with confidence to the future, and hail every invention or discovery as a new lever to raise the race to a higher level. With religion, the main task is to bring the present into line with the past, to make what is equal what has been, while every invention is viewed with suspicion, every discovery with dread, all growth of knowledge as promises of evil rather than harbinger of goodness.

This is the condition of things prevailing to-day in civilised Europe; it remains for all who really value progress and intellectual honesty to say how long it shall continue. It is useless prating of mental development while our whole lives are made a living lie by this attempt to dominate a civilised community by a barbarous religion. It is useless hoping for steady progress while we are ruled by a shilly-shallying, weak-kneed spirit of mediocrity, weighing every expression of opinion in terms of how many shillings we shall lose, or how many social invitations we shall forfeit. Right through history it has been the dauntless few who have made life worth living, and shown others the path of duty. All history, too, has witnessed some phase of the struggle that is going on to-day. In all ages there has been an interested priesthood fighting with all the energy of threatened vested interests to protect its dominions, an army of timid creatures crying only for peace at any price, and a resolute band determined that truth should conquer, come what would. The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; but both the quality and the quantity of our development are always determined by the independence of the few who keep their minds free from prejudice, their hands well nerved to the work before them, and who are animated by the desire to bring professed theories into complete harmony with known facts.

C. COHEN.

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A clerical gentleman was walking through the main street of a small town where he had once been minister, and, meeting an old member of his church, paused to speak with her. "How are you, Mrs. Block?" said he, kindly. "Fairly well," said the woman, plaintively. "And how is your husband?" "My husband is in heaven, sir, this two years!" "In heaven! I am very sorry to hear it!" responded the clergyman, absently, as he passed on, leaving the poor woman dumb with astonishment.

## JOSEPHUS AND THE GOSPELS.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

IF any proof were necessary of the uncritical tastes of the majority of English readers, it might be found in the continued issue of editions of Josephus, all containing the famous forgery (*Antiquities*, xviii., iii., 3), in which "the learned Jew" is made to certify his belief that Jesus was the Christ, and that he rose again from the dead on the third day as the divine prophets foretold (although, as far as our information goes, they quite omitted to foretell anything of the kind), and that the tribe of Christians "exists to this day."

That the passage is a forgery needs little argument. It has no connection with the preceding or subsequent sections. The phrase "to this day," when he is speaking of the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, is opposed to the method of Josephus. It is not cited by any of the apostolic fathers, nor by Justin Martyr, Cyprian, Arnobius, Minutius Felix, nor Lactantius; although highly important in their disputations both with the Jews and Gentiles. Nor is it hinted at by Origen, Clement of Alexandria, or Tertullian, each of whom was well acquainted with Josephus, and often quoted from his works. Origen, indeed, expressly states of Josephus that he did not believe Jesus to be the Christ. It is first quoted by Eusebius, for whom Niebuhr can find no better name than a "detestable falsifier." The *Encyclopædia Britannica* says: "It is unanimously believed to be, in its present form at least, spurious, and those who contend even for its partial genuineness are decidedly in the minority." De Quincey more emphatically declares that "this passage had long been given up as a forgery by all men not lunatics." Yet the lumbering translation by Whiston continues in demand, more probably for this spurious passage than for any other reason.

We wonder how many of those who boast of the testimony of Josephus to Christ have ever read the section immediately following that passage. It almost seems designed to ridicule the story of the miraculous conception, for it tells how a beautiful woman named Paulina was enjoyed *in a* temple by one Mundus, who pretended to be the god Anubis. The Unitarian minister, John Jones, in the sequel to his *Ecclesiastical Researches*, does not scruple to connect this story with that in the first chapter of Matthew. If we do not take it as a satire on the Christian story, it may, at any rate, serve to indicate the trickery of priests in that day.

The absence of all mention by Josephus of the new-born brotherhood of Christians, remarked by the keen insight of De Quincey, has never received sufficient attention. The "monstrosity of this omission," as that fine writer calls it, becomes apparent when we consider his chronological position, extending from A.D. 37 to the end of the first century. His opportunities were complete. He was of royal and sacerdotal lineage. He had studied experimentally the doctrines of the various Jewish sects or schools of philosophy, as he preferred to consider them. He had a personal share in "the history of the time, and had access to the works of Nicolaus of Damascus and other historians, as well as to direct documentary and personal evidence." In the opening of the fourteenth book of his *Antiquities* he declares that he has taken great pains to omit no facts of consequence, "either through ignorance or laziness." He devotes above forty chapters to the time extending from Herod the Great to Pilate. Yet he knows nothing of the alleged facts of the Gospels. He knows nothing of the alleged massacre of children because Herod had heard of the birth of a child with neither family nor fortune to support his claims. He himself was, for several years, governor of Galilee, the very district where most of the miracles ascribed to Jesus are said to have been performed; yet he gives no particulars of them.

The narratives in the Gospels, if we leave out of consideration the birth stories in Matthew and Luke, begin with the fifteenth year of Tiberius (Luke iii. 1), not more than eight years before the birth of Josephus. His father, Matthias, was in great reputation in Jerusalem at the very time of the alleged ministry and crucifixion of Jesus, and should surely have known something of the preternatural darkness, the earthquake, and rending of the veil of the temple, and the rising of the dead from their graves, and their coming to Jerusalem. Yet Josephus has no infor-

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mation upon these wonderful events. He knows nothing even of the death of Jesus, although he tells us of a false prophet of the Samaritans whom Pilate ordered to be slain. His own connection with Palestine ran abreast with the generation succeeding Christ, that dating from the crucifixion to the destruction of Jerusalem. But he knows nothing of the wonderful work of Paul, Peter, and the other Apostles.

He describes at length all the particular parties and religious fanatics and impostors among the Jews, yet is absolutely ignorant of the Christians, never mentioning them either in his *Wars of the Jews*, written about A.D. 73, or in his *Antiquities*, written about twenty years later. Many Jesuses, three of them high priests, are mentioned by him and their acts recorded, but no Jesus Christ. He dwells on the origin of the Galilean sect founded by Judas of Galilee, and this, he says, was the latest sect which had originated among the Jews. But the mention of Judas, his followers and their doctrines, does not lead him to mention Christ nor the Christians. He appears to be utterly ignorant of a body of men who, as De Quincey says, "should have challenged notice from the very stocks and stones of their birth-place." Had he known of them, he would surely have inveighed against them on the same ground as he did against the Galileans for renouncing the custom of the Jews, and, by their fanaticism, giving that nation a bad character among the Romans.

But the question arises whether Josephus did not by this latest sect of Galileans intend the Christian. Justin, of Tiberias, as well as Josephus, was in Galilee, and yet neither of these historians knew anything of the Christians. Josephus knew much of Judas of Galilee, and of the sect of Galileans which he founded, and it is at the least possible that some confusion has arisen. Joseph tells us that they arose at the time of the procuratorship of Coponius (A.D. 6 to 10). Judas, their leader, sought to revive the tradition of a theocracy and re-establish the kingdom of God. He was a teacher as well as a revolutionist, and taught that men should regard God as their only ruler and Lord. The Jewish historian proceeds to say of his followers: "They also do not value dying any kinds of death, nor, indeed, do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man lord."

*Origen* informs us that Judas was regarded by his followers as the Messiah (Homily on Luke xxv.). Basnage says: "The Romans sent some forces against Judas, and he miserably perished." Possibly his fate was the same as that of his sons James and Simon, who were crucified by order of Tiberius Alexander, procurator (A.D. 47). Josephus ascribes to his sect the origin of all the troubles ending in the destruction of the city and Temple. De Quincey, in his essay on the Essenes, says: "We have little doubt that the Sicarii and the Zealots were both products of the same great sect of Galileans, and that in an imperfect sense or by tendency all were Christians." No doubt the current view of Jesus is quite contradictory to the rebellious characters ascribed by Josephus to Judas; but it is not difficult to discern some similar elements in the Gospels, which, we must bear in mind, were compiled when all hopes of a temporal kingom were at an end. In the many injunctions to follow him, even to leave the dead to bury the dead for that purpose; in the command to call no man master; in the selection of twelve apostles who were promised they should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel; in the record that the people sought to make him a king; in the triumphal entry into Jerusalem; the lament over that city "how often would I have gathered your children together"; in the accusation against him that "he stirreth up the people"; in the virtual admission before Pilate; in the inscription over the Cross; and in the cry of the disciples after his death, "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel"; those who list may see signs that the legend of Jesus is mixed up with that of a temporal deliverer. Only in John is the statement found that "my kingdom is not of this world."

The identity of the Essenes, mentioned by Josephus, with the early Christians has been noted by many authors from Eusebius to De Quincey, but few have ever suspected that the Essenes were to be identified with the sect founded by Judas. Mr. Proctor, in his article on "The Gospel Life of Jesus," in the *Freethinkers' Magazine* for August, 1887, is the first English writer I have noticed to run them together; and this, I suspect, may have happened through a slip of the pen. A learned Jewish rabbi, however (R. Abraham, in *Libro Juchassin*, folio 139, 1), cited by Schœttgen (Hor. Heb. in Act v. 37), and in part by Adam Clarke, says:—

> "At this time there were three sects; for, besides the Pharisees and Sadducees, Judas the Galilean began a third sect, which is called that of Essenes.....the opinion of the Nazarenes, who were called Essenes, and the author of whom was Judas the Galilean. They, indeed, occasioned the Jews to rebel against the Romans, saying that no one ought to command other men, nor to be called Lord, except God alone."

On which Schœttgen remarks that this must be false, because the Essenes existed long before Judas; yet he, with Adam Clarke, thinks it very likely Judas was an Essene, though not the author of the sect. But, as Hennell remarks, in his *Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity*, may not the confusion of R. Abraham be unravelled thus: Many of the Essenes adopted part of the doctrines of Judas, and settled afterwards into that sect, of which one appellation was Nazarenes?

If the reader will turn to the speech put into the mouth of Gamaliel (in Acts v. 33–39), he will see that the author of the Acts takes pains to discriminate the followers of Jesus from those of Judas of Galilee. Readers of Zeller Baur or *Supernatural Religion* will have no need of any assurance that the Acts of the Apostles is utterly unhistoric. Indeed, one has only to compare the speeches put into the mouth of Paul with those ascribed to Stephen and Peter to see that the author in each case has not hesitated to make his characters utter his own sentiments. John Jones, the Unitarian, in his *Ecclesiastical Researches*, a work in which he strives to show that both Josephus and Philo were Christians, says:—

> "The enemies of the faith, I have observed, were studious to identify its professors with the disciples of Judas. The Christians, on their part, must have been anxious to defeat this artifice, representing themselves on every proper occasion a very distinct people; and to this natural anxiety we are indebted for a very important incident, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Luke delicately notices the charge, and with great propriety avails himself of the language and advice of Gamaliel to show that it had no foundation in truth" (p. 209).

In other words, the charge that the Galileans were followers of Judas was made in the earliest ages, and the author of the Acts delicately makes a Jewish Rabbi distinguish between them and say that Judas perished, and as many as obeyed him were dispersed. But even this was as applicable to the Nazarenes as to the Galileans.

*(To be concluded.)*

## "SUPERNATURAL" MORALITY.

(*A Summary of a portion of a Lecture by Charles Bradlaugh.*)

IT has been assumed so generally by sky-pilots that some theologic dogma is necessary to every system of morality that the assumption needs direct contradiction. It is put to-day by the clericals who are attacking secular education for the young that without religious teaching there is no morality possible. This inaccuracy of speech is the result of centuries of supernaturalistic bias. To maintain, says a famous historian, that Christism bestowed on the world moral truths before unknown shows either gross ignorance or intentional fraud.

On the contrary, it will be contended here that every system of "supernatural" morality is necessarily uncertain, arbitrary, and confusing; that moral progress is only made in the ratio in which supernaturalism is diminished. The "supernatural" view is that every act is moral which is in obedience to or in accord with the commands of deity; that these commands are known by direct revelation from "God," or through the human conscience, which it is alleged is implanted by "God" in each individual, and which infallibly decides for each person what acts are right and what are wrong.

The Rationalist objection is that the commands of "deity" must be expressed either to individuals or to the whole race. In the first case the sceptic asks, How is it to be determined when any individual is reliable who professes to be the recipient and interpreter of "God's" commands? In the second case one asks, Is it conceivable that any such

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command should have been given to the whole human race without its most complete recognition on the part of the recipients? The Mahdi claimed to be god-sent; Joseph Smith declared himself charged with a special revelation; so did Mahomet; so did Jesus. How, in each case, is it to be determined whether the prophet is sane and truthful? Is it to be decided by the numbers who accepted or rejected the prophet? and if yes, at what date or within what limits does the numerical strength become material? There are more Mormons now than there were Christians within a like period. Mohammedanism in some countries would poll an overwhelming majority. Buddhism counts to-day far more heads than can be claimed for Christism.

There is most certainly no one revelation to the whole race universally admitted to be the revealed command of "God." As for the Bible, the large majority of the world's inhabitants do not now accept it; the largest proportion of the human family have never accepted it, and even of the minority who nominally accept it the Christians think the Old Testament very imperfect as a moral guide, whilst the Jews reject the New.

Conscience, so-called, varies in the same individual at different periods of his life, and under different conditions of health. Three centuries ago it was moral in England to believe in witches, and it was moral to kill a witch. To-day it is held immoral to believe in witchcraft; to kill a witch would now be at law a criminal act.

One hundred years ago it was moral to trade in slaves, to own slaves, and to breed slaves. Very recently it was moral to own and breed slaves in America. Why for centuries did Christians trade in slaves if morality is dependent on the immutable judgments of a God-ordained conscience? Why, if slavery was defensible by supernatural moralists only a few years ago, has it now become utterly indefensible?

In England it is immoral to marry the sister of your diseased wife, and the immorality is so clear that any unfortunate children born of such a union are bastards, and in the event of an intestacy are excluded from sharing the property of either of the parents. In Canada and in Australia it is moral to marry your deceased wife's sister, and the children are respected as legitimate. The Secularist asks, How is this explicable from the supernatural standpoint?

## PIOUS ROGUES AND FOOLS.

"Forty millions, mostly fools."—CARLYLE'S GOSPEL.

WE know that no one knows if God exist,
And know that, if He do, we do without Him;
And yet to cunning knaves we gravely list,
And pay them well to tell us all about Him!

The people's lack of knowledge long ago
Gave priestly rogues and fools an easy living;
The pious habit sticks, although we know
They'd cease to preach if folk refrained from giving.

The parsons and the priests are not all fools,
They're mostly knaves; and all who ponder know it;
And we, the priests' and parsons' dupes and tools,
Are not all rogues; we're mostly fools and show it.

We know that none knows more of God than we,
That facts divine from parsons never reach us;
And yet—can stronger proof of folly be?—
We pay these shams to teach what none can teach us!

CHORUS OF PARSONS.

Praise God from whom all pests and blessings flow!
All dispensations, good and bad and middling!
The *good* ones come to *us*, by which we know
That God rewards us for our pious diddling!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## Women Street-Car Conductors.

There are seven women conductors on the Chillicothe (Ohio) Electric Street Railway. They are all of good family and good-looking, and they find nothing unpleasant in the work; indeed, they say it is much preferable to most of the indoor occupations followed by women. They are paid four dollars a week, are on duty nine hours a day, and have one day off in every week.

## ACID DROPS.

AFTER a comparatively mild summer we have had tropical weather in England. London has been like a furnace, and many persons have fallen dead in the streets. No doubt we shall get a cold snap presently just as we are growing accustomed to the heat. "Providence" gives the taciturn Englishman a constant theme of conversation in his climate—which is another illustration of the design argument. We present it to the Christian Evidence people free gratis, for nothing.

How these Christians love one another. The anti-Ritualistic agitation is going on merrily in the Liverpool district, and is affording a fine opportunity to the previously neglected energies of Mr. George Wise. This gentleman was the principal speaker at a demonstration held in Birkenhead on Sunday, under the auspices of the National Protestant Union. His chairman, a colored gentleman, was the recipient of several uncooked and well-aimed tomatoes; and the rival meetings which were held in pleasant proximity resulted in free fights. On the other hand, some lively scenes occurred at the Church of St. James the Less. Hundreds of "Protestants" attended, and hooted the vicar. They also spat upon him in the chancel, and the police had to protect him from personal violence. Yes, yes; a happy family is the household of faith.

"If this man Kensit and his followers," wrote "Chorister" in the *Daily Mail*, "tried to reach our chancel and upset the communicants, I, for one, would not hesitate in defending chancel and altar with a revolver, which, I may mention, is kept ready in my cassock pocket for Kensitites." Mr. H. A. Lamb, who is "sacristan and master of ceremonies" at St. Alphege, Southwark, announces that he can call out two hundred costers to do battle with Mr. Kensit's Gideonites. Such a blessed, peaceful thing is controversy amongst Christians! General Booth knew what he was about in taking "Blood and Fire" as the Salvation Army's trade mark. The phrase sums up the whole spirit and history of the Christian religion.

The Wesleyan Missionary Society spent £131,266 last year in saving the souls of the heathen, but we do not know how many it succeeded in rescuing from the bottomless pit. The Society has 345 missionaries operating in various parts of the heathen world. Everybody knows there is no need for their services in England, nor is the money they receive wanted here for any works of benevolence and amelioration.

The Church Missionary Society is watching the Sirdar's advance upon Khartoum. A proposal has been made to constitute the place "a centre of active Christianising effort," and even to set up a Bishopric there. The Cross went down before the Crescent in the old days of hand-to-hand fighting, but the case is altered now that the soldiers of the Cross have got Armstrong, Gatling, and Maxim guns. That makes a world of difference.

The Boers in the Transvaal don't understand why the Lord is making them suffer so. They forget that whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Rinderpest has swept off the cattle, locusts have destroyed the crops, and fever is playing havoc in several districts. Altogether, there is a rare opportunity for President Kruger to sink his rural simplicity and show himself powerful in prayer.

The new Vaccination Act appears to be a sublime illustration of the wisdom with which the world is governed. A gentleman applied to Mr. Curtis Bennett at the Marylebone Police-court for the purpose of making an affidavit, under Section 2, of his conscientious objection to his child being vaccinated. Mr. Bennett said that he had looked into the Act, and in the first place it did not apply to metropolitan magistrates at all. In the second place, it did not state *how* the magistrate was to be "satisfied" as to the objector's conscience. There was absolutely no form prescribed, either of affidavit, oath, declaration, or certificate. The applicant, therefore, would have to apply to the Local Government Board, and point out the difficulties of their Act of Parliament. A pretty state of things indeed! Evidently the old method of objectors to vaccination will still have to be pursued—the method of defiance.

The editor of the *Freethinker* has four children, and not one of them has been vaccinated. He was threatened over the eldest, and he invited the threateners to come on, but they didn't. They preferred to leave him alone, and they have never troubled him since—somewhat to his regret, for in defending himself he might have done something, however little, towards breaking down the infamous law which aims at compelling parents to have poison thrust into the blood of healthy children.

The pilgrimage to Lourdes began on Saturday. About

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50,000 pilgrims were taken there in special trains. They suffer from all manner of diseases, and some of them expect to be cured. The paralytics are especially hopeful. One or two who are not very far gone may take up their beds and walk—while the excitement lasts. The rest will get no help from Mary, and have to go on praying to God, who takes a back seat in Catholic countries.

We are all for Anglo-American friendship and good understanding, but some of the clerical fraternity are doing their best (or worst) to make it farcical. An American minister over here, the Rev. Dr. Reuen Thomas, has been talking much nonsense about it. He thinks that Germany will come into a "Teutonic federation" with Great Britain and America. "This," he is reported to have said, "would be a real alliance, and along the lines of such racial agreement the Kingdom of God, if it ever came on this earth, was certain to come." Fancy poor God Almighty depending upon this political project for the realisation of his Kingdom! The cheek of these sky-pilots is quite colossal.

What is a miracle? Well, said a negro preacher, if you saw a cow in a field, that wouldn't be a miracle; and if you saw the cow climbing a tree, that wouldn't be a miracle; but if you saw the cow climbing the tree backwards, that *would* be a miracle.

Dr. Lyman Abbott seems to be pretty much in agreement with that negro preacher. Questions are allowed after his week-night lecture in Plymouth Church—once the home of Ward Beecher—and lately he was asked: "Do you believe in miracles?" His answer was: "Yes, I do." He was then asked: "Will you give us an example of what you regard as a miracle?" Dr. Abbott replied: "The recent victories of our fleets at Manila and Santiago, resulting in the destruction of the Spanish fleets, with a loss on our side of only one man killed and less than twenty wounded."

Now, if these victories were miracles, it follows that the Lord fought the naval battles of Manila and Santiago, and in that case it is an absurdity to give thanks and honor to Admirals Dewey and Sampson and the officers and men under their command. It doesn't seem at all easy to divide the thanks and honors between God Almighty and the Admirals. Any believer who tried to do that would have the coolest cheek imaginable.

Further, if the American victories were miracles, why was even one man killed in the American fleet, and why were twenty wounded? These men, in the circumstances, were gratuitous victims; unless, indeed, the Lord's omniscience and omnipotence failed him to that extent. It will hardly do to say that one was killed and twenty were wounded just to give an air of reality to the engagements.

Every man with a little knowledge and a grain of common sense knows very well that the American victories were *not* miracles. The American ships were better built, better equipped, and better manned. Their gunners were expert enough to hit the Spanish ships and knock them to pieces, whereas the Spanish gunners were so inexpert that they could scarcely hit anything but the ocean, and they only hit that because it was too big to miss. Suppose the Americans had been opposed by a British fleet—we only take the horrid supposition for the sake of argument—does any man outside a church or a lunatic asylum imagine that they would have got off so easily? When opposite fleets are well matched, the Lord is pretty sure to keep neutral.

A gentleman of the Hebrew persuasion made a curious application to Magistrate Mead at the Thames police-court. He wanted advice on a very difficult matter. His wife had married him under false pretences. He believed her to be a Jew, and he found her to be a Christian. "I cannot live with a Christian woman," he said plaintively. Poor fellow! His neighbors ought to get up a subscription to send him to Jerusalem—or Jericho; and perhaps his wife would be very glad to be left behind.

Wonders will never cease! A bishop is reported to be seriously ill from overwork and want of proper food. His name is Bompas, and he is at Selkirk, in the Klondike region.

When the late C. H. Spurgeon's wife bore him twins he said: "Not more than others I deserve, But God hath given me more." This is a quotation from a well-known hymn. But no quotation would do for Mrs. Edward Harris, of Richlane. A special hymn is required for her case. She has had twins seven times running.

"Religion for Lunatics" was a headline in the London *Echo* the other evening. Nothing could be more appropriate, we thought, as we turned to the paragraph beneath. Unfortunately, it contained no more than a baldish statement about the Parliamentary return as to the "religious ministrations" in the county and borough asylums in England and Wales. However, it is consoling to know that religious requirements of lunatics are properly attended to. Not, indeed, that heaven is poorly stocked with that variety. It is well known that clever people mostly go to the other place.

"A Non-Churchman" contributes a novel letter to the correspondence in the *Westminster Gazette* on Ritualism and the Protestant Crusade. "Is it possible," he asks, "for any sane human being to imagine it a matter of the smallest moment to an Almighty and all-loving Father, in whose eyes a thousand years are as a single day, whether Mr. Jones, in this particular year of 1898, worships the Virgin Mary and believes the Athanasian Creed or not?"

The Vicar of Gorleston is at loggerheads with his congregation. In a recent sermon he said that he believed in a future life for animals, and that he would far rather meet them in heaven than many human beings of his acquaintance. Thereupon most of the congregation got up and left the church. They seem to have felt that the cap fitted; or perhaps they thought, like the majority of Christians, that an exclusive heaven is the only one worth having.

"It is authoritatively stated," we read in the *Daily News*, "with regard to the Emperor's journey to Palestine that, after the consecration of the Church at Jerusalem, the Imperial train will go on to Jericho." A good many Germans would be thankful if it stopped there.

It does seem a little incongruous to hear of the great preparations being made in Jerusalem to receive the Kaiser. To read of the rebuilding of the city the better to welcome this pinchbeck emperor does strike us as a little out of the eternal fitness of things. "The gate at the beginning of the chief thoroughfare is being widened in order to allow the Imperial equipages to pass." Times have changed since the "king of kings" cantered into the city on two donkeys, like one of Sanger's star-spangled equestrians.

There have been more than 100,000 deaths from the plague in Bombay. This shows how right Mr. Gladstone was in arguing that Providence had so beautifully adapted the earth for man's habitation.

Marston parish church, Norfolk, has been struck by lightning. The stonework of the walls was splintered, and some of the woodwork destroyed, including pews and the communion rails. It is curious that "Providence" does not recognise its own houses in a thunderstorm.

"Providence" has sent us a trying heat wave, which is the cause of a good deal of ill-temper and profanity, to say nothing of the deaths that have occurred. It is to be feared that Hades will be quite overstocked in consequence. A taste of it here leads to the everlasting enjoyment of it hereafter. But perhaps the truth is that Old Nick has got hold of the weather, and is running it for his own advantage.

Herr P. Nordheim, in the *Vossische Zeitung*, has been giving a description of General Booth's performance at Berlin. The great man's platform antics and hoarse voice "give him too much resemblance to a well-known comic figure on the Berlin boards." On the other hand, it is impossible not to be impressed by his dramatic earnestness. Herr Nordheim notes the enthusiasm, indeed the hypnotic effects, excited by a Salvation girl with a fine voice. Penitents came up to the platform to be saved in response to her fervid appeals. One of the Salvationists tried for ten minutes to save Herr Nordheim himself, but did not succeed. He left the hall, feeling esteem for the humanity of the Salvationists, but regretting that "at the end of the nineteenth century such means were still needed to induce mankind to lead a reasonable life."

*Apropos* of Mr. Justice Wright's masterly description of Terah Hooley as a witness, the *Daily News* says: "When the liar's not a swearing on the Bible, he loves to lie a basking in the sun." The *Freethinker* has lost its monopoly of this sort of writing.

The Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians have had a Conference for the purpose of finding a way to "union," but a fatal obstacle has arisen, and the negotiations have collapsed. Thus endeth another pious dream.

Dean Hole has been fined on account of his dog being outdoors without a muzzle. If things go on as they threaten to, a number of clergymen will have to be fined (or something) for being outdoors without a muzzle on themselves. Yes, the muzzling order needs considerable extension.

Emperor William of Germany is the most pious monarch

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in Christendom. He is also the greatest friend of "Abdul the Damned." Every reader can extract his own moral. The weather is too hot for superfluous labor on our part.

Merstham Church has a public notice to cyclists, begging them to come in and join in the service. They will "find a seat, a Bible, and a prayer and hymn book quite handy," and "five automatic cycle racks" at the back of the bethel. All that remains to be added is iced lager beer and cigarettes.

The Rev. Dr. Marcus Dods has been lecturing at Edinburgh for a religious association which rejoices in the outlandish name of the British Chautauqua, and which might as well be called straight out the Pious Palaver. Dr. Dods' subject was "The Bible and Other Sacred Books," and his first observation was that the latter differed from the former by their "astonishing mixture of what was worthless with what was valuable." Of course there is no such mixture in the Bible. The Christian Scripture contains nothing that is worthless. There is wonderful value, if you only look with orthodox eyes, or, still better, with professional eyes, in such stories as Jonah's whale and Balaam's ass. In any other book, perhaps, they would have been ridiculous yarns; but, occurring in the Bible, they are serious and solemn and full of instruction. So much depends on the point of view!

Dr. Dods also observed that the "other" sacred books, or at least some of them, claimed to be a special revelation, and even professed to be written at the dictation of God; but the Bible, "without saying anything of its authorship," gave a clear consecutive, &c., &c. So the Bible says nothing of its authorship! Dr. Dods forgets that the book is in print. People can read it for themselves and check this amazing statement. Does not the Bible allege that the Ten Commandments, for instance, were written with the very finger of God? Does it not represent God as personally dictating the whole sacred law to Moses, and as instructing him to write it all down in a book for the Jewish people and for future ages? It is really too bad of Dr. Dods to play these little tricks with his audience, unless he aims at gaining a reputation as a humorist.

Teapot Taylor, the disturber of Secular meetings on Peckham Rye, has got into trouble with the police again. On Sunday last he and his gang were trying the old game with a Secular meeting addressed by Mr. Edwards, but a London County Council constable, named Bush, didn't see why one particular gathering out of the dozen or so in progress should be interfered with in this disorderly fashion. He therefore told him to go to another spot and hold a meeting of his own. But that was not what Teapot Taylor wanted, and there was a warm dispute, which ended by the constable running him in. According to the newspaper report, sticks, stones, and pieces of turf were used as weapons by the soldiers of the Cross, three of whom tried to prevent Taylor's arrest. However, the constable stuck to his prisoner, and took him to the police-station. Magistrate Hopkins ordered Taylor to find a surety in £10 for his good behavior for six months. Perhaps this will teach him a lesson. But we fear that nothing will teach a lesson to his supporters, for those who accept an impenitent thief as a proper champion of Christianity are past tuition.

In view of Teapot Taylor's arrest and condemnation by the magistrate, it is amusing to read the leading article in the *South London Mail* for August 20. The writer is a foaming bigot who wants to see all open-air Freethought meetings suppressed. He calls them "demoralising demonstrations," whose object is to "debauch public opinion, religious, moral, and political.' The Secular speakers ventilate "pestilent theories," and indulge in "irreverent and sacriligious (*sic*) attacks upon The Book." They are "sapping and mining the greatness of this nation," and they should be treated as traitors to the State. This looks like suggesting that they should be prosecuted for sedition, but the writer doesn't mean that—he is only in a muddle. However, he recovers lucidity enough to call upon the authorities to put the Blasphemy Laws in force against the infidels. He bids them "strike, and strike hard." In his opinion, that is the only way to answer Freethought advocates; and we quite believe it is the only way that is feasible to his limited capacities. Argument is not much in his line. His idea of settling a controversy is to call for the police.

"It is small wonder," this bigot observes, "that men whose most cherished beliefs are grossly insulted Sunday after Sunday by the inflated irreverence of these profane orators of Peckham Rye are tempted to retaliate with their good strong arms." This is almost a direct incentive to violence. But the writer forgets that Secularists may have good strong arms too, if they are compelled to use them.

Well, the authorities *have* struck a blow, and it has fallen upon Teapot Taylor, instead of upon the Secularists, who only want fair play and the common right to hold their meetings in an orderly fashion. We hope the editor of the *South London Mail*, after his crusading talk about strong arms, has at least had the manliness to provide the £10 security for his brother in the faith.

An editorial against the Secularists was not enough. The subject was also referred to in "Notes and Notions" by a fellow who writes as "John Justice." He likewise complains of Peckham Rye being "polluted by profanity." Where are the police? he asks. He calls upon the authorities to "deal promptly and drastically" with the Secular lecturers. But why this frantic appeal to the police and the authorities? Any citizen can set the Blasphemy Laws into motion, though we don't choose to tell him how. But it would have to be done at the said citizen's own risk and expense. Ay, there's the rub! It is a peculiarity of bigots that they almost invariably like to gratify their evil passions at the expense of their neighbors.

There was a fire at the Consumptive Hospital's buildings in the neighborhood of Paisley, and the damage will eat up every penny of the £3,000 insurance. While the fire was burning, and before the arrival of the fire brigade from Paisley, a pious gentleman named William Quarrier, who writes a long letter on the subject in the Glasgow *Daily Record*, made up his mind to wrestle with the Lord in fervent effectual prayer. For two hours he prayed lustily, and all the time "the flames rose higher and higher." Still, the Lord did answer his prayer by keeping the east wind blowing all the time, and this kept the flames in the western side of the building. Simple William Quarrier! One would think that the wind was in the habit of shifting whenever a fire broke out. But, after all, this William Quarrier may not be quite as simple as he seems; for, after declaring that his faith in God is stronger than ever, he begs "the sympathy of the Lord's children in making good any deficiency." Perhaps this prayer to the Lord, conveyed through the columns of a widely circulated newspaper, will be answered likewise, to the vanquishment of all the infidels and materialists on this planet.

Marcus Hedges Lewis, of Eccles, near Manchester, described in the London *Star* as "minister and preacher, borrower of money, backer of horses, and obtainer of goods for which he had no means of paying," was charged at the Mansion House with forgery by altering a cheque for £1 to £61.

Men of God will go wrong. A warrant has been issued at Wood Green for the arrest of the Rev. Fenwick Skrimshire, of the Presbytery, Lower Tottenham. He is charged with inciting a man to commit a certain offence in a carriage on the Great Eastern Railway.

"Providence" does not seem to afford special protection to clergymen and their families. One of the victims in the latest Isle of Man boat accident was the Rev. Mr. Gordon, a retired Church of England parson, who had just built a large house, in which to enjoy the remainder of his life. At Yeovilton, near Yeovil, Miss Gertrude Hyson, eldest daughter of the rector, has been drowned while bathing in the river.

Sir Henry Fowler, one of our Liberal "statesmen," has been orating at the laying of the foundation stones of a Primitive Methodist Chapel at New Invention. He declared that the improved condition of the people of England was mostly due to the work of the Christian Churches—just as though there were no Christian Churches in England a hundred years ago. "The one thing the people wanted," he said, "was the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ." Well, it is provided for them at a cost of something like £20,000,000 a year, and it is frightfully expensive considering its real value. Of course, Sir Henry Fowler may think he is speaking the truth. We don't. But if he is, it is clear that he and all his fellow members of parliament are wasting time at Westminster. What is more, they are wasting the nation's money.

A witch doctor, Chambers alias Elliott, has been committed to prison at Wells for two months. He appears to have done a roaring trade. His fee was 10s. 6d., and the simple country people, including well-to-do farmers, had implicit belief in the efficacy of his magic and incantations. No doubt it is all right to send him to prison, but what about the Catholic purgatory doctors who take money for getting your dead relatives out of a place nobody knows where? When you sweep the stairs why not begin at the top?

## WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

H. L. Barrow, 5s.; T. Holstead, 10s.; Richard Green, £1. *Per C. Cohen*:—W. Swaile, 2s. 6d.

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements

*Sunday*, August 28, Victoria Park.

September 4, Peckham Rye and Athenæum Hall; 11, Athenæum Hall; 18, Birmingham; 25, Liverpool.

October 2, Glasgow; 9, Leicester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 28, Victoria Park. September 4, Victoria Park; 18 and 25, Athenæum Hall, London. November 27, Birmingham. December 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

W. LEDGER.—The Hyde Park Demonstration was settled by the rain. No doubt you were much disappointed after coming from Hull. Perhaps you will be able to hear Mr. Foote, and maybe Mr. Watts, there before long. Thanks.

J. M. DAY.—We will enquire, and try to let you know next week.

W. A. FINCKEN.—You are quite old enough to join the Secular Society, Limited. Some men have more sense and character at twenty than others have at sixty. You have your share, or you wouldn't incur the trouble and expense of becoming a member. Your certificate will be forwarded before the General Members' Meeting.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—In our next.

G. W. BLYTHE.—We don't recollect the date of the piece you mention. Perhaps it will be included in Mr. Mackenzie's projected volume.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—A. Marsh, £1; T. Holstead, 10s.; W. Ledger, 1s.

T. J. THURLOW.—Inserted as desired. Pleased to hear the East London friends had such a good time.

W. KOHEN.—Glad to have your letter assuring us from personal knowledge that the Freethought Demonstrations are doing great good, especially amongst the younger men, who are rallying to the branches in their respective districts. Never mind the personalities of the Christian blackguards you refer to. An advertisement is just what they are dying for. Leave them alone, and they will sink and rot in their own filth. We have noticed the misfortunes of Teapot Taylor.

T. HOLSTEAD.—Thanks. See acknowledgments. Mr. Foote hopes to visit Bolton before Christmas.

G. BRADY.—Received with thanks. Mr. Foote's holiday did him much good, though it was too brief, and broken by editorial duties.

W. MANLEY suggests that Mr. Watts's article in last week's *Freethinker* on "Secular and Theological Forces" should be reprinted as a cheap tract for general distribution.

H. PERCY WARD.—We have not seen Mr. Reader Harris's *Case Against Atheism*, though we have seen it advertised. We have glanced at a few of his outpourings in evangelical papers, and we thought them almost imbecile. Is the book any better?

G. CROOKSON.—There must have been a mistake. Our old subeditor is dead, and we cannot ask him whether he recollects the matter. Mr. Foote has not the least objection to lecturing at Barnsley. We believe there was a difficulty some time ago in obtaining a suitable hall. No doubt a date can be found for a visit if this difficulty is removed.

T. WILMOT.—Mr. Foote would have been very happy to lecture at Camberwell on September 4, but he has to reopen the Athenæum Hall that evening. You must charge the accident on the hot weather.

NON DEI.—(1) You will only waste your time by refuting Christian lies about leading Freethinkers. Mrs. Besant, of course, never made any such infamous statement about Charles Bradlaugh. Any man with an atom of common sense must see its monstrous absurdity. We cannot make our columns the medium for printing such stuff. (2) Glad to hear you have such high admiration for Ingersoll's oration on Shakespeare. Every Freethinker ought to have a copy. (3) Clodd's little book on Evolution is good; we believe the price is 2s. 6d.

RICHARD CARROLL (Belfast) joins the Secular Society, Limited, and sends good wishes.

A. B. MOSS.—We shall be glad if you can manage to have our paragraphs safely conveyed to the writers in the *South London Mail*. Thanks.

RICHARD GREEN.—Sorry to hear that the postponement at the Athenæum Hall deprived you and your wife of the "pleasure," as you are good enough to put it, of hearing Mr. Foote lecture again. Perhaps you and your wife will be coming to London again before long. We hope so. Your subscription to the Wheeler Fund is acknowledged elsewhere. Glad you are joining the Secular Society, Limited. We expect a good many accessions during September, before the first General Members' Meeting. Some always take a long time considering, but jump on board when the whistle sounds.

H. WARD and W. A. JONES (Kimberley) congratulate Mr. Foote on the launching of his Secular Incorporation, which they hope will be "vigorously taken up by every Freethinker in the United Kingdom." They apply for membership themselves, and send the entrance fee. They expect to get a few others to join presently. "You have," they add, "a good many sympathisers scattered about in South Africa."

KNOWLEDGE.—We presume you mean translations, but we do not know of any such chart. Of course there are easily accessible translations of Homer, Hesiod, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle, Virgil, Lucretius, and Lucan. After the immortal work of Gibbon, you will find Mommsen's *History of Rome* most helpful. There is a good English translation, but somewhat expensive.

CHILDREN'S EXCURSION FUND.—C. Cohen acknowledges:—Mr. Striemer, £2; Victoria Park Collection, 15s. 9d.; Mile-end, 1s.; Mr. Bass, 6d.; Mr. Wood, 1s.; Mr. Davey, 1s.; Mr. Beadle, 1s.; Mr. Hall, 1s. 6d.; Mr. Wills, 1s.; Miss Lawrence, 2s.

W. ANDERSON.—There are several volumes of Hazlitt's writings in Bohn's Library, at 3s. 6d. each. If you do not want, or cannot afford, them all, you can obtain a most excellent and full selection from Hazlitt in the Chandos Classics. The volume is edited by Alexander Ireland, who contributes a lengthy Memoir. Hazlitt was in some respects a great writer, though not so choice as Coleridge or Lamb. His style is masculine and trenchant. He was undoubtedly a Freethinker—probably a Deist, certainly not a Christian.

E. G. JAMES.—Will use in our next.

W. WILSON.—Every member of the Secular Society, Limited, has to pay 10s. the first year, and 5s. a year afterwards. Your suggestions are taken in good part, but we have not the means to purchase "advanced" novels from Grant Allen and Mrs. Humphry Ward. The lady's price is a very high one. Where are we to find a few thousand pounds? Some new features will be introduced in the *Freethinker* shortly.

A. MILLER and S. MCLANG (Paisley) ask us to contradict the story that Mr. Foote declined to debate with a certain Dr. Reid? Well, who *is* Dr. Reid? We do not recollect such a person. We have an idea that some sort of challenge was thrown out by a local quack doctor, but we could hardly take him as an accredited representative of the Christian religion. Our correspondent also asks us to deny that "on another occasion you shut the doors to keep out Christians who wanted to debate with you." Nothing of the kind ever occurred at any of Mr. Foote's lectures. At one of Mr. Watts's lectures the Secularists had to keep out a gang of disturbers who came over from Glasgow, and were led by the ruffian, Walton Powell, who is now doing fifteen months' imprisonment for debauching young girls. Perhaps this is the occasion alluded to.

JOHN GRAHAM.—Mr. Forder is not the editor of the *Freethinker*. Please send your notices direct to editor himself in future. See paragraph.

J. N. LEIDS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

A. MARSH, 62 Pentonville-road, London, N., treasurer of the Truelove Fund, desires us to acknowledge that he has received 10s. from W. C. Griffin.

H. L. BARRON.—J. M. Wheeler certainly did, as you say, render splendid services to the Secular cause. The Memorial Fund closes at the end of September. There is still time for many more sympathisers to subscribe.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Ethical World—Free Thought Magazine—Lucifer—Awakener of India—Star—South London Mail—Daily Record—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Sydney Bulletin—Lucifer—Paris in 1900—Isle of Man Times—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker—Liberator—People's Newspaper—Daylight—Charleston News and Courier—Daily News—The Two Worlds—English Mechanic—The New Time—Secular Thought—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Torch of Reason—Der Arme Teufel—Crescent—Free Society—Midland Evening News.

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.

*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.

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.

## "FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.

I VENTURE to press this appeal again, and more strongly, upon the attention of the friends of this journal. I assure them I am not doing so needlessly. It would be far better to increase the circulation by regular, judicious advertising, than to face the necessity of a maintenance fund. Standing still is impossible; one must go forward or backward; and it will be easy enough to go forward if Freethinkers rally to my support on this occasion. I want to begin advertising in various ways early in September. There are thousands of liberal-minded people who might buy the *Freethinker* if it were only brought under their notice, and made less difficult to procure. This cannot be done without money, and it ought to be forthcoming. What I cannot do individually, my readers can do collectively. It is rumored, I hear, that I have just had a windfall of £2,000. Unfortunately it is a pure and absolute invention. If those who start such rumors had to make them good I should soon be wealthy.

G. W. FOOTE.

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## SUGAR PLUMS.

Owing to the continuance of the heat wave, there will be a still further postponement of the resumption of the Sunday evening lectures at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road. There will be a lecture on Sunday next, September 4, under any circumstances, and Mr. Foote will occupy the platform.

The third Freethought Demonstration took place on Sunday afternoon in Finsbury Park. It was blazing hot, and the shade of a big tree was most welcome to the speakers, and to the portion of the audience which it covered. Mr. Wilson kindly provided a brake and pair of horses as before, and the vehicle made a first-rate platform, solid to the feet and high enough to command the biggest crowd. Mr. Forder, who acted as chairman, led off with a brief speech, and then called upon Mr. Cohen, who was warmly received and listened to with great attention. He was heartily applauded on resuming his seat. Mr. Charles Watts, who followed, was in good form. All his points were caught up by the meeting, and he was loudly cheered at the finish. The chairman then introduced Mr. Foote, not only as President of the National Secular Society, but as editor of the *Freethinker*, a journal which Christian bigots had vainly tried to suppress by prosecution and imprisonment. Mr. Foote was enthusiastically cheered on rising, and the crowd, which was a big one before, grew bigger and bigger as he proceeded with his speech, much to the detriment of the Christian gatherings in the vicinity. There was more enthusiasm at the finish, and then Mr. Heaford delivered a brief, effective address, which was evidently appreciated. Mr. Forder spoke a few more earnest words before closing the meeting. The horses were then hitched on to the brake, and the speakers drove away amidst vigorous cheering, the waving of hats and handkerchiefs, and cries of "Come again!"

One feature of the brake party seemed to be rather pleasant to the meeting. Mr. Foote brought his wife, his eldest daughter, and the "baby," a little maiden of seven, dressed in white, with a white sun bonnet. She had never been to such a gathering before, and her naïve enjoyment was evidently found amusing. Moreover, the people were able to see for themselves a sample of the "horrible infidel homes" which Christian Evidence men are in the habit of depicting. Mr. Heaford also had one of his children in the brake—a lad of nine with a noticeably good head.

Miss Brown, who was unfortunately suffering from a sprained foot, nevertheless went with Miss Bater amongst the crowd to take up a collection, with what appeared to be a gratifying result.

The Infidel Slaughterers had a rival meeting at a respectful distance. They had a large meeting at first, but there was a general exodus from it when the "infidel" brake appeared upon the scene, and it never got very large again. According to report, the Infidel Slaughterers were madder than ever. They forgot all about Jesus Christ, and spent nearly all the time in traducing the National Secular Society and libelling its President—a policy which soon palls if the "infidels" don't condescend to reply.

A report of the Demonstration appeared in Monday's *Daily Chronicle*. It was not too accurate, but anything is better than the old boycott.

Another Freethought Demonstration will be held this afternoon (August 28) at 3.30 in Victoria Park. Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, and other speakers, will address the meeting. East-end Freethinkers should gather in strong force and bring along their Christian friends with them.

After speaking at the Freethought Demonstration in Finsbury Park last Sunday afternoon, Mr. Charles Watts hurried off to the Secular Hall, Camberwell, where he gave a free lecture for the benefit of the funds of the local Branch. Considering the excessive heat, there was a good audience, about two hundred persons being present. Mr. Watts had a hearty reception, and his lecture was enthusiastically applauded.

Mr. A. B. Moss had three good open-air audiences on Sunday, in the morning and afternoon at Hyde Park, and in the evening at Hammersmith. One of his opponents confessed that he was nearly driven into a lunatic asylum through listening to the late Mr. Spurgeon's discourses on Hell.

Wigan Secularists are going to re-organise. A meeting for this object will be held to-day (August 28) at 12.30 noon at the Bull's Head Hotel. All local Freethinkers, whether belonging to the N.S.S. Branch or not, are invited to attend.

Editor Green, of the *Freethought Magazine* (Chicago), is gallantly maintaining his periodical, but he appears to have had a bad time lately. When the war excitement began his receipts dropped one-half. He says that all publications have suffered in the same way except the daily newspapers. "The Christian periodicals," it appears, "have suffered equally with the Freethought journals, and most other weeklies and monthlies have greatly fallen off in their receipts and circulation." Happily, the cessation of fighting is now bringing about an improvement.

Miss Vance's official announcement of the details of the Children's Excursion appears in another column. About £20 or £25 will be required to give the youngsters a really good day's outing, with enough to eat and drink. Surely this amount will be subscribed readily enough. Some Freethinker who can afford it should write out a cheque for say £10, and break the back of the expense. Who will do it, and help to make a lot of children happy?

"Our English friends had a very successful Annual Conference on Whit-Monday, when Mr. Foote was unanimously re-elected President. We wish him and his friends all success. Our movement is not dead, nor even sleeping. Secular principles are ousting religion everywhere; and even the churches have to adopt secular means to hold their own at all—that is, they have to renounce Christianity in order to live. It is our influence that compels this change; we are making it impossible for all but the most brutishly ignorant to believe Christian dogmas and the fudge of the New Testament. This is our work, our 'mission,' as some might call it; and certainly no mission could be more successful. We cannot make money, but we can impress thoughtful people for good, and we can help them to see what the clergy are anxious to hide. It matters not in the least how the clergy speak about us behind our backs, nor what their dupes and tools spread in the way of slander; for our work goes forward in spite of all. Secularism is come to stay, everybody likes it, the clergy as well as any—for themselves, if not for their dupes. All that is good, honest, and wholesome in civilisation is secular; religion, at its very best, is perverted, and more or less corrupted, Secularism. Faith is growing less, for intelligence is growing in extent and influence; devotion in the pious sense is giving place to devotion to the world and worldly pursuits. The most devout now go through a little mummery, and spend most of their time in worldly things. This great change is growing and deepening. We are teaching people that this world and this life may be made worth the having, that a future life is all fudge; and the people are believing us and acting accordingly."—*Joseph Symes, in the "Liberator" (Melbourne).*

## CHILDREN'S EXCURSION.

The Committee have arranged for an excursion by brakes to Eastcote Farm, Pinner (a most accessible and suitable spot), on Saturday, September 10. Brakes will start from the most convenient points the Committee can select to pick up the children of the members of the various Branches—viz., Camberwell, East London, Bethnal Green, Wood Green, Finsbury Park, North-west and West London, full particulars of which will be announced next week. Each brake will be in the charge of members of the Committee, who will undertake the care of the children. On arrival at Pinner a luncheon and tea will be provided, and every possible arrangement made for their amusement and safety; and they will return early in the evening at a given time.

The age limit is from seven to fourteen years of age. Parents wishing to visit Pinner can obtain from the Secretary particulars of the train service to fit in with arrangements. Application for tickets (members' children only) should be made to Branch Secretaries. Individual members should apply to Miss Vance, 377 Strand, who will also send collecting-cards.

## *Re* East London Excursion.

A three hours' beautiful drive from the Mile End Waste through the sylvan scenery of the forest to picturesque old Epping; musical accompaniments to cheer us on the way; a goodly number of the fair sex, with a fair sprinkling of budding little Freethinkers giving life and color to the jolly company; the very best of good cheer at the "Royal Oak," ending with a most delightful drive back home in the cool of the evening; account for the suspension of the propagandist work of our active saints of East London on Sunday last; and also for the way in which those worthies, on that occasion, did honor to the good old pagan festival, Sunday.

T. J. Thurlow.

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## BLESSED SAINT ANN.

THE important intelligence printed by the newspapers that "the novena of St. Ann in the church of St. John the Baptist is at an end," and that "many are the cures wrought by the relic of the great saint," should attract the attention of thoughtful persons. That the cures taking place in this church are miraculous is well known; it is to advertise the miracle-joint that they are mentioned by the press. They are brought about by the presence there of a glass case holding a piece of the wrist-bone of St. Ann. I have thought it worth while to look up the record of the lady in the case. During St. Ann's open season her miraculous cures are as common as those of Mrs. Lydia Pinkham, and large aggregations of discarded crutches, ear trumpets, wooden legs, patent trusses, braces, and glass eyes are piled alongside the relic for the astonishment of the faithful and for the benefit of the scoffer. You would think that in the course of time the church of St. John the Baptist would have a line of second-hand mechanical supports to sell or to burn; but we never hear of their being disposed of in that way. I suspect that they are kept from one year to another in the run under the altar, and roused out to do duty again when a novena comes on.

Comment has been caused by the fact that the parents and grandparents of Jesus Christ (or God) are kept far to the rear in the narrative of his exploits. If such a man should come to the front now, we would have pictures of the humble cottage where he lived when he was a boy, and the old folks of several generations sitting out in front under a catalpa tree. Although the hero of the gospels retained a number of Boswells near him to record his bright sayings and the choice scraps of profanity which he let fall anon, and also to preserve examples of his facility at repartee, the members of his family are about the same as ignored. His brothers and sisters, the sons and daughters of his ever-virgin mother, are accorded a single allusion; but that is apparently by mistake. Commentators have surmised that his relatives were shut out in order that the young man himself might more prominently occupy the stage, and that his managers did not wish to surround him with connections who would divide the attention of the spectators. If this is right, it may be inquired why they claimed for him such an over-shadowing Dad. Viewed as the only-begotten, he owes more to being the son of somebody than any man in the subsistence department of the United States army or on the staff of Fitzhugh Lee, and this is not barring Russ Harrison.

I think that St. Ann is unknown to the gospels, though I may be wrong and am open to correction. However, if the writers of the synoptics missed her, there were others, and Ann or Anna gets her dues at the hands of the genius who penned the Gospel of the Birth of Mary, an anonymous and so-called apocryphal contribution to religious literature, which the editors of the canon do not seem to have found available for their columns. Victor Hugo said that to reform a man you should begin with his grandmother. St. Ann was the grandmother of God. Hugo's thought was anticipated by the divine mind, for, though it is true that the genealogy of our Savior is traced to a number of women with a past, whose husbands might have brought suit for divorce and named an angel as co-respondent, Ann (or Anna) is the first of his forbears between whom and himself the common processes of generation do not come in. From Abraham, who was superseded in the affections of Sarah by one of those amphibious individuals called angels, down to Joachim, the husband of Anna, none of Christ's ancestors had to keep an eye aloft to protect the domestic hearth.

This Joachim was a native of Nazareth; Anna, a product of Bethlehem; and they were married to each other. Whether she was a wife in name only it is futile to inquire, but for twenty years they were without children, and Joachim's neighbors jollied him for all that length of time. He could not even go to meeting of a Sunday without having it thrown up to him that the women folks would like to see the doctor's carriage in front of his house. Some said he was afraid he would be expected to blow off the gang, and was too penurious to so spend his denarii. This got so tiresome after two decades that Joachim quit home, changed his name, and went to herding sheep on the range. "When he had been there some time," says his biographer, whose neglect of dates is to be regretted, "on a certain day when he was alone" he had an idea. The thought overtook him that perhaps he had been standing in his own light all these years, and that as likely as not his absence from home had enhanced his family prospects. The impression attained such strength that he put on his soft clothes, drew what was coming to him, and took the road for Jerusalem. When he hove in sight of the premises he had left, he saw Anna sitting on the stile, waiting for him or for somebody else, and the sight so reminded him of Judah's adventure on the way to Tinmath (see Genesis xxxviii. 14) that he felt a momentary pain. She gave him the glad hand, and, as they walked along together towards the house, Anna questioned Joachim, as a woman will, about his conduct while abroad; inquired if he had seen any nicer girls than she was, and what he thought of the women of Hualapi; but it is not chronicled that he gave anything away. When the proper moment arrived, she observed, as though this was the first time it had occurred to her, that she was the possessor of a piece of news, but didn't know whether she had better tell it or keep it to herself. Joachim said Hum, and waited. It was something, she went on, that he might not care to hear. Joachim said to himself: "I thought so. Now it is coming." Well (so Anna resumed), while he was away (and she didn't half believe him when he said he had been true to her—which, by the way, Joachim had not affirmed) a visitor from heaven had favored her with a call, a very agreeable party, resembling the holy men called priests, and had told her to keep a look-out at the gate for her husband, whom she was to assure, when he came, that he would in due time become a father in a truly miraculous way. Joey had heard of these things happening before, and so, suppressing the remark that the miracle would be more extraordinary if he should become a mother, he snored softly and feigned sleep, but did a whole lot of thinking at the same time. To forestall scoffing, and to set doubts of Anna's story at rest in advance, I will here quote a dogma of the Roman Church, proclaimed by Pope Pius IX. on the Feast of the Conception, December 8, 1854, in the church of St. Peter, and in the presence of more than two hundred cardinals, bishops, and other dignitaries, all sober, in these words: "That the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first moment of her conception, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Christ, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin." That settles it; and, besides, I have seen the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin on Lafayette-place. They named the kid Mary.

It is written in the Gospel of the Birth of Mary, whence, as said previously, I glean these statistics, that Mary was weaned at the age of three. Meanwhile Joachim hung around the house, and the angel stayed away. It is surmised he was a travelling man. Anna's angel instructed her that the child was to be devoted to the Lord. That meant she should be placed in an institution called a temple, which was accordingly done, and Mary, aged three years, became a virgin of the temple. A passage in the narrative, describing the bringing of her there, says: "And there were about the temple fifteen stairs to ascend. The virgin of the Lord in such a manner went up all the stairs one after another, without the help of any to lead or lift her, that anyone would have judged from hence that she was of perfect age. Thus the Lord did, in the infancy of his virgin, work this extraordinary work, and evidence by this miracle how great was she like to be hereafter." I see little to be gathered from this except that, if nothing happened to arrest the development of her pins, the girl would some day be able to make a wheel hum, and to wear appropriate clothes, in serene confidence that she was above criticism. The temple where Mary now took up her residence was the home of numerous other girls, and here also the priests appear to have been domiciled. The rules of the establishment required that when the girls reached "a proper maturity" they were to return home and obtain husbands, and for fear any of them might fail of immediate espousal the priests kindly acted as schatchens, and found a young man for each one of them. In this way did the holy men provide that the wedding and christening should come in their right order. Mary at fifteen became the bride of Joseph, a man far advanced in years. To her also, as to her mother, came an angel to advise her what she should say to her husband in case he inquired; and when Joachim heard of it, he observed: "This thing appears to run in the family." It was the fortune of Mary to rear a son

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who was one day to return to this temple where the priests "sold doves" (somewhat soiled) and "oxen" (a euphemism), and clean it out. Probably his raid was made on the strength of her evidence. Nothing like that which happened to Anna and her daughter has happened to any wife or maid since that time; and this is what makes their relics so unique, and their history so interesting.

—*New York "Truthseeker."* G. E. MACDONALD.

## BOOK CHAT.

BOOKSELLERS' catalogues often contain food for mirth, and the trade journals keep us from becoming too sad. In one of the latter, dated August 13, occurs the following among the books asked for:—"Shelley's Works, by Formans." Such is fame. Mr. H. Buxton Forman has devoted a good portion of a useful life to the elucidation of Shelley's poems, and his reward is to be referred to as "Formans."

* * *

This recalls Byron's savage sneer, that military glory meant that one manured a foreign field and had one's name spelt wrong in the gazette.

* * *

We are delighted to see that Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein and Co. have published another edition of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, translated by "George Eliot." The present is a bulky volume of nearly 800 pages, and is issued at 15s. Despite the sneers of the orthodox, Strauss is by no means obsolete, and his book is much more satisfactory for the student than the more brilliant *Life of Jesus* by Ernest Renan.

* * *

For the benefit of those of our readers who are not millionaires, we may mention that Strauss's book is by no means uncommon in second-hand bookshops, where copies usually fetch about eight shillings, if in good condition. It is pleasant to reflect that the book must still have a ready sale to be at all in evidence among the second-hand dealers.

* * *

Mr. Geoffrey Mortimer has published several short stories in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* recently. It is gratifying to find that Mr. Mortimer's fine talents are appreciated by the editor of the paper with the largest circulation in the world. The million or so readers might do worse than buy the books of the author of *Tales of the Western Moors*.

* * *

Walt Whitman is without question one of the greatest figures in American literature. He completely broke with the past, and no longer contented himself, like the Longfellows, Bryants, and Whittiers, with being the sedulous ape to European poets. Whatever American literature may ultimately become, he must ever remain the pioneer of the distinctive New World literature. We therefore welcome the new, cheap, and complete edition of his poems issued by G. P. Putnam's Sons, Bedford-street, Strand, at 2s. net.

* * *

Until recently *unexpurgated* editions of Whitman used to fetch as much as 15s. second-hand. We fear we have said almost enough to induce Detective Sweeney to take a copy to bed with him, but we have every reason to believe that it is only *scientific* works which can demoralise a policeman.

* * *

To those of our readers who are unacquainted with Whitman, we recommend Colonel Ingersoll's pamphlet on the American poet, which, besides being a most eloquent oration, is a most illuminative piece of criticism.

* * *

Mr. George Meredith's novels were the subject of an article in the *Harvard Monthly* for June, 1887. The writer sent it to Mr. Meredith, who promptly replied in a very interesting letter, which was recently read at the annual dinner of the magazine. We reproduce the letter for the benefit of the Meredithians among our own readers:—

England—Box Hill, Dorking.
July 22, 1887.

MY DEAR SIR,—When at the conclusion of your article on my works you say that a certain change in public taste, should it come about, will be to some extent due to me, you hand me the flowering wreath I covet. For I think that all right use of life, and the one secret of life, is to pave ways for the firmer footing of those who succeed us; and, as to my works, I know them faulty, think them of worth only where they point and aid to that end. Close knowledge of our fellows, discernment of the laws of existence, these lead to great civilisation. I have supposed that the novel, exposing and illustrating the natural history of man, may help us to such sustaining roadside gifts. But I have never started on a novel to pursue the theory it developed. The dominant idea in my mind took up the characters and the story midway. You say that there are few scenes. Is it so throughout? My method has been to prepare my readers for a crucial exhibition of the personæ, and then to give the scene in the fullest of their blood and brain under stress of a fiery situation.

Concerning style, thought is tough, and dealing with thought produces toughness. Or when strong emotion is in tide against the active mind, there is, perforce, confusion. Have you found that scenes of simple emotion or plain narrative were hard to view? When their author revised for the new edition his critical judgment approved those passages. Yet you are not to imagine that he holds his opinion combatively against his critics. The verdict is with the observer. In the comedies, and here and there, where a concentrated presentment is in design, you find a "pitch" considerably above our common human; and purposely, for only in such a manner could so much be shown. Thus my notes and condensations are abandoned when the strong human call is heard. I beg you to understand merely that such was my intention.

Again, when you tell me the Harvard has the works, and that young Harvard reads them, the news is of a kind to prompt me to fresh productiveness and higher. In England I am encouraged but by a few enthusiasts. I read in the *Critical Review* of some verse of mine the other day that I was "a harlequin and performer of antics." I am accustomed to the kind of writing, as our hustings orator is to the dead cat and brickbat flung in his face—at which he smiles politely; and I too; but after many years of it, my mind looks elsewhere. Adieu to you.—Most faithfully yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

* * *

According to Mr. Carlyle Smith, in the *Pall Mall Magazine*, Mark Twain's literary preferences are "entirely serious." The only poet he cares for is Browning. Good heavens! Who would have thought it? In prose, we are told, he reads "anything that is clean and healthy." Yet he has never been interested in a single line of Thackeray, he does not in the least appreciate Goldsmith and Addison, and "Meredith provokes him to laughter." It really looks as though Mark Twain had been playing the humorist with Mr. Carlyle Smith.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### ATHEISM, AGNOSTICISM, AND MR. CHARLES WATTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I read with astonishment Mr. Charles Watts's article on "Atheism and Agnosticism" in the August number of the *Literary Guide*; I have also read, with disappointment, his "Explanation" in the *Freethinker* in reply to the "Book Chat" note in your issue of the 7th, in which you criticise the article.

Mr. Watts's explanation does not satisfy me, and I venture to think that many others share my dissatisfaction. Mr. Watts's position does not appear to me to be logical, and there are several points in his article and explanation which I should like him to make more clear.

To some it may seem presumptuous on the part of a young Freethought recruit to criticise one who is an experienced general in our ranks, but I feel sure that Mr. Watts is too generous-minded and genial-spirited to stifle sincere desire for information by stigmatising it as impudence.

As Mr. Watts states in his article, "in these days precision, both of thought and expression, is expected on the part of those who write for, or speak to, the public"; but, at present, it appears to me that, adhering to that standard of precision, which, as a rule, characterises Mr. Watts's writings, reconciliation between his article and his explanation would be a difficult task.

The following are some of the apparently contradictory statements of Mr. Watts's which, to my mind, are most perplexing:—

1. Mr. Watts designates himself in the *Freethinker* an "Agnostic." He says in the *Literary Guide:* "It becomes .....almost a necessity for those who choose to designate themselves Agnostics to explain their position, and to vindicate their use of the word so as to set themselves right with the public, and avoid being called by a name [Atheist] to which they object, upon the ground that it does not clearly express their views." Yet, in the *Freethinker*, Mr. Watts, the Agnostic, also says, "I am a pronounced Atheist," which, surely, can hardly be considered an effective way of setting one's self "right with the public"; nor is it, I submit, the proper policy to adopt in order to avoid being called by a name to which one objects.

2. In his article Mr. Watts asserts that the two "isms" are not identical in their signification. In his explanation Mr. Watts defines an Atheist as one who has "no belief in the existence of any 'God,'" and an Agnostic as one who knows "nothing of the alleged supernatural." Is not this a

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distinction without a difference? Is not disbelief in "God" disbelief in the "alleged supernatural"?

3. Mr. Watts writes in the *Literary Guide*: "It is true the judicious Atheist may not assert in so many words that there is no God; but from the whole of his teaching that is the legitimate inference to be drawn." In the *Freeethinker* Mr. Watts writes: "I have, ever since I accepted the Atheistic position, regarded it to be equally dogmatic to affirm or to deny that of which we know nothing." Would it be fair to Mr. Watts to say that the legitimate inference to be drawn from the latter quotation was that there is no God; only that Mr. Watts, as a judicious Atheist, had not in so many words asserted it?

4. Mr. Watts declares in his article that when the Atheist "positively denies" the existence of a God portrayed in "terms which no human mind can grasp," and which are "unthinkable," a being whose existence is not "susceptible of proof," he is as unphilosophical as the Theist who positively asserts the existence of such a God. If a person positively asserts the meaningless formula, 2 + 2 = 5, is the mental attitude of the individual who positively denies the assertion to be characterised as unphilosophical? Or would it be more philosophical and judicious to neither deny nor affirm anything about the matter, and say "I do not know"? And is the illogical position of the Theist who defines God as a personal, infinite being, a term "meaningless" and "unthinkable," shared by the Atheist who denies that a God so defined could exist?

5. In the *Literary Guide* Mr. Watts affirms: "The dogmatism both of the Theist and the Atheist the Agnostic eschews, seeing that both are tacitly claiming to have some sort of a conception of the inconceivable, and thoughts of the unthinkable." But, in the *Freethinker*, Mr. Watts affirms, as I have previously quoted above: "I have, ever since I accepted the Atheistic position, regarded it to be equally dogmatic either to affirm or to deny that of which we know nothing." In the one quotation the person who accepts the Atheistic position possesses "dogmatism"; in the other quotation the Atheist is one who regards it as equally dogmatic to affirm or to deny "God"—a position which, according to Mr. Watts's article, is the very point upon which the Agnostic "claims to differ from the Atheist." It is difficult to see how the two statements can be harmonised; they utterly destroy the distinction which Mr. Watts has been trying to show exists between the Atheist and the Agnostic. Mr. Watts will forgive me, I hope, for not being able to resist the temptation to say that the reader will *not*, as he states in his article, "be able to decide for himself which is the more logical position"; unless, like Mr. Watts, he accepts *both* positions.

In his explanation Mr. Watts writes: "Unfortunately, the article is not printed exactly as it was written. I regret that several words which were intended to explain my object in writing were inadvertently omitted." Of course one can easily understand how a misfortune of that kind might occur, but I must confess that I cannot understand Mr. Watts when he further writes: "It was my intention, while not objecting to the use of either term, to state what is supposed by some persons to be the difference between Atheism and Agnosticism." Who are the "some persons"? Theists, Atheists, or Agnostics? Does the article represent Mr. Watts's ideas about Atheism and Agnosticism, or does it not? And, if not, I respectfully ask, What is the utility of an article which states what is "*supposed* by *some persons*" to be the difference between Atheism and Agnosticism, if it does not represent the views of leading Atheists and Agnostics, but the erroneous opinions of "comparatively unknown" persons?

I do hope that a further explanation from Mr. Watts, with the missing words, will appear in the next number of the *Literary Guide*, as many persons will read the article there who do not see the *Freethinker*. It would be a pity if the position of a prominent Secular leader like Mr. Watts on this question was misunderstood, and his article used by unscrupulous Christian Evidence lecturers to keep alive the mistaken idea, denied by almost every Atheist of any note, that an Atheist is one who says "There is no God."

H. Percy Ward.

## FLOGGING CERTAIN CRIMINALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I am at a loss to understand why Mr. Joseph Collinson pitches into Mr. Justice Day in your paper of August 14. As I take it, rape is a serious offence, although sometimes a question of degree, and for which the judges do not possess the power of flogging; but I have no doubt that learned judge knew the sort of case with which he had to deal, as well as being able to discern the sort of gentleman he was dealing with. Some years ago I was on the petty jury at Winchester, where two cases of rape came before us. The judge was Baron Huddlestone, a most irritable old gentleman. One was where a young fellow met a girl in a lonely spot, threw her down, and committed the offence. Fifteen years was his reward. The other where a brazen-faced girl attended a fair, and consented to go off with a young fellow, who committed the offence. We stopped the case. Rape is an offence against the person, and I have no doubt the prisoner before Mr. Justice Day deserved it, or you may depend he would not have made the remark. Does Mr. Collinson wish to do away with flogging for any sort of offence committed against the person? Well, as a Freethinker and a constant reader of your paper, I totally differ from Mr. Collinson; and as the mention of the word Hooligan is suggestive of a class who do not stop at daylight murder, and whose victims have done them no injury, I convey to the non-flogging champion, Mr. Collinson, that, were I a judge, and either of these gentlemen appeared before me, I should give them all the elbow room the law allowed, and even stretch it, so that this game may be stopped. Flogging is the only cure. I do not think there is much the matter with the sentences passed by our judges, and, if there were, these sentences are carefully revised, and, if deemed prudent, the Home Secretary could step in at any time and remit; but I feel sure it will be a long time before Mr. Collinson could get the Home Secretary in the mood to remit any flogging for crime committed against the person, highway robbery with violence, and others for which that punishment is provided. In fact, the outlook points to the need of our judges ordering more flogging, whether Mr. Justice Day or either of them, before the outrageous offences which have lately been perpetrated in our large towns are stamped out. Flogging is a safer cure than long terms of imprisonment or penal servitude for these crimes, whilst the first suggestion does not deprive them of their reason, a fact which the latter in many cases often does. Criminal lunatics are certainly on the increase.

Charles Parmeter.

## MORAL INSTRUCTION AND THE BIBLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—With one or two brief statements I think I shall have closed my case against Mr. Cohen.

I want the teacher to be allowed the use of any book which he pleases to choose as a source of illustrations, and I do this on the principle of freedom of thought. I will not consent to boycott the Bible, any more than I would consent to boycott Paine's *Age of Reason*.

I cannot understand what Mr. Cohen means by speaking of the Bible being placed in the teacher's hands on "official recommendation." I do not want a School Board or the Education Department to "recommend" the use of the Bible. I want the authorities to lay a certain syllabus of instruction (veracity, justice, kindness, etc.) before the teacher and say to him: "Teach that, and draw your illustrations from any book you like."

Mr. Cohen fastens on my statement, that the lessons given under the Education Department are thoroughly secular. So they are thoroughly secular; but there is nothing to prevent any teacher from making reference to any Bible story in a non-theological sense. No Government inspector forbids it, or would dare to forbid it.

If Mr. Cohen asks what I mean by reference to any Bible story in a non-theological sense, I will refer him to the columns of the *Freethinker*. In an editorial article a fortnight ago on the death of Bismarck you did the very thing I want the ordinary elementary school teacher—Christian or Atheist—to be permitted to do. You were speaking of the pathos and the solemnity of the voice of mourning, and you drew your illustrations from many literary sources. In the annexed paragraph you have selected an illustration from the Bible side by side with an illustration from Roman history:—

"Standing out against all the bloody villainies of David is his grief over his favorite child. 'Oh Absalom, my son, my son; would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.' And through all the tumultuous glories of Rome, and the shouts of her legions, and the ring of their swords on hostile helmets, pierces the musical wail of Catallus over his dead brother—a note of immortal love and grief that will find an echo in human hearts for ever."

Now, there is the point. Is such a use of the Bible to be right in the *Freethinker*, and wrong in the nation's schools?

F. J. Gould.

## 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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## 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 (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, F. W. Mussett's Dramatic Company.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, A lecture.

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.30, Freethought Demonstration, addressed by Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, Moss, and Heaford.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones. Peckham Rye: 3.15, R. P. Edwards.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, E. Pack; 7, A lecture. August 31, at 8, C. Cohen.

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Slavery."

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7 15, Stanley Jones.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH: (Fleet-road, corner of Downshire-hill): 7.15, R. P. Edwards, "What must I Do to be Saved?"

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Davis, "Meaning of Atheism"; 3.15, Stanley Jones.

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7.15, A lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, C. Cohen.

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. August 30, at 8, Stanley Jones.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "The Third Commandment."

**COUNTRY.**

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The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XVIII.—No. 36. SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1898. PRICE TWOPENCE.

## A PRIZE BIGOT.

THERE have been "scenes" of late on Peckham Rye. The space set aside by the London County Council for public speaking has been utilised by the Secularists, who have held meetings there in common with other political, social, and religious bodies. Unfortunately, as some Christians think, these Secular meetings have been highly successful. Crowds of people have listened to the Freethought lecturers, and the seeds of scepticism and free inquiry have been sown in many minds. This is naturally irritating to the orthodox, and it is not astonishing that desperate efforts have been made by the baser sort of Christians to break up the Secular meetings by disorder, and even by violence. Such tactics, however, are pretty sure to fail. In the first place, Secularists are not easily frightened; and, in the second place, there are policemen about with instructions to restrain those who commit or provoke a breach of the peace. It must be admitted that the police are acting impartially. They have repeatedly warned off rowdy Christians who molested the Secularists, and only the other day they arrested a Christian ruffian whose conduct had long been intolerable. This fellow is an ex-gaol bird, and is therefore considered by some of the orthodox as a particularly excellent soldier of Christ. He is flatteringly described in the *South London Mail* as "an active and eloquent champion of the Christian Evidence Society." We leave it to Messrs. Engström and Waterman to disown his connection with that body; but as to his eloquence, we may remark that he tried it upon a London magistrate a few years ago, yet it did not save him from imprisonment as a convicted criminal.

We do not intend to waste our time over this wretched creature. We have to fly at higher game. In our last issue we referred to the bigoted article in the *South London Mail*, calling upon the authorities to stop the Secular meetings by prosecuting the speakers for "blasphemy," and obliquely inciting the Christians to resort to physical violence against the Secularists. We have now to observe that the *Mail* returns to the charge with added fanaticism. The writer—presumably the editor—no doubt regards himself as a vigorous journalist. He is certainly vehement, his style is very turgid, and his English often ungrammatical. His adjectives and adverbs pullulate like a small-pox eruption. He is a master of the forcible-feeble kind of composition. A multiplicity of words ekes out the paucity of meaning. Apathy must be indifferent, and indifference must be apathetic; but this writer is dissatisfied with anything short of the pleonasm of "apathetic indifference." Perhaps his clients think it marvellously fine writing; it is, however, nothing but a vulgar display of pompous illiteracy.

This new article of his, like the former one, abounds in riotous abuse. "Blasphemous utterances," "traffickers in profanities and obscenities," "poison of infidelity," "pestilent Freethinkers," "obscene tirades"—these are a few haphazard specimens from his budget of vituperation. Perhaps he is a half-pay clergyman; anyhow, he seems to be a faithful student of the Bible, which is a perfect text-book of controversial Billingsgate. Nothing equals it in the vocabulary of malediction and imprecation.

The editor of the *Mail* refers to the Bible, but does not mention it. He treats it as the Jews do the ineffable name of Jehovah. He calls it "the Book," or "the Book of the Sacred Law." To him it is a sacred fetish, which must be approached with fear and trembling, and only touched by consecrated hands. Those who presume to handle it without warrant, or in a rational spirit, deserve the fate of Uzzah, and he would delight to see them suffer it. "This is *our* book," he says in substance to all Freethinkers, "and touch it if you dare. Criticise *it* and you insult *us*. We won't have it questioned. It is not to be examined, but accepted. And if you can't do that, go and hang yourselves; or if you object to suicide, come to us for your quietus, which we shall be happy to give you with the promptest dispatch."

One aspect of the *Mail* man's solicitude is positively touching. He is quiveringly anxious about the "children." He does not mind their reading all the filth of the Bible; on the contrary, he thinks there is nothing better to train them in modesty and purity. What he contends is, that they have a right to walk on Peckham Rye without the danger of hearing the "pernicious teachings" of Secularism. A terrible risk indeed! Something ought to be done to protect these young innocents. Fancy what would happen if they learnt that the whole human race is not in peril of everlasting damnation because two persons, who never existed, ate an apple between them. Their whole moral nature would be immediately corrupted. They would lie, and swear, and steal, and go to the Devil generally, and perhaps end their days in the prison or on the gallows. Yes, the children must be safeguarded. The editor of the *Mail* says so. From experience, personal and otherwise, he knows the natural turpitude of the human heart. He is thoroughly assured that veracity is impossible unless children are trained to revere a book which approves of lying for the glory of God; that decency is impossible unless they are compelled to read laws against unnatural offences, and beautiful stories such as that of Lot and his daughters, Judah and Tamar, the Levite and his concubine, and Gabriel and Mary; that honesty is impossible without a profound study of the life of David; that humanity is impossible without a complete knowledge of the holy wars of the Jews; and that chastity is impossible without an intimate acquaintance with the continence of Solomon, and the wifely fidelity of his mother, Bathsheba. For these reasons he demands that South London children shall not be exposed to the awful danger of hearing that the Bible is not a proper handbook of ethics, that morality is based upon the welfare of human society, that it is right to promote the happiness of others and wrong to do anything that conduces to their misery.

But how are these Secular meetings to be stopped? That is the question. Violence has failed, and "the active and eloquent champion of the Christian Evidence Society" has been taught the folly (and risks) of it by the magistrate. The editor of the *Mail* evidently regrets this lame and impotent conclusion. Nevertheless he cannot alter it, and he therefore admits, however reluctantly, that there is no remedy in "physical force." Nor does he expect much from the authorities, who are so blind to their Christian duties that they rest satisfied with keeping the peace. No disposition is shown by them to prosecute the Secularists for "blasphemy," but "prosecution for blasphemy by public subscription may drive them into their holes." Never mind the law of Maintenance—"the public must take care of itself." Yes, but the public does not appear to be very enthusiastic in this matter. The editor of the *Mail* is really speaking for himself and a handful of similar-minded bigots. Still, if the public-subscription policy fails, there is no reason why the editor of the *Mail* should not take action himself. Perhaps it is hardly correct to



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say "*no* reason," for a bigot is generally a person who likes to gratify his prejudices at other people's expense. If he assisted at the burning of a heretic, he would hand round the bag for donations towards the cost of his own bundle of faggots. But if the editor of the *Mail* is above such sordid considerations, let him start a blasphemy prosecution himself. He poses as the guardian of Christianity in South London, and, although self-elected to the office, he should try to fulfil its obligations. We do not choose to tell him how to proceed. He can find it out by paying a solicitor for the information. Instead of bleating like a frightened sheep, let him try to roar like a furious lion, even if he only succeeds in rivalling Bottom the weaver. Better still, let him try to develop claws and fangs; or, to put it on the level of his intelligence, let him bell the cat himself; so that, when half the Secular lecturers of London are in gaol, he will be able to say: "Alone I did it." Meanwhile, the Secularists will await his onset with equanimity. On the whole, they would rather see him come out in the open, instead of skulking behind the barriers of anonymous journalism. The public would then be able to gaze upon the form and features of this Bayard of the faith, and perhaps acclaim him as the very forerunner of the long-expected Messiah.

We invite this pious gentleman to begin business. He will have ample opportunity for a start this afternoon (Sunday, September 4), when a great Freethought Demonstration will be held on Peckham Rye, and addressed by the leaders of Secularism.

G. W. FOOTE.

## ATHEISM AND AGNOSTICISM.

In the August number of the *Literary Guide* there appeared an article of mine under the above heading to which my friend Mr. Percy Ward takes exception. His criticisms of my statements were printed in last week's *Freethinker*. The principal object which he appears to me to have had in view when writing his letter was to show wherein he considered that I had contradicted myself, and where my position as stated in my article was an illogical one. How far he is right in his views may be presently seen. But here I desire to assure my friend that, in my opinion, it is no presumption upon his part to criticise any of my writings. I make no claim to infallibility, and therefore it is always a pleasure to me to be set right when it is shown I am wrong. In this case, however, I fail to see that I am wrong. Of course, this may be in consequence of my mental inaptitude, or it may be the result of my friend being in a state of "astonishment" and dissatisfaction, which might have interfered with his "precision, both of thought and expression." But of that the reader will be the better judge.

Before noticing the five points upon which Mr. Ward desires further information or explanation it may be an advantage to repeat that the object of my article was to state the Atheistic and the Agnostic positions, and also to indicate wherein they differ. Now, it must not be overlooked that there are two classes of Atheists, the negative and the affirmative. Upon this subject Mr. George Jacob Holyoake writes: "Affirmative Atheism of the intellect is a proud, honest, intrepid, self-respecting attitude of the mind. The negative Atheism of mere ignorance," etc., etc., is a "species of Atheism I recognise only to disown and denounce" (*Trial of Theism*, p. 244). Fortunately, negative (dogmatic) Atheism is rapidly disappearing, although, as I mentioned in my "Explanation" (see *Freethinker*, August 14), I still meet some who believe in it. It is true that all the *leading* Atheists of to-day agree with Mr. Bradlaugh, who said: "I do not deny God, because I cannot deny that of which I have no conception."

In my statement of the meaning of Agnosticism my remarks were based upon Professor Huxley's definition, which amounts to this, that "nothing is known beyond phenomena," and that "a man shall not say he knows or believes that for which he has no scientific ground for professing to know or believe." Now, so far as my article is concerned (and that is the only subject under consideration here), it is not which of these theories is the true one, but rather, is my statement of them correct? In the article itself I remark: "It will be seen that in this article our object has not been to favor either Atheism or Agnosticism, but rather to indicate what the two terms represent, and wherein they differ." I hope this is sufficiently clear for Mr. Ward, and that, so far as it goes, it will "satisfy" him. My own views will be made apparent, I hope, further on.

Mr. Ward seems to take exception to my allegation that some persons suppose there is a difference between Agnosticism and Atheism, and he asks: "Who are the 'some persons'? Theists, Atheists, or Agnostics? Does the article represent Mr. Watts's ideas about Atheism or Agnosticism, or does it not? And, if not, I respectfully ask, What is the utility of an article which states what is '*supposed* by *some persons*' to be the difference between Atheism and Agnosticism, if it does not represent the views of leading Atheists and Agnostics, but of 'comparatively unknown' persons?" Now I have not used the phrase "comparatively unknown" in reference to persons who recognise a difference between Atheism and Agnosticism, but to those who openly avow their denial of the existence of God. This (unintentional, of course) misrepresentation of my writing does not fill me with "astonishment," although I confess to a little "disappointment" that one who criticises another should be so careless himself. Writers who are by no means unknown have held the opinion I have here stated. Dr. Bithell writes thus: "When we hear writers of repute confounding Atheism, Positivism, and Agnosticism in one category as essentially alike, though differing in name; . . . it is certainly incumbent on those who value the truth to come forward and put these purblind babblers in the right." Samuel Laing also states: "We may frankly acknowledge that the real essence and origin of things are 'behind the veil,' and not knowable, or even conceivable, by any faculties by which the human mind is endowed in its present state of existence. This is Agnosticism. There is one other conception of which we may certainly say that it is not true—that is, Atheism" (*Modern Science and Modern Thought*, p. 71). In his pamphlet, *Is there a God?* Mr. Bradlaugh says: "If, however, God is affirmed to represent an existence which is distinct from the existence of which I am a mode, and which, it is alleged, is not the *noumenon* of which the word 'I' represents only a speciality of *phenomena*, then I deny 'God,' and affirm that it is impossible 'God' can be. That is, I affirm that there is one existence, and deny that there can be more than one" (p. 2). This is Atheism; but Professor Huxley, the Agnostic, argues that there *may* be something beyond, and Herbert Spencer observes: "At the utmost reach of discovery there arises, and must ever arise, the question, What lies beyond?" Samuel Laing, in speaking of the "wonderful universe of worlds that has been evolved by inevitable laws," says: "What are they in their essence, and what do they mean? It is 'behind the veil,' and may be anything. Spirit may be matter, matter may be spirit." Thus, while Atheism and Agnosticism may be regarded as practically the same in their rejection of Theism, they differ upon several minor points. For instance, Atheism, according to Mr. Bradlaugh, alleges there is but one existence, and denies "that there can be more than one." Agnosticism makes no such statement, but admits the possibility of other existences. Atheism assumes the eternity of matter; Agnosticism has nothing to say either *pro* or *con*. Atheism regards phenomena as a part of the one existence; Agnosticism says there *may be* some other existence behind it, but what that existence may be we cannot tell. As I stated in my article: The Atheist can see no reason for believing in any God whatever; on the contrary, to him the existence of such a being seems impossible. The Agnostic believes that "the power which the universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable," and, consequently, he professes neither belief nor disbelief with regard to its nature or its attributes. To him it is unimportant by what name it is known; the thing itself—that is, the power in the universe—can never become an object of human thought. The difference between the Atheist and the Agnostic may be put thus: Is there a God? Theist: "Yes." Atheist and Agnostic: "We do not know." Is the universe infinite and eternal? Atheist: "That is my opinion." Agnostic: "I do not know." Is matter the cause of all phenomena? Atheist: "I think so." Agnostic: "I do not know."

I now come to my five statements, which, to Mr. Ward's mind, "are most perplexing." For the sake of brevity, the reader is asked to study them one by one, as Mr.

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Ward has put them in his letter, and then note my reply thereto.

1. I am both an Agnostic and an Atheist upon the questions of the existence of God and a future life. Apart from these subjects, Atheism appears to me to be the more logical of the two.

2. The two phrases *are* "a distinction without a difference," and, therefore, they are not, as Mr. Ward asserts, a contradiction. The two "isms," as I have already alleged, are practically alike so far as disbelief in God is concerned.

3. It is quite true that I regard it as equally dogmatic either to affirm or to deny that of which nothing is known, and yet I may *infer* there is no God. Inference is not denial. This is *not* "a distinction without a difference."

4. Mr. Ward here asks: "If a person positively asserts the meaningless formula $2+2=5$, is the mental attitude of the individual who positively denies the assertion to be characterised as unphilosophical? Or would it be more philosophical and judicious to neither deny nor affirm anything about the matter, and say 'I do not know'? And is the illogical position of the Theist who defines God as a personal infinite being, a term 'meaningless' and 'unthinkable,' shared by the Atheist who denies that a God so defined could exist?" The first question bears no analogy to the problems under consideration; for the reason that the science of arithmetic gives us an undeniable answer to the "meaningless formula"; but we have no means of obtaining a similar reply to the question, Does God exist? Therefore I should deem it both injudicious and unphilosophical to answer the arithmetical query by saying, "I do not know." The second question submitted in this paragraph I answered in my article by saying: "The Atheist does not admit that, in practically denying the existence of God, he is guilty of the same fault which he charges upon the Theist—that of attempting to bring such a being into human conception; that is, of holding that the infinite can be comprehended by the finite. God, as portrayed by philosophical believers, is eternal in duration and infinite in extent—terms which no human mind can grasp; they are really unthinkable. The positive assertion that such a being exists is deemed by the Atheist as a reckless piece of dogmatism, because it is not susceptible of proof, and it cannot be even clearly thought of. In a word, the *terms* convey no definite idea, and hence the words used are meaningless."

5. I fail to see that the two statements I made—the one in the *Literary Guide*, and the other in the *Freethinker*—are not in harmony. In the one case I referred to the dogmatism of the Atheist who positively denies the existence of God, and in the other case I simply recorded my opinion that such positive denial is as dogmatic as the positive affirmation of God's existence. These two statements in no way destroy the distinction I drew between Atheism and Agnosticism.

I have now answered Mr. Ward as fully as the space at my command will allow, and I hope that this friendly criticism will tend to enhance the truth we both have at heart.

CHARLES WATTS.

## OUGHT WE TO BE NEUTRAL?

SOMETIMES I notice a disposition among a very good set of people to adopt a position of neutrality with regard to Christianity and Freethought. They say it does not matter what a man believes or disbelieves; we must go by a man's deeds, not his words: if good social results are obtained, we need not concern ourselves with the religion or non-religion that lies behind; and hence, if questions are put to us as to our religious opinions, we may decline to answer.

This sounds logical. It looks fair. It commends itself to the peace-loving person who regards all opinions about the universe as a sort of inconvenient lumber which had better be hidden away in order to avoid disputes.

Does it matter what theories we hold? Now, there may come a time when men will have such a hold upon the facts of nature, and have brought the results of experience to such a practical method of life, that theory will be very much pushed into the background. We have not reached that stage. Our conduct is still largely swayed by theory. Are you a monarchist? I know what you are likely to do on Jubilee days, or occasions of royal visits to your town, or when grants to the Royal Family are debated in the House of Commons. Are you are a believer in the beneficial action of drugs? I know your attitude towards the physician, towards vaccination, towards Pasteurism, and the like. Are you a social democrat? I know what you will say about the proletariat, the capitalist, the landowner. And thus, like so many good or evil spirits, theories float over the world, and move men to action, to heroism, or to fury. I think every man should take a definite stand with regard to social and intellectual theory. Either we should vote for this or that theory, or have clear reasons for dissent. We ought to say whether we are for or against. Our responsibility to society demands that we each play our part as advocate, or opponent, or critic. The indifferent man is a traitor to the commonwealth. He who lounges aloof from the battle is as bad as a deserter.

In reality, a theory which is sincerely held is itself a deed; for it is the mother of a thousand deeds. It supplies the directing thought. It maps out our conduct. It gives the plan to a long succession of words and acts. It is, therefore, an idle excuse to say that theory is only dream and speculation, and may be concealed as a thing of no account. If a man comes into our house or our company, we have a right to know his business. If a man mingles in the work of the commonwealth, we have a right to know his spring of action. It is a part of good manners that a man should say what is his spiritual nationality, what cause he represents, and whither he is bound. If we meet a man who carefully avoids all reference to his work, his objects, or his family, we suspect him. We have no right to pry into his private affairs, but we expect him to tell us enough to explain his relation to the world in general and ourselves in particular.

Now I come to the special point which I have had in view all along. The Christian theory is the popular theory. It governs modern life nominally, and sometimes really. This Christian theory has fallen under suspicion. There is a minority of heretics, so earnest and so thoughtful that even the Church does not despise them. The issue is more and more pressed upon the attention of the world, Is the Christian theory true or false? It is alleged—I allege it; all Freethinkers allege it—that the Christian sacred literature rests upon false claims. It is alleged that the Bible is not the Word of God; that the reputed authors of many of its books were not the real authors; that the origin of these documents was quite different in character from what the Christian Church declares; that the "miracles" are only legends, and the theism only a primitive conception of nature which science is superseding. It is alleged, also, that the Christian theory does not assist us to meet the conditions of modern life; that its doctrines of prayer and atonement do not console or redeem; and that its hopes do not inspire us to labor for social regeneration. In my opinion—in the opinion of an increasing circle of thinking men and women—the Christian theory fails. It is not an asset. It is a bad debt. It must be written off the books.

Will any honest man tell me it is of no consequence whether he calls himself a Christian or not? Will he say his concern is with things more important, with bread, with clothing, with employment, with wage earning, with education? No; he has no right to dodge round the bushes. He ought to come out into the open. Is he, or is he not, a Christian? Is he, or is he not, an Atheist or Agnostic?

I will adduce another reason for plain speech. Heresy has been persecuted; heresy is the badge of the untitled few; heresy lines not the purse; heresy wears the crown of thorns; and therefore heresy implies a moral purpose—and moral purpose is the salt of life. How, then, can any man of integrity pretend that heresy lies beyond the scope of his serious thought? How can he say that he has more important things to pursue? How dare he, while his brother struggles with prejudice and unreason, pass by on the other side, and not join in the magnificent rebellion? I do not understand this velvet philanthropy which will not soil its fingers with the touch of heresy. I do not understand the ideal of life which takes no account of intellectual dignity, which provides food, and wages, and recreation, and yet omits care for the instinct of liberty. To me the power of protest against a crooked and unworthy philosophy is as much a necessary of life as bread.

Of course, discretion is part of the equipment of a propagandist. The unbeliever in Christianity need not carry atheism into every railway carriage, or worry the family

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circle every day with observations on the defects of the Church, or mingle Biblical criticism with the amenities of wedding breakfasts. There is, as the Jewish moralist remarked, a time for everything. There is a time to suppress controversy. But there is also a time for self-revelation. There is a time to declare which cause we follow, which king we serve. There is a time when every right-minded man should profess, in the language of the people, his opinion on great religious issues. I do not ask that he should call himself Sceptic in such a way as to lead his neighbors to suppose the label Sceptic covers his whole character. If that were the case, his scepticism would be worth nothing. But it is not likely to be the case. He who entertains a genuine objection to the Christian creed, and says so in honorable English, will probably be straightforward in other departments of thought and practice. He whose warp is honest will almost certainly not cheat in the woof. F. J. GOULD.

## JOSEPHUS AND THE GOSPELS.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

*(Concluded from page 549.)*

IF we consider the utter improbability that Luke or any other Christian writer in the second century should possess such accurate knowledge of the proceedings within the Sanhedrin as to be able to give, word for word, Gamaliel's speech as it was spoken, we shall probably conclude that it, like so much else in the narrative, is a concoction. That the account in the Acts of the Apostles is utterly untrustworthy, and, moreover, founded on events narrated by Josephus, is evident from the reference to Theudas, which involves a double mistake.

Gamaliel is made to say that before the time of Judas of Galilee there rose up Theudas, "boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought." Now Josephus mentions this Theudas (*Antiq.*, bk. xx., chap. 5, sec. 6). He, like so many others at that time, was an impostor, calling himself a prophet. He persuaded a number to follow him to the river Jordan, telling them that he would, by his own command, divide the river and afford them an easy passage over it. The Roman procurator, Fadus, sent a troop of horsemen against them, who killed many and took the rest prisoners. (Four hundred are mentioned afterwards as slain in another rising.) The head of Theudas was cut off and sent to Jerusalem. But this Theudas lived more than a generation after Judas, for Fadus was procurator of Judea in the days of Claudius Cæsar. The discrepancy between the Acts and Josephus is admitted by orthodox Christians; but they say, with the Bishop of Bath and Wells, "Luke is as likely to be as right as Josephus." We venture to hope that no immortal soul will be imperilled by the thought that Josephus is as likely to be right as the anonymous author of the Acts of the Apostles, a book competent critics assign to the latter half of the second century, and which was rejected by the Marcionites and other early Christians. Josephus places the event in its due chronological order, and from his official position could not make a mistake of thirty years in regard to an outbreak which took place within his own lifetime. It should be observed also that, whereas the author of the Acts makes the sect of Judas of Galilee come to nought, Josephus assigns them a most important position.

That the Gospel compilers did make glaring chronological errors in regard to historic facts we have evidence. The anachronism in Matthew xxiii. 35 is of itself sufficient to show this. Jesus is made to declare that the Jews of his generation shall suffer for "all the righteous bloodshed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar." Now, Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*, bk. iv., chap. iv., sec. 4) tells us Zacharias, son of Baruch, one of the best and most eminent citizens, was slain in the Temple at the time of the siege of Jerusalem, more than thirty years after the alleged crucifixion of Jesus. Lardner, and other Christian evidence writers, seeing in what discredit the Gospels would be landed by the admission of this anachronism, allege that Zecharias, the son of Jehoiada, killed in the court of the Temple (2 Chron. xxiv.), is meant. But, apart from the identifying designation "son of Barachias," is it feasible that Jesus, beginning with Abel, the first known innocent blood, would stop with Zacharias, who was killed B.C. 840, when there was a flood of righteous blood shed among the Jews after that date? Zachariah the prophet cannot be intended, for in his time the Temple was in ruins, and nothing is known concerning his death. That the Zecharias referred to is the one spoken of by Josephus is evident; for the writer of Matthew goes on to make Jesus lament over Jerusalem, and in the next chapter detail many other events in connection with the destruction of the city.

These passages simply prove that the writer lived after A.D. 70. The apologists have to confess that the son of Jehoiada is confused with the son of Barachias, which of itself is instructive of the process by which events, belonging to different ages, got mixed up in the course of a few generations.

Another instance of the untrustworthy nature of the Gospel statements concerns the date assigned to the census or enrolment for taxation under Cyrenius (Luke ii. 2). According to the gospeller, this census was synchronous with the birth of Jesus. According to the Jewish historian, it took place ten years later—viz., after the deposition of Archelaus, Herod's son and successor, who had already ruled some time as king, and then for ten years as tetrarch (*Antiq.*, xvii., 13, secs. 2, 5). No reason can be assigned for Josephus misdating this event, which, as an annalist, he must have been able to determine. Indeed, it is evident that while Herod was living, and acknowledged sovereign, such a census would not have been instituted.

We may also briefly refer to the death of Agrippa, whom the writer of the Acts (xii. 21, 22) evidently confounds with his grandfather, Herod, the king.* Luke introduces the angel of the Lord, whereas Josephus speaks of an owl as being present. Eusebius, pretending to cite from Josephus, has the audacity to substitute "angel" for "owl" to make the accounts the more resemble each other.

But to return to the Galileans and the process by which the founder of that sect got to be considered Jesus instead of Judas. Josephus tells us in the very same chapter of the Jewish Wars (book vi., chap. 5), in which he relates that miraculous signs appeared in the heavens in the year of the destruction of Jerusalem, and that a heifer, as she was led by the high priest to be sacrificed at the Passover, brought forth a lamb—tells of one Jesus, the son of a plebeian, who, four years before the war began, came to the feast of the tabernacle crying: "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people." This was his cry by day and night. Some people in authority took up the man and gave him a great number of severe stripes; yet did he not either say anything for himself, or anything peculiar to those that chastised him, but still went on with the same words which he cried before. Hereupon the rulers, supposing there was a sort of divine fury in the man, brought him to the Roman procurator, where he was whipped till his bones were laid bare, yet did he not make any supplication for himself, but at each stroke of the whip cried: "Woe, woe to Jerusalem." The procurator dismissed him as a madman, and he continued his cry for seven years and five months, when he saw his predictions fulfilled in earnest at the siege. Standing on the wall, he cried aloud: "Woe, woe to the city again, and to the holy house." And, just as he added at the last, "Woe to myself also," there came a stone from a catapult which killed him immediately.

There can be no doubt that the career and fate of this strange prophet must have left a deep impression on his age. The nature of his prediction, his insanity, and the mild, submissive persistence, remind us of traits of the Gospel Jesus. But there is yet another Jesus of a very different character, mentioned by Josephus in his account of his own life, as well as in the *Wars*. This Jesus was the leader of what Josephus calls "a seditious tumult of mariners and poor people" in Galilee. He was ruler in Tiberius, and "an innovator beyond everybody else." Mr. George Solomon, in his curious book, *The Jesus of History and the Jesus of Tradition Identified* (1880), argues that the

* Mark vi. 14 also speaks of "King Herod," who is confounded with Antipas, the tetrarch.

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Gospel Jesus is a mixture of these various historic elements. But, manifestly, none of these accounts represent the miraculous elements of the Gospels. Those, however, who hold that the Gospels are really nothing better than romances of the second century will, at any rate, be disposed to think it possible that the romances have distorted events which can be seen more clearly in Josephus. Mr. Richard A. Proctor, the eminent populariser of astronomy, in his articles on "The Beginning of Christianity" in *Knowledge* (Jan., 1887), and in the one on "The Gospel Life of Jesus" in the *Freethinkers' Magazine*, already referred to, endorses this view, and considers that the supernatural parts of the Gospel story are founded on solar myths. After alluding to these, he says :—

> "The records of ordinary events, natural in their proper place, which appear with a non-natural aspect in the life of Jesus as presented in the Gospels, are apparently taken from the works of Josephus. They may, of course, have been simply derived from stories of the self-same events, as they really happened, handed on over a generation or two, by ordinary oral tradition. But most of them have undergone less change than is commonly found in stories thus carried on."

But it will be properly asked, How came the evangelists to refer back the story of their Jesus to the days of Herod and Pilate? We have already seen that while, according to Matthew, Jesus was born during the reign of Herod, according to Luke it was not until ten years after, and Jesus must have been but a stripling when brought before Pilate. How little was really known may be seen from the passage in John viii. 57, which implies that Jesus was over forty, while Irenæus in the second century argues on the authority of all the elders in Asia that Jesus reached to fifty years of age.

Now Josephus does tell us of a false prophet of the Samaritans who was put to death by Pilate. That he does so assures us the more that he knew nothing of Jesus. Luke, moreover, tells us (xiii. 1) that Pilate mingled the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices; and this, though uncorroborated by any historian, may indicate that there was a tradition of persecution.

As to the crucifixion, Rabbi Wise, of Cincinnati, makes a suggestion which is surely worth consideration. There *existed* at the commencement of the Christian era a widespread and deep sympathy for a crucified King of the Jews. This was Antigonus, the last of the famous Maccabees. Herod, with the assistance of the Romans, defeated Antigonus and took Jerusalem after an obstinate siege. Antigonus was handed over to Mark Antony, who had him executed as a common malefactor. Strabo, Plutarch, Dion Cassius, and Josephus all relate this as a remarkable event, for never previously had the Romans put a king to death so ignominiously. Strabo says that, because the Jews obstinately refused to recognise Herod, Mark Antony was persuaded to try this severe method of removing their respect for their lawful king. Josephus tells us he was beheaded, but the seeming contradiction which probably arose from Josephus's well-known suppression of offensive truths is explained by Dion Cassius, who tells us that he was first whipped and crucified, and then had his throat cut. Rabbi Wise, in his *History of the Hebrew's Second Commonwealth*, writes :—

> "Dion Cassius says: 'Antony now gave the kingdom to a certain Herod, and, having stretched Antigonus on the cross and scourged him—which had never before been done to a king by the Romans—he put him to death.' The sympathies of the masses for the crucified King of Judea—the heroic son of so many heroic ancestors—and the legends growing, in time, out of this historical nucleus, became perhaps the source from which Paul and the Evangelists preached Jesus as the crucified King of Judea."

There was another event, unnoticed by either Mr. Solomon or Mr. Proctor, which may have contributed to place the advent of a Messiah in the days of Herod. It was a Messianic conspiracy which took place in his days, and which he quenched in blood. The passages in Josephus relating to this intrigue were first pointed out to me by my friend Mr. W. J. Birch—a gentleman deeply versed in all the literature of the first ages of Christianity, and who has written at some length on this point. They may be found in the *Wars of the Jews* (bk. i., chap. xxix.), and in the *Antiquities* (bk. xvii., end of chap. ii.). The wife of Pheroras the Tetrarch, brother of Herod, seems to have been prophesied to bear the coming King. Pheroras, being a just man, was asked to put her away, but was not so minded. Josephus, strangely enough, puts the blame of this conspiracy on the Pharisees, the principal of whom were slain, together with those of Herod's own family, who had consented to what was foretold; and one Bagoas, an eunuch, who is declared by Josephus to have "been puffed up by them, as though he should be named the father and the benefactor of him who, by the prediction, was foretold to be their appointed king; for that this king would have all things in his power, and would enable Bagoas to marry, and to have children of his own body begotten." Perhaps this was in allusion to Isaiah lvi. 4, 5.

Lardner says of this curious business: "Josephus's account is a perfect comment upon St. Matthew's." But may not the account of the author of the Gospel according to St. Matthew be a comment on the transactions related by Josephus? That Herod should be concerned, and should stifle in blood a conspiracy in which were engaged the heads of the court and some six thousand Pharisees, bears all the air of probability; but that he should be alarmed at the prophecy by Magi of the birth of a poor child, and, when he did not find the child, should slay all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof, from two years and under, without one word of notice from any historian, demands greater faith than is possessed by the present writer.

## THE DEITY AS A HUMORIST.

A Cold-Blooded Essay for the Hot Weather.

One of the best-quoted proverbs is that which bids us give even the devil his due, the same devil who has been facetiously termed "the fourth person of the Trinity." If this should be so, there is no reason why the same courtesy should not be extended to the other august persons composing this "household of three." Oddly enough, the Ghost, the third member of the family, has been credited with being the only literary gent among them, though how the devil this comes about the present writer cannot guess. The Ghost, it is true, has been celebrated for other matters not entirely connected with theology, but history and Mrs. Grundy wisely avert their eyes. Raking up ancient scandals is dirty work, and only well paid if one is a lawyer. Now Mr. Froude has whitewashed the character of Henry the Eighth someone may turn his attention to our Ghost, the most famous Ghost in history, with all due respect to Hamlet's papa, Scrooges' partner, and the eminent one of Cock-lane.

As was said a sentence or so back, the Ghost is an author, and until recently was considered a very dull one too. The contention of the present writer is that the Ghost is a humorist, and that he challenges comparison with Mark Twain, Artemus Ward, G. L. Mackenzie, and Dod Grile. The latter has told us that he was inspired by his "scholarly friend, Mr. Satan," and it is to be feared the same thing is true also of Mr. Mackenzie, "the Laureate of Secularism."

But to return to our "muttons," as Shakespeare says. The Ghost's book is called "The Bible," and is usually classed as sober fiction. There is, however, a sprinkling of fun, a day's march between each joke; but what of that? A pearl is none the less a pearl even if it is surrounded by an intolerable deal of oyster, which, by the way, is a simile of solemnity.

The *motif* of the Ghost's book is irresistibly funny: the idea of a "God" who puts himself to death to satisfy himself. The prevailing opinion is, of course, that the whole book is a dreary document of the past. This wrong view is partly owing to the fact that people do not read the volume for themselves, but merely chatter about it. Then, secondly, to stupid persons, who must be serious or nothing.

Of the Ghost's humor the following are good specimens. He tells us that Adam and Eve "heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." This is a very fine voice to walk in gardens and elsewhere, and to wear brown boots.

Yet another favorite: "And it came to pass that night the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four score and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses." How surprised those Assyrians

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must have been when they got up in the morning and found "they were all dead corpses."

Mark Twain has quoted another. The Ghost refers in a short story attributed to St. Luke to a "street which is *called* straight." The American humorist says that the street in question is "straighter than a corkscrew, but not as straight as a rainbow."

The cultured readers of this journal will say that the above specimens are examples of very elementary irony. Quite so, but they were written many centuries ago, and by a Ghost. Further criticism is disarmed by the fact of the Ghost being "one" with two other gentlemen. We shall never be absolutely sure whether this congenital puzzle did not have a blighting effect upon the "humor" of the writer we are referring to.

Another example is where the Ghost refers to a lady's nose as resembling a "tower that looketh towards Damascus." Really this is an ungentlemanly joke, and must have provoked a quarrel. It is nearly as bad as if he had suggested that her face was like "a fly-blown beefsteak with a tin-tack in the centre." If he had always written in that strain, he might have avoided that unfortunate business with a carpenter's wife which clouded his later years.

A more delicate irony is contained in the two accounts of the death of Judas. In the one he falls and his bowels gush out, and in the other he hangs himself. There is no contradiction. Judas simply strangled himself with his own entrails. This, probably, was the germ of the oft-quoted passage of Diderot's.

But I must desist. I am anxious to contemplate the beauties of Nature, to amuse the little ones by throwing stones into the sea, the while I listen to their chatter. On another occasion I must return and reperuse the effusions of the high and mighty author, the Ghost.

MIMNERMUS.

## THE BEDBOROUGH PROSECUTION.

MR. GEORGE BEDBOROUGH'S trial takes place in the September sessions at the Old Bailey. Our readers will recollect that he is indicted for "obscenity," and that his actual offence was selling a copy of Dr. Havelock Ellis's book on *Sexual Inversion*. We have already given our opinion of this book, and we are glad to see that it is shared by the editor of the *Review of Reviews*. "I have read the book," Mr. Stead says, "and no person who reads it with an impartial mind could come to the conclusion that it was published with the intention of corrupting the morals of Her Majesty's subjects." It appears to us that this is a case in which the right of publication (there is nothing else at stake) should be strenuously defended. We have pleasure, therefore, in announcing that another "protest" meeting will be held on Monday evening (Sept. 5) in St. Martin's Town Hall. Several well-known speakers will be upon the platform, and we hope there will be a large gathering of sympathisers in the body of the hall. All who value the freedom of the press should try to make this meeting as large and influential as possible, if only to compel the attention of the press, which has not given this prosecution the attention which it demands. We also beg to state that funds are urgently needed for Mr. Bedborough's defence. Competent counsel are engaged on the expectation that the friends of liberty will find the necessary cost. Subscriptions should be sent—and the sooner the better—to the honorary secretary of the Free Press Defence Committee, Mr. Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, Islington, London, N. We may add that the Committee is now very large and representative, including clergymen, artists, editors, authors, and publicists. Amongst the Secularists upon it are G. J. Holyoake, G. W. Foote, C. Watts, J. M. Robertson, C. Cohen, and W. Heaford.

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(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.

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(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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## ACID DROPS.

NAPLES has an "ecstatic virgin," who is certainly ecstatic, whether she is a virgin or not. Her name is Almerinda Ettore, and she is reverenced by the ignorant and credulous multitude as a "saint" of the first water. She prophesied that she would die on August 5, that the earth would then be convulsed and the sun darkened, while a great black cross would appear in the sky. Unfortunately for her reputation as a prophet, she is still living, though the most elaborate preparations were made for her funeral; the explanation being that her spirit refused to leave her body. "Had I expired," she says, "I must have risen again from the dead on the next day." But, despite her egregious blunder, she is still regarded as inspired, and Italian pressmen crowd about her to obtain copy for their journals. Who would have thought, a hundred years ago, that such phenomena would mark the close of the nineteenth century!

Catholics in England, where they are in a minority, and a poor one at that, talk unctuously about toleration and freedom; but Catholics, where they are in a majority, are insolent persecutors of all who differ from them. Take, for instance, the following story from Ischl, a famous Austrian summer resort. We give it in the words of the Vienna correspondent of the *Daily News*.

"The Dutch pianist, M. Sieveking, who is a pupil of Leschetitzky, was spending a week in Ischl, and, on being requested to join in a concert given for the benefit of the poor of Ischl, willingly promised his help. On Sunday he was walking through a street, when a priest of inferior degree—a co-operator, as he is called in Austria—passed on his way to a death-bed. He was accompanied by a sexton, who, to all Catholics, announces by a tinkling of the bell that he carries the sacred wafer, the Body of Christ. Sieveking did not take any notice, as no doubt any Englishman would have done in the same situation. The priest stopped and cried out angrily: 'Whatever religion you may belong to, you are certainly an uneducated man; otherwise you would have taken your hat off.' Sieveking, no doubt, gave an impatient answer, but he cannot recall what he said, and in a few moments he was surrounded by a group of threatening natives, who crowded round him so closely that he made his escape by entering a house. He went to see the Mayor later, who is a Liberal, and he advised him not to go home, as two gendarmes were waiting to arrest him; so he dressed at the Mayor's house, and went direct to the concert, which was crowded, and where he was enthusiastically applauded. The Mayor, in the meantime, endeavored to prevent his being arrested, but the gendarmes were waiting for him in the artists' dressing-room. A supper was to be given in the artist's honor, and the police allowed him to join it, they sitting at a side table close by. The Mayor offered to stand bail for him, all to no avail. After supper he was marched off to prison, which he reached about midnight."

M. Sieveking did not insult that Catholic priest, but simply took no notice of him, yet he was charged with "disturbing a religious ceremony." What a mixture of humbug and impudence! It reminds one of Ingersoll's caustic remark about the Catholic bigots who, when they burnt a heretic alive, gagged his mouth or cut out his tongue, lest he should say something that might hurt the feelings of the gentlemen who were piling up the fuel.

M. Sieveking was taken off to prison in evening dress. He was not allowed to change his clothes. He had to lie down on a long board fixed to the wall. His pockets were emptied, and he had neither light nor water. In the morning he was allowed a little water, but no towel. Some one sent him in a meal, or he would have had nothing to eat. Such is Catholic Christianity.

Mr. Justice Phillimore, who is a High Churchman, had to sit in court the other day in the Divorce Court and register the dissolution of nineteen marriages. That was all he had to do, but his Christian conscience prompted him to deliver a sermon on the matter. "I cannot," he said, "take this step as a Christian man without saying how very much I regret, on social, moral, and religious grounds, that these facilities should be given to people to dissolve the marriages which they have contracted." Of course the judge had no more right to say that than any other man in court. "Judges," as the *Daily News* remarked, "had much better stick to the law and leave theology alone." A court of law is not a church, and a judge's seat is not a pulpit.

The Khalifa, who lives near the Mahdi's tomb, has a reputation for miraculous powers, which will soon be put to the test. The Sirdar is upon him with a well-disciplined and scientifically-equipped army; and prayers to Allah, like

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prayers to Christ, will hardly stop the flight of bullets and shells.

Curiously, however, there is an English Field-Marshal, Sir J. L. A. Simmons, who thinks that the Sirdar and his army should be supported by prayer. We at home, he says in the *Times*, should "render them all the assistance in our power." He suggests that "earnest and united prayers in our churches and all places of worship" should be offered up to the King of Kings for their success. But won't the Khalifa's army be supplicating the same God for the same result? And how the deuce is he to oblige both? Or why should he oblige one rather than the other? The only way, apparently, is to let them fight it out.

Bailie Monro, of Pollokshaws, is so pious a man that he catechises and preaches to the prisoners who are brought before him. He is laughed at in the local *News*, and broad hints are thrown out that the Bailie, while remarkably pious, has a keen eye to his own advantage in business dealings, even with the Town Council.

Klondyke seems a barren field for missionary enterprise. A soul-saver writes from the spot to the London *Times*. "Scepticism," he says, "is rife among miners, and, while most of them are respectful when talking to the minister, very few even pretend to lead Christian lives"—whatever that means. As a result of a year's work this missionary has made only one convert.

The *Daily Chronicle* refers to the "fights that have recently taken place between Christians and Secularists on Peckham Rye." This is very misleading. Secularists have not interfered with Christian meetings; Christians have interfered with Secular meetings. The Secularists are guilty of nothing but self-defence.

Kensit, the Protestant Reformer, used to be a feeble opponent of "infidelity," and amongst his wretched publications was a filthy libel on Colonel Ingersoll. Perhaps he found it didn't pay after all. Anyhow, he has struck oil in a new direction. The noble Kensit appeals to the British public for £10,000, to be expended by himself in sending what he calls "Wicklif preachers" throughout England. A few of them are already on the job. Their chief business seems to be disturbing High Church services. This is a proceeding with which we have no sort of sympathy. Rowdyism is no cure for illegality.

The Romish Church, says the New York correspondent of *Secular Thought*, Toronto, received an illustrious convert into its bosom during the current week. The murderer Thorn, the partner of Mrs. Nack in the murder of Guldensuppe that created so much sensation some months back, died in the electric chair with a crucifix in his hand, and an invocation to Jesus to save him on his lips, while a priest recited sentences appropriate to the occasion in his hearing. It is the regular fashion here for murderers to turn Roman, as there have been occasions when commutations of death that have been previously refused have been granted on the convict professing his belief in the doctrines of Mother Church.

The Rev. G. W. Peel is rebuked by the *Advocate of India* for declaring that God has sent the plague over there because the English had tolerated idolatry. "The heavy charge at which India has to support an alien Church," it says, "is not enough for Mr. Peel. He is not satisfied that his Church receives the money of the impoverished people of India, who do not belong to it. He goes further, and urges the Indian Government to begin a crusade against the old religions of the country, in defiance of the most solemn pledges, and at the risk of the most frightful suffering." But what are these things to the salvation of immortal souls? to say nothing of the welfare of the clergy.

Children have done a lot of cadging for missionary societies, and five lads at Penge decided to get even with the soul-savers, so they broke into a Sunday-school and emptied the missionary-boxes, realising the sum of £1 6s., which they spent on cycle-riding, two of them taking a trip to Brighton. The spree ended, however, with an introduction to a magistrate.

Sabbatarian bigots at Chatham have had a youth named Harry White fined 7s. 6d. for selling artificial flowers in the street on Sunday. The Act thus cruelly enforced was passed in the reign of Charles II. of pious and unclean memory.

Mr. Wilson Barrett's head appears to have been turned by the financial success of his *Sign of the Cross*. He seems to fancy himself a great public teacher, with a sort of divine mission to elevate the morality of the British public. "I like my plays to have a purpose," he says, "and an earnest one, too. I like them to be true; true to what is best in men and women." This is sickening talk on the part of a man who has pretensions to being an artist. Perhaps it is blasphemy to say that William Shakespeare was a greater dramatist than Wilson Barrett. Still, a great many people think him so. And, according to Shakespeare, the business of the dramatist is to "hold the mirror up to nature"—not only to "show virtue her own feature," but also to show "scorn her own image." Surely the man who wrote *Hamlet* would smile at the ethical antics of Mr. Barrett. What a conception of art, to fancy that the function of a dramatist is to be a clergyman in a theatre!

Hall Caine's flashy novel, *The Christian*, has been separately dramatised by the author and Wilson Barrett. Caine's version will be played in America, and Barrett's in Australia. The version to be played in London will be the joint production of novelist and dramatist. It ought to be something at the finish.

Wilson Barrett is to play the part of John Storm, the celibate priest. Of course it will fit him to a nicety. Who was that laughing? Silence, sir, in the presence of moral greatness!

A coroner's jury has returned another verdict of manslaughter against two of the Peculiar People—James and Grace Cook, of Lambeth—for not providing medical assistance for their child, who died of whooping-cough, bronchitis and diarrhœa. A full report of this case appears in another part of this week's *Freethinker*, to which we refer our readers. Both parents are committed for trial, and we shall notice the case further when it comes before a judge and jury in the criminal court.

Commenting on this new "Peculiar" case, the *Christian World* says: "It is not to be wondered at that there should be such lamentable folly among poor and ignorant people when 'Christian Science,' which is several degrees more absurd, is fashionable in the West-end." We quite agree that Christian Science is the height of absurdity, but why does a Christian paper call it lamentable folly to obey Jesus Christ

The Wolverhampton *Express and Star* is unintentionally very funny over the case of these poor "Peculiars." "These strange people," it says, "evidently translate the Scriptures literally." What is meant is that they *read* it literally; in other words, they think the Bible means what it says. The editor of the *Express and Star* is not such a fool. No doubt he thinks it is a poor Christian who can't make the Bible mean *anything*.

A curious electrical Prayer-book, "used in converting Indians," was recently bought (the *Christian World* says) by a collector of rare volumes from a New York bookseller. Brass plates are rivetted to the covers, at the top of which there are appliances for the insertion of electric wires. The story is that it belonged to a backwoods missionary who owned a small battery. When he wanted to convert an Indian he placed the book in the redman's hands, and surreptitiously turned on a current which sent mild but appreciable thrills through the latter's frame, giving him indisputable proof that he had "found religion."

Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, President of the Wesleyan Conference, thanks God for the School Board system. No doubt he does. It is Nonconformist religion, as Lord Salisbury said, which is taught in Board schools.

Piety and good taste do not always go together. Mrs. Spurgeon tells the story of her courtship and marriage by the famous preacher, as part of the second volume of *C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography*, just published. She also prints some of his love letters. Now if this had been done by a third person when husband and wife were both dead, it would perhaps have been pardonable; but for a widow to publish her dead husband's love letters argues, in our judgment, a decided lack of delicacy. What public justification can be pleaded we are at a loss to discover. Can it really be maintained that the people who heard Spurgeon preach had a right to hear how he made love to a woman? Are there no sacred intimacies in life which it is a profanation to expose to the general gaze?

Mrs. Spurgeon tells us that her husband introduced his declaration of love by drawing her attention to some lines—very wooden lines—from Martin Tupper, who was just fit to be the poet of the Tabernacle. Tupper had a great vogue in those days, and he was read admiringly by the Queen. He had a multitude of admirers in America too, one of whom asked Thackeray "what the English people thought of Tupper." "Sir," said Thackeray, "they do *not* think of Tupper."

Ruskin, in his younger days, was an admirer of Spurgeon, and used frequently to hear him preach. "In later years,

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however," as Mrs. Spurgeon says, "there came a change of feeling on Mr. Ruskin's part, and he strongly repudiated some of the theological opinions to which Mr. Spurgeon closely clung to the end of his life." This, of course, was inevitable. Ruskin's mind developed, Spurgeon's did not. The great writer lived to see the nonsense of the great preacher's belief, for instance, that every word of the Bible came from the mouth of God; and to despise and ridicule his paltry little theory of salvation, according to which the great majority of mankind were going to everlasting hell, and a little minority of the "elect" complacently rejoiced in the prospect of being saved themselves while all their fellow-men were damned. Spurgeon never developed a bit. He was taught a certain theology as a boy, and he went on preaching it to the day of his death. What distinguished him was not any originality of mind, but a musical voice, immense self-confidence, a large command of simple vigorous English, and a power of homely illustration exactly on the level of the particular crowd he addressed.

"Blessed be ye poor!" said Jesus Christ. That's the text, and now for the commentary. Canon Chapman, of St. Paul's Cray, was summoned the other day at the Bromley Police-court for keeping three unlicensed male servants. For the defence it was stated that the three "under gardeners" were only partially employed, and the Canon had no desire to evade payment of any licences; indeed, he had already paid for two footmen, a coachman, a gamekeeper, and a gardener. All these servants were necessary to one man, and that man a minister of the gospel promulgated by the poor carpenter's son of Nazareth! Why, if that gospel be true, Canon Chapman is as sure of hell as he is sure of dying; for Jesus Christ not only said "Blessed be ye poor," but "*yours* is the kingdom of heaven." All the rest go elsewhere.

There is a haunted house, called St. Austin's in the Forest Hill-road, near Honor Oak railway station. Crowds of people gather there to see the "ghosts," and, owing to the evil reputation of the place, all efforts to let or sell it have failed, although it stands in an acre of ground, and is charmingly situated, commanding some of the finest views south of the Thames. The caretaker, however, who has lived in the house with his family for years, laughs at the "ghosts." He has never seen them himself, and declares they are old women's inventions. But this is exactly what a sensible man would expect. In superstition, as in landscape, distance lends enchantment to the view. Knock at a haunted house and enquire for the ghost, and the occupiers will tell you to go to the devil; go round the corner in the next road, and the people shake their heads and say there is something strange; go a mile away, and they swear there is a ghost, and tell you to a minute when it is visible.

The Duke of York commanded the *Crescent*, which acted as guardship at Cowes during August. He piously read the lessons on Sunday morning, and the British and Foreign Sailors' Society, of which he is patron, sent him 600 New Testaments to be distributed amongst the crew, who would, no doubt, have sooner had a quarter of a pound of tobacco.

Evangelist Moody boasts of having distributed thousands of New Testaments (what price the Old?) amongst the American soldiers. "Nearly all the regulars," he says, "now before Santiago were given Testaments before they left Tampa." Well, John Fox, Harper's correspondent at Santiago, writes that the way to Caney was strewn with Bibles on both sides, where the soldiers threw them before going into action.

Jesus Christ rode into Jerusalem on an ass, but the German Emperor will enter it in a much more imposing fashion. The *Christian World* is bold enough to remark that pious Emperor William will be honored by the assassin of the Armenian followers of Christ, and all "because the Kaiser prevented Europe from rescuing the rest of the Armenians from the blood-stained clutches of the Sultan."

Pious Emperor William has been photographed in forty different ways in the new uniform he intends wearing at Jerusalem. What a man he is! There has been nothing like it since Nero.

Joseph Lewis, who was hung a few days ago at Swansea Gaol, made a confession of his guilt. He prayed for the widow of the man he murdered, and declared that he had no ill-feeling towards anybody in the world. What kindness! And what condescension! Murderers often die forgiving everybody they have ever injured.

"I am not going to tell a lie about it. I am in the presence of God." So said William Viney at the Stratford Police-court, where he was committed for trial on the charge of wilfully murdering his three children. Evidently the "presence of God" is not sufficient to keep a man from committing murder. The presence of a policeman is much more effective.

A speaker at a missionary meeting told how he was entertained by a cannibal king. The principal dish was a pie, which, when it was opened, disclosed two human fingers. Everybody shuddered except a man at the back, who called out: "I'll bet that finger was our parson's; he's got a finger in every pie."

At the Highgate Police-court some days ago a woman who keeps a restaurant in the Archway-road applied for "protection" against the Salvation Army. A meeting was held outside her house every Sunday evening from half-past six till nine; there was a band and lots of singing, and the noise drove away most of her customers. The applicant was told that she must request the Salvation Army people to go away before anything could be done to redress her grievance. When she has done that, however, she will probably find herself far from the end of her trouble. The Boothites are very obstinate disregarders of everybody's comfort but their own. Besides, making a noise unto the Lord is distinctly recommended in the Bible.

According to the New York *Truthseeker*, the prosecutions and fines for profanity in the city and its vicinity work out rather curiously. A "damn" costs ten dollars in Harlem, twenty-five on Staten Island, only five in Jersey City, and merely two in Brooklyn. It would pay a New Yorker who wanted to let off steam badly to cross the East River.

Men of God have their little peculiarities in America as they have here; witness the following cases from one number of the New York *Truthseeker*:—"The Rev. Ralph Baldwin, of Saginaw, Mich., took a young lady from London, Ont., and eloped with her to Detroit, Mich., where the couple lived a gay life. He returned to Saginaw to attend to his religious duties, but inquisitive neighbors at last reported his goings-on, and a scandal is the result.——The Rev. James Ross, of Jacksonville, Fla., is to be tried for cruelly beating and abusing his fifteen-year-old daughter, whom he stripped and thrashed with a half-dozen switches, throwing her upon the floor, holding her down with his foot, and kicking her in the mouth. In his defence he charged that the girl used profane language.——An attempt was recently made to lynch the Rev. R. E. Howell, who is in jail at Warrensburg, Mo. The Rev. Howell's offence is preaching and praying to the wife of William Henderson, and converting her—to his own use. The mob that tried to lynch him was frustrated. He will not be tried for eloping, but there is a charge of arson against him that is likely to land the reverend gentleman in the penitentiary."

The blood of Christ will henceforth be drunk in grand style at St. Matthew's, Bayswater. The church has been presented with "two chaste and handsomely jewelled flagons" for the holy communion. There are also two gold patens for the body of Christ. Canon Bristow also announces that he has received some beautiful jewels for a chalice at St. Savior's, Southwark, and that he will be glad to receive more. Why, certainly. Who doubts it?

The Jew-hunt still goes on merrily in France. Its latest participant is the aristocratic lady who writes as "Gyp." She is very clever, and, according to English taste, frequently blue. But she is a good Christian, and she hates the Jews—perhaps because they killed Jesus, though he was a Jew too, which makes it a domestic quarrel after all. Well, the lady wrote an article in a Paris paper proposing that all Jews should be boycotted. She apparently forgot that her own publishers were Jews. Messrs. Calmann-Levy, it is rumored, have turned the boycott upon her by informing her that she can find another publisher for her future works, and also for reprints of her former ones.

An Ayrshire clergyman, the Glasgow *Evening News* says, in praying for the Prince of Wales introduced a feeling reference to his accident. "And now, brethren," he continued, "we will join in singing hymn No. So-and-so, 'Courage, brother, do not stumble.'" The congregation giggled, but the minister never saw the joke.

## WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

*Per R. Forder*:—From Rangoon, Burmah, per C. Burgess: A. Harris, 5 rupees; C. Burgess, 5; Rainford, 5; E. H. Sep pings, 5; D. Costa, 5; Harwood, 5; Mrs. Dale, 5; Matthews, 3; Buttery, 2; total 40 rupees = £3 5s. R. Rattray, 5s.; A. Hurren, 2s. 6d.; H. Slater, 2s. 6d.; J. Bradley, 2s. 6d.; G. Smith, 1s.

Chas. Lewis, 3s.; J. G. Thompson, 10s.

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, September 4, 3.30, Freethought Demonstration, Peckham Rye; 7.30, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe: A Freethinker's View." 11, Athenæum Hall; 18, Birmingham; 25, Liverpool.

October 2, Glasgow; 9, Leicester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Lecturing Engagements.—September 4, Peckham Rye; 18 and 25, Athenæum Hall, London. November 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

S. Truman.—Dr. Karl Pearson's *Ethic of Freethought* is a book well worth your reading. It contains other Essays than those indicated by its title. The one on Martin Luther is particularly vigorous and outspoken. He charges the great Protestant hero with having been a hindrance instead of a help to European progress. Dr. Pearson's *Grammar of Science* is an important work, displaying very great ability. "We must turn a deaf ear," he says on the last page, "to all those who would suggest that we can enter the stronghold of truth by the burrow of superstition, or scale its walls by the ladder of metaphysics. We must accomplish a task more difficult to many minds than daring to know. We must dare to be ignorant."

C. E. S.—Many thanks.

W. P. Ball.—Much obliged for your weekly batch of cuttings.

Horace Seal applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. This correspondent's subscriptions to two other objects are acknowledged elsewhere.

Walt Sparrow, applying for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, writes: "The argument raised by Christians, that it is unfair to insult and ridicule their beliefs, has kept me from joining your movement before; but on hearing the Christian Evidence men in the recent demonstration, and John Kensit and Job Williams in their crusade against Ritualism, I have come to the conclusion that it is only a piece of pious humbug on their part. A certain Christian Evidence lecturer advised his audience to compare the speeches and the appearance of the speakers in Finsbury Park the other Sunday. I have done so, with the above result."

Joseph Maling, joining the Secular Society, Limited, writes as one who "has only recently found an adequate philosophy of life in Secularism."

G. Thwaites.—Glad you are joining the Secular Incorporation. We hope others will hurry up during the next week or two. Copy of prospectus forwarded.

A. B. Moss.—You must indeed have had a hard day's work on *Sunday* with three open-air meetings. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Heaford were similarly engaged. We hope the Freethought party duly recognises the value of such arduous service. Thanks for copy of the *Mail*. Trust you received those of the *Freethinker*.

J. G. Thompson.—Subscriptions acknowledged in their respective places. Thanks. Also for your application for membership in the Secular Society, Limited.

Children's Excursion.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—George Anderson, £3 3s.; W. H. Harrap, 2s. 6d. We have received: Horace Seal, £1. R. Forder acknowledges: R. Rattray, 5s.; R. H. Side, 10s. More subscriptions are urgently needed for this good object.

N. S. S. Treasurer's Scheme.—Miss Vance acknowledges: S. Burgoyne, 5s.

T. Dunbar.—In our next.

C. Mascall.—It was acknowledged in the *Freethinker*. Certificates will be sent out with the notices for the General Members Meeting.

Omicron.—Shall appear in our next issue. "With regard to advertising the *Freethinker*," you say, "I think it is desirable you should state the amount you require as a commencement, and over how long a period such contributions would be needful, as then contributors would have something to guide them as to the amount of their donations." There should be £50 at least—£100 would be much better—to operate with as soon as possible. £200 spent during the winter would cover what we are contemplating. Of course there is a great saving when advertising is paid for in advance over a lengthy period.

John Graham asks us to announce that the Wigan meeting for reorganising the N. S. S. Branch adjourned until September 11 at the Bull's Head Hotel. A full gathering is then earnestly requested.

E. D. Jones.—Thanks for cuttings.

William Tipper applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. This correspondent's letter is being attended to.

James Neate.—Thanks. See paragraph.

W. H. Howard.—Shall be dealt with in our next.

"Freethinker" Circulation Fund.—Horace Seal, £1; R. T. Nichols, 10s. 6d.; J. G. Thompson, 10s.

Papers Received.—Ethical World—Truthseeker—Crescent—Free Society—Progressive Thinker—Pollokshaws News—Liberator—Wolverhampton Express—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Isle of Man Times—Sydney Bulletin—Public Opinion—People's Newspaper—South London Mail—Advocate of India—Secular Thought—Torch of Reason.

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.

*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.

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

The National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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 is due.

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

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.

Freethought lectures will be resumed at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, this evening (Sept. 4), the chair being taken at 7.30. Mr. Foote occupies the platform, and will discourse upon "The Czar's Appeal to Europe: A Confidence-Trick or an Inspiration? A Freethinker's View of the Matter." There ought to be a crowded audience on this occasion. Freethinkers should try to bring Christian friends along with them.

Another grand Freethought Demonstration was held on Sunday afternoon in Victoria Park. Mr. Wilson kindly supplied a brake as before, but, although it was used to drive to and from the Park, it was not used as a platform for the speakers. Demonstrations are not very frequent there, and the place allotted for them is not the one where the multitude gathers on Sundays to hear the orators of different persuasions. It was therefore decided to leave the brake on the roadway, and to hold the Demonstration at the spot usually occupied by the local N. S. S. Branch. This secured a larger audience. It also "sold" the Infidel Slaughterers, who were there with a rival brake, and who had been heard to say that they meant to get *as close as possible* to the Freethought meeting—with what object is easily understood. They arrived first, and had driven to the demonstration ground, where they postponed business until the Secular party arrived; and their astonishment was a sight for the angels—white and black—when they beheld the Secular party leave their brake and coolly walk to the ordinary place for public meetings. Those polite, amiable, and peace-loving Christians had the one spot all to themselves; consequently their sweet compliments were wasted, and their meeting was comparatively insignificant. They will remember Victoria Park for a long time.

Mr. Waldron, of the Christian Evidence Society, was shouting away at a great rate not far from the N. S. S. Branch station, but of course he couldn't keep that up long, and his meeting was soon over. There was a large crowd around the big and lofty Branch platform, on which Mr. Moss was standing as a landmark, and a loud cheer went up as Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, and Heaford made their way through with Mrs. Foote, Miss Brown, Miss Bater, and other ladies, for whom seats were provided. Mr. Moss led off as chairman in a little speech marked by much vigor and humor. Mr. Heaford followed with a longer speech, and one of considerable force and eloquence, which merited all the recognition it received. Then came Mr. Watts, who was heartily greeted. His speech made a great impression, and was hotly applauded at the finish. Mr. Moss then introduced Mr. Foote as President of the National Secular Society and the gentleman about whom the Christian orators were always talking. They had heard a lot about Mr. Foote, and now they would hear Mr. Foote himself. Enthusiastic applause greeted the new speaker, and the meeting, which was a remarkably fine one when he rose, swelled into magnificent proportions as he proceeded. He was in a humorous vein, and his speech was punctuated by frequent laughter; but he was serious enough in finishing, and the final quotation from Shelley provoked a storm of cheers. Mr. Cohen spoke last. He said he was suffering from toothache, and he certainly looked pale; but he warmed to his work as he went along. His speech was instructive and entertaining, and there could be no mistaking the warmth of his reception. He has done a lot of good work in Victoria Park, and the hostility he first aroused has given place to respect and admiration.

Miss Brown, Miss Bater, and other friends, went through the vast crowd while Mr. Foote was speaking and took up a gratifying collection, which will go with the other collections towards defraying the expenses of these Demonstrations.

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Any Freethinker who wasn't present, and feels that he would have given something if he had been, can send the amount (or more) to Miss Vance, at the N. S. S. office, 376 7 Strand, London, W.C., or, if he prefers, to the editor of the *Freethinker*. Mr. Foote is responsible for the conception and organisation of these special efforts, and cannot very well take anything himself in the circumstances; but some acknowledgment must be made to the other speakers, who have even given up previous engagements to take part in this particular work.

Another Freethought Demonstration will take place this afternoon (Sept. 4) on Peckham Rye, at the usual time—namely, half-past three. The speaking will be from Mr. Wilson's brake. No doubt there will be an immense gathering. The *South London Mail* devotes five columns more to the denunciation of Secular "blasphemy," and calls still more fiercely upon the authorities to stop these pernicious attacks on the faith of the English people. This incendiary journal is doing its best to set the neighborhood on fire. But it will not frighten the Secularists. They will be on the Rye, and the *Mail's* ravings will only serve to swell their audience. We scarcely need say that South London Freethinkers should rally in strong force on this occasion—for reasons that are too obvious to be recited.

Mrs. Ritchie, Thackeray's daughter, is bestowing valuable annotations upon the new edition of her father's writings. One of these annotations, in the latest (fifth) volume, throws light upon the problem of his orthodoxy. In a letter, written when he was engaged on the "Journey from Cornhill to Cairo," he says: "I have been reading lots of books—Old Testament—Church histories, travels, and advance but slowly in the labor. I find there was a sect in the early Church who denounced the Old Testament; and get into such a rage myself when reading all that murder and crime which the name of the Almighty is blasphemously made to sanction, that I don't dare to trust myself to write, and put off my work from day to day."

The New York *Truthseeker* appears to be profiting by the resumption of Watson Heston's cartoons. From the latest number of our contemporary to hand, we see it is reported that James M. Tuttle, a wealthy resident of Lincoln, Illinois, has made a provision in his will to pay a thousand dollars to Colonel Ingersoll for a funeral oration. Mr. Tuttle is 92 years old.

By the way, why does the *Truthseeker*, in congratulating John Hay on his recall from London to fill a higher position at Washington, say that he will have greater opportunities for usefulness there than in "loafing round the throne"? The American Ambassador in London does very little loafing round the throne. He is kept very busy, not only by the regular duties of his post, but also by the numerous social calls upon him. He is a welcome figure at literary, educational, and benevolent gatherings, where he does a great deal to promote friendship between America and England. We hope this is not lacking in "usefulness."

The Glasgow *Weekly Citizen* takes the Rev. Dr. Robert Drummond to task for asserting that "The Sabbath is a Christian Institution." "As a matter of fact," it says, "it was an institution long before the dawn of Christianity, and, indeed, before the growth of the Mosaic law." The orthodox Professor Sayce is quoted in support of this statement, which is of course incontrovertible except by ignoramuses. Another article in the *Citizen*, over the familiar initials of "A. G. W.," gives some fine quotations from Guyau's book, recently reviewed in our own columns.

The Liverpool Branch opens afresh at the Alexandria Hall, Islington-square, to-day (Sept. 4). Addresses will be delivered by Messrs. Ross, Bergman, and Hammond. Local Freethinkers will please note.

The Manchester Branch re-opens its hall to-day (Sept. 4) for the new lecture season. Mr. Percy Ward is the lecturer. Those who heard his vigorous speech at the N. S. S. Conference will probably want to hear him again.

Mr. Robert Buchanan in the London *Star*, vigorously denounces the prosecution of Mr. George Bedborough. With regard to Dr. Ellis's book, for selling which Mr. Bedborough has to stand his trial, he writes: "A few benighted sceptics like myself are foolish enough to think that the best way to save foolish people from sin and disease is to enlighten them scientifically. We do not find that the study of corruption encourages us to concupiscence; on the contrary, were we not morally inclined already, the dreadful truths detailed in such books as this of Dr. Ellis would appal us into continence and self-respect. We think, therefore, that to insult a man of science and to punish the unfortunate publisher for carrying out what is in point of fact a noble bit of work, done in the interests of suffering humanity, is more worthy of savages than of sane men living in the nineteenth century."

Mr. J. M. Robertson started a monthly magazine called the *Free Review*, and conducted it, for a couple of years we believe, with marked ability. It ought to have succeeded, but of course it was doomed to go the way of all really advanced monthlies. The public for them, unless the bulk of the matter is popular padding, is very limited, and trade obstacles prevent even that limited public from being reached effectively. Mr. Robertson eventually transferred his magazine to other hands. Under the new auspices it was enlarged, and its title was altered to the *University Magazine*—not a very happy designation. Some excellent articles have appeared in it, but it has not succeeded. We hear that it is to be dropped, the September number being the last issue. The Bedborough prosecution is used as a cover for the retreat, but the real fact is that an advanced periodical which has to depend upon its circulation, without commercial adjuncts, such as advertisements, is very difficult to maintain. The repeated failure of such gallant ventures ought to convince everybody concerned of the necessity of giving every possible support to a journal like the *Freethinker*, which has braved every danger and survived every trouble for more than sixteen years. We also are unable to obtain advertisements which are given to papers with a smaller circulation than ours. We have to depend almost exclusively upon our circulation, and we are asking our friends, who can do it easily if they choose, to enable us, by judicious advertising, to promote the circulation of the *Freethinker*, and to make it, if possible, more accessible to the multitude of liberal-minded people who might purchase it weekly if it were only procurable like other journals.

## THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

*(Company Limited by Guarantee.)*

### MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION.

1.—The name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.

2.—The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.

3.—The objects for which the Company is formed are:—

(*a*) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.

(*b*) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.

(*c*) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.

(*d*) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.

(*e*) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.

(*f*) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.

(*g*) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.

(*h*) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.

(*i*) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.

(*j*) To employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants for the same end.

(*k*) To publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals.

(*l*) To assist, by votes of money or otherwise, other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects.

(*m*) To have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

(*n*) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred society in any part of the world.

(*o*) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

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## THE ATTITUDE OF THE PRESS.

THE newspaper press is a powerful institution, and might be still more potent but for its ill-disguised venality. There is no need of sensational disclosures to prove its amenability to "influence." Bribes and subsidies may be, and no doubt are, rejected with scorn by organs of the higher class. The indignation of these journals at the bare suggestion of "being bought," in the vulgar sense of the term, is probably justified by the policy they pursue. Albeit their wrath is occasionally so extravagant as to become somewhat amusing, even if it does not confirm the suspicions it is intended to allay. It may, however, be readily admitted that the leading journals are above and beyond any species of coarse corruption. But that does not say that they are insusceptible to blandishments and inducements of other kinds. And in regard to the numerous class of inferior organs, so much goes on behind the scenes that all the vauntings and vaporings as to the general incorruptibility of the press can only be described as sheer humbug.

Freethought owes nothing to the newspaper press. We cannot buy its support, nor always secure from it fair play. When a century or two hence some historian sets himself the task of describing the progress of the Freethought movement, he will have to sorrowfully admit that the newspaper press—from its inception to the end of the present century—rendered not the slightest assistance in the march of emancipation. He may discover one or two newspapers that, in a more or less equivocal fashion, have accorded recognition to the swelling tide of Rationalist thought. But they are exceptions of comparatively recent date. They serve but to mark that lack of discernment, or of honesty, or of courage, which will be remembered to the eternal discredit of the bulk.

Ever since Freethought became an organised movement it has had to fight the newspaper press. And the fight has been on most unequal terms. The press has had a giant's strength, and used it like a giant. When it has not joined in a conspiracy of silence, it has resorted to malignant misrepresentation. In earlier days it circulated the vilest fabrications, and suppressed all denials or statements of the truth. Its libels were innumerable, and for the most part unpunishable. It gave no publicity to any Freethought proceedings except such as it thought might be turned and twisted to the discredit of the cause. Freethought was never referred to except to be reviled. Of late years there has been an improvement, but it is small, falling far short of what should have taken place. There is decidedly less calumny, but no disposition to accord that publicity, in the way of adequate and impartial record, which the importance of the movement demands.

Newspapers, of course, are not to be expected to turn themselves into vehicles for the dissemination of Freethought views. No such proposal is made. Proprietors regard it as their first duty to consider the tastes of their public, and to supply the material which they believe will yield the most profitable return. Hence the religious communities receive a considerable share of attention in the daily columns, though probably not so much nowadays as formerly. There is no objection to that, but what really is open to objection is the boycotting of information respecting the advanced movements that proceed on lines antagonistic to what are supposed to be orthodox beliefs.

The explanation of the present backwardness of the press is that its conductors quite fail to appreciate the volume and extent of the Rationalistic thought which permeates society. If they but once realised the numerical strength of the *clientèle* which is still waiting to be served, it is certain that an enlargement of their policy would speedily ensue. Why they should be so blind to the existing requirements in this direction is indeed a matter for surprise. It is not to be supposed that they estimate the Rationalist strength by the mere numbers enrolled in organisations. That would be taking an estimate within absurdly narrow limits. Those who have the means of observation know how vast is the Rationalist realm, how innumerable are the units by which it is peopled, and how little likely the bulk of them are to be discovered except by those who look beneath the surface. The religious communities are very much in evidence, but, loud and obtrusive as they are, they do not comprise everybody. The proprietor of a powerful newspaper could well afford to offend such of them as are bigots if, on the other hand, he secured the zealous adhesion of the hundreds of thousands of liberal-minded, progressive, freethinking people who at present have no accredited organ in the daily press.

Occasionally one is startled by some little heretical remark, or some outspoken leader that finds its way into newspapers even as now conducted. Therein one sees the spirit of Freethought—which is cribbed, cabin'd, and confined in many an editorial sanctum—trying to find an outlet even at the risk of subsequent managerial remonstrance. Any paper that for once in a way will thus speak the honest truth undoubtedly deserves, and will hardly fail to receive, the support of Freethinkers. The misfortune is that there are so few leading papers that dare to admit, either in their editorial or news columns, anything that smacks of heretical thought.* For ever in front of the managerial eye is the terrible religious "Mrs. Grundy." Space may be found and prominence given to the most inane utterance if it should be made by a Bishop or a dissenting minister whose clap-trap had secured a following. But a Rationalist discourse, though brimful of current interest, of original thought, and epigrammatic expression, is dismissed in a few lines, or, what is more frequently the case, entirely ignored.

That this system of exclusion can for ever continue is quite beyond the bounds of reasonable probability. There are indications in many quarters of the barriers breaking down. I notice, as one of the signs of the times, that the *Record* takes a Lincoln newspaper severely to task for inserting a contribution which, it says, could only be equalled by the kind of thing that appears in "Secularist publications." The extracts which are given are in themselves so extremely sensible, and so exactly hit the mark, that the "Secularist publications" ought really to ironically thank the *Record* for its unintended compliment.

FRANCIS NEALE.

## THE N. S. S. CHILDREN'S EXCURSION.

THE Committee are pleased to announce that the arrangements for conveying the children to Pinner on Saturday, September 10th, are now complete. It being impossible to make a starting-point for each branch, the following places, accessible and well known to London Freethinkers, have been chosen. Each conveyance will be in the charge of members of the Committee. For Camberwell, East London, and Bethnal Green branches, brakes will start from South Place Chapel (which is situated between Liverpool-street and Moorgate-street stations) at 10.15 a.m.

Finsbury Park and Wood Green Branches: Holloway Castle, Camden-road, Holloway end, at 10.30.

Finsbury Branch and members of the parent society: Clerkenwell Green (usual meeting-place), 10.30.

North-west London and members, usual meeting place, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road, 10.30.

West London Branch and members, Marble Arch (corner of Edgware-road), 11 a.m.

Tickets for the return journey, luncheon, and tea, are now obtainable.

Branch secretaries and parents are requested to at once inform the N. S. S. secretary—Miss Vance, 377 Strand, W.C.—the exact number of tickets required, together with the names and ages of the children, as seats can only be provided in accordance with the number issued.

The time of return can be ascertained before the departure in the morning.

The secretary will, upon the receipt of a stamped addressed envelope, be pleased to advise as to the easiest method of reaching the nearest starting point, or helping in any difficulty which may arise—in seeing safely home any children living at a great distance.

## Yankee Soldiers' Menu.

The following is a description from camp of the first dinner of some of the American soldiers:—"From Uncle Sam: Soup, hard tack, beans, and coffee. From our parents: Roast chicken, pickles, gingerbread, mince-pie, jam, and cheese. From our girls: Angel cake, everyday cake, bride cake, and sure-enough cake. Captured: Bananas, strawberries, peanuts, cigarettes."

* The *Star* and *Morning Leader* are to be honorably exempted from any censure in this respect.

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## "PECULIAR PEOPLE" IN LAMBETH.

VERDICT OF MANSLAUGHTER.

MR. W. SCHRODER, deputy coroner, held an inquiry at the Lambeth Coroner's Court on Tuesday, August 22, into the circumstances attending the death of Ethel Grace Cook, aged twenty months, daughter of James Cook, a carman, living at 67 Lambeth Palace-road. The parents of the deceased are members of the sect known as the "Peculiar People." Grace Cook, the mother, said that the child suffered very frequently from colds.

The Coroner: Did you ever consult with your husband as to whether you ought to call in a doctor?

The Witness: We did not think of such a thing. We trusted in the Lord. We belong to the sect known as the "Peculiar People."

The Coroner: Is it part of your religion to refuse to have medical advice?

Yes, sir.

Continuing, the witness said that about six weeks ago the deceased had a cough, which developed into whooping-cough. She gave the child no medicine of any kind. She remained in about the same condition until about a fortnight ago, when bronchitis set in. The witness then kept her in bed; but about two days later she got worse and had diarrhœa. The witness administered arrowroot and brandy, but the diarrhœa did not cease, and the child gradually wasted. On Sunday, August 14, convulsions ensued, and death just a week later.

The Coroner: What did you do to relieve the child?

The Witness: I had hands laid on the child by an "elder."

Anything else?

She was anointed twice with oil, and we prayed for her in the chapel.

In what way—that she might be relieved of her pain and sickness?

Yes; if it was the Lord's will, and if not that she would be taken away. We left it entirely to the Lord.

If medical advice had been offered by a medical practitioner or any person, would you have refused it?

Yes, sir.

James Cook, the father, gave evidence corroborating that given by his wife.

Thomas Gentry, stableman, said he was an "elder" of the sect. He was called in in that capacity to see the child, and he laid hands on her, and anointed her with oil, and prayed for her, believing that the Lord would then restore her if it was His will.

Dr. George Nicol Henry, police divisional surgeon, of 175 Kennington-road, said he had that day made a post-mortem examination of the body in conjunction with Dr. Roe. The body weighed 14 lb. 3 oz. Death was due to asphyxia supervening upon bronchial pneumonia. It was his opinion that if the child had had proper medical attention it would have lived. Dr. Roe gave similar evidence.

The coroner told the jury that he could only advise them to return a verdict of manslaughter against the parents, and, after consideration in private, they found unanimously "That the parents were guilty of criminal neglect in not providing medical assistance when they knew that their child was so ill."

The coroner said that was a verdict of manslaughter against the parents, and he committed them on his warrant, but said he would release them on bail, as their position was due to a conscientious belief on their part. They would, however, have to be arrested and taken to the police-station and charged, which was done. Bail was fixed at £100 for each.

## BOOK CHAT.

THE September number of the *Literary Guide* is perhaps rather more "reviewy" than usual, though bookish readers will probably regard this as a merit rather than a defect. There are some independent articles, however, one of them entitled "Why?" by Amos Waters, being a spirited vindication of scepticism. The paragraphs on various topics are bright and informing. A letter from an irritated Agnostic seems to show that Mr. Watts's article in the August number on "Agnosticism and Atheism" has given offence in both directions. It reminds one of Butler's shrewd couplet:—

> Those who in quarrels interpose
> Must often get a bloody nose.

* * *

*The MacMahon; or, The Story of the Seven Johns*, by Owen Blayney (Archibald Constable), is pre-eminently a book worth reading. In this volume we meet once more the old delightful characters with which we have been familiarised in the novels of Charles Lever, Maria Edgeworth, Samuel Lover, and F. M. Allen, authors who have seen in the versatility of the Irish character material for stories which combine, either in matter or the manner of telling, the light and shade of a people, whom to know, be it only through works of fiction, is to love.

* * *

The period of this novel is the closing years of the seventeenth century, when Ireland, where the scenes are laid, was torn by the fierce fighting between the armies of Kings William and James. The real hero of the book is John McKinley, and he does not hesitate to speak out, as in the following passage:—

> "'It's the religion o' the creeds that makes the professors. Good men it turns into persecutin' cruel wolves, while it provides a cloak for the villainies o' knaves..... See the Church o' Englan' persecutin' Papists; an' Presbyterians persecutin' Papists an' Presbyterians; the Presbyterians in Scotlan' persecutin' all who differ from them; an' the Papists in Spain an' France burnin' the Protestants.....It wur religion did it. Religion! God give me patience! A've got an account to settle wi' it!.....My God! What wickedness hez it not provoked men to? It hez kindled the toarch o' all but universal war. It hez slain, an' racked, an' burned. Did ye hear the death wail o' that band o' poor Jews who wur burned alive not twenty years ago to grace the weddin'-feast o' Spain's most holy Christian King? It wuz done to plase the Holy Father, an' to win a blessin' from God on the married pair. Religion!' he exclaimed, throwing up his hands with a fierce gesture, and bringing them down with a bang on the fox-skin cover of *The Christian's Consolations*, 'tell me o' any deed o' infamy over which hell fiends may grin an' gloat, an' A'll fin' ye it's patthern an' example in excess in the doin's o' religion.'
>
> "'But it has done some good, Mr. McKinley, hasn't it? .....It's all a case of reward and punishment—I mean the world's made up of right and wrong, and religion teaches that right shall be rewarded and wrong punished.'
>
> "'That's how it ought to be; and maybe it is what pure religion teaches, if ye go into the question. But plainly, it's not the religion o' the hour, an' decidedly it's not a religion taught be any Church at this minit. "Maintain an' reverence me, an' respect the Pope an' King James," cries one set; "Maintain me, an' swear be Protestantism, King William, and Luther," shouts another. That's here; in other lan's the cry's different. Give me the people who do good fur the love o' doin' it, un' fur love o' their fellas, un' not fur the hope o' reward. But that's not what the Churches say: "On'y b'lieve what A tache ye, accept me creed, conform te me practices an' cereminies, an' ye're all right."'"

This extract is by no means the best; but it is of interest to Freethinkers. The first portion of *The MacMahon* has some passages which, for mirth and humor, are scarcely excelled in recent fiction. Should this short notice induce a single reader to read Mr. Blayney's book, we are confident that he or she will enjoy many hearty laughs, and will peruse a commendable story.

* * *

*Place aux dames!* We heartily welcome a new volume from the pen of Constance E. Plumptre, the author of *Natural Causation* and a masterly study of *Bruno and His Philosophy*. Her new book, which is issued by Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein & Co., is entitled *Studies in Little-Known Subjects*. There are eighteen essays in this volume, which is divided into two parts—"Studies in Times Past" and "Studies in Times Present." Perhaps the most generally interesting of the papers are those on "Japan," on "Thackeray's Letters," and on "John Francis and the Athenæum." Miss Plumptre writes exceedingly well, and of course writes from the Rationalistic standpoint.

* * *

The good old *Daily News* reviewed Miss Plumptre's book on August 25 last. The reviewer did his utmost to belittle the volume, and referred to the author as "*Mr.*" Plumptre. Of course the creature knew better, but he was paid to tickle the long ears of the Nonconformist fools.

* * *

Rationalistic writers have a great deal to bear with. Their books are either boycotted altogether, or else they have to put up with notices which are grossly unfair. Even in the case of an intellectual giant like Buckle the same game was played, only on a larger scale.

* * *

The cream of the joke is seen when a series of wretchedly-written "anti-infidel" pamphlets, by a mannikin of the name of Hastings, directed against Secularism, meets with a storm of approval, and sky-pilots and journalists write flattering notices by the yard.

* * *

Messrs. Macmillan have earned the thanks of all lovers of good literature by the publication of *The English Men of Letters*, a series of most admirable monographs, edited by the Right Hon. John Morley, M.P. One of the best is that

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on Shelley by John Addington Symonds, an author of world-renowned reputation. Unfortunately, the book was originally written before the publication of Professor Dowden's authoritative *Life of Shelley*, and Mr. Symonds found it necessary to rewrite a portion of his monograph. One would think that Messrs. Macmillan would have printed a new edition; but, for some absurd reasons best known to themselves, they merely printed the new matter as an appendix, and asked the reader to consider all those earlier pages, marked with brackets, as being cancelled. The result is that the early editions of Symond's *Shelley* are inaccurate, and the later ones simply unreadable; and the poor reader, like the man in the tale, is between the devil and the deep sea.

* * *

This is the era of cheap publishing. Messrs. Bliss, Sands, & Co. have produced an edition of *Shakespeare* at 3s. 6d. This *Falstaff* edition, as it is named, is an admirable book for the price, well-printed, well-bound, and a most desirable volume for any working-man's library. A companion volume issued by the same firm is Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, the best biography in the English language. As a matter of fact, Johnson's fame rests more on his biography by Boswell than on his own writing.

* * *

No more prejudiced man ever lived than Dr. Johnson. Goldsmith was right when he said: "There is no arguing with Johnson, for when his pistol misses fire he knocks you down with the butt end." Johnson could not tolerate a man who thought independently on traditional orthodoxy. He calls Bolingbroke "a scoundrel and a coward." And yet Johnson had never read a syllable of the works whose author he so savagely pillories. "I have never read Bolingbroke's impiety," he remarked. To Johnson Freethinkers are vermin, which his rhetoric would fain exterminate. Hume, Gibbon, and Voltaire are all scoundrels. At best, Voltaire is allowed but "a petty wit." Men like Priestley and Price were an abomination. Boswell says that he was present at Oxford when Dr. Price came into a company where Johnson was, who instantly left the room. Rousseau was "one of the worst of men, a rascal who ought to be hunted out of society." His hatred of the Scotch is well known, and even appears in his definition of the word "oatmeal" in his dictionary. For real fun it would be difficult to match his definition of "network," which a small boy once described as "a number of holes joined together with string."

* * *

A vigorous attempt to oust the sea serpent and the big gooseberry has been made by the editor and staff of the *Daily Chronicle*. A correspondence has been published in that paper asking why a cheap edition of Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyam is not issued in England. We hope that Messrs. Macmillan will take the hint and allow a silly season boom to bear a practical result.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### STREET RUFFIANISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The above question should be of special interest to Freethinkers just now, because the Dean of St. Paul's attributes the state of affairs to the lack of religious teaching in Board schools. As among the ruffians convicted there is a plentiful sprinkling of Irish names, it is probable that the Irish Hooligan at least has not been contaminated by a Board school. The fact is, that for some reason or other our magistrates and judges, and more especially country magistrates, among whom there is more than a fair sprinkling of the clergy, do everything possible to encourage ruffianism. I give one sample out of thousands—from truth. Daventry Divisional Petty Sessions; before C. Rodhouse and W. Asheby; Ernest Pike charged with assaulting Alfred O. Coles. Defendant struck complainant in the face, cutting his lip, and knocking him down. Coles complained to a policeman, and defendant then gave him another violent blow, knocking him down again, and rendering him insensible. There was a long list of convictions against defendant, and he was under a bond of five pounds to keep the peace. Fined ten shillings and seventeen shillings costs, and allowed time to pay the amount of the forfeited bond. A trifling theft would have been mercilessly punished; but, for all that, there can be no doubt that Christianity exalteth a nation.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

### OF THAT ILK.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I notice that the writer of "Book Chat," in the *Freethinker* of August 7, uses the phrase, "of that ilk," as if the words meant "of that sort," "of that kind," "of that kidney." This is a most reprehensible error with many writers who ought to know better. Is there any call for adding to the variety of forms in English speech which denote "of that sort"? Is it fair to the Scottish tongue to take a phrase, that has a special and particular meaning when correctly used, and turn it to some other purpose which is altogether away from its proper meaning? "Ilk" does not mean "sort." In the present-day Scottish vernacular it means "each," as "Ilk lass lifts her leglin," etc.; and in some earlier generation it has denoted "same." The words, "of that ilk," where they occur in territorial designations—and I have never seen them apart from designations—can only mean "of that same." Thus Hugh Logan, of that ilk, means Hugh Logan of Logan, or otherwise Hugh Logan of that same.

The Irish have the same form of expression, which is more general with them, and more special with the Scotch. In English speech the form is not unknown. A Scotchman might say, "I told you else"; while an Englishman would say, "I told you otherwise." If I am correct in construing the old form of words as above, then it must be apparent that the use complained of is stupid and in bad taste.

A. B.

## SONNET TO THE HOLY SABBATH.

MEAN are our days; meanest of all art thou,
Poor jaded relic of a played-out creed!
Thine hour hath come; yea, thou hast sown thy seed,
And reaped the golden fruit thereof; but now
Time sits in judgment on thy senile brow,
Deep-scarred by many a priest-baridden deed.
Go; for thy knell hath tolled! No more impede
The strides of thought before which thou must bow.

The tell-tale seams upon thy withered cheek
Are witness to the crimes that thou hast fed.
Thine aims are not the aims that we would seek.
Dark day of Ignorance, we wish thee dead.
Go; take thy wizened visage from the week!
We greet the day of Reason in thy stead.

BERTA C. E. BUSS.

## FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

IT is bad enough for adult men and women to have to kneel, weekly or monthly, at the feet of a priest (usually one whom they know intimately), and detail every unworthy thought and act into which they have been betrayed; but for girls and young women to discuss their innermost thoughts and feelings with a person of the opposite sex is vicious and lamentable. If they are still of a refined character, such a practice is a source of exquisite pain, and often leads either to duplicity or to actual debasement; if they are less refined already, the temptation to abuse their condition is overpowering.—*Joseph McCabe.*

Biblical scholars have concealed their discoveries from us and talked to us in hieroglyphics long enough, quieting our doubts with claims of false translations, interpolations, and hidden mysteries that we should not try to penetrate. But if the book was given to us for a moral guide through this earthly life, and our salvation depends upon it in the heavenly life to come, surely our religious teachers should tell us in plain English what the writers intended to say as to the character of God and the duties of men to him and to each other.—*Elizabeth Cady Stanton.*

Ethically, we are required to do no evil that good may come; theologically, to worship a deity who is doing just that all the time.—*M. D. Conway.*

For thousands of years men have been writing the real Bible, and it is being written from day to day, and it will never be finished while man has life. All the facts that we know, all the truly recorded events, all the discoveries and inventions, all the wonderful machines whose wheels and levers seem to think, all the poems, crystals from the brain, flowers from the heart, all the songs of love and joy, of smiles and tears, the great dramas of imagination's world, the wondrous paintings, miracles of form and color, of light and shade, the marvellous marbles that seem to live and breathe, the secrets told by rock and star, by dust and flower, by rain and snow, by frost and flame, by winding stream and desert sand by mountain range and billowed sea.—*Robert G. Ingersoll.*

Of all my seeking this is all my gain;
No agony of any mortal brain
Shall wrest the secret of the life of man:
The Search has taught me that the Search is vain.

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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, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe: A Freethinker's View."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A Concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Some Lessons of Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 8.15, R. P. Edwards.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen. Peckham Rye: 8.15, Freethought Demonstration, addressed by Messrs. G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, C. Cohen, A. B. Moss, and W. Heaford.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, A. B. Moss; 7, W. Heaford. September 7, at 7, C. Cohen.

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, Mr. Davis.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH: (Fleet-road, corner of Downshire-hill): 7, R. P. Edwards.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 8.15, Mr. Davis.

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7.15, E. Pack.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Secularism."

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. Heaford. September 6, at 7, C. Cohen.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, H. Courtnay, "What is Secularism?"

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The English Bible."

**COUNTRY.**

DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, J. Brownsword, "Some Fallacies of Trade Unionism."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): H. P. Ward—11.30, "Charles Bradlaugh, Atheist"; 2.30, "The New Woman and the Old Man"; 6.30, "Shall we Live after we are Dead?"

HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall): 7, W. Ledger, "Peace on Earth."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant Sunday evening, musical and other recitals.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—September 4, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell; 7, Mile End Waste.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—September 4, m., Mile End; 11, m., Mile End; 18, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 25, m., Finsbury; a., Victoria Park.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—September 4, Glasgow; 11 and 18, Manchester. October 2, Sheffield; 16, Birmingham. November 27, Liverpool. December 18, Birmingham.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## BLESSED BE YE POOR!

CANON GORE is a leading High Churchman. He is also one of the "fashionable" preachers and a fairly voluminous author. He edited the volume of Church essays called *Lux Mundi*, and contributed himself the essay on Inspiration, which clerics like Father Ignatius regard as terribly and even damnably heretical. We have read most of what he has written, or at least of what he has published, and we cannot say that we have a tremendous idea of his abilities. There is one great God Almighty, and there are a lot of little God Almighties, who talk from pulpits to sinners, and give themselves extraordinary airs of superiority over the multitude of the "unanointed." They seem to be always sniffing the perfume of the holy oil of consecration. An ordinary observer might almost imagine that they belonged to a special variety of human nature, but what we read of them in the newspapers from time to time is ample proof that they are like unto other men—and sometimes more so. Canon Gore is one of these little God Almighties. Nobody beats him at putting rather commonplace reflections into serious and solemn language which suggests the voice of inspiration. And this quality is sufficiently conspicuous in his new volume on *The Sermon on the Mount*. His very Preface reveals the quite unconscious egotism which is so generally developed by the clerical profession. He expresses "much gratitude" to a brother clergyman for "help in the correction of proofs." One would think that proof-reading was the most terrible business on earth, or that this particular volume was a perfect monument of laborious and painful scholarship, whereas it is nothing but plain exhortation from beginning to end. What on earth can it really matter to anybody but himself *who* corrected his proofs? Why not put in a word for the printer, and the printer's reader, or even the printer's devil?

First of all, Canon Gore tells us how much superior the Sermon on the Mount is to the teachings of Gautama, Confucius, Socrates, Plato, and all the rest of the moral philosophers. Nothing is advanced to support this contention, except some vague talk about "depth" and "completeness." We are indeed told that the Sermon on the Mount "differs from other codes by the authoritative sanction which is given to the words by the person of the speaker." But this is simply an appeal to Christian faith—or Christian prejudice, and has no force when addressed to an outsider. On the contrary, it is liable to provoke the retort that the personal note in the teaching of Jesus Christ is a mark of unpleasant and sometimes undignified self-assertiveness. Whatever truth and value there is in an ethical maxim is necessarily independent of the personality of the speaker. It has always to be tested by reason and experience.

We do not propose to follow Canon Gore, at least at present, through his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. We intend to take a sample from the bulk. The first "beatitude" will serve our purpose admirably. According to Matthew, Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." According to Luke, he said, "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich." Now which of these sayings, if either, is the one that came from the lips of the Prophet of Nazareth? Canon Gore seems to settle it in this way: the beatitude in Matthew was meant for all the world, and the beatitude in Luke only for his personal disciples, in view of the "actual poverty in which they lived." But is this anything but gratuitous nonsense? Sincere followers of Jesus Christ, like William Law or Count Tolstoi, see clearly enough that he taught the duty of renouncing property. It may be hard or even impossible, but there it is, and we shirk it at our peril. And really, when we look at other parts of the New Testament, it is clear enough to all but those who do not want to see. The poor are to be rewarded in heaven, the rich are to be punished in hell. Lazarus, whose only virtue was his poverty, went into Abraham's bosom; while Dives, whose only crime was his wealth, went to be tormented in Hades. Then we have the case of the good young man who asked what he should do to be perfect. Jesus told him that one thing was lacking; he was to sell all he had and give to the poor. Further, we read that the very first Christians at Jerusalem sold their possessions, and laid the price at Peter's feet—where it didn't stay long. That is what the first Christians did, and if *they* failed to understand Jesus, being so near to him, how shall Canon Gore understand him nearly two thousand years afterwards?

We have not the slightest doubt that "Blessed be ye poor" was the original text. How, otherwise, can you account for the antithesis of "Woe unto you rich"? It was a splendid text to start with amongst slaves and beggars. But when the first Salvation Army, like the latest one, became important enough to attract the support (for whatever reasons) of men of wealth and position, an alteration had to be made to suit their case. "Blessed be ye poor" was not abolished, for it was still useful; but a balancing text was inserted elsewhere, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The rich were told that they need not renounce their wealth, that they could get to heaven without becoming paupers. All they had to do was to be humble, to confess themselves miserable sinners, to be obedient sons of the Church, and to make her their almoner to the needy and destitute.

Substantially this is what Canon Gore says. He only uses a different form of words. Christians, he declares, are not bound to be poor in order to be blessed. Christ's kingdom is based "not upon actual poverty, but upon detachment." What he really meant was this—"Blessed are those who at least in heart and will have nothing." You may be as rich as Rothschild—if you can, as long as you are prepared (when necessary) to lose your wealth and do without it. Meanwhile you may be a millionaire in a mansion or an Archbishop in a palace. You are all right and have a through ticket for heaven; while poor people, who were proud in their poverty, will fry for ever and ever in hell.—Let us pray!

G. W. FOOTE.



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## BIBLE FAITHS AND THEIR DEFENDERS.

THE two principal faiths—Jewish and Christian—based upon the Bible are curious exhibitions of folly, inconsistency, and inutility, while many of their defenders have been, and still are, equally striking specimens of perverted humanity. From the time of Noah, who distinguished himself at the celebrated Flood, down to the present, these faiths have been most unfortunate in their champions. The Rev. George Warington, in a paper read some years ago at the Victoria Institute, wrote: "The defenders of Scripture are numerous and zealous, but they are a motley and discordant set, at war among themselves, as fiercely as with the enemy—to a great extent mutually destructive, a large proportion of them, therefore, certainly in the wrong in the defence they make, and so a source of weakness rather than strength." Certainly our reading of history and our personal experience would justify the accuracy of this statement. It may be urged that the nature of the faiths renders a dignified, intelligent, and logical defence impossible. Probably this is so, and this very fact tends to show not only the defective features of the religions of the Bible, but also the deteriorating influence they have had upon the characters of those who set themselves up as their defenders. Nothing is more damaging to any religion than to discover that its effect upon the minds of its expounders has been morally disastrous. If it be true that "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit," then the Bible tree, root and branches, must be corrupt indeed.

Let us glance briefly at the foolish and inconsistent nature of these faiths. They teach that God made man perfect, and yet he was organised so badly that, at the first test to which he was subjected, he proved thoroughly imperfect. The result was that he became "a fallen creature," and, although it is said God was omnipotent, he did not *improve* his work, but, by a cold-water process, actually destroyed the whole human race, with the exception of one family. By-and-bye mankind again multiplied; but, unfortunately, wickedness and crime still marred their careers. God then decided to send his son, who was alleged to be of the same age as himself, to correct the errors of his Almighty Father. It was then decreed that those who did not believe that Christ could raise them from their fallen condition should be punished everlastingly in fire under the superintendence of a devil whom God made for the purpose of producing the ruin of the sons and daughters of earth. Notwithstanding that belief in the Son was made necessary to this supposed salvation, God made no provision that it should be universally known. Hence, despite the fact that it is alleged two thousand years have passed since the "plan of redemption" was consummated, only about one-third of the inhabitants of the globe have heard anything concerning the scheme; and amongst those few to whom the "glad tidings" have been proclaimed many do not understand the plan, others find its application impracticable, while a large section reject it altogether. Such is the foolish inconsistency of the religions of the Bible.

The Christian defender of his faith contends that God's revelation was a high, moral, continuous development; first revelation to Adam and Eve, then to Abraham, next to Moses, and, finally, through Jesus to the world in general. The fallacy of this contention ought to be apparent to all dispassionate minds. How many of the earth's population were the better for the revelations to Adam and Eve? The answer is given in the story of the destruction of nearly the whole of the human race by the Noachian flood. How many were improved through the call to Abraham? But few, indeed, outside his own family, and even within that circle the revelation failed to inspire the members with truth, justice, fidelity, and decency, as the history of Hagar, Isaac, and Jacob amply proves. What moral excellence did the people receive from the dispensation of Moses? The Jews were led by him under God's special guidance, and yet we find them manifesting the lowest moral qualities—an utter forgetfulness of virtue, a lack of self-reliance, and entire disregard for the rights of others. They resorted to falsehood, theft, and murder, and ultimately many of them forsook their God and worshipped a golden calf. And, lastly, what have been the advantages derived from the revelation made through Jesus? Let the history of the Christian Church and the present deplorable condition of society in general furnish the answer. It is this very Church that for centuries was active in destroying secular literature, opposing the extension of knowledge, persecuting men of science, and doing its best to extinguish the light of reason. From the reign of the first Christian Emperor to the partial renunciation of the faith in the sixteenth century, the Church produced a period rightly named the "Dark Ages."

But what of the Church at the present time? True, in consequence of the advancement of secular thought and the cultivation of a higher-toned humanity than formerly existed, the Church is not allowed to be guilty of such black crimes, which it practised during the Middle Ages, when the vilest deeds were considered justifiable, so long as they tended to advance the faith and uphold the Church, and when murder was deemed a virtue, and lying a creditable accomplishment. The defenders of the faith may say such conduct formed no part of the religion of the Bible. To this we answer that those actions were at that time the general characteristics of the professed religion; and, moreover, for most of the crimes committed by the defenders of the faith at that period a sanction can be found in the Bible. Let this be denied by Christian expounders, and we undertake to cite passages from the "Holy Scriptures" that will fully justify our statement. The very fact that the faith is now clothed in a new garb to make it more acceptable to modern requirements is evidence of its changeable and indefinite nature; and also that the kind of conduct it inspires depends not upon any inspiration from a god, but rather upon the moral sense and humane proclivities of its professors. It is both amusing and pitiable to note the subterfuge resorted to by Christian defenders when they are confronted with the incongruities of their faith. If we show the absurdity of supposing that a few drops of water sprinkled on a child's face can purify its heart, we are told by the Evangelists that this is no part of Christianity. Point out the ridiculous character of immersing an adult female in a bath as an initiation into the Church, and the Independents, Wesleyans, and Churchmen state, That is not Christianity. Attack the horrible doctrines of eternal torments, and the Universalists exclaim, That is not Christianity. Demonstrate the irrational nature of the Trinity, and the Unitarians answer at once, That is not Christianity. Portray the horrors of war, the Quaker asserts that Christianity is peace, and that all war is anti-Christian. Avow that sometimes war has a high and noble mission, that of destroying despotism, breaking up long-standing tyrannies, and freeing down-trodden peoples; intimate that any religion which would stand in the way of a battle fought for truth and freedom cannot be good, and we shall instantly be told that Christianity does nothing of the kind, but that, on the contrary, it sends its disciples to fight, appoints chaplains to the army, and consecrates the weapons of destruction. An interesting story is told of a dilemma in which a clergyman found himself when trying to defend, in a conversation with Robert Cooper, the absurdities of free-will and the utter depravity of human nature as taught by the orthodox faith. Mr. Cooper said to the reverend gentleman: "You consider man to be naturally depraved, do you, sir?" "I do, sir," answered his opponent. "You also maintain that he is a free agent?" "Undoubtedly," replied the clergyman. "Then allow me to ask you if you consider man free to be good?" "Free to be good, certainly. If a man is a free agent, he can just please himself whether he is good or bad; and if he is good, he will be rewarded by the Almighty with everlasting bliss; but if he is bad, he will be condemned to eternal damnation." "Indeed," replied Mr. Cooper, "a very charitable condemnation truly; but, sir, if that is the case, why is it that man does not always select that which is good?" "Oh! because he is naturally bad." "Then," replied Mr. Cooper, clinching the entire argument, "man is *free* to be good, and yet he is *obliged* to be bad!" The clergyman retired, and we hope he became a wiser man.

CHARLES WATTS.

*(To be concluded.)*

### Arguing with Bigots.

If you argue with a bigot,
At the finish, as a rule,
You agree with him in thinking
You are nothing but a fool.

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## PROGRESS AND RELIGION.

THAT religion represents, in a civilised community, a force hostile to all-round mental development is one of the commonplaces of the Freethought platform; and, although there are ample and innumerable facts by which to prove the truth of the statement, it always comes as more or less of a shock to the religious listener. "How," it is asked, "can religion be hostile to mental development when it can point to numbers of eminent men in art, science, and literature who live and die in the faith of their ancestors?" Upon those who put forward this plea, and their name is legion, it seldom dawns that in every one of the cases that may be named the man was religious before he grew eminent, and, therefore, the utmost that can be deduced from such a condition of things is that their religious opinions have not hindered them becoming great in special departments of knowledge, while to my mind there is here only evidence of the power of hereditary tendencies, accentuated by early education, to resist, frequently throughout a whole lifetime, the acquisition of positive knowledge concerning the world at large.

I have never yet heard it urged that Dr. Dallinger's Methodism had any favorable influence upon his microscopical studies, that Faraday's connection with the Sandemanians helped him in his chemical experiments, or that Lord Kelvin's researches in physics were at all dependent upon his vague belief in Christianity. And, on the other hand, it were easy to show that during the last three centuries the number of scientific men who have definitely surrendered all religious beliefs has become greater with every generation. And even in the case of many prominent men who remain believers, in spite of their learning, it might well be argued that, as the mind of man is organically related in all its aspects, even they suffer in their general mental culture by encouraging a frame of mind utterly unwarrantable by the knowledge in their possession.

But the most prominent effect of religious beliefs is not that they prevent people from thinking—that were next door to an impossibility—but that all religions induce inaccurate methods of thought, while at the same time sharply circumscribing the area of the mind's operations. During the days when the Roman Church was most powerful people still thought, only the mind's working was very much like the motions of a tethered horse: it went round and round in a circle without making any advance.

Every religion hedges round a number of subjects as being beyond or above criticism. These tabooed subjects may be few or many, but they are there, with the result that, while the mental faculties may work with comparative freedom on some subjects, they halt abruptly at others. It is upon this principle that we find the Protestant criticising freely enough the infallibility of the Pope, but halting suddenly if asked to apply the same principles to his own Bible. He will point out as well as others the incredibility of Catholic miracles, the ignorance of the times, the credulity of the witnesses, and their opposition to all experience, and yet cannot see that every argument applies with equal strength to the Biblical miracles which he greedily swallows. A Christian can quite realise how Mohammed's visions may have been the result of a distempered imagination, but cannot see that the argument is equally strong in the case of Jesus. A virgin birth is an absurdity in India, or Egypt, or Greece, but is eminently reasonable in Judea. The most vigorous demonstration is demanded for every statement made against religion, and the wildest and entirely unsupported ones accepted when urged in its defence. It is thus that we find in every creed men of considerable acquirements, each with his own pet superstition which he refuses to give up, and yet denouncing in unmeasured terms the superstitions of others. It is thus that we find the great chemist Faraday, when asked how he could believe the astounding propositions current in the sect to which he belonged, replying: "I prostrate my reason in this matter; for, if I applied the same process of reasoning which I use in matters of science, I should be an unbeliever."* And a still more powerful intellect than Faraday, Paschal, gave utterance to substantially the same sentiment upon the same subject.

One of the evil effects of religious beliefs is, therefore, that the holder of them can never be safely reckoned on as a permanent force in the direction of progress. The very man who is fighting with the army of Rationalism one moment may be fighting in the enemy's ranks the next. He is not fighting on behalf of reason, he is only fighting against one form of unreason, which he is anxious to supplant by another form quite as bad, or even worse. His being on the right side is a pure matter of accident, and a very slight circumstance will convert him into an active opponent.

But religious beliefs inflict a still greater injury upon the human mind than any I have indicated, and this is seen in the clearest manner in the history of Christianity. If the evil influence of religion died away with the generation that witnessed it and suffered it, although that were bad enough, the evil would be of a comparatively mild character. But this is not the case. Each generation, while it hands on some proportion of its virtues to the generations that follow, bequeath also some proportion of its sins. And it may safely be affirmed that the setting up of a bad quality is easier than the creation of a good one; for in the latter case we have to call a new aptitude into existence, while in the former we have either to release certain uncivilised qualities or to degrade civilised ones. The chief injury religion has inflicted upon the human mind has been its systematic suppression generation after generation, until its vices and weaknesses have assumed an almost chronic character.

To consecrate a set of opinions is bad enough, it discourages criticism; but to make happiness here and hereafter dependent upon their acceptance is, for the average man, to damn inquiry altogether. What man can think impartially with a rope round his neck, and with the knowledge that failure to reach a particular conclusion means instant execution? Like the man at a stormy political meeting who, when asked his opinions, looked round at the threatening faces, and declared himself to be of "the same opinion as the man with the big stick," religious threats and penalties have paralysed reason and secured an outward conformity at the expense of honesty and sincerity. And when one further reflects how this process was carried on generation after generation it can hardly be questioned that, great as have been the injuries inflicted upon the world by Christianity, none have been greater than this. As Buckle says:—

> "We hear much of martyrs and confessors—of those who were slain by the sword or consumed in the fire; but we know little or nothing of that still larger number who, by the mere threat of persecution, have been driven into an outward abandonment of their real opinions; and who, thus forced into an apostasy the heart abhors, have passed the remainder of their life in the practice of a constant and humiliating hypocrisy. It is this which is the real curse of religious persecution. For in this way, men being constrained to mask their thoughts, there arises a habit of securing safety by falsehood, and of purchasing impunity with deceit. In this way fraud becomes a necessary of life, insincerity is made a daily custom, the whole tone of public feeling is vitiated, and the gross amount of vice and of error fearfully increased."*

To the same effect, Francis Galton, in one of the most important books of the century, says:—

> "The Church, having first captured all the gentle natures and compelled them to celibacy, made another sweep of her huge nets, this time fishing in stirring waters, to catch those who were the most fearless, truth-seeking, and intelligent in their modes of thought, and therefore the most suitable parents of a high civilisation, and put a strong check, if not a direct stop, to their progeny. Those she reserved on these occasions to breed the generations of the future were the servile, the indifferent, and, again, the stupid. Thus, as she brutalised human nature by her system of celibacy applied to the gentle, she demoralised it by her system of persecution of the intelligent, the sincere, and the free. It is enough to make the blood boil to think of the blind folly that has caused the foremost nations of struggling humanity to be the heirs of such hateful ancestry, and that has so bred our interests as to keep them in an unnecessarily long-continued antagonism with the essential requirements of a steadily advancing civilisation. In consequence of this inbred imperfection of our natures, in respect to the conditions under which we have to live, we are, even now, almost as much harassed by the sense of moral incapacity and sin as

* Quoted by G. H. Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind*, vol. i., p. 11.

* *History of Civilisation*, Lib. Ed., vol. i., p. 172.

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were the early converts from barbarism, and we steep ourselves in half-unconscious self-deception and hypocrisy as a partial refuge from its insistence."*

Severe as this indictment is, I do not think that it can be reasonably said to be overdrawn. One has only to reflect that in Spain alone, from 1471 to 1781, an annual average of 100 people were put to death, and 900 imprisoned for offences against religion, and that the policy of Spain was only an example of what was happening, more or less, over the whole of Europe, to realise the demoralising effect upon successive generations. A nation cannot go on draining itself of its best blood without feeling the effects sooner or later; and in the very nature of the case the people who feel the weight of persecution are the very people who are most upright, most honorable, and most useful to the nation, if properly appreciated.

All religious persecution has this one result: it manufactures hypocrites and breeds cowards. For, while it lasts, they are the only classes who are safe. Persecution affects only the man who makes up his mind to be honest and straightforward, to speak the truth that is in him, and dare the consequences. The man who is content to play the hypocrite does not dread persecution. It has no existence for him. Public praise may be lavished upon him; the highest offices of the State are open to him; he has stifled his thoughts and bridled his tongue, and that is all that is required of him. It is the fearless investigator, the searcher after truth, the man who would sacrifice all the comforts the world has to offer, who suffers; and with him the race suffers also.

It is in these two directions that religion has inflicted an irreparable injury upon the human mind. By limiting the number of subjects upon which man might exercise his reason, it has induced inaccurate methods of thinking; for the mind does not consist of a number of isolated and independent faculties, but is an organic whole, necessarily suffering by an injury or want of development of any of its parts. And, secondly, by the long centuries of mental terrorism in which it has kept the race, by selecting the strong, reliant, heretical goats from the credulous, timid, and ignorant sheep, by killing the former and leaving the perpetuation of the species principally to the latter, it has inflicted such injuries upon the mental and moral stamina of the race as can only be rectified by many generations of careful scientific training.

C. COHEN.

* *Hereditary Genius*, pp. 358-9.

## ASSIZE SERVICES.

["Judge not that ye be not judged."—Matt. vii. 1.

WITH dismay we learn from the *Sunday Magazine* that there is an agitation on foot for the abolition of what are known as "Assize Services"—*i.e.*, the Church services usually attended by the judges in state prior to the opening of Assize.

It is very terrible to contemplate the lengths to which the iconoclastic spirit of the age seems inclined to go. Something should be done to check it. We are a Christian nation with a deep and abiding reverence for traditions and antiquities. And it is not to be supposed that we can part with our cherished institutions and customs one after another without even an expostulatory word. True, the present proposal emanates, as the *Sunday Magazine* says, from certain "thoughtless" persons. They may, however —"thoughtless" as they are—succeed in carrying it out, and then, we ask, what will become of the administration of the law in our county towns?

Let us consider this matter in detail, as so high an authority in the religious world as the *Sunday Magazine* deems it one of special importance. First of all, we must describe the present procedure. The judge of Assize is met at his "lodgings" by the High Sheriff, the Under Sheriff, the chaplain, and others, who are ushered into his lordship's drawing-room, where he and his marshal and clerk await the arrival of the high officials of the county. Afterwards the whole party make their way to the sheriff's state and other carriages outside, the county trumpeters sounding a *fanfare* while the seats are being taken. The procession, which generally includes the Mayor and other civic authorities, then moves off to the cathedral or church, where the officers of state are met at the entrance by the dignitaries of the church—the Dean and Chapter attending if it is a cathedral town. A service is held, and then the High Sheriff's chaplain preaches a sermon, except at Cambridge, where the University preacher always officiates.

From this it will be perceived that the chief and special thing of which it is proposed to deprive Her Majesty's judges is the sermon. A more cold-blooded, cruel proposal could hardly be conceived. Of course, it never enters into the minds of the iconoclasts that *the* one thing of all others which the judges look forward to with pleasant emotions—when they pack up their traps and leave town on circuit—is the sermon that awaits them in the one, two, or three centres they are marked down to visit.

Their attendant clerks carry with them a few law books —mostly records of Crown cases reserved—and there are the circuit libraries always available. But what, after all, are they? Useful for reference, no doubt; but for general guidance—what better than to sit at the Assize services, and snap up hints as they fall, like precious pearls, from the lips of the Solons of the pulpit?

The "thoughtless" proposal means that the Sheriff's chaplain is no longer to be afforded the opportunity—sanctioned by immemorial custom—of delivering to the judges such a discourse as he thinks will best fit them for the discharge of their duties. Why should he be deprived of this chance, which only comes to him at long and rare intervals? Why begrudge him the little "look in"? Think of the many dreary occasions during the year when he has absolutely no one to address but pious spinsters, common tradespeople, and Hodge!

With no proper admonition and guidance from the sheriff's chaplain, the business of Assize might certainly go on. But would God's blessing rest upon it?

Jurors are not specially called upon to attend the service and hear the sermon. They may, however, be relied upon to make every effort in court to fulfil their oath, and "a true verdict give according to the evidence." But is the judge to be trusted to direct the jury, and accurately and impartially sum up? And would he be able to reconcile to his conscience the sentences he passes when that conscience is lacking the sanctifying stimulus, the quickening and strengthening and purifying influence of the chaplain's sermon? These are serious questions for the "thoughtless" to weigh and consider.

What we say is—as well propose to abolish the trumpeters' *fanfare* as the service and sermon, and then see what will happen.

There are, however, other considerations involved. It seems that the proposal of the "thoughtless" is grounded on the fact that, apart from the officials concerned, scarcely anybody thinks it worth while to attend the services. Should that be so—and we do not deny it—it surely affords no reason for depriving the judges of an improving discourse. The *Sunday Magazine* observes with regret that some of the sermons are "dull and perfunctory." It is conceivable that some of them are. Let us frankly admit even that. It is possible, too, that, being "dull and perfunctory," they do not tend to the pleasantest frame of mind on the part of the judges, some of whom are notoriously testy old gentlemen. The judges, as men skilled in analysis, may occupy themselves in mercilessly dissecting the discourses during their delivery, and be tempted to feelings of mockery and scorn. Such a spirit, we need hardly say, is very unfitted to the temple of God. The most, therefore, that we can hope for is that, in these instances of "dull and perfunctory" sermons, the administrators of the law may, with Christian fortitude and in a spirit of Christian charity, make an effort to bear patiently with their weaker brethren in the pulpit. Far be it from us to imagine any of the judges—even the most irascible—leaving the sacred edifice soured and disgusted, or in a railing and profane mood. Far rather would we think of the sermon as having the ordinary soporific effect, if only for the sake of the poor prisoners afterwards to be tried.

The "thoughtless" further allege that the custom of holding these services is effete and obsolete, and that the regularity of its observance is broken by the fact that several of the judges are Roman Catholics, and do not, therefore, attend. We know that, a few years ago, Sir Henry Hawkins, with what we always considered a somewhat low taste, generally preferred, instead of attending any service, to take out his "little dawg"—the late famous fox terrier—for a walk, even though it were on the Lord's

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Day. Such an example, it is hardly necessary to say, is not one that can be commended. To see, as we have seen, that venerable ornament of the judicial bench wandering in the vicinity of Warwick Castle during church hours on a hunt for rats—thus not only desecrating the Sabbath himself, but leading his little dog into a like offence—is not, it must be admitted, the most edifying spectacle that could be imagined.

The *Sunday Magazine* enlarges on the peculiarly favorable opportunity that the Assize sermons afford for impressing on the judges the sovereign virtue of mercy. There are, of course, numerous texts available for that purpose, such as the cheerful promise that the Son of Man will send forth his angels to gather up offenders, and will "cast them into a furnace of fire," where there "shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth"; or that mercy-breathing verse: "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv. 41). Suitable discourses based on these texts would infuse a proper spirit of humility in the judges by showing them how insignificant, after all, are their sentences of hanging, penal servitude, and the cat.

Nevertheless, for an eloquent incentive to mercy, more particularly addressed to believers, the judges might be satisfied with a certain speech put into the mouth of Portia by one William Shakespeare, which many people, whose opinion is worthy of attention, regard as vastly finer than anything that can be found on the same subject in Holy Writ, from Genesis to Revelation.

Failing other appropriate texts, the Sheriff's chaplain might select that which heads this article, or Jesus Christ's denunciation:—

> "Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers" (Luke xi. 46).

Or he might dilate on the incident of the woman taken in adultery, and explain how any punitive measures would be possible in society if only they, who are without sin, are permitted to cast stones. Or he might submit to them, as experts in the sifting and weighing of evidence, the exact grounds on which we are asked to believe in Bible *miracles*—in Jonah's whale, Balaam's ass, and other sacred marvels. Or he might explain how "legal swearing" is to be reconciled with the following plain declaration by Christ, which does *not* merely apply to oaths in ordinary conversation:—

> "Again ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne. Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. v. 33-37).

Or he might, as a delicate compliment, select some passage from Judges, such, for instance, as the rather "tall" story of Samson slaying *a thousand* men with the jawbone of an ass, which he might rationalise by explaining that, in reality, the weapon used was oratory—though not, of course, of the pulpit order.

However, not to pursue the matter any further, we may conclude with the reflection that it is just possible these Assize services are regarded by the judges as less useful to them than to the officiating clerics who derive from them a transitory and factitious importance.

FRANCIS NEALE.

## 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.

## CAPITAL LETTERS.

WORDS, said Hobbes, are the counters of wise men and the money of fools. The saying is profoundly true, as anyone may discover who takes the trouble to examine and reflect. Just as a bit of bunting will gather men together, inspire them with a common sentiment, and make them face death rather than budge an inch, so a word or a phrase will often act as a mighty spell, though the people who employ it have never given its meaning five minutes' real thought in the whole course of their lives. A bigoted Protestant, say an Orangeman, who has been trained to detest the Roman Catholic Church without having imbibed the least knowledge of its history, flies into a rabid passion at the word "Pope." On the other hand, a strict Catholic, who has been taught to regard every form of dissent as a damnable heresy, no sooner hears the word "Protestant" than he conjures up the idea of a monster. To mention "Tory" at a Liberal meeting, or "Liberal" at a Tory meeting, is to excite the strongest feelings of derision or abhorrence; while to mention "Sceptic" or "Freethinker," or "Infidel," among orthodox Christians is to make them feel positively unclean. During the French Revolution, it is said, there were fanatical Republicans who cried "Fraternity or Death"; that is, not death to themselves, but death to other people. "Be my brother or die!" they shouted to their opponents, while pointing weapons at their breasts. Clearly, in this case, Fraternity was not an intelligible idea, but a shibboleth, a party cry, a cant phrase, meaning as little as Abracadabra.

There are also many words that pass current without any definite signification being attached to them by the multitude; but when once they are adopted by a party, though their meaning becomes no more defined, they are taken as badges, and become rallying cries in political and social struggles. Take a very striking illustration. Free Trade, whether right or wrong, is perfectly intelligible. The phrase is neither dubious nor obscure. The simplest mind comprehends it at once. Free Trade is unlimited trade with every part of the globe. But the opponents of Free Trade, in a country like England, where naked Protection has no chance, raise the flag of Fair Trade; and under cover of that word *Fair*, which is so highly respectable, and even venerable, they manage to cheat thousands of simple-minded persons, who never get behind such words, but are imposed upon by their plausible faces. With the most perfect sincerity and composure, they ask you how you can oppose Fair Trade? What can be fairer than *Fair* Trade? And so on. Their poor minds are hopelessly befogged, and their condition is pitiable; but it is only an extreme instance of what is, after all, exceedingly common.

People can be cheated, however, not only by words, but by spelling; and there is no more effective device in this line than the skilful use of capital letters. When every substantive was printed with a capital there was no opportunity for this trick; but now capitals are generally dropped, except for proper names, the cunning rhetorician can eke out his argument or his metaphor by a species of literary atavism. Probably no writer knew the secret of this method better than Carlyle, who was one of the greatest masters of rhetoric that ever lived; or, as some might prefer to say, one of the greatest artists in words. When Carlyle is writing straightforward history, as in the *Frederick*, he uses few more capitals than an ordinary author; but when he assumes the preacher or the poet, as in his wayside disquisitions or in the perpetual transcendentalism of *Sartor Resartus*, his pages show a perfect eruption of capitals. Eternities, Verities, and so on, spring up head and shoulders above modester words of equal merit; and naturally they strike the attention of the ordinary reader, who is too apt to judge by first appearances, and takes these capital-lettered substantives at their own estimate—if we may be allowed to charge them with the author's doings. The object, of course, is to give these special words, not simply a distinction, but a personality. They are nothing but abstractions; but when they are printed like proper names they look like real existences; nay, like living beings, that may be loved and hated for themselves. When Carlyle says "the Eternities cry" this, that, or the other, he imposes on the ordinary reader by means of the capital. Eternities suggest God; in fact, it seems a sonorous euphemism for the ineffable name. Yet,

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if God were substituted for Eternities, the reader would shrink back. "How do you know," he might exclaim, "that God says so? Is it in the Bible, or is it a private revelation to yourself?" The fact is, Carlyle, like the tremendous and unscrupulous artist he was, expressed nothing but his own opinion; but this trick of spelling enabled him to father it, as it were, upon the universe.

Professor Huxley, many years ago, uttered a strenuous protest against this jugglery. Speaking of the metaphysical idea of compulsion, he said: "Matter I know and force I know, but what is this Necessity but a mental figment of my own creation?" And later on he said, with his peculiar blending of humor and scientific precision, that words like Necessity are printed with capital letters to make them imposing, just as you put a bearskin hat upon a grenadier to make him look more formidable than he is by nature. Metaphysical discussion would not cease if such words were printed like ordinary nouns, yet it would probably lose much interest to common readers, who might begin to see the truth of Berkeley's remark, that metaphysicians first raise a dust, and then complain that they cannot see.

Deity is another word usually printed with a capital, though quite wrongly. God is, in a sense, a personal name, for the word is supposed to denote a personal being. Mr. John Morley, therefore, was a little *outré* in printing it with a small g when he edited the *Fortnightly Review*; and the *Spectator* was only dishing him with his own sauce when it retorted by printing Mr. Morley's name with a small m.

Christian journals frequently print Atheist or Freethinker without a capital, while uniformly bestowing one on Christian, Protestant, or Catholic. This practice seems to justify their readers' opinion that Atheists and Freethinkers are an inferior species. We have even seen Unitarian printed in such journals with a small u.

During the first Jubilee craze we all witnessed a new development of spelling. Loyalty had grown so hectic as to appropriate for the Queen a usage formerly devoted to God. Every personal pronoun relating to her in the Jubilee service at Westminster Abbey was printed in capitals, so that she and the Almighty claimed an equal dignity. Since then Mr. Alfred Austin has dedicated a new volume of poems to the Queen, and, like a complete courtier, he follows the example set by the Archbishop of Canterbury. But worse remains. It is actually reported in the newspapers, without contradiction, that in the Prayer-Book used at Windsor the royal pronouns all take capitals, while the divine pronouns are reduced to the ignominy of small type. Surely it is impossible to conceive a loftier (we beg the word's pardon) flattery of royalty, or a more blasphemous snub to the heavenly majesty. Who will dare to pretend, after this, that the religion of the upper circles is anything but a branch of statecraft, or that their Christianity is anything more than "an organised hypocrisy"?

G. W. FOOTE.

## TWO PICTURES.

DARK is the night, and bitter blows the wind;
Quietly the sullen river flows along;
The lights of London shining just behind,
And gleaming on the water deep and strong.
Hark! what was that? see in the sluggish water
A female figure; ah! it's gone from sight.
The same sad story—someone's fallen daughter
Homeless and maddened, driven to hell to-night.

. . . . . .

Lights from the basement to the upper story,
Music and warmth and beauty in galore;
The heiress reigns to-night in all her glory,
Her swift feet glancing o'er the polished floor;
Bewild'ring scene of satins, silks, and laces,
Of waving palms, and choice exotic flowers;
Stout dowagers, with false teeth and painted faces,
Trifling with pleasure till the morning hours.

. . . . . .

Where is the God, the all-creating Spirit?
Where is the God whose word and law is just?
One creature flourishes not on her own merit,
Another "falls" because she lacks a crust!

T. PLATTEN.

## THE BURIAL OF BYRON.

IT has been said of Westminster Abbey that, instead of being a national Valhalla, it is but an imperfect and irregular commemorator of greatness. Look round the building, and notice that it is crowded with monuments, which have no right to be there, whilst admission is refused to a poet like Byron. It may be on account of his scepticism, but what claims to orthodoxy had Ephraim Chambers, Courayer, Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, or even Charles Darwin? Byron's life had not been without errors, but surely he had as much right to be buried there as John Broughton, "the prince of prize-fighters," or Mrs. Aphra Behu, a novelist we beg leave to introduce to the attention of Detective Sweeney. The tombs of several (by no means immaculate) actresses would not be profaned by the admission of Byron's ashes.

The poet, it will be remembered, was buried in the church at Hucknall-Torkard, Nottinghamshire. If he had no claim to lay in the "consecrated" precincts of the Abbey, he has no right to lay in "consecrated" ground at all.

The Greeks desired that Byron might be buried in the Temple of Theseus at Athens, but it was decided that the body should be conveyed to London for sepulture in the Abbey. Permission, however, was refused by the Dean, who thus earned an immortality of infamy; and, after lying in state for some days in London, Byron was buried with his mother and his ancestors in the little church at Hucknall, such being the desire of his beloved sister, Augusta.

It appears that not one of the "respectable" and conservative little gentry about Nottingham responded to the invitation to attend the funeral procession, so strong was their instinctive feeling that he was the enemy of their pretensions; but the great-hearted common people attended in masses the burial of one of England's greatest poets. To quote the fine lines of Alexander Smith:—

> ".....he was as far above common men
> As a sun-steed, wild-eyed, and meteor-maned,
> Neighing the reeling stars, is 'bove a hack
> With sluggish veins of mud."

MIMNERMUS.

## ACID DROPS.

"I AM sincerely glad," Emperor William telegraphed, "to be able to congratulate you for the splendid victory of Omdurman, which at last avenges poor Gordon's death." We suppose this is a Christian expression. Thousands of men slaughtered to avenge the death of one! In what scale are the respective values of different human lives weighed? It may be a subject for congratulation that the detestable tyranny of the Khalifa is ended, and that a large portion of the earth may once more become populous and cultivated; but to justify the Soudan campaign on the ground that it avenges the death of Gordon seems to us positively wicked. But, after all, who looks for common sense in Emperor William's telegrams!

The Khalifa was a wily impostor. He said prayers daily at the Mahdi's tomb, and affected great austerity in public, but in private he wallowed in drunkenness and debauchery. He and his immediate friends had a fine old time while it lasted. Now the inspired Khalifa is a fugitive, if he is not already slain by his own followers for not destroying his enemies, as he promised, by his miraculous powers.

The Bishop of Salisbury, preaching to troops in the Cathedral, asked the prayers of the congregation for the success of the Khartoum expedition, because "victory would mean the abolition of a tyranny practised in the name of religion." Perhaps so; but is that the *only* tyranny practised in the name of religion? Tyranny is practised in the name of Christianity all over the world. It is even practised in England. The Bishop of Salisbury's faith is protected against free criticism by law, and his Church is compulsorily supported by myriads of people who despise and detest it.

The Bishop of Carlisle has managed to be really funny. In one and the same pastoral letter to his clergy he advised them to pray that God would enable our troops to smash the Dervishes, and also that God would bless the Czar's proposals for a general peace. How the Almighty must smile when he listens to that double-barrelled supplication!

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How curious it is that during Zola's holiday—which the hostile Paris journals called his "flight"—his enemies should have so signally vindicated him. Colonel Henry's confession and suicide fell upon France like a bolt from the blue. He concocted a certain document to make the guilt of Dreyfus absolutely certain. That document was cited at Zola's trial with triumphant effect, and M. Cavaignac, the War Minister, quoted it in the Chamber as conclusive against the prisoner of the Devil's Island. Zola all along declared it a rank and clumsy forgery, and Colonel Picquart insisted that it was forged by Colonel Henry himself. Everybody now knows that they were right, and he must be a very prejudiced man who believes in the authenticity of the other documents that went along with this precious concoction.

Everybody knows that Zola is a Freethinker. Yet the dear *Daily News* hopes that he is not "a sufficiently bad Christian to desire the humiliation of his enemies." Our contemporary is well aware that Zola is not a bad Christian. nor a good Christian—no, nor even an indifferent Christian. One has to write in a certain way for a Nonconformist public, but it is a pity to make oneself ridiculous to no purpose.

The editor of the *National Review* has done excellent service by translating some early letters of Captain Dreyfus to his wife and his counsel, Maître Demange. Some were written during his prosecution and trial, and one after his sentence and degradation. If there is any truth in psychology, those are the letters of an innocent man. A guilty man would have struck a false note somewhere in his protestations of innocence; but these letters have every mark of absolute sincerity. The man who could read them without tears is to be envied—or pitied.

President Faure comes rather badly out of this Dreyfus scandal. He is a showy sort of man, but not at all deep in mind or strong in character. It seems to us that France really wants a President with greater powers than are conferred by the present constitution, in order to give some stability to the management of her affairs. She might do much worse than call back M. Casimir-Perier and make a bold constitutional revision at the same time.

Rev. Thomas W. S. Jones, Wesleyan Missionary Society's agent at Naples, attributes most of the blame of the late troubles in Italy to the Roman Catholic Church, which has a Forward Movement there, whose object is to overthrow the Kingdom, and to reduce the country to a cluster of states under the headship of the Pope. "Every priest of Rome," Mr. Jones says, "every association and congress, every associate of this aggressive movement, has been, knowingly or unknowingly, a centre of discontent. All economic and administrative mistakes, all the ills that nations are heir to, have been used to fan the fire of socialistic dissatisfaction and anarchist passion, and clerical policy has suggested, semi-officially, a Federal Italy, with the Pope as the temporal head. And yet all over, certainly in the south, the attempt at insurrection has been an utter failure. No leading mind directed it, save from behind the scenes. The wire-pulling was in the hands of those shadowed by the mystery of the Vatican itself."

We have no doubt that what Mr. Jones says is quite correct. At the same time, we venture to add that the Italian government has itself to thank, in large part, for the success of such tactics. If it only cared more for the condition of the people, and less for "glory," based upon merciless taxation of industry, it would have little to fear from the machinations of the Papacy.

Doctor Talbot has been fined ten shillings, or seven days' imprisonment, for riding on the London and South Western Railway without paying his fare. By trade he is a weaver, and it appears that "Doctor" is really his first name. Being the seventh son of a seventh son, he is supposed to possess healing powers, according to a superstition which is said to be more or less prevalent in Lancashire. This is a new development of the sacredness of the number seven.

During the proceedings at Bow-street Police-court, in the case of the two *Britannic* officers who are charged with robbing the mail, Mr. George Page was called as a witness to testify as to the contents of one of the stolen letters, and the following is the *Daily News* report of what occurred :—

"The Chief Usher was proceeding to swear him in the usual way, when he raised an objection. Holding up his hand, he said he wished to be sworn in the Scotch style. The usher was about to administer the oath in the way requested, when witness said in an excited tone : 'No, no; I can repeat the oath myself.'

"The Chief Clerk (Mr. Cavendish)—Do you object on religious grounds?

"Witness—I can affirm on my own ground and in my own strength. I was born with power to speak the truth, and that strength has not been impaired.

"On what ground do you object to be sworn?—I object to being sworn on that book.

"Do you object on religious grounds?—I don't care what you call it. I hold that a Bible in a court-room is humbug.

"Mr. Osborn—I think we can dispense with this witness altogether.

"Witness—Of course, you can do without me if you like, but if you let Bradlaugh go into Parliament without swearing, why not let me give evidence without taking an oath? There's a great deal of humbug in this world. Witness then left the witness-box."

Sir John Bridge, the Bow-street magistrate, is a bit (some say a good deal) of a bigot, or he would have interposed on behalf of Mr. George Page, who had a perfect right at law to affirm instead of making oath. It is a great pity that magistrates are so small-minded, and so impertinent, as to carry their religious prejudices into court, and to connive at a palpable defiance of the law of the land, which they are paid to administer.

Rev. A. Bowen, Roman Catholic priest, has been fined 40s. at Shifnal, Shropshire, for behaving indecently to a girl on the public highway. Shocking! shocking! It is really a shame that men of God should be persecuted in this infamous way.

According to the *St. John's Wood Advertiser*, a clergyman has given the following reasons for the decreasing attendance at church services :—"Railways and bicycles, week-end outings, services too long, sermons not practical enough, parsons not manly enough, many hymns too effeminate and sentimental." Very well, and what is the remedy? Alas, it is not indicated. Indeed, the case seems hopeless. Railways and bicycles cannot be annihilated, week-end outings won't be dropped, and how on earth are parsons to be made manly?

Mr. Kensit, the noble and self-denying Protestant crusader, stated that "only a few days ago, at Canterbury, a Roman priest had offered to take souls out of purgatory at £14 each, and the priest had boasted that by that means he had secured a sum of £323." This statement was indignantly challenged by several Catholics in the columns of the *Daily Chronicle*, and the editor of that journal sent Mr. Kensit a private letter, asking him to be good enough to mention his authority. This letter, in spite of the word "private," was read out by Mr. Kensit before a meeting at Cardiff. Under the circumstances, therefore, the *Chronicle* declined to treat his reply as private. "Little John's" letter was printed in full, and a pretty epistle it was. Mr. Kensit wanted £10 before he would show his authority for a public statement. "I am far too busy," he added, "to work for your paper for nothing." Exactly so. Everybody who knows John Kensit is well aware of what he is working for.

Rev. Robert Middleton, vicar of St. Miles's, Norwich, has a ritualistic disagreement with his Bishop, and on Sunday evening he "went for" the right reverend father-in-God like a true militant Christian. He was severe on "proud, pompous prelates," with (for instance) £4,500 a year and "all the enormous fees for faculties and things." Mr. Middleton does not appear to agree with the Rev. C. L. Engström, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, who rebukes Mr. Foote for referring sarcastically to the £15,000 a year of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dr. Woodward, Keeper of the Department of Geology at South Kensington, is censured by a religious journal for "taking upon himself" to open that department the other Sunday evening, and to hold a reception of those attending the Zoological Congress. Our pious contemporary adds that if this sort of thing is allowed "there will be an end of Sunday rest." How terrible, to be sure! This and the hot weather are enough to make one's blood boil.

The *New Age*, after ascribing a quotation from Darwin to Haeckel, says it is not a very important question, Whence came we? Well, it may not appear very important to superficial sentimentalists, who fancy that the millennium will be achieved by means of a handful of selected maxims from the New Testament. But it looks vastly important to those who believe in the power of ideas and the sovereignty of principles. Those who hold that man is a fallen angel, and those who hold that man is a risen animal, have necessarily very different views of man's position and destiny. The choice of these two theories is really the parting of the ways.

According to the Rev. E. B. Ottley, who preached at Marylebone on Sunday, the late Mr. Gladstone once said to him : "It will be time enough to discuss the question (of eternal punishment) when we have a glimmering of the

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meaning of the words Eternal and Eternity." How characteristic that is of the Grand Old Man! As a theologian he was always mystifying and quibbling about words. Why, the very man in the street has a competent idea of the meaning of Eternity—quite as competent, we may add, as that of the greatest "thinker." He will tell you it is "for ever and ever," or something like; or he may even say it is "a hell of a time"; and that's as near to it as finite beings will ever get. The practical question, therefore, is really this—Are the damned tortured in Hell by their all-merciful Father for such a period? It is no use juggling. Answer, yes or no. But the Grand Old Man never could answer categorically. He always had plenty of alternatives and qualifications. No doubt he felt that the theologian who was foolish enough to be precise simply gave himself away to his opponents.

The Czar will do well to look after his people at home, instead of carrying on further enterprises in China. The districts affected by the bad harvests are in a dreadful condition. Cattle are being fed on fodder taken from the thatches of cottages, horses and oxen are being sold at half price, and the prospect for the winter is positively alarming. Famine is pretty certain to desolate the province of Kazan.

Thunderstorms are accounted "acts of God." During one near Carlantino, recently, twenty peasants sought shelter in an old house, but the building collapsed, and eighteen of them were killed in the ruins. If it *was* an act of God, what should be said of his Almightiness?

The plague is increasing in Bombay. No less than 27,800 victims have succumbed to it already. Yet the text is true, "He doeth all things well."

A pretended cripple, on being refused a drink, stood up erect, moved about with wonderful agility, and offered to fight two gentlemen on the spot. On appearing at the Marylebone Police-court, he said that he was trying to sell "Scripture books"—apparently in public-houses.

A. J. Waldron has issued "An Appeal." He claims to have rescued hundreds from unbelief, and particularly to have converted one "Mr. L——," who was "one of the most aggressive Secularists of New Brompton." As this gentleman was "subsequently baptised as a confession of faith before more than 600 people," it is difficult to see why his name should be concealed. Was it Mr. Liar? Perhaps our New Brompton friends can throw a little light upon the subject. Meanwhile we cannot help a feeling of sadness at the thought that such a successful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ should be "worried with financial difficulties." "Some generous person" is asked to "come forward to the rescue." Only "£500 per annum is required." Surely that beggarly sum will not need to be asked for twice.

Arthur Coy, a young married man, employed as a fitter at Kirkstall Forge, Leeds, committed suicide by throwing himself in the canal. In a letter to his wife he said: "Meet me in heaven." It is rather a distant and uncertain place for an appointment. The foolish man had better have gone home and looked after his own family, instead of leaving them to the Lord. His poor wife isn't likely to get much assistance from that quarter.

Any good Christian can tell why the Colston Hall was burnt down. The conflagration occurred during the night, and was evidently a "judgment" on the Trade Union Congress for something that happened during the day. Mr. Harris, a Bradford delegate, moved a resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Wardley, of Sheffield, and unanimously agreed to, requesting the Government to require from all firms that had been granted, or that might hereafter be granted, the Government's licence to print and publish the Holy Bible, an assurance that they paid trade-union wages for their printing and bookbinding work. Mr. Harris is reported to have spoken as follows in support of his resolution: "He said that at Glasgow women were employed to bind the Bible at wages amounting to only four or five shillings a week. One firm there employed 200 women, and paid them from 4s. to 6s. per week for the same class of work that men in London got 23s. per week for doing.—Mr. Rogers (London), in seconding the resolution, said they had no quarrel with the Queen's Printers or the University Press, but they had a quarrel with the Scotch houses. It was a quaint humor that their brothers across the Tweed, who claimed to be a Bible-loving people (and that he did not dispute), should be guilty of the evil practice of sweating, for undoubtedly it was a fact that it was in the production of Bibles that the cloven hoof of the sweater was most apparent."

These wretched sneers at holy people, who only starve the mortal bodies of insignificant work-girls in order that they may supply cheap Bibles for the salvation of immortal souls, must have reached the ears of "one above," who signified his displeasure in the usual way. Those unanimous Trade Unionists forgot that the Bible God is "a consuming fire."

Rev. A. Bird, preaching a funeral sermon on a deceased lady in the Baptist chapel, Penzance, spoke as follows, according to a report in the *Cornishman*: "One of the marked features of the Bible is the position it everywhere assigns to woman. From the first to the last it assumes the moral equality of the sexes, and again and again gives beautiful and suggestive pictures of woman's life, crown, and honor, examples of which were found in the stories of Sarah, Hannah, Ruth, and Mary."

We hope the lady whose funeral sermon the reverend gentleman was preaching was at least superior to the first of the Bible ladies in this list. Sarah was what the man in the street calls—well, by the curt designation of a female dog. She agreed to pass herself off as her husband's sister on two occasions, and, as rich and powerful personages took a fancy to her, the old man she left waiting for her made a fine profit on the transaction. Having no children of her own, she told her husband to get some by one of her maids, which the accommodating old fellow cheerfully consented to. But by-and-bye when she did get a child of her own—it occurred when she was ninety, and it was a considerable miracle—she bullied her husband into turning Hagar and her boy out into the desert to die of hunger and thirst. A nice baggage indeed! though perhaps she just fits the taste of the Rev. A. Bird.

"Providence" has been giving it hot to the poor New Yorkers. Fancy a temperature of 107 degrees in the shade. If that sort of thing lasted, the smart Yankee would become like the indolent Spaniard, so great is the influence of climate on human nature.

## JEHOVAH JUNIOR; OR, THE MAKER'S BOY.

(*Tune*—"The Minstrel Boy.")

THE Maker's boy to the World is gone,
In the ranks of men you'll find him;
Their "mortal coil" he has girded on,
And his God-head left behind him.
"Sons of men," said the Son of Man,
"With peaceful aspirations!
The sword I bring will spoil your plan,
And sunder homes and nations."

"I represent the Creator's House,
'In which is many a mansion.'
(N.B.—You'll see, if you've rhythmic nous,
A defect in last line's scansion.)
Trust in me, and in water douse,
And, verily, I'll book you
For 'mansions in my Father's House';
If not, my Pa will cook you!"

"But bear in mind, if with me you come,
That your bed will not be roses,
Because I mean to make matters 'hum,'
As they 'hummed' in days of Moses!"
Thus Jehovah the younger spoke—
At least, we're told he did so,
By solemn folk who shirk his "yoke";
But solemn people "kid" so.

The wastrel fell in a mortal fright
At the hands of Pontius Pilate,
But rose again on the second night,
Being anxious not to *lie* late.
Two-and-seventy hours, said he,
Within the grave he'd slumber;
But stayed not more than thirty-three;
Not *half* the promised number.

The mongrel boy back to heav'n is gone,
On a great white throne you'll find him,
With hybrid beasts, as described by John,
And a pigeon perched behind him.
Loudly roars the celestial "zoo":
"'Tis well that Cæsar *slew* Jah!
So, Cock-a-blessed-doodle-do!
And likewise Hallelujah!"

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, whose Freethought verses are well known to readers of the *Freethinker*, proposes to bring out a collection of his best pieces in volume form. The price would be half-a-crown, and all who would like to have a copy should intimate so at once to Mr. R. Forder 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, September 11, 3.30, Freethought Demonstration, Hyde Park; 7.30, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, "Good Without God: or the Morality of Nature."

September 18, Birmingham; 25, Liverpool.

October 2, Glasgow; 9, Leicester; 16 and 23, Athenæum Hall.

November 6, Manchester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 18 and 25, Athenæum Hall, London. October 2, New Brompton. November 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

R. KILLICK.—Miss Vance has conveyed to us your kind message. We are sorry to hear that "Providence" has been so hard upon you in the matter of health, but hope you will soon be better. When you are so, call and shake hands.

MAJOR-GENERAL FORLONG, sending a subscription to the Wheeler Memorial Fund, says: "I was sorry to hear of poor Mr. Wheeler's death. He is a great loss to the cause, and seemed a most estimable man, with a well-balanced mind."

W. COX.—Please let your lecture notices be written on separate slips of paper for our compositors.

A. E. ELDERKIN.—We missed Coulson Kernahan's letter, to which you refer. It is not surprising that he did not answer your communication. Glad to hear you regarded Mr. Foote's lecture on Sunday evening as "a very great treat." The difficulty about publishing some of the Athenæum lectures is that they are all extemporaneous utterances, and accurate reporting is rather expensive. It affords us much satisfaction to know that a man like yourself derives "enjoyment and profit" from reading the *Freethinker*. Bishop Magee did not answer our Open Letter. How could he?

A. B. MOSS.—Yes, we got home all right, but it was stiff work sitting so long and speaking too, in that broiling sun, to the chorus of the *Mail's* Hooligans. Pleased to hear you had a fine audience at Mile-end.

CHARLES LONG, in reference to Mr. Gould's article, "Ought we to be Neutral?" says: "I don't think he would practise what he preaches if he had to earn his living in a village or cathedral town." Perhaps not. But a great many people live outside such places, and they might give heed to Mr. Gould's admonitions.

S. J. B.—Received with thanks.

A. BUTTON hopes all friends of the movement will join the Secular Society, Limited—which he does himself, and make it the success that it deserves to be.

T. OLLERENSHAW, joining the Secular Incorporation, writes: "I have every confidence in you as leader, and hope you will be spared to us till a ripe old age."

T. PERKINS.—Yes, it was indeed amusing to see the Bishop of Llandaff, after all those long months of the strike, calling for special prayers to Almighty God to end it just as the men were practically forced into accepting the masters' terms.

M. E. PEGG.—We conformed to the instructions in your letter, unless we are very much mistaken. However, we note now that it is on September 11 and 18 that Mr. Percy Ward lectures at Manchester. Mr. Foote has booked the date in November.

R. EDWARDS.—Thanks. See paragraph. It is sad to think that a gentleman who is so fond of referring, in season and out of season, to the appeals made in our columns on behalf of Secular objects, should himself require to be "rescued" from "financial worries."

G. L. ALWARD.—Inserted as desired. We reciprocate your good wishes. When are the Grimsby friends going to make a fresh move in Freethought propaganda?

R. STIRTON (Transvaal).—Thanks for your sympathy and good wishes. The Secular Incorporation ought to be a great success, and will be if the Freethought party does its duty.

G. DIXON.—Thanks. See acknowledgments. We wish you all happiness.

CHILDREN'S EXCURSION.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Per Mrs. Henderson, 15s.; Nellie, Florrie, and Dorothy Foote, 5s.; C. Bowman, 2s. 6d. Collected at Mr. Foote's Lecture, £1 3s. Per Mr. Cohen, 9s.; J. Barry, 2s.; G. W. Foote, 5s.

THE following are fresh applicants for membership in the Secular Society, Limited: C. Bowman, Mrs. Mensbier, R. Killick, Robert Stirton (S. Africa), A. Button, T. Ollerenshaw, G. B. H. McCluskey.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—Mrs. Mensbier, 5s.; T.A., 1s.; A. E. Elderkin, 2s. 6d.; G. Dixon, 10s.; F. W. Donaldson, 5s.; T. Ollerenshaw, 2s.; F. F. (per C. Cohen), 5s.; F. Morgan, 2s.

J. MUNTON.—Thanks for cuttings.

T. L. MARTIN.—Thanks for the cuttings and letter. If you apply direct to Miss Vance, N. S. S. office, 377 Strand, London, W.C., she will forward you a parcel of tracts for distribution amongst the South Wales miners.

J. FARMER.—The Humanitarian League's office is at No. 53 Chancery-lane, W.C. Its monthly organ, *Humanity*, is published at one penny. It is admirably conducted by Mr. H. S. Salt.

G. B. H. MCCLUSKEY, joining the Secular Society, Limited, says: "If Freethinkers only take up this scheme with the enthusiasm of the old fighting days, I believe it will effect a revolution."

F. MORGAN wishes that every reader of the *Freethinker* would send at once a subscription, however small, to the Circulation Fund. We wish so too.

A. ANDREW.—Received with thanks.

E. J. B.—Will appear as written.

NEWCASTLE AND EAST LONDON BRANCHES.—Your lecture notices arrive as we are going to press, too late. We must receive them by first post on Tuesday at latest.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Torch of Reason—Ethical World—Cornishman—Public Opinion—People's Newspaper—Liberator—Workers' Republic—Isle of Man Times—Freidenker—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Crescent—Two Worlds—Truthseeker (Bradford)—St. John's Wood Advertiser—South London Mail—Lloyd's Newspaper—Daily Chronicle—South London Press—Freedom—New Century Review.

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 is due.

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.

## SPECIAL.

FRIENDS of the *Freethinker* are earnestly invited to subscribe towards its Circulation Fund. This is a way of helping us and at the same time promoting the spread of Freethought. We want to make this journal better known to the liberal-minded public throughout the country, to make it more accessible to purchasers, and to overcome the obstacles raised by the bigotry or timidity of newsagents. The best pens in the party are engaged upon the *Freethinker*, and it must be of the highest service to the movement to have their writings extensively read. Besides, this journal is the vital centre of our propaganda and organisation. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, could easily contribute some assistance, and we ask them to do so if possible during the present month.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

IN spite of the sultry weather, a capital audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road, on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Czar's Appeal to Europe." The lecture was followed with profound attention, the interest never flagging to the end. Mr. Thurlow, who occupied the chair, said that such lectures proved the absurdity of the allegation that Secular advocates were only vulgar Bible-bangers. The President of the N. S. S., at any rate, generally managed to deal with a live topic; and, whatever it was, he seemed always able to treat it informingly even on the shortest notice. A little courteous criticism was offered by a member of the audience, and was suitably answered.

Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening (September 11), taking for his subject "Good Without God: or the Morality of Nature." Freethinkers are earnestly invited to give publicity to this lecture amongst their more orthodox friends, to whom it should prove interesting and perhaps instructive.

There was an immense concourse of people on Peckham Rye last Sunday afternoon, partly owing to the malignant but effective advertisement in the *South London Mail*, which continues to demand a prosecution of the Secularists for "blasphemy" by means of public subscription; the cream of the joke being that the editor warmly resents the imputation that he is a bigot, and claims to be guided by the noblest spirit of impartiality. He stigmatises the Christian Evidence Society as "mealy mouthed" because Mr. Engström objects to violence and personalities. The proper way of opposing the Secularists, he contends, is to imitate the tactics of Mr. Teapot Taylor. His colleague, who writes under the pseudonym of "John Justice," ventured to say that "Sunday bids fair to supply proofs that the indignation of the people is very real"—which meant, if it meant anything, that the Secularists would be mobbed. Well, they were not mobbed. They had a tremendous meeting around their brake—kindly supplied by Mr. Wilson as usual—and nine-tenths of the crowd were decidedly sympathetic. The other tenth consisted of a knot of Hooligans who were there to display the taste and temper which the *South London Mail* regards as truly Christian. They booed and howled and hooted to their hearts' content. They also

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sang "Rule Britannia," and other idiotic songs. But, while they made the work of the speakers harder than it should have been, they were quite unable to do more, and they judiciously kept at the rear of the meeting. For two hours the crowd stood in the broiling sun, listening to the various speeches, and warmly applauding every strong point.

Mr. Heaford acted as chairman and spoke very effectively. Mr. Moss followed, and hotly denounced the policy of the *Mail*, a paper, he said, which had been flinging gratuitous mud at him for years. Mr. Cohen was pointed and humorous, and his speech was much cheered. Mr. Watts spoke calmly and philosophically, and for a few minutes the Hooligans seemed to be ashamed of themselves; but, under obvious direction, they soon burst forth again with renewed vigor. Fortunately they got tired before the end of Mr. Watts's address. He finished amidst comparative quiet, and the applause was loud and general. Naturally the Hooligans went it blind during Mr. Foote's speech; never once did they cease howling like all the menagerie of the apocalypse. But they did not stop the speech; Mr. Foote made himself heard to the end, and we hope the cheers at the finish were thoroughly satisfactory to "John Justice." The Secular brake drove away amidst general signs of goodwill. A humorous diversion, however, was created by one fanatical Christian, who looked more like a Soudanese dervish than a civilised Englishman. He shook a dirty fist, and screamed maledictions through an opening in his Judas beard, which could not have seen the barber for many a long year. No doubt he is a regular reader of the *South London Mail*.

Miss Vance and other friends went through the crowd and took up a good collection, which the truthful editor of the *Mail* told his readers was to be for the maintenance of the *Freethinker*. *Our* readers do not want to be told that it was for nothing of the kind.

The first of these Freethought Demonstrations was to have been held in Hyde Park, but the rains descended and the floods came and rendered it impossible. Hyde Park, however, is too important a place to be neglected, and an extra Demonstration will be held there this afternoon (Sept. 11) at 3.30, near the Marble Arch entrance. Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, Snell, Heaford, and Moss will address the gathering. Local Freethinkers should, of course, rally round the platform.

A well-attended meeting in connection with the defence of Mr. George Bedborough was held on Monday evening, under the auspices of the Free Press Defence Committee, at St. Martin's Town Hall. Mr. J. M. Robertson occupied the chair and delivered an able and interesting address, which was evidently much appreciated. Mr. Seymour, the honorary and hard-working secretary to the Committee, read a few letters from absent well-wishers. Mr. William Platt moved the resolution of protest against the prosecution in an entertaining speech which bristled with good points. Miss Amy Morant followed in a gentle but effective vein. Then came Mr. Foote, who was greatly cheered, his speech rousing the meeting to a high pitch of enthusiasm. Mrs. Despard, Mr. Peddie, and Mr. Heaford followed with force and earnestness, and the resolution, on being put, was carried unanimously. Mr. Robertson closed the meeting with a few appropriate words.

Mr. Bedborough's trial will come on very shortly at the Old Bailey. Mr. Avory has been retained for the defence, and it is to be hoped that the jury will at least disagree. Unfortunately, the heavy expenses of the defence are not yet covered by subscriptions. More money is urgently needed. Sympathisers should forward their donations at once to Mr. Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, London, N.

Mr. Bedborough's indictment is at last delivered. It completely justifies the view we have taken all along, in spite of the dissent of others who perhaps watched the case less closely. We felt sure that Dr. Havelock Ellis's book was the pretext for more comprehensive action. By arresting Mr. Bedborough under the "obscenity" laws the police were able to raid his premises. They did so, and carried off all the books, periodicals, and papers they found there. Their object, under some unknown prompting, was evidently to destroy the Legitimation League—in which they have practically succeeded, to suppress the *Adult*, and to stop the discussion of sexual problems. Dr. Ellis's book fills but one count in the indictment. There are many other counts referring to articles and poems in the *Adult*, and to pamphlets published under the auspices of the Legitimation League. From the opinions and sentiments expressed in some of those articles we very strongly dissent, but that should not, and shall not, blind us to the real principle which is at stake—namely, the right of free publication for *all* opinions. Liberty is higher than any special conclusion, and must always be defended when it is attacked.

It has long been a scandal that there is no crematorium in London. The nearest to the metropolis is at Woking, forty miles distant. Fortunately there is a prospect of this scandal being removed. The London burial boards have been consulted by the parliamentary committee of the County Council, and declared themselves favorable to the provision of crematoria. Accordingly the committee will promote a Bill in the next session of Parliament to admit of this provision being amply made.

The Trade Union Congress passed a resolution in favor of secular education. Of course this is only a pious opinion as yet, but the time cannot be very far distant when it will become a practical policy. England is losing immensely by the squabble of sects over the education of her children, and she will be obliged to end it in mere self-preservation.

The Brighton Town Council has decided by a large majority to open the Booth Bird Museum on Sunday afternoons. The collection of British birds in this Museum is the finest in the country.

The Glasgow Branch sends us a copy of its annual report and balance-sheet. "At no time," it says, "during the past ten years has the average attendance been so good, or the work of the Society more effective." We note that a Visiting Committee has been appointed to look after lapsed or sick members, which is an excellent feature. The balance-sheet shows an improved income and a substantial sum in hand. We wish the Glasgow Branch all the success it deserves, and that is much.

The Liverpool Branch commenced the new lecture session on Sunday evening. There was a good attendance, and several names were taken of intending members of the Secular Society, Limited. Mr. Foote visits Liverpool on September 25.

Mr. Charles Watts has, by request, reprinted his article on "Secular and Theological Forces" from the *Freethinker* in the form of a large two-page tract for general distribution. Copies can be obtained at the rate of one shilling per hundred, or post-free one-and-two. Orders should be sent to Charles Watts, 17 Johnson's-court, London, E.C. This tract should have a wide circulation.

Subscriptions are still wanted towards the expenses of the Children's Excursion. It is to be hoped that Miss Vance will be able to tell us next week that she has received sufficient for all purposes. The excursion takes place on Saturday, September 10. Full details of the various starting-places of the brakes appeared in our last issue. Tickets for children are still obtainable by applying to Miss Vance at 377 Strand, W.C. Those who wish to secure seats should apply at once. Mr. Foote intends to join the party as a mark of respect to the little ones—bless 'em! Mr. Watts and Mr. Cohen will probably go too.

A good report of Mr. A. B. Moss's recent lecture in the Camberwell Secular Hall appeared in the *South London Observer*.

There is an appreciative article by W. B. Wallace on the Emperor Julian in the September number of the *New Century Review*. Julian has been called "the Apostate" by Christians. He was the last great Pagan opponent of their faith, a great soldier, a wise ruler, and no despicable philosopher.

## Obituary.

Died at Grimsby, on Wednesday, August 31, on her birthday, Mrs. Mary Ann Brown, at the ripe old age of eighty-five years. She was well known, and admired by all her friends as an intelligent and worthy woman. She had been a Freethinker for forty years, a close reader of Freethought literature, and a most ardent admirer of the late Charles Bradlaugh. Her illness was a short one, and she was conscious to the last. She desired a silent funeral, which could not be carried out, as she had expressed a wish to be buried in the churchyard of Holton, to lay amongst her departed family. The parson claimed the right to perform the Church of England Funeral Service over her. She was attended within a few hours of her death by a Freethought lady friend, to whom she expressed her perfect happiness. It was not thought her end was so near. Her last moments were watched over by two ladies, both most devout Christians, who expressed themselves satisfied that it is possible, without a hope of a future life, to die a peaceful and happy death. Mrs. Brown's last words were to bid them good night, and then, in a peaceful slumber, she passed away from life to death without a sigh. She desired no flowers, only the Northampton colors, on her grave.—G. L. A.

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## BELIEF MADE EASY.

*Helps Towards Belief in the Christian Faith.* By C. G. Griffinhoofe, M.A. (London: Ward & Downey.)

HALTING Christians and hesitating inquirers need no longer flounder about in the Slough of Doubt and Despond. Mr. Griffinhoofe has come to the rescue. He has written a book, with a preface by the Archbishop of Armagh, intended to help them out of all their difficulties, and to land them—by hook or by crook—on the "terra firma of faith." That some such book is very badly needed seems to be felt by all who are interested in the maintenance of orthodox belief. And that is why we should hasten to condole with the professors of the old creeds; for, of many attempts to help the lame dog, Faith, over the Christian stile, Mr. Griffinhoofe's book seems to enjoy the distinction of being quite the weakest and the worst.

Nevertheless, the *Record* accords it a column of eulogistic notice, and adds some unique observations of its own on Christian evidence, which observations have about the same argumentative force as Mr. Griffinhoofe's efforts. The Archbishop of Armagh, in the preface, retails an old piece of imbecility, which the *Record* rejoices over as the motive and keynote of the book. It is the story of someone—this time a young musician of genius—who piteously whines: "If I could only be *sure* about the truth of the religion of Christ!" The implication, of course, being that there is something so very precious in Christianity that people *want* to believe it to be true, whether it is so or not—a cool assumption that begs the question. The individual who begins by wanting to believe something to be true will probably—if he only goes on wanting long enough—end in the belief, or what serves him for belief, that it *is* true. The Archbishop of Armagh may regard such a spirit as fitting for the entry upon an impartial investigation of religion. Other people would probably say that the first effort of a judicially-constituted mind, with the least training in scientific methods, would be to carefully divest itself of everything that bore even the semblance of bias, and that, until that was done, no useful inquiry could proceed.

But we know that picture of the tearful, heart-broken waverer—the sad-eyed sceptic who, in bitter anguish of soul, prays to the Lord or appeals to the parson for strength to swallow what, in saner moments—it is implied—his gorge has risen at in instinctive rebellion. "O Lord, give me faith!" is the plaintive cry, half choked with sobs and terrible heavings of the diaphragm. And then the Lord throws in a new light—to which X rays are as dull and impenetrative as the old farthing dip—and all becomes clear. Or the sympathetic cleric—with the smug satisfaction that *he*, at any rate, is equal to believing as much, or even more, than is asked of him—says: "My poor dear friend, I feel for you; read this tract, and doubt no more." The picture is a favorite one from the gallery of Christian Evidence, and has been lithographed and reproduced in every form of cheap parsonic art. Yet we may be permitted to testify that no sceptic we ever knew could, or would, descend to such snivelling, drivelling idiocy.

The *Record*, dropping Mr. Griffinhoofe's book, tells us in a confidential way how to deal with the "difficulties which some feel from the presence of miracles in the gospels." We are to get these weak-kneed mortals first to admit the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the most stupendous miracle of all. Then, having secured that admission, we come down on the cripples with this poser: "If you believe that, you can believe anything." Or, as the *Record* more elegantly puts it: "Grant the resurrection, and all follows easily." Quite so; and a great deal more than the *Record* appears for the moment to be thinking of.

Once having swallowed the resurrection, where are we to stop? We cannot, as Cardinal Newman long ago urged, permit ourselves to be stayed by antecedent improbability from believing either the other miracles recorded in the Gospels, or those which have—according to equally good, or, as we should say, equally insufficient testimony—occurred in later times, such as St. Francis Xavier turning salt water into fresh for five hundred travellers; St. Raymond transporting himself over the sea in his cloak; St. Andrew shining brightly in the dark; crucifixes bowing the head to the supplicant; Madonnas bending their eyes on assembled crowds; St. Januarius's blood liquefying periodically; St. Winifred's well effecting miraculous cures. "No miracle can be so great as that which took place in the Holy House of Nazareth; it is indefinitely more difficult to believe than all the miracles of the Breviary, of the Martyrology, of saints' lives, of legends, of local traditions put together, and there is the grossest inconsistency on the very face of the matter for anyone to strain at a gnat and to swallow the camel" (*Position of Catholics in England*). This, it will be perceived, is exactly the argument of the *Record*, much as that journal may be horrified to find itself proceeding on the same lines as the great Romish controversialist. If we believe in the resurrection, there is no reason—at any rate, on the ground of antecedent improbability—for refusing belief in all the other Bible miracles; and, accepting these, it is absurd to strain at those which are presented to us on certainly not less evidence in ecclesiastical history.

After all, neither Mr. Griffinhoofe nor the *Record* affords such a "help to belief" as that which is attributed to Christ. His was a short and easy method. He simply said: "Believe—or be damned." If that does not stir the mind into a state of capacious receptivity, it is to be feared that nothing else will. X.

## TWELVE REASONS FOR JOINING THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

*First Advantage.*—This scheme gets rid of the old difficulty as to giving or bequeathing money, or other property, for Secular purposes. The Secular Society (Limited) is a legally incorporated body. It has all the rights, as far as its Memorandum and Articles go, of an individual citizen. If anything is bequeathed to it, the executors have no alternative but to pay the amount over. That is certain. It does not admit of a moment's doubt. While the registration stands there is absolutely no room for apprehension on this point. A Freethinker may leave this Society five pounds, or a hundred pounds, or a thousand pounds, with the certitude that all he so leaves will be devoted to the objects set forth in the Memorandum.

*Second Advantage.*—The Society, like an individual citizen, can act as trustee. Should a Freethinker wish a certain sum of money to be devoted, not to the general objects of the Society, or to any one of them in particular, but to some special object in the same direction, he can so devote it by deed of gift, or in his will, and appoint the Society as trustee for the carrying out of his intentions.

*Third Advantage.*—While the Society is not nominally a Trust, like the various Christian Churches, it is practically so. Its Memorandum amounts to the same thing as a Trust, because it specifies certain objects to be promoted, generally by the members and particularly by the Directors, and because Article 54 makes it legally impossible for the Society's funds to be expended in any other way.

*Fourth Advantage.*—Room is made for five hundred members. This number was not exceeded in order to minimise the expenses of registration. But the number can be increased at any time by paying the necessary fee at Somerset House. Five hundred members, however, or even a great many less, are quite sufficient to prevent the possibility of treacherous collusion. This is a moral guarantee of the firmest character. Two or three people might conspire to defraud a society by perverting the use of its resources, but secrecy is indispensable to that end, and in the case of hundreds, or even scores, of members, the thing is inconceivable.

*Fifth Advantage.*—No member, as a member, can derive any profit, direct or indirect, from the Society. The funds of the Society could not, therefore, be voted in any way to its members. Further, there is no danger of the highest interests of the Society being injured by a desire on the part of its members for a commercial dividend. There is no room for that desire to operate.

*Sixth Advantage.*—There is no Share Capital; consequently the danger does not exist of shares passing into indifferent, alien, or hostile hands. This has frequently occurred in the case of ordinary companies, and the result has been ruinous to the objects of the original promoters.

*Seventh Advantage.*—No temporarily successful faction of malcontent members could have the slightest chance of wrecking the Society, for it cannot be voluntarily wound

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up except by the consent of at least nine-tenths of its members, which involves practical unanimity. The continuity of the Society is thus guaranteed.

*Eighth Advantage.*—It could be to no one's personal interest to see the Society wound up, because Article 57 provides that on its winding up its property would have to be given to some kindred society, or to a non-sectarian charity. "It shall not be paid or distributed," the Article says, "amongst the members."

*Ninth Advantage.*—While there is every security for the rights of members, and for full and perfect publicity, the Society's affairs will be conducted in a business-like way by a Board of Directors, who have legal powers and also legal obligations, which could, if necessary, be enforced.

*Tenth Advantage.*—The Memorandum gives the Society large and varied powers, if only it can obtain the means to exercise them. The whole field of Secular work and organisation could be covered with adequate resources.

*Eleventh Advantage.*—Every member having to be proposed and seconded, and admitted or rejected by the Directors, there is a reasonable guarantee that only proper persons will be admitted to the Society; and, as every member has to pay ten shillings on joining, and five shillings a year afterwards, there is a reasonable guarantee that he will be seriously interested in the Society's welfare.

*Twelfth Advantage.*—This is an indirect one. Henceforth the leading men in our movement will be freed from unjust suspicion and malicious misrepresentation. If one of them was left anything by a friend, who happened to be a Freethinker, it was always open for jealous persons to say, "Oh, it was meant for the movement, but he has stuck to it himself." Mr. Bradlaugh had several such legacies, at least two of them being substantial ones, and he suffered from these traducers, who took advantage of a Christian law to libel their own leader by means of a falsehood that, from the very nature of it, did not admit of a positive refutation. Other leading Freethinkers have suffered from the same cause. But all that is ended now. If a man wishes to leave money to the movement, he can put the Secular Society, Limited, in his will. What he leaves to an individual, henceforth, can only be meant for that individual. And probably there will always be some who prefer to help a movement by helping those who labor and sacrifice, and perhaps suffer, to carry it forward.

## THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

*(Company Limited by Guarantee.)*

### MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION.

1.—The name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.

2.—The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.

3.—The objects for which the Company is formed are:—

(*a*) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.

(*b*) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.

(*c*) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.

(*d*) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.

(*e*) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.

(*f*) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.

(*g*) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.

(*h*) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.

(*i*) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.

(*j*) To employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants for the same end.

(*k*) To publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals.

(*l*) To assist, by votes of money or otherwise, other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects.

(*m*) To have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

(*n*) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred society in any part of the world.

(*o*) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

## BOOK CHAT.

Mr. Richard Le Gallienne has proved himself a dainty writer of prose by the publication of his *Prose Fancies* and *The Book Bills of Narcissus*. His last book, *The Romance of Zion Chapel* (John Lane), raised our expectations once more. We hoped that he was about to atone for the puerility and vulgarity of *The Quest of the Golden Girl*, but long before reaching the end of the book, although we had come across many passages of sweetness and charm, the sickly sentimentality which threatens to become a mannerism with Mr. Le Gallienne sprang up and spoiled the daintiness of the remainder.

* * *

Le Gallienne, too, is getting morbid. He twaddled about "spiritual" petticoats in *The Quest of the Golden Girl*, but here he positively gloats over sick-chambers and death-beds. Listen to the following:—

> "Sorrow, too, is an aristocracy, and when Theophil came to realise that, as Jenny had been found worthy to die, he had been found worthy to suffer, it seemed to him almost only to have been happy. Happiness is such a materialist, a creature of coarse taste and literal pleasure, a bourgeoise who has not yet attained the rank of a soul."

And later he adds:—

> "The influence of sorrow on the individual is much what the influence of Christianity has been upon the world. Christianity, no doubt, has robbed us of much—but then it has given us sorrow; it has taken away the sun, but it has given us the stars."

No, no, Richard; it is of the "aristocracy" of happiness you must write, and the sooner you give up writing such morbid stuff the better for yourself and your readers.

* * *

Le Gallienne has some fearful and wonderful ideas about love, with his stupid jargon about the *Egoisme à trois* being finer than the *Egoisme à deux* on account of its "additional inclusiveness." Why stop at three? Why not go on to five, to seven, to a dozen? Or even to the good round number of Solomon's harem? Of course, Le Gallienne puts these ideas very daintily, but submit them to the *aqua fortis* of criticism, and the result is lamentable. Most readers will close this book at the death of Jenny. The remainder is very poor stuff, and quite unworthy of the author of *The Book Bills of Narcissus*.

* * *

Although Dr. Havelock Ellis is getting his books advertised by Detective Sweeney and his colleagues free of charge, we have no compunction in calling attention to the new edition of *The New Spirit* (Walter Scott), which has just been added to the "Scott Library." (1s. 6d.)

* * *

*The Daily Twaddlegraph* has surpassed itself in its fulsome adulation of the Disarmament Scheme of the Czar. It calls it "The Czar's Millennium." It is curious to note how the very ideas which were considered certain evidences of insanity in social reformers are now proofs that the Czar is a second Solomon.

* * *

We may mention that Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *The Shadow of the Sword*, deals with this question at considerable length. It would be a useful publication to press on the attention of the outside public at the present moment, as being evidence of the attitude of a Freethinker on a current question.

* * *

The *Adult* for September is a good number, the strongest item being a letter on the Bedborough prosecution from the

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pen of Mr. G. Bernard Shaw. Mr. Seymour, the interim editor, is to be congratulated on the way in which he fills the breach.

* * *

The *University Magazine* for September opens with a "Swan's Song" by the editor, giving his reasons for dropping the publication. Mr. J. M. Robertson follows with an interesting and careful article on "The Originality of Shakespeare," and Mr. John Vickers concludes his suggestive essay on "Christian Origins."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### MILTON AND TOLERATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I desire to make a few remarks on your interesting article on Milton in the *Freethinker* of August 21. You observe that Milton stopped short of unbounded liberty, as he inculcated the non-toleration of Popery. But why? Because, as he avowed, the holders of Popish doctrines were idolaters. In my opinion, a sufficient reason. In his work on *Christian Doctrine* (vol. iv., pp. 420–1; Bohn's edition) he enumerates seven reasons against the blasphemous Doctrine of the Mass, ending with the words, that the body of Christ "is again exposed to be broken, and crushed, and bruised by the teeth, not only of men, but of beasts; till, having passed through the whole process of digestion, it is cast out at length into the draught—a profanation too horrible to be even alluded to without shuddering."

Now, I ask, was not Milton right in declaring that this damnable blasphemy should not receive toleration? The Papal Church speaks of an Infinite Being as an object of worship; one who creates works by His own volition; one who said: "Let there be light, and there was light!" And yet they blasphemously assert that the priests of that Church have the power to create Him afresh; that he may be eaten, received into the intestines, and ultimately cast into the sewer. Before God, I aver that I write this with tears in my eyes, and my whole frame affected by its awfulness! I aver such blasphemy should not be tolerated. No Church should be allowed to so debase the human mind and profane heaven.

How deeply this feeling affected the God-like mind of Milton is evinced by the despatch addressed, as Latin secretary under Cromwell in 1655, "to the Evangelic Cities of Switzerland" anent the persecution of the Waldenses. Milton writes: "For, as for those of the Canton of Schwitz, who account it a capital crime for any person to embrace our religion, what they are might and main designing, and whose instigations have incensed them to resolutions of hostility against the orthodox religion, nobody can be ignorant who has not yet forgot that most detestable slaughter of our brethren in Piedmont. Wherefore, most beloved friends, what you were always wont to be, with God's assistance still continue magnanimous and resolute; suffer not your privileges, your confederacies, the liberty of your consciences, your religion itself, to be trampled under foot by the *worshippers of idols*.....do, for our part, be assured that we are no less anxious and solicitous for your welfare and prosperity than if this conflagration had broken forth in our Republic, or as if the axes of the Schwitz Canton had been sharpened for our necks, or that their swords had been drawn against our breasts, as indeed they were against the bosoms of all the reformed.....In the meantime, we cease not to implore the blessing of the Almighty upon all your counsels, and the protection of your most just cause, as well in war as in peace.—Your Lordships' and Worships' most affectionate, OLIVER, Protector of the Commonwealth of England."

OMICRON.

### THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE SOCIETY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—1. In your latest issue—nominally of September 4, really of to-day—you quote the absolutely false statement of the leading article of the *South London Mail*, of August 27—viz., that Mr. James John Taylor is "an active and eloquent champion of the Christian Evidence Society."

So far is this from the truth that, to the best of our remembrance, (1) Mr Taylor has *never* had any connection with this Society. (2) We *abhor* his methods. (3) We consider them to be, "if anything, more truly injurious to Christian truth than the worst assaults of our opponents."

I quote from my letters, which ought to appear next Saturday, to the editors of the *South London Mail* and the *South London Observer and Camberwell and Peckham Times*. Further—and the editor is perfectly cognisant of my opinion—I consider the leading articles in the *South London Mail* of August 20 and 27 as distinct incitements to violence, and as reprehensible in other ways.

I must, however, add that, from all accounts, the language of one lecturer, at any rate, of the Secular party at Peckham Rye has been frequently disgusting, and I hope that you are as ready to denounce such language used in defence of Secularism as my colleague and I are in severely reprehending any personalities uttered by any of our lecturers defending Christianity.

2. You are greatly in error—doubtless through misapprehension—as to what took place last Sunday afternoon at the Christian Evidence Society's platform in Victoria Park. Unless Mr. Cohen, who was speaking when our meeting broke up, greatly exceeded your other speakers in length, and was followed by another speaker, our meeting occupied as long a time as yours, for it commenced much earlier. We had five speakers, one of whom, Mr. Waldron, spoke twice.

Further, my own most careful and repeated observation of the audiences at the two meetings enables me to state, *as a certain fact*, that they were equal in size, except that towards the close of ours a *very* trifling number left our audience to join yours. Of course, after we concluded, very many more *may* have augmented yours; but, as I left immediately, I do not know.

As I have already twice written to one of our speakers condemning one of his utterances, I may add that I deeply regretted that you, with your knowledge, position, and ability, should have condescended to use the illustrations drawn from Cornish wrecking and the Archbishop's £15,000 a year.

C. LLOYD ENGSTRÖM
*(Secretary, Christian Evidence Society).*

September 1, 1898.

[Mr. Engström's letter calls for a few words in reply. We are glad that he disavows all connection with the noble Taylor; though, after all, that is his affair, not ours. The Secular speaker to whom Mr. Engström probably alludes has no connection with the National Secular Society. We do not propose to discuss the relative proportions of the Christian and Secular meetings in Victoria Park. With regard to the Cornish wrecking story, it was simply told *as* a story; and we cannot help it if Mr. Engström is no humorist—at any rate where religion is concerned. With regard to the Archbishop's £15,000 a year, we have to say that we shall refer to it as often as we please as an illustration of the beautiful consistency of many who preach "Blessed be ye poor." We do not expect Mr. Engstrom to like it, or to approve it; but, in the conduct of our own case, he can hardly expect us to take advice from the other side. All the Christian can expect from the Freethinker, and *vice versâ*, is that he shall keep his temper and refrain from personalities.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

### CIRCULATING OUR JOURNAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have, for some little time, noticed your appeal in the *Freethinker* for money to enable you to advertise the *Freethinker*, and so help to increase its circulation. Now to me this does seem a very important matter, and well worthy the consideration of those Freethinkers who have the cause at heart, for I am sure there are thousands of men and women who have never yet heard that there is another side to this beautiful religion of Christ. At the same time the thought occurs: What do the poorer class of Freethinkers do in this matter? Some, I fear, do nothing, and care less. Many have been saved who take no thought of saving others. This class are not worth the saving. Others there are who still keep touch with the movement, who no doubt read their *Freethinker*, and then gently put it on one side without considering what may be done with it. To such I would point out my own plan, which is as follows: Generally I save up some half-dozen numbers in case some lost friend drops in to whom they may partly be the means of pointing out the light. Failing this, I take them out with me on to some 'bus, or train, or other public place, and give them away, and many laughs this has caused me, for it is no uncommon sight to see a man gaze at the title and drop the paper like a hot potato. Others, more liberal-minded, will thank you; and, more than once, I have been shaken by the hand, for one never can tell where he may meet a saved man or woman. To my mind, sir, this is a good way to spread the light, for well do I remember some twenty years ago seeing the *Freethinker* displayed in a shop window in Tunbridge Wells, a copy of which I bought, and which was the means towards my own saving. This method of giving away copies of the *Freethinker* may, at first sight, seem a trivial thing, but those small and trivial things do a great deal of good. We cannot all give money, for it is notorious that Freethinkers are mostly cursed by poverty. But we can all do something. Being saved ourselves, we should try to save others.

THOMAS DUNBAR.

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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, "Good Without God: or the Morality of Nature."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8 30, A concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Rome, Dissent, and Reason."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (20 Edgware-road): September 13, at 9, Monthly meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 8.15, Stanley Jones.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen. Peckham Rye: 8.15, C. Cohen.

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7 15, E. White.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH: (Fleet-road, corner of Downshire-hill): 7, A lecture.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 8.30, Freethought Demonstration, addressed by Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, Snell, Heaford, and Moss.

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7.15, R. P. Edwards.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Ethics of Christianity."

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, L. Bergmann, B.Sc., "Miracles."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): H. P. Ward—11, "The Law of Population"; 3 (Alexandra Park, near flagpole), "What will you Give in Place of Christianity? A Secularist's Answer"; 6.30, "Why Christianity Lasts."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Mr. Dyson, "Puzzles for Christians, by One of Them"; 8, Particulars as to excursion to Hipperholme on September 18.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business meeting.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—September 11, m., Camberwell; a., Peckham Rye; e., Camberwell.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Croedon-road, London, S.E.—September 11, m., Mile End; 18, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 25, m, Finsbury; a., Victoria Park.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—September 11 and 18, Manchester. October 2, Sheffield; 16, Birmingham. November 27, Liverpool. December 18, Birmingham.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

EIGHTEEN hundred and ninety-eight years ago, if we are to believe the gospel, a number of astrologers came from a wide region called "the east" to Judea. They were led thither by a wonderful star, which apparently accommodated itself to their rate of locomotion, and descended low enough to journey visibly over the earth's surface. This bit of celestial pyrotechny was of course the star of some great person's nativity, and on arriving at a house in Bethlehem, over which it rested, they learned that an uncrowned and unanointed King of the Jews had just been born in a stable and was cradled in a manger. After giving him the presents they had considerately brought with them, they returned to "the east," and were never heard of afterwards. What is still more curious, they were never mentioned in the whole course of that wonderful child's career, although their visit to Bethlehem, and the subsequent massacre of the innocents, should have kept them fresh in the memory of every inhabitant of Palestine.

It is also recorded in the New Testament that the birth of this wonderful child was marked by the appearance of angels to some nameless shepherds in an unknown place. These angelic visitors proclaimed peace on earth and goodwill towards men, or peace among the restricted class of men in whom the Lord "is well pleased," as the Revised Version expresses it.

Accordingly, it has been the custom of Christian scribes and preachers to celebrate the astral herald of Christ's nativity as the morning star of a new day. Every fresh Christmas sees this threadbare theme new-worn. Pulpiteers and pious journalists expatiate *ad nauseam* on the immorality and brutality of pre-Christian civilisation, and the goodness and tenderness which have gradually crept over the world as Christianity has advanced. Fortunately for these professional apologists, they can presume on the most utter ignorance of their readers and hearers, and, neglecting history and the logic of facts, they are able to give a free rein to their cheap and tawdry rhetoric. Nor does it in the least interfere with their periodical jubilations that while they praise their perfect system, which has had eighteen centuries to produce its perfect fruit, they are obliged to bewail the ghastly diseases of Christian civilisation; its chronic pauperism, its rampant vices, its widespread drunkenness, its criminality, its costly military systems, outvieing anything which even Rome ever witnessed, and the frightful scale of its wars, as well of its warlike preparations, which are a strange commentary on the gospel of peace. True, there are some dissonant voices in this well-practised chorus, but they are nearly lost in the swelling volume of sound. A Shelley sings of "the Galilean serpent," and a Swinburne of "the poison of the crucifix." Such voices, however, are only audible to discriminating ears, and so the sweet songsters of orthodoxy keep the concert pretty much to themselves.

Glancing back over eighteen centuries of history with a free and fearless eye, who can truthfully assert that the Star of Bethlehem *was* the herald of a better day? It is quite obvious to the candid student that Christianity wrought no practical improvement on the great body of the Roman Empire, either before or after it secured the patronage of Constantine. The early Christian emperors were not a whit more moral than the pagan Cæsars. They were simply pale copies of great originals; and if their vices were less flagrant and monstrous than those of a Nero or a Caligula, their virtues were insignificant beside those of an Augustus or an Antoninus. Nor is it easy to see in what respect the gladiatorial shows at Rome were worse than the faction-fights at Constantinople. Still less is it easy to see how the burning and torturing of Christians by pagans were any worse than the burnings and torturings of heretics by their fellow Christians.

Intellectually, Christianity merely substituted a new and vigorous superstition for an old and dying one, which was gradually being supplanted among the educated classes by a prudent, though spirited, philosophy. The gods of Olympus gave place to the Trinity and the Devil, who wielded all the arbitrary power of their predecessors without exhibiting any of their grace or *bonhomie*. The national religions succumbed to one of universal pretensions, and their spirit of mutual toleration was succeeded by a malignant fanaticism which regarded every difference of opinion as a crime. And while the national religions were always more or less subservient to temporal welfare, the new religion dwarfed this world into the mere vestibule of heaven or hell.

Borrowing the bigotry of Judaism, exalting faith as the supreme virtue, and denouncing unbelief as the blackest sin, Christianity did its best to obscure and degrade morality. At the same time it arrested intellectual progress, which always follows mental dissatisfaction and the restless spirit of inquiry. The proof of this can be given in a sentence. During six or seven centuries of undisputed supremacy Christianity could not point to a single new discovery in science, or to a single new book of the least importance to literature. What more damning impeachment than this could be conceived? Nor can it be answered by pointing to what Christendom has since produced, for there was no sign of improvement until Arabian science flashed its light upon the darkness of Europe. Even then the Church intercepted its rays as far as possible, and she might have succeeded in restoring the old darkness had it not been for the Renaissance, which was simply the revelation of the classic art, literature, and philosophy of Greece and Rome, and the political reconstruction of Europe, which, by inducing quarrels between princes and popes, led to the so-called Reformation.

Since the Reformation the progress of Europe has been wonderful, but it has not been inspired by Christianity. The leading minds in every branch of intellectual activity have been accounted heretics by their own generation, and the nearer we approach to our own day the more distinct is the line of separation between the Churches and the great discoverers and thinkers. It is now impossible to give an accurate list of the chief scientists and writers in Christendom without including three sceptics for every believer.

But while the progressive movement is wholly inspired by scepticism, and mainly conducted by Freethinkers, the government, that is the organised forces of society, is in the hands of orthodoxy, which rules in our legislative halls, our courts of justice, our universities, our schools, and in every department of the public service. Obviously, therefore, it is orthodoxy that must bear the responsibility for the chronic evils and the low tone of society. Let us look into these phenomena and see what that responsibility amounts to.

What has the Gospel of Peace brought us to? Europe has now more than ten times as many soldiers as sufficed to preserve the peace and integrity of the Roman Empire



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when it was surrounded by hostile and predatory barbarians. Europe is, in fact, an armed camp, not for the repulsion of barbarians, but for internecine war among Christian states. After eighteen centuries of the Gospel of Peace, Christendom is darkened by the shadow of the sword, and the highest honors are paid to successful generals who are skilled in the art of slaughter.

Treating man as a spiritual instead of a material entity, Christianity has no remedy for the vices it perfunctorily reprobates. Drunkenness is not diminished by sermons, nor are the grosser forms of vice lessened by unctuous texts, while families crowd in single rooms, while filth breeds fever, and promiscuous herding destroys modesty and self-respect. Not by futile appeals to the will, but by wise political and social changes, can this state of things be altered. Christianity wastes its breath in preaching "righteousness," while Freethought strives for practical reform.

Hypocrisy, which is one of the meanest vices, is essentially a Christian product. Orthodox travellers tell us that they find very little of it in the heathen world, but when they return to Christendom they find it circulating in the very atmosphere. The reason of this melancholy fact is not remote. The evil is entirely due to the exaltation of belief over conduct, and the erection of false and impossible standards which are openly revered and privately neglected. Theophrastus gives us one Character of a Hypocrite, and not a particularly offensive one. The literature of Christendom gives us scores of the most disgusting type.

The benefits of Christianity appear in the apologies of its professional champions, its evils are written large on the pages of impartial history. What real good has it ever achieved? Deny it the right to appropriate all the improvement of the secular intellect and the natural growth of humanity, and how much has it to boast of its own? But the miseries it has inflicted on mankind are appalling in their magnitude and number. It has shed oceans of blood, and bitter tears have rolled from myriads of eyes under its iron tyranny. It closed every thinker's lips. It kept men in darkness and slavery. It made men bow at the foot of the altar and the throne. It preached poverty to the poor and took its share of the wealth of the rich. It invented the rack, the thumbscrew, and the wheel. It illustrated its love of man with the flames of a thousand stakes. It has been a curse rather than a blessing. And its star of Bethlehem was not the herald of a glad new day, but the portent of a long and dismal and disastrous night. G. W. FOOTE.

## BIBLE FAITHS AND THEIR DEFENDERS.

(*Concluded from page 578.*)

In concluding our remarks upon the above subject, which were commenced in last week's *Freethinker*, we wish to draw the attention of our readers to the habit Christian defenders have of tenaciously refusing to attempt to justify in debate the Jewish faith and its leading teachings. They will not discuss the character of the God of the Old Testament, and for its "heroes" they will hold no brief. This may be discreet, but it is not consistent, for upon that faith their own rests. If the Bible God be ignored, where does the Christian find his deity? The truth is, the Jewish God, as represented and delineated in the Old Testament, is so thoroughly bad, he being guilty of almost every crime known to man, that Christian defenders will have nothing to say on his behalf. Practically, all Christians are atheists to the God of the Bible, for they believe him not. Again, it is in the Jewish faith that we find the stories of the Fall and Original Sin, upon which are based the doctrine of the atonement and the theory of rewards and punishments as taught in the orthodox churches. Destroy the Hebrew basis of Christianity, and the essential part of it falls to the ground. This is so palpable that no Christian exponent of any marked ability has the courage to discuss the doctrines of his faith.

Another point is that, in the Jewish religion, some of the prominent moral teachings of the Gospels are set forth. The inculcation of such virtues as love, justice, humility, and forgiveness, about which Christians talk so much, but practise so little, is found in the Old Testament, and therefore they are not of Christian origin. Far be it from us to champion the faith of the Jews, with its numerous absurd, brutal, and immoral injunctions; but it is only fair to say that, with all its drawbacks, it is more humane in reference to the lower animals than is Christianity. In the Hebrew Bible there are many humane precepts as to the treatment of what are termed the brutes. For instance, the muzzling of the ox when threshing, the slaughter of the dam and the young on the same day, the taking of the mother-bird with the nestlings, are all forbidden; and a command is given that animals shall share with their masters the rest of the Sabbath day. Lecky observes: "In the range and circle of duties inculcated by the early Fathers those to animals had no place. This is indeed the one form of humanity which appears more prominent in the Old Testament than in the New." Lecky might have gone further, and said the claims of the lower animals on man's consideration are entirely overlooked in the Christian system.

Christian defenders are fond of boasting that their faith "is a grand old city, built of the pure white marble of truth." They assert "it has existed through the storms of two thousand years, and is as strong to-day as when first it rose to view." If this statement were true, it would certainly say but little for the inherent power and invigorating influence of Christianity. A constitution that is sound and healthy should possess greater strength in its manhood than it had in its infancy. But what is the fact with the teachings of the New Testament? After being in existence for nearly eighteen hundred years, supported by the wealth of the nation, with prayers to assist it, grace to support it, and a God to protect it, we are told that it is as strong as it was when it was first promulgated. But the fact is, Christianity is not so strong as it was in its "palmy days." The older it gets, the weaker it becomes. If Christianity is as strong as ever, what means so much alarm on the part of the clergy about the spread of infidelity, and the falling off of church attendance? Besides, if this faith is so potent for good upon the minds of those who profess it, why is it that the Church that teaches it has always been, and still is, the foe of human progress? The *Church Gazette*, in a leading article in its issue of August 20, makes the following significant confession: "There is no doubt that London churches at present strike the eye and ear more than any other Anglican churches; yet it is equally undoubted that the London population does not go to church, excepting merely a few holy women and devotees, and if this state of things is to be paramount everywhere, our Church will have sealed its doom. But how will it have sealed it? By utterly ignoring the intellectual needs of its people, and so driving them elsewhere. Of the same omission the entire English Church is more or less guilty, and the fact is testified to by ninety-nine out of every hundred church-goers throughout the length and breadth of the land, except, of course, such as do not think at all, and whose opinions are therefore worth nothing. Between the Church and thought there has always been a certain rift, but this mattered not so very much as long as the people were retained. Now that the people are being lost to her because they now can think, the position becomes threatening and peremptory, especially to such Churchmen as wish limits to be extended so as to include these very people, instead of driving them elsewhere or nowhere..... A Church like our own may be truly and wisely conservative in the sense of declining to modify her belief or her practice without very sound and well-verified ground, and unless the demand is undeniably solid. But her conservatism has gone beyond that; because, in directions where it is clearly admitted that there is flagrant need of speedy and thorough change, she has all along shown that she had no goodwill to carry out changes of any adequate kind at all, but has hung back from doing anything, and resisted all such as would do it for her, against her own best interests. All this is so intensely out of keeping with the reforming and advancing spirit of the age we live in that she has thus greatly forfeited the confidence and sympathy of both masses and classes." This is a strong indictment of the faith, coming as it does from one of its own expounders.

Let us now return to the defenders of Christianity. As a rule, they present a sad picture of humanity and a poor sample of intellectuality. Moreover, the majority of them do not indicate that they are overstocked with modesty and the love of honest and fair disputation. With

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them egotism precludes the possibility of calm discrimination, and conceit renders them oblivious of the legitimate nature of their opponent's position. They suffer from the delusion that they have "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" upon their side, and therefore they assume that those who differ from them must be wrong. Of course these remarks do not apply to all the defenders of the Christian faith. It has been our pleasure to meet in public debate such gentlemen as the Rev. T. D. Matthias, Dr. Harrison, and Dr. McCann, disputants who discussed principles and avoided personalities. Where, however, are their successors to-day? Most of the Christian defenders at the present time are of the Brewin Grant and Dr. Brindley type, minus the ability of those "theological clowns." We have recently taken part in some special open-air Freethought demonstrations in the London parks, which afforded us an opportunity of witnessing and hearing the conduct and language of many of the present reckless defenders of Christianity, for they "pitched their tent" in close proximity to our gatherings. A more lamentable exhibition of theological lunacy than that exhibited by these unfortunate fanatics it would be difficult to conceive. In them the demon of intolerance was let loose, and religious bigotry was unrestrained. Being destitute of the power of reasoning, they indulge in the use of the vilest epithets against their opponents, whose arguments these defenders of the faith are incapable of answering. Their usual policy is to retail silly and oft-repeated stories about "infidel death-beds," to indulge in wild prophecies of the social ruin that would ensue from the supremacy of heterodox opinions, to heap calumny upon the heads of some of the noble thinkers of all ages, and to misrepresent Secularists, whose characters they continually malign. Yet they are constantly prating about "Christlike" love, purity, and meekness. Such a mode of advocacy is the very quintessence of hypocrisy and vulgarity. To attack the personal character of opponents is to employ a contemptible weapon, and such a course must damage any cause in whose interest it is adopted. Those Christian calumniators should remember that, if their base charges against Secularists were as true as they are false, it would prove nothing in favor of Christianity, for the numerous instances recorded of irregularities, immoralities, and crimes committed by clergymen show that, if Freethinkers have not a monopoly of virtue, neither are they alone in practising any of the vices which degrade the human kind.

CHARLES WATTS.

## THE WORSHIP OF THE UNKNOWABLE.

MR. HERBERT SPENCER'S doctrine of the Unknowable is well known to all students of philosophy, and, thanks to the illegitimate use made of it by religious advocates, to a great many who are not. Although its place in the *Synthetic Philosophy* is comparatively unimportant, the bulk of the work standing quite clear of it, it has yet received a very large share of public attention owing to the fancied support given by it to current religious ideas. From men of the type of the late Professor Drummond or Mr. A. J. Balfour, down to the Christian Evidence lecturer, whose whole knowledge of 'Erbert Spencer is derived from a newspaper cutting, there comes the assertion that the greatest thinker of the age is in fundamental agreement with Theistic beliefs. It matters little that Spencer explicitly repudiates Theism, and that even language with Theistic implications is strikingly absent from his later writings; so long as the words used can be made to bear the desired meaning it is enough; the use of a great name is secured, and the unthinking religionist, who has had qualms of uneasiness concerning his creed, is once more lulled to rest.

It is superfluous here to dwell upon the philosophic import of the "Unknowable," although a few words are necessary in passing. Following a line of investigation that has been steadily gaining ground since Hume, Mr. Spencer holds that all our knowledge of the universe is ultimately reducible to a knowledge of mental states and their mutual relations. Concerning the universe, apart from our conscious states we know nothing, and can know nothing. Nevertheless, he holds that we are bound by the conditions of thought to think of something existing as the external cause of our sensations, and this something he calls the "Unknowable," the "Unconditioned," or the "Absolute." It is this Unknowable, printed with a bewildering array of capital letters, which has figured so largely in the apologetic literature of recent years.

A very obvious criticism upon this Unknowable is, that, in asserting its existence, it is annihilated. In the very nature of the case, the only way to prove its existence would be by our ignorance that it did exist. Existence can only be predicated of that which affects consciousness in some manner, and if we have a consciousness of anything as existing, although our knowledge of it may be imperfect, it ceases to be unknowable. To say that we have a consciousness of the unknowable is to frame a sentence one-half of which destroys the remainder. Unknowableness is not a property of existence, it is simply the name for a complete and irremovable mental blank; and I, for one, fail to see any justification for converting a pure negation into a positive conception, and speaking of a consciousness of things unknown as though that were anything else than a consciousness of ignorance.

A close study of the first part of *First Principles* shows that Mr. Spencer frequently falls into the curious error of confounding the unknown with the unknowable. He rightly points out that "Positive knowledge does not, and never can, fill the whole region of possible thought. At the uttermost reach of discovery there arises, and must ever arise, the question—What lies beyond?" but is obviously in error in regarding this, or the statement that "A known cannot be thought of apart from an unknown," as a proof of the existence of an *unknowable*. It is perfectly true that at no time do the limits of thought equal the limits of existence, that the very limitations of thought suggest something beyond, as a boundary suggests land on either side the line of demarcation; but this unknown rises in thought, not as something different in kind to the known, but as something fundamentally identical with it. The unknown is the conceivably knowable; it is thought of pretty much as a traveller thinks of an unexplored country—a place concerning which nothing is known, but which, when known, will present at most only fresh modifications of soil, vegetation, or animal life.

But it is with the use made by Mr. Spencer of the unknowable as an object of religious worship that I am specially concerned; and here it is much to be regretted that he continually uses language which can have no other effect than to bolster up ideas which he specifically rejects over and over again. To speak of "The Infinite and Eternal Energy," "The Creative Power," "The Ultimate Cause," or to assert that "when the Unknown cause *produces* in him (man) a certain belief, he is thereby *authorised* to profess and act out that belief,"* with much more of the same kind, is to use theological language with but slight modification, and to play into the hands of those who, disregarding the writer's avowed Agnosticism, will not hesitate to claim him as one of the supporters of their own unscientific theism.† Indeed, as the language stands, one feels tempted to say that it reads like the philosophic equivalent of the three incomprehensibles of the Athanasian Creed.

Mr. Spencer's teaching concerning the nature of religion and science may be briefly summarised as follows:—

1. The function of religion, from the earliest time to the present, has been to assert the existence of an unknowable reality, and to keep alive a consciousness of the insoluble mystery surrounding it.

2. The function of science is to deal with the known or the knowable, with all that is presented in experience, with the world of phenomena exclusively.

3. Religion and science are consequently not antagonistic, but complementary; conflicts arise when either trespasses on the other's department, and a recognition of the proper line of demarcation is the only method of reconciling these hitherto hostile forces.

The first objection to this position is that, in support of his main thesis, Mr. Spencer describes two lines of development where only one exists. Religion and science do not represent parallel lines of development, both of which may increase simultaneously, but two stages along the same

* Italics mine.

† To name only one illustration out of scores that might be given, the *Christian World*, June 5 and July 3, 1884, identifies Mr. Spencer's "Absolute" with the Christian God, and affirms that his language might have been used by Butler or Paley.

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line of mental evolution, one of which necessarily suffers by the increase of the other. It is the reasoning of early ages, which might fairly be called science under the then existing conditions, that has crystallised into the religions of to-day. Mr. Spencer has himself shown clearly enough (*Principles of Sociology*, vol. i.) that all religious ideas have their origin in man's misunderstanding of ordinary natural phenomena, both internal and external, and there is certainly nothing in his investigations of primitive religious ideas that will support the view of religion laid down in *First Principles*. Existing religions constitute man's earliest attempts to explain or modify natural phenomena; they are a kind of primitive science, and are marked with all the imperfections of generalisations based upon imperfect and inadequate data. Man pictures the universe as alive, and consequently his science is a science of "wills" rather than of forces. This early volitional theory is gradually replaced by the mechanical, and the characteristic of religion is not the assertion of an "Unknown Verity," but a clinging to the earlier view instead of the later one. Religion is, therefore, no more concerned with an Unknowable than is science. Both aim at bringing the *unknown* within the region of the known, while the difference between religion and science to-day lies simply and exclusively in the method of investigation followed and the explanation offered.

It is certain that the bare affirmation of an unknowable existence is not enough to constitute a religion. At least, it must maintain the existence of some definite relations between this existence and humanity; and it must stand or fall upon the strength of the explanation offered. The essence of religion is, therefore, not the assertion of an "Unknowable Reality," of a "Supreme Verity transcending experience," or "A Mystery that is Ultimate and Absolute," but in the propounding of a set of relations held to exist between an assumed existence—God—and humanity. Man never did, and never will, worship anything, or fight for anything, of which he is convinced that he knows nothing, and can know nothing. Whatever may be the ultimate truth concerning the object of religious worship, so far as it is worshipped, it is believed to be known, and, if that belief could be destroyed, religion would be bound to go with it. As I have said elsewhere, "It was man's misunderstanding of the objects he knew that gave religion birth; his fears gave them shape, and the cunning and tyranny of his rulers gave them permanence." It would be as reasonable to picture primitive man worshipping the differential calculus as worshipping the Unknowable; and it is just as reasonable that modern man should erect an altar to that of which he knows nothing, as to express religious reverence for what is, after all, but a simple euphemism for his utter and irretrievable ignorance.

Mr. Spencer's method of reconciling religion and science is still more curious. The history of the conflict between religion and science, he rightly points out, is that of the constant retreat of the former before its ever-victorious enemy. Still, "as the limits of possible cognition are established, the causes of conflict will diminish. And a permanent peace will be reached when science becomes fully convinced that its explanations are proximate and relative; while religion becomes fully convinced that the mystery it contemplates is ultimate and absolute." That is, when science has monopolised the entire field of human knowledge, actual and possible, and when religion is convinced that it knows nothing of what it is worshipping, and can know nothing; that it can offer man nothing in the shape of counsel or advice, but that its sole work is to eternally offer man a conundrum that he must eternally give up, and its sole function to sit in owl-like solemnity contemplating an insoluble mystery, like a Hindoo fakir meditating on nothing at all, then there will be peace between science and religion. And this is called a reconciliation! It is the same plan on which Poland was reconciled to Russia, or the Dervish Army and its leaders have just been reconciled to the British Army in the Soudan. Mr. Spencer finds two combatants engaged in deadly conflict; he murders one of them, and then offers the corpse to the survivor, with the pious wish that now they will become reconciled and live on friendly terms for the future. The religion that is reconciled with science on these terms is simply committing suicide to save itself from slaughter.

Mr. Spencer cannot well be regarded as a humorist, or one would imagine that in the sentence above quoted, as well as in such remarks as "Religion is distinguished from everything else in this, that its subject matter is that which passes the sphere of experience," or "Science has been obliged to abandon the attempt to include within the boundaries of knowledge that which cannot be known, and has so yielded up to religion that which of right belonged to it," he is simply poking fun at religion in general. The religious man will derive but small comfort from the perception that science must eventually monopolise the entire field of conduct and of knowledge, while religion is left to work in an unknowable region, to worship an unknowable object, and to cry, "Mystery, mystery—all is mystery," while its old enemy is steadily monopolising a larger and larger share of human attention.

There is doubtless some truth in Mr. Spencer's conclusion, although not in the direction he indicates. Religion always has preferred mystery to enlightenment, and depended for support far more upon man's ignorance than his knowledge; but to have this much gravely propounded as a theory that will reconcile religion and science is only one degree less startling than the fact that there are not wanting even ministers of religion who adopt it as a means of defence against modern scepticism.*

To my mind, Mr. Spencer's account of the function of religion, as given in *First Principles*, is hopelessly wrong; and, even were it right, its only purpose would be to rob religion of every shred of practical value. Religion, to be of service, must teach man something. Fundamentally, it must teach man his relation and duties towards the object of religious adoration. To do this it must possess some knowledge, however defective, of the object of its adoration; and, therefore, to admit that it is completely ignorant of the very thing it is its business to expound is for it to confess the hollowness of its claims and the uselessness of its existence.

Happily, the "Unknowable" does not constitute an essential part of Mr. Spencer's philosophy. His invaluable work in Biology, Psychology, Ethics, and Sociology is independent of it. But it has been eagerly seized by hard-pressed theologians to prop up a decaying system of ideas, and it therefore becomes urgently necessary to rightly estimate its value in the world of thought.

C. COHEN.

## THE GOLDEN RULE.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

THE injunction, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets," has been extolled as the very pith of Christian ethics. It has been emphatically denominated "the golden rule," and it has been supposed that nothing less than a divine revelation could have imparted to humanity the knowledge of so important a standard of conduct. This position, however, has been modified somewhat since evidence has been forthcoming that the rule is neither peculiar nor original to Christianity, but is found in authors anterior to the Christian era.

The sentiment of reciprocity in truth is one that is early developed in humanity. It springs from the notion of right evolved from the sense of special possession, and is even seen in animals, who find a *modus vivendi* in recognition of mutual rights. "The germ of conscience," it has been said, "lies in the struggle for existence having become aware of itself in the mind of a thinking person." When once a savage felt that it was wrong to take his life and the means whereby he lived, and saw the same feelings manifested by others, the transferring of the sense of wrong, and the contrasted sense of right, to others, would only be a work of time depending on the development of the reflective faculties and the social instincts by the ever constant action of natural selection weeding out the socially unfit.

No great mental effort would be needed for the savage, who feels it is wrong for another to deprive him of his property on a particular occasion, to infer that it is wrong

* Dean Farrar, for instance, says: "The revelation of God's light lies beyond the region of modern science." While Canon Curteis, in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century*, adopts what he calls "Christian Agnosticism."

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for anyone else, at any time, so to act. No doubt there was a difficulty in recognising the equivalence of duties by and to the self, for, as Schopenhauer says, pure egoism would kill a man for the fat wherewith to grease its own boots; but mutual dependence and tribal living in common unfailingly bring the sense of identity of interests. "Do not wrong me, and I will not wrong you; I do not hurt you, why do you hurt me?" are the natural and spontaneous utterances of the sense of right as seen alike in savages and children. The rule of reciprocity beginning among friends extends itself as relationships of interests are extended.

Unsocial instincts also develop on the line of reciprocity. The wild feeling of revenge for injury inflicted grows into a principle of returning a similar injury. The *lex talionis*, a life for a life, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," is the primitive rule. "Tit for tat" is the justice of the savage, and is not without its relics in the criminal codes of the civilised world.* Yet this is the germ of reciprocity, and "the golden rule."

Professor Max Müller has recently cited instances of this feeling directed towards the gods, from what is probably the oldest writing in the world, the Rig-Veda of the Hindus. In the notes to his translation of the "Hymns of the Marats," or "Storm Gods," he says:—

> "I think it best to connect the fourth and fifth verses, and I feel justified in so doing, and by other passages where the same or a similar idea is expressed—viz., that if the god were the poet, and the poet the god, then the poet would be more liberal to the god than the god is to him. Thus I translated a passage (vii., 31, 18) in my *History of Sanskrit Literature*, p. 565: 'If I were lord of as much as thou, I should support the sacred bard, thou scatterer of wealth; I should not abandon him to misery, I should award wealth day by day to him who magnifies, I should award it to whosoever it be.' Another parallel passage is pointed out by Mr. J. Muir (on the interpretation of the Veda, p. 79, viii, 19-25): 'If Agni thou wert a mortal, and I were an immortal, I should not abandon thee to malediction or to wretchedness; my worshippers should not be miserable or distressed.' Still more to the point is another passage, viii., 44, 23: 'If I wert thou, and thou wert I, thy wishes should be fulfilled.'"

The Rev. J. Stevenson, in his translation of the Sama Veda (p. 276), puts the following in the mouth of the singer: "When I, O Indra, shall become a possessor of wealth like thee, then assuredly my singer of sacred hymns shall possess abundance of cows." In the Odyssey, Calypso tells Ulysses she acts as she would wish to be done to were her fate the same. Hesiod enjoins "To all a love for love return." Herodotus relates how, when Mæandrius yielded up the supreme power to the citizens of Samos, he said: "I shall certainly avoid doing that myself which I deem reprehensible in another." The same historian tells how, when the Spartans, who went to Xerxes as a voluntary atonement for their country, were asked by the Persian Hydarnes to enter the service of the king, they replied: "To you servitude is familiar; but how sweet a thing liberty is you have never known; if you had, you yourself would advise us to make all possible exertions to preserve it." So, in Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, Cyaxares says to Cyrus: "If I appear to you to think unreasonably in this, do not consider these things as in my case, but turn the tables and make the case your own." Diogenes Laertius relates of the Greek sage Thales that when asked how we might live virtuously, he replied: "If we never do ourselves what we blame in others." Isocrates, in one of his orations, tells the Athenians: "You err against the first principle of wisdom, condemning in others what you yourself pursue." In his admonition to Nicocles, Isocrates says: "Do not those things to other people which you dislike when others do." "Put yourself in my place," says Scipio to Hannibal, as recorded by Polybius. A similar idea occurs in the precepts of Buddha (Dhammapada, 159): "Let each man make himself as he teaches others to be." "All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death; remember that you are like unto them, and do not kill nor cause slaughter." Max Müller cites in a note to this passage from the Ramayana, v., 23, 5: "Making oneself a likeness—*i.e.*, putting oneself in the position of other people, it is right to love none but one's own wife." The sentiment is also found in the ancient Hindu book of fables and counsels, the Hitopadesa: "Good people show mercy unto all beings, considering how like they are to themselves."

Confucius, in China, distinctly enunciated the so-called golden rule. In Dr. Legge's translation of the Confucian Analects we read, p. 266: "Tsze-kung asked, saying, 'Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?' The master said: 'Is not *reciprocity* [in Chinese *chou*] such a word? What you do not want done to yourself do not do to others.'" In his article upon Confucius, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Dr. Legge—who, as a missionary, shows little disposition to accord bare justice to the Chinese sage—admits: "It has been said that he only gave the rule in its negative form, but he understood it also in its positive and most comprehensive force."

As reported by his grandson, Tsze-sze, in the *Doctrine of the Mean* (in Chinese Chung-Yung), chap. viii., sec. 3, Confucius taught that "when one cultivates to the utmost the principles of his nature, and exercises them on the principle of reciprocity, he is not far from the path." And again, in the *Ta Hio, or Great Learning*, chap. x., section 2: "What a man dislikes in his superiors let him not display in the treatment of his inferiors; what he dislikes in inferiors let him not display in the service of his superiors; what he hates in those who are before him let him not therewith precede those who are behind him; what he hates in those who are behind him let him not therewith follow those who are before him; what he hates to receive on the right let him not bestow on the left; what he hates to receive on the left let him not bestow on the right. This is what is called *the principle with which, as with a measuring square, to regulate one's conscience.*"

In his translation of the Chinese sage, Mencius, p. 327, Dr. Legge gives the following passage: "If one acts with a vigorous effort at the law of reciprocity when he seeks for the realisation of perfect virtue, nothing can be closer than his approximation to it"; and in a note on the word translated "reciprocity" he says it is "the judging of others by oneself, and acting accordingly." Pauthier translates the passage: "*Si on fait tous ses efforts pour agir envers les autres comme on voudrait les agir envers nous, rien ne fait plus approche de l'humanité que cette conduite.*"

The sentiment was not new to the Jews. The Book of Leviticus ordained: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Do that to no man which thou hatest" appears in the apocryphal book of Tobit (iv. 15). "Judge of thy neighbor by thyself," says Jesus, the son of Sirach (Ecclesiasticus xxxi. 15). Emanuel Deutech says that the maxim, "Do unto others as thou wouldst be done by," was 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 comprised the whole law'" (*Literary Remains*, p. 27). It is also found in Philo Judæus.

The wide spread of the sentiment, of which we could give further evidence, doubtless shows that it has been an important factor in the evolution of morals. As a sort of ready, general guide to conduct, it has contributed towards the repression of actions which, being noxious to the individual, are at the same time hurtful to society, and it has tended to encourage actions promoting the welfare of both. But we deny that it is an infallible criterion of morals. It does not, indeed, appear to us a golden rule at all, but at the best only silver-gilt. Its essential principle does not ring true. It appeals primarily to self-interest, and assumes that what one wishes to be done to oneself is right. But it is not true that we wish for ourselves what would be best for the general welfare. The Christian who molests the last hours of a Freethinker excuses himself on the plea that he is doing as he would be done by. He would like his mind directed to thoughts of God and heaven in his last moments. Perhaps the strongest instance of the exhibition of the golden rule is to be found among those numerous savage tribes who, when they have a visitor, offer him a wife or sister by way of hospitality. If the formula is supposed to mean, "Do unto others as ye would they should do, providing it is right," this is at once conceding it to be useless; since, if the person already knows what is right to do, the rule is superfluous. If he does not know, the rule supplies no adequate criterion.

* Mr. Kemble (*The Saxons in England*, vol. i., p. 268) points out that the right of retaliation lies at the root of all Teutonic legislation, and that it is especially recognised by early English law, which "admits as its most general term that each freeman is at liberty to defend himself, his family, and his friends; to avenge all wrongs done to them, as to himself shall seem good; to sink, burn, kill, and destroy, as amply as a royal commission now authorises the same in a professional class, the recognised executors of the national will in that behalf.'

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My child wishes ice cream. In its place I should desire the same. Must I, then, supply it? Evidently to decide so simple a question other considerations must be imported. A man can no more be sure of doing the right thing simply by putting himself in another man's place than he can learn to box by sparring at himself in the looking-glass. It may sometimes give a useful hint as to what he must not do, but it will not help him much as to what he should actually do. Brown, who is fond of a drink, stands Robinson a glass because he would like one himself. Jones, a teetotaller, persuades Robinson not to drink because he would wish to be deterred in the like circumstances. Smith, doing as he would be done by, gives Jones, who is hard up, a sovereign, which perhaps he spends foolishly; Robinson, who likes hard work, gives him a stiff job for which he is perhaps unfit, and Brown gives him brandy, which perhaps kills him. Yet each acts on the golden rule. The principle enunciated by Kant is evidently safer. Only those maxims must be adopted as ruling motives which are susceptible of being made universal. But the golden rule, so far from affording a universal law, varies in its application according to the subjective idiosyncrasies of each person. It may suffice to deter from evident wrong and injury, but in the minutiæ of conduct, which, after all, make up the important affairs of life, if weighed in the balance it is often found wanting.

## OMAR, THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA.

THERE was born in Persia, in the latter half of the eleventh century, a certain Omar. He was a great man among the Persians, famous for learning—especially astronomy—and poetry and Freethought. He was one of the eight men who reformed the Calendar; he was the author of astronomical tables, and of a treatise on the extraction of cubic roots, and another on algebra, and of sundry poems. His poems consist simply of quatrains, little epigrams of four lines apiece, arranged in alphabetical order, and to read them in the original must be as festive as reading through a dictionary. Their subjects are praise of love and wine, and speculations in religion. That is practically what all Persian poetry is.

Omar was an Epicurean. The way he enforces his Epicureanism is, of course, by praising wine; for he is a Persian and a Mohammedan, to whom wine is forbidden by his religion, thus having the double advantage of being naughty as well as nice. Wine with Omar is a type of the enjoyment of the world in general. This old Persian poet remained more or less forgotten for some eight centuries. Maybe because of his infidelity and his alphabetical arrangement, and his having written in Persian. Then his writings fell into the hands of one Edward Fitzgerald, who, says Swinburne, has made Omar one of the greatest of English poets. Fitzgerald began studying Persian in 1853. He presently began turning odd stanzas of Omar's into English, and soon he strung them together into a golden chain. Fitzgerald himself was a Freethinker, and he boldly adopted the principle that what is wanted in a translation is to give people, who do not know the original, an idea of the effect it produces on people who do.

Fitzgerald's version of Omar has been before the world about forty years, but it is not popular. At least, there is no reasonably cheap edition of his to be had. Some translations are finer than the originals. Witness the New Testament written in "canine" Greek and rendered into divine English. What a translation of Omar was Fitzgerald's! "A planet larger than the sun which cast it," said his friend Tennyson. The magnificent opening is pure, unadulterated Fitzgerald. In one of the later quatrains, by the addition of two words, Fitzgerald has turned a commonplace idea into the most fearful indictment ever uttered by man against his Maker:—

> O Thou, who man of baser Earth didst make,
> And even with Paradise devise the snake,
> For all the sin wherewith the face of man
> Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—*and take!*

In particular, Omar voices Materialism in his rebellion against orthodoxy:—

> 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.

Such lines as the following haunt the memory of the reader:—

> They say the lion and the lizard keep
> The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;
> And Bahram, that great hunter, the wild ass
> Stamps o'er his head, but cannot break his sleep.
>
> I sometimes think that never blows so red
> The rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;
> That every hyacinth the garden wears
> Dropt in her lap from some once lovely head.
>
> And this reviving herb, whose tender green
> Hedges the river lip on which we lean;
> Ah! lean upon it lightly, for who knows
> From what once lovely lip it springs unseen!
>
> Ah, my beloved, fill the cup that clears
> To-day of past regret and future fears.
> To-morrow! Why, to-morrow I may be
> Myself with yesterday's seven thousand years.
>
> For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
> That from his vintage rolling time hath prest,
> Have drunk their cup a round or two before,
> And, one by one, crept silently to rest.

Lamentation, just as in Æschylus or Marcus Aurelius, or even the book of Job, is apparent in his poem:—

> Yet, ah! that spring should vanish with the rose,
> That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close;
> The nightingale that in the branches sang,
> Ah, whence and whither flown again—who knows!

But the nightingales of Fitzgerald will live, and shall sing to generations yet unborn when we have all "crept silently to rest."

## ACID DROPS.

THE tropical heat has abated but little up to the time of our going to press. Many persons have collapsed in the streets of London, some of them dying; but matters have been much worse in New York, where several people went raving mad, and nearly fifty deaths were recorded daily. How, in the name of wonder, will these unfortunates stand the heat in the other place? Most of them, presumably, have jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire.

Mohammedam and Christian have been exchanging the usual civilities with each other at Candia. Hundreds of Christians were massacred, and the Christians were only prevented from retaliating by the presence of the European battleships. How religion makes men love each other! Cats and dogs live together better than men of different creeds.

Had the Khalifa remained in Omdurman and compelled the Sirdar to shell and storm the city, the British and Egyptian losses would have been much heavier. It appears that he was led to his doom by a prophecy of the Mahdi that the English would advance to Kerreri, where they would be defeated. This spot came to be known as the deathfield of the infidels. The Khalifa went there to fight, and found it the deathfield of the true believers. So much for trusting to prophets instead of generals in time of war.

The assassin of the Empress of Austria must be mad. No doubt he calls himself an Anarchist, but madmen have often a taste for *outré* labels. There are moral lunatics as well as intellectual lunatics, and this assassin is one of them; and that's all there's in it, as the Americans say.

The poor Emperor of Austria, who has been badly hit so often, speaks of the "inscrutable decree of Providence" which permitted this last blow to fall upon him. Of course it sounds strange to Rationalists, but it is the appropriate language of a sincere Christian. Even the great Hungarian novelist, Maurus Jokai, remarks that the good Empress was "not protected from above." True, and who is? Whenever does "Providence" or "the One above" foil the efforts of madmen or criminals? A lady passes by, a criminal lunatic rushes out and stabs her with a file, and in a few minutes she is a corpse, while he is chuckling over the success of his monstrous enterprise. And all the time the great detective of the skies looked down and winked. Bah! The doctrine is too absurd for refutation.

The captive King of Benin has now, it seems, become a Presbyterian, and regularly attends the Mission established near his house at Old Calabar by the United Presbyterian body. As his only knowledge, so far, of the English language extends to "Hello" and "Good-bye," there must have been a great deal of interpreting going on. The Old Testament, with its code of sacrifices and records of bloody cruelties,

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has probably presented no difficulties to his Majesty's mind. And he has, no doubt, readily understood the divinely-ordered crucifixion on Calvary. But one would have thought that he would have more readily become a Roman Catholic. The doctrine of transubstantiation—eating the body, and drinking the blood, of Christ—would have been very much to his taste. He is still allowed two or three wives.

The vicar of All Saints' Church, Marstham, Surrey, announces that, failing a much-needed cloak-room, he has decided to utilise the porches, and to fix wardrobe hooks on them. He says: "Wet mackintoshes and damp cloaks do not conduce to worship." There seems to be a taint of heresy in this objection to humidity. Christenings, baptism by total immersion, and holy water have always seemed to us to be special features of the Christian faith. Perhaps the distaste, in this instance, arises from the fact that the clergy have had no hand in sanctifying the water. Yet even common or garden rain is sent by the Lord, as we may learn from the Book of Common Prayer, according to the forms of which we pray when he sends us too much, and we pray when he sends us too little. Thus we regulate the Divine Waterworks according to our needs.

The Rev. William Davies, vicar of Llanllawddog, in Carmarthenshire, has committed suicide by hanging himself in a store-room above his coach-house. There is no particular moral. We only mention it as an illustration of Talmage's theory that most suicides are Atheists.

The Archbishop of Canterbury said recently in that city that "he had no doubt there were inaccuracies in the Old Testament narratives, though the writers told the truth, as far as they knew it." This statement was deemed "astounding" by the editor of an evangelical paper called the *King's Own*, who accordingly wrote asking the Archbishop whether he had actually made it. The Primate, through his chaplain, replied as follows: "His Grace did make the statement to which you refer, and he thinks it; and for an instance he would refer you to 2 Samuel xxiv. 13 and 1 Chronicle xxi. 12." In the first of these passages a threatened famine in the time of David is spoken of as "seven years," and in the second as "three years." Of course it is a flat contradiction, though it is only one of hundreds in the Bible.

Now come the "harmonisers," and as they work separately they make a pretty mess of it. One who signs himself "W." writes to the *Westminster Gazette* that the Archbishop has found "a very old chestnut"—as though that made it any better. "Every tyro in Bible study," he says, "knows that De Wette, many years ago, indicated that the Hebrew for three had been mistaken for seven." But the orthodox De Wette was not inspired; that was only his opinion, and it has not been accepted by the editors of the Revised Version.

The second "harmoniser" writes to the same paper as a "Country Parson." According to this gentleman there is no discrepancy at all. The writer in Samuel refers to seven years of famine, and the writer in Chronicles to three years', and the latter was part of the same famine, only the four years that had elapsed were not mentioned! No doubt the Archbishop will find this very convincing. It recalls the old story of the lushington who was accosted by an acquaintance in this fashion: "Why, you were drunk when I saw you a week ago, and here you are drunk again." Whereto the lushington replied: "I'm not drunk again; it's the same drunk."

The "Holy Land" is being transmogrified. All the romance is being fast swept out of it by railways, hotels, and other western devices. You can take a ticket at Jerusalem for Jericho, or a steamboat at Jericho for the Dead Sea. Not so much as Lot's wife, turned into rock salt, is left to testify that wonders were once done in the land.

We are continually being reminded that this is a Christian country. One cannot go into any hotel or boarding-house without finding that beautiful text framed, and hanging in a conspicuous position: "The proprietor is not responsible for any articles left in the bedrooms."

Two other members of the Peculiar People, this time at Southend, have been committed for trial on the charge of manslaughter. Ruby Gladys Feltham, aged eight weeks, died of diarrhœa, without medical assistance, and the coroner's jury returned a verdict against both parents. Robert Feltham, the father, on being questioned, said: "I do not wish to argue. We put our trust in God." That is the proper attitude for all sincere Christians, but sincerity is so rare that it is called "peculiar."

John Kensit has been lecturing at Glasgow on Idolatry in the Church of England. He did not, however, according to expectation, have it all his own way. One clergyman in the audience got up and protested against John Kensit's language, and several other persons withdrew. This is said to have surprised him, and he asks dolefully, "Stands Scotland where it did?"

Henry Spicer, one of "General" Booth's young men, went singing for the Lord outside the "Barley Mow" public-house, Ranelagh-road, Pimlico. He was asked to go away—nearer heaven or nearer the other place, it didn't matter which—but he wouldn't budge, and the landlord brought him before Magistrate Shiel. He was asked whether he would undertake not to go there again, but he declined "on principle" to give such an undertaking. "Then as a matter of principle," the magistrate said, "you will have to pay forty shillings and two shillings costs, or one month." Failing to pay up, he was removed to the cells, leaving behind him a number of Salvationists to bewail his fate. One of the "soldiers" broke down and wept like a child. Fancy a month's imprisonment! It is enough to make a hero snivel—at least, a Salvation hero.

The Rev. C. Pierrepont Edwards, of the Borough, London, is known as "the fighting parson." He may not be as eloquent as a Jeremy Taylor, but he is readier with his fists, and has often used them in helping the police—with whom, by the way, his master, Jesus Christ, was not apparently on good terms. This fighting parson has been preferred to the vicarage of West Mersey, Colchester, where he will perhaps find a sturdier lot of opponents. Before leaving the Borough, however, he was presented by the police with a solid silver tea and coffee service, "as a token of their appreciation of the help he has rendered them during the four years he has been curate of St. Savior's." Mr. Edwards regards himself as a "real good" Christian; but just fancy Jesus Christ putting up his "dukes"! This gentleman and Count Tolstoi ought to hold a public discussion; and if they never left off until they settled the matter it would be the longest debate on record.

In some new American churches small rooms are attached known as "babies' corners," where mothers may leave their children while attending service. This is a new interpretation of the injunction, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God." If all the (intellectual) babies who go to church were dropped in these corners, what a surprising diminution would take place in the bulk of the congregations!

During a service in the Congregational Church, Maritzburg, a bullet crashed through one of the windows, and killed a worshipper engaged in prayer. It is believed that the shot must have been fired from one of the surrounding hills, a distance of over 5,000 yards. Another instance of the saving power of prayer.

We wonder whether the Rev. Arthur Robins, chaplain to the Queen and to the Household Troops at Windsor, is descended from Robins the famous flowery auctioneer. This is how the reverend gentleman burst forth from the pulpit on Sunday morning: "The God of battle and of Gordon gave the victory to those who, thirteen years ago and more, took an oath before the God of heaven that, for each drop of Gordon's blood that had been shed, there should be rivers in requital of the blood of them who slew him. Gordon was avenged when in Khartoum the flag of England floated where the butchers of the Mahdi marked him down."

No doubt the Rev. Arthur Robins thinks himself a very good Christian, and perhaps he is. Gordon's sister, however, says that her brother would not have approved such sentiments. "What he wanted," she says, "was help at the time, not vengeance after." After all, it seems to us that the men who killed Gordon had as much right at Khartoum as he had. It was much nearer their residence than his.

Sir William Crookes's presidential address to the British Association was alarming from one point of view, and reassuring from another. The using up of nitrogen on this planet threatened our future food supplies, he said; though this is far from obvious, and is flatly denied by other specialists. On the other hand, he declared that the universe was at bottom spiritual, not material. Sir William *felt* the truth of this, and said that science was on the way to *prove* it. But prophecy is always a risky business, and Sir William Crookes may be no better at it than his less scientific fellow-citizens.

Bishop Brown seized upon President Crookes's address as a good opportunity for putting in a plea for that "wonder-worker," Jesus Christ. Preaching in the Cathedral to a congregation which, of course, was not allowed to raise a question, or debate, Dr. Brown remarked that, according to Sir William's address, the men of the future might have to make artificial bread. Now that was what Jesus Christ

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did, and his action was a prophecy of what man would be able to do by discovering the secrets of nature. Bishop Brown may be sufficiently ignorant or idiotic to imagine that he was talking sense; but, as a matter of fact, the multiplication of loaves and fishes in the Gospel was not a chemical process at all. Man will never be able to produce loaves of bread by simply saying "Let them be." Really it would be well to have a great brewer and distiller as next year's President of the British Association. Bishop Brown would then be able to preach on the miracle at Cana in Galilee, and to explain that Jesus Christ had an apparatus in the backyard, by which he turned water into wine without violating the laws of nature. In other words, he will show the world that Jesus Christ was not God the Son, but one of Mrs. Besant's "Mahatmas."

A correspondent asked us recently whether we had seen Mr. Reader Harris's little book entitled *The Case Against Atheism*. We replied that we had not seen this volume, but we had seen some of his outpourings in evangelical papers, and thought them almost imbecile. We now see that the Birmingham *Daily Gazette* pretty nearly shares our estimate of this gentleman. In a review of his book it gives him credit for good intentions—which, by the way, Flaubert grimly said was every fool's excuse—but denies that he possesses the necessary equipment to wage war against Atheism. Our contemporary does not say so plainly, but any sagacious reader can see that it regards Mr. Reader Harris as a great fool.

The *Glasgow Herald* is still more severe on Mr. Reader Harris. "We have seldom," it says, "read feebler apologetic lectures than these. Their chief characteristic is a shallow dogmatism that often verges on actual ignorance." Mr. Harris is a perfectionist, and his faith saves him from all sin; but the *Herald* says it doesn't save him from errors and misrepresentations.

Archdeacon Wilson's sermon on Christianity and War—a fruitful theme which he by no means exhausted—is reported at length in the *Rochdale Observer*. "The sword was placed in our hands," he said, "for use, and we ought to use it"—not against our fellow-Christians, of course, but against Turks and heathen whose "sense of humanity was on a lower plane than ours," and who could only be taught by brute force. Every now and then it would be necessary to slaughter these people, children of "Our Father" though they were. Christian nations, however, should dwell together in peace. Jesus Christ meant them to. The world was progressive, and to deny it "was, in fact, sheer atheism." Indeed, Mr. Archdeacon! Pray stop there, and let us have a word together. It is precisely the Atheist who *has* preached the doctrine of natural progress, and it is precisely your Church which has denied it and preached the inherent wickedness and helplessness of man. Yet you turn round now and declare that your doctrine belongs to the Atheist, and that his doctrine belongs to you; which only shows, though, what parsons will do rather than lose their livings. Sooner than face the abomination of desolation, in the shape of having to earn an honest living in the ordinary labor market, they would argue, and if necessary swear, that white is black, and black white, and blue no color at all.

The Belper Board of Guardians has had a stormy sitting over the admission of certain "nuns" as visitors to the Workhouse. It was contended that they really carried on a subtle system of proselytising amongst the inmates. The Church party was worsted in the voting.

What humbugs are these soul-savers, devil-dodgers, and gospel-grinders! They have had small-pox at Middlesborough. Everybody with a tincture of science knows that this is a disease of dirt, springing from unsanitary conditions. It can only be fought by science; not the quack science of vaccination, but the true science of good drainage, clean homes, and ample breathing spaces. When small-pox fastens on a place the medical authorities wake up, and by and by they drive it out. They have done this at Middlesborough. And now that the town is clear out crawl the clerical impostors, crying: "We did it! We did it!" We have a handbill before us emanating from All Saints' Church, and announcing a "Thanksgiving Service for the Removal of the Plague of Small-Pox," and this is how the thing opens: "For many weary months we prayed at all our services for the removal of the terrible plague of small-pox, with which it had pleased God to afflict this town. It has now pleased God to hear our prayer, and the plague has ceased." The pious charlatans who issue this handbill know they are talking lies and nonsense, but they also know that there are plenty of fools in Middlesborough who can easily be imposed upon.

The Rev. C. J. Finch, vicar of St. Peter's, Hoxton, has a young daughter, who was walking in the garden with her brother the other night, she being dressed in white while he was carrying a bicycle lamp. A child in the road cried out "There's a ghost," and, although the vicar has explained the matter, hundreds of people gather every night to see the apparition. Well, if that happens in London at the end of the nineteenth century, what trouble could it have been to persuade a handful of people in Jerusalem, nearly two thousand years ago, that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead?

"Dean Farrar and the Scriptures" is the heading of a paragraph that is going the round of the newspapers. It runs as follows: "A correspondent called the attention of Dean Farrar to the fact that Atheistic lecturers are in the habit of affirming that he does not believe in the Bible (referring to his works as a confirmation of the statement), and observed that, if such a grave assertion were allowed to be propagated without contradiction, the young and the ignorant might be deceived by it. The Dean, who is at present staying in Yorkshire, replied as follows: "The statement to which you refer is ignorant nonsense. The doctrine of the Church of England about Holy Scripture is stated in her Sixth and Seventh Articles, and that doctrine I most heartily accept."

This paragraph looks inspired; perhaps it is circulated by Dean Farrar himself. Not only "Atheistic lecturers," but ardent Christians, like Father Ignatius, have declared that Dean Farrar "does not believe in the Bible" in the ordinary sense of the words. It is highly necessary, therefore, that he should say something to clear himself; and what he does say is characteristic of the man. The Sixth and Seventh Articles of the Church of England do not state the full Christian belief as to the Bible, but only the Protestant belief as against that of the Church of Rome. They emphasize two points, and two points only; first, that the Scriptures contain all that is necessary to salvation, so that no man is at the Pope's mercy for a seat in heaven; secondly, that fourteen books of the Roman Catholic Bible are apocryphal, and cannot be used to establish any doctrine. The general Christian view of the Bible, common to Catholics and Protestants, is taken for granted, as it had not then been brought into controversy. Dean Farrar must be well aware of these facts, and his new profession of faith strikes us as a very paltry evasion.

There is one word in the Sixth Article, however, to which we beg to draw Dean Farrar's special attention. The last clause explains what is meant by the expression, "Holy Scripture," and is as follows:—"In the name of the holy Scripture we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church." Now, unless Dean Farrar means to juggle with the word "authority," it is idle for him to say that he believes in the Bible according to these terms. He does *not* believe in the "authority" of Jonah; on the contrary, he believes that Jonah did not write it, and that it is not history, but romance, from beginning to end. If *this* is believing in the Bible, then Atheistic lecturers believe in it as well as Dean Farrar, and thus he finds himself on the same platform with them at the finish.

What asses some of the magistrates are making of themselves over the "conscientious objection" clause of the new Vaccination Act. One says to an applicant: "You know I have to *satisfy* myself that yours is a conscientious objection, and I must take time to consider." Another says: "It must be a *conscientious* objection, and some people have *no* consciences." And so they go on doddering; trying to be very smart and subtle, but being foolish, not to say impudent, all the time. Any man of common intelligence could easily see that a father wouldn't move in such a matter at all unless he *had* a conscientious objection. Is it likely that he would lose time, take a lot of trouble, and run the risk of being publicly insulted, merely for the fun of the thing?

Colonel W. H. Campion, chairman at the Haywards Heath Petty Sessions, got up on his hind legs in the police-court, and offered a prayer of thanksgiving to the Almighty for "the great and glorious victory in the Soudan." At that very moment ten thousand of the Dervish army lay dead, and five thousand wounded were bleeding to death without medical assistance on the parching sand under the broiling sun. What a sweet thing to thank God for! And what a lovely thing religion is when you probe it to the bottom!

How these Army men in France are striving to prevent a revision of the Dreyfus case! After all that has happened recently their conduct is positively insane. They appear to be backed up by President Faure, who does not seem to have any idea of the duties of his post beyond figuring at military reviews and state functions, or exchanging fulsome telegrams with the Autocrat of all the Russias. It is quite certain, however, that revision must come. The civil element in the Ministry will have to break from the military element, and if M. Faure comes to grief in the hubbub we shall regard it as a just nemesis.

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, September 18, Bristol-street Board School, Birmingham; 11, "War Within the Church"; 3, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 7, "The Meaning of Death."

September 25, Liverpool.

October 2, Glasgow; 9, Leicester; 16 and 23, Athenæum Hall.

November 6, Manchester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 18 and 25, Athenæum Hall, London. October 2, New Brompton. November 20, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

C. BAKER.—Will look into it, if possible, for next week.

E. R. WOODWARD.—We quite agree with you in a general way. But when a Christian rowdy tries to break-up Freethought meetings, and vents the most filthy libels against Freethought advocates, it is not malice, but mere common sense, to tell the public the truth about *him*. If a man commits a crime, pays the penalty, and then behaves decently, it would be cruel to rake up the past. Don't you see the distinction?

J. G. DOBSON joins the Secular Society, Limited, and hopes "its effect will soon be felt from one end of the country to the other."

WIGAN Freethinkers are requested to note that a meeting will be held to-day (Sept. 18) at the Bull's Head Hotel, for the purpose of reorganisation and renewed propaganda.

T. ROBERTSON.—Received with thanks. Subjects forwarded.

A. B. MOSS.—Glad to hear you had such good meetings on Sunday. We have not seen the *South London Mail*, which you say is full of abuse again. No one thought of sending us a copy.

P. THWAITES.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—*Per Miss Vance*:—S. J. W., 2s. 6d.; D. C., 2s. 6d. *Per R. Forder*:—R. Gibbon, 5s.; R. Davison, £1; A Few Rangoon Sinners, 10s.; W. M., 5s.—A. R. B., 1s.; H. Good, 5s.

MISS VANCE has received for the Truelove Fund: D. C., 2s. 6d.

S. J. W. sends 2s. 6d. to our Circulation Fund, and "hopes 1,000 others are sending 2s. 6d. each by the same post." He also sends "congratulations on the very successful Demonstration in Hyde Park."

H. HUNTER.—Yes, we heard that Mr. Heaford, assisted by Mr. Edwards, kept the meeting going in Hyde Park when the Demonstration was over. Our movement is evidently respected in that quarter.

C. HARWOOD.—We believe Mr. Engström when he says that he abhors personalities, but we also believe you when you say that you have listened to very vile personalities from several of the Christian Evidence Society's speakers.

N. S. S. CHILDREN'S EXCURSION.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Collected at Mr. Foote's lecture, 10s. 6d.; Captain Cross, 10s.; C. Bowman, 2s.; A Friend, 2s. 6d.; W. Davy, 1s.; G. Bowers, 1s.; D. C., 2s. 6d.

R. CHAPMAN.—Sorry to hear that no hall is available for lectures by Mr. Foote at South Shields. You are worse off now than you were ten years ago, if this is really true. Are you quite sure?

G. BERRY.—Mr. Foote will gladly pay Stockton a visit when he comes north, which he is trying to arrange to do this side of Christmas.

J. N. LEEDS.—Perhaps the magistrate, Mr. D'Eyncourt, is a Roman Catholic himself. His remarks seem to justify that conclusion. But the people of London are not going to ask him whether they shall oppose the Roman superstition or not.

W. P. BALL.—Sincere thanks for your valued weekly batch of cuttings.

A. MILLER.—We do not remember the incident you refer to. Glad to hear you derive so much enjoyment from reading the *Freethinker*. Thanks for the cuttings.

H. E. S.—Mr. Voysey's religious views have more than once been criticised in our columns. We never had a very high opinion of his abilities, and we do not know that we are called upon to be always opposing his comparatively harmless form of superstition. The other matters you raise do not concern us—at least not primarily. If you are anxious about them, you should write to Mrs. Bonner.

H. GOOD, subscribing to our Circulation Fund, says he would be very pleased if the *Freethinker* found its way into a much wider circle of readers. "I have taken it," he adds, "ever since it started, and always enjoy reading it. May it live and flourish!"

WELL-WISHER (Newcastle).—Thanks for the cuttings, etc., which we shall use in our next issue, not having room this week.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Daily Mail—Ethical World—Free Society—Open Court—New York Truthseeker—Isle of Man Times—Progressive Thinker—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—New Century—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Public Opinion—Liberator—Crescent—Bristol Evening News—Eagle and the Serpent—Torch of Reason—Birmingham Daily Gazette—Lucifer—English Mechanic—Rochdale Observer—Two Worlds—Derbyshire Times—Malthusian—Boston Investigator.

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 is due.

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.

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

## SPECIAL.

### ANOTHER SHILLING WEEK.

READERS of the *Freethinker* during the last seven or eight years will probably recollect that I have made several special appeals for various objects in connection with the work of the National Secular Society. A certain week has been fixed upon as "Shilling Week." During that time my readers have been invited to send me a subscription of one shilling or any number of shillings. Well, I am now going to make an appeal of this kind on behalf of the *Freethinker* itself. Friends are sending me some contributions every week towards the Circulation Fund, but the pace is very slow, and driblets during a long period will not serve the purpose as well as a reasonable sum at once. Consequently I have decided to make another "Shilling Week" of the first week in October. During that week I invite my readers to get a postal order for one shilling, or for several shillings if they can afford it, and to forward the same to me before October 8. Of course I have no objection to cheques. But I am anxious that the mass of the party should do something. If they all act together on this occasion, they will never miss what they give, and they will enable me to push the circulation of this journal, which is the right arm of all my work for Secularism, and, I venture to think, of very considerable importance to the whole party.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE is announced to deliver three lectures to-day (September 18) at Birmingham. The subjects should prove attractive, and it is to be hoped that the weather will not cause a necessity for an inquest on the lecturer.

In spite of the hot weather, a good audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Good without God." Mr. Watts occupied the chair, and Mr. Heaford a seat on the platform. The lecture was much applauded.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures this evening, Sunday, Sept. 18, at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham-court-road. He takes for his subject "Atheism and Agnosticism: Their Value and Relation to Each Other." Mr. Watts's views upon these questions have recently caused considerable comment, and he will be glad, therefore, for his opponents to attend the Athenæum this evening, when the subject can be debated.

Mr. C. Cohen goes on a lecturing tour through the south of Scotland, the north of England, and the Midlands during October. All the Sundays are booked already, but Mr. Cohen is open to deliver week-night lectures, and Branches, etc., that wish to engage his services should communicate with him as soon as possible. It is to be hoped that he will not be allowed to have many idle evenings. Mr. Cohen's new address is 17 Osborne-road, Leyton.

Mr. Forder writes:—"On Sunday, September 4, being at Yarmouth, I agreed to give an open-air lecture on Freethought in that Sabbatarian watering-place, the first for

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many years. Consulting our good friend Headley on the Saturday as to the probability of a row, he assured me the stalwarts would see to my safety. A written placard in his window was the only public announcement, but it brought a big crowd. Mr. Headley was not only an excellent chairman, but a good speaker, and I should imagine from his twenty minutes' address that he has the capacity for lecturing. The audience was a very large one, and I found after the lecture that friends were present from Nottingham, Leicester, Kettering, and other places. I have promised to go again, but the hope of the friends there is that Mr. Foote will soon pay them a visit."

The first of the Sunday Freethought Demonstrations was to have been held in Hyde Park early in August, but had to be given up in consequence of the rain. An extra Demonstration was therefore arranged for last Sunday afternoon. Mr. Harry Snell acted as chairman, and opened the proceedings with an effective speech. Further addresses were delivered by Messrs. Foote, Watts, and Heaford, who were all in good form, and heartily applauded. There must have been three thousand people around the platform, and a more intelligent and appreciative audience could not be desired. Not an interruption, not a shadow of disorder, from beginning to end. This ends the Freethought Demonstrations for the present. The places visited have been Clerkenwell Green, Regent's Park, Finsbury Park, Victoria Park, Peckham Rye, and Hyde Park. A big crowd gathered at each place, and the Gospel of Freethought has been preached to many thousands, who listened to it out of doors when nothing would tempt them inside a hall. The weather has been remarkably hot, and the speakers will be glad of a seasonable winter to cool off in, so as to get ready for more Demonstrations next year.

Mr. Foote took the full responsibility for these Demonstrations, though Miss Vance made the detailed arrangements for him, and Mr. Wilson kindly supplied a brake and a pair of horses for each meeting. Collections could not be made in Hyde Park or in Regent's Park. The other collections, taken up and retained by Miss Vance, have had to be supplemented out of Mr. Foote's own pocket. He has thus taken nothing for his own services, and substantially helped to meet the expenses, which are reckoned on the lowest possible scale. This is one of the perquisites of the N. S. S. presidency.

The Children's Excursion was a great success. Nature was kind, and gave a comparatively cool day. The sun shone gloriously, but its heat was tempered by a refreshing breeze. Five big brakes were crammed with children, and a few adults to see that the youngsters got safe and sound to the journey's end. We haven't heard of any missing, so we suppose they all got home again; though we hear that a Sunday-school party that way, some years ago, lost no less than eighteen juveniles. Mr. Watts has written on this Excursion in another column, so we need not dilate upon it here. All we want to say is that Miss Vance, 376-7 Strand, London, W.C., is anxious to receive further subscriptions, in order that she may clear off the balance of expenses immediately.

The New York *Truthseeker* celebrates its twenty-fifth birthday. The issue for September 3 contains portraits of D. M. Bennett (who founded the paper )and his wife, of E. M. Macdonald, the present editor, and his brother George, and of Heston, the *Truthseeker* artist. Colonel Ingersoll contributes "A Look Backward and a Prophecy," which we reproduce for English readers, and George Macdonald chats agreeably about the younger days of himself and "Gene." There are also contributions by J. E. Remsburg and Lucy N. Coleman. We congratulate our American contemporary on having lived so long. It is not exactly easy to keep a Freethought paper going. They tell a story of an old French gentleman who, after the Revolution, was asked what *he* had done in it. "I have lived," he replied. That was something, anyhow. And the *Truthseeker* has lived, and promises to keep on doing so, with credit to its conductors and advantage to Freethought.

Mr. Brabrook, delivering the presidential address in the Anthropological Section of the British Association at Bristol, spoke as follows: "When my friend Mr. Clodd shocked some of the members of the Folk-lore Society by his frank statement of conclusions at which he had arrived, it was said we must fall back on the evidences of Christianity. What more cogent evidence of Christianity can you have than its existence? It stands to-day as the religion which, in most civilised countries, represents that which has been found by the operation of natural laws to be best suited for the present circumstances of mankind. You are a Christian because you cannot help it. Turn Mohammedan to-morrow—will you stop the spread of Christianity? Your individual renunciation of Christianity will be but a ripple on a wave. Civilised mankind holds to Christianity, and cannot but do so till it can find something better. This, it seems to me, is a stronger evidence of Christianity than any of the loose-jointed arguments I find in evidential literature. Meanwhile, I cannot for a moment assent to the theory that Christianity or any other religion is unchangeable. It would be like nothing else in all God's universe if it were. Those who say it is know better. They would not do in its name what Christians did in that name three centuries ago. If they wished to do so, as perhaps some of them do, they would know full well that even so short a space in the world's history as three hundred years has placed it out of their power. Upon this thorny subject I will say no more."

## A PLEASANT DAY.

Those who delude themselves that Secularists and Freethinkers lack the secret of real happiness should have witnessed the National Secular Society's Children's Excursion on Saturday, September 10. They would then have seen that, whatever doubts Secularists may entertain as to the alleged joys of some future state, they have a keen sense of the true pleasures of the present existence. To me it is one of the highest enjoyments of life to see children spending a day in the health-inspiring country air, where the charms and beauties of nature are not marred by the exigencies of our so-called modern [civilisation. If I possessed means, a large portion should be devoted towards enabling children to indulge more than they do at present in rational recreation. It is the sunshine of their lives, and it endears them to those to whom they are indebted for their pleasurable gratifications.

The National Secular Society has always been impressed with this fact, but unfortunately its lack of finance prevented the carrying out of that which the Executive recognises as most pleasing and desirable work. Still, through the benevolence of many friends who subscribed to the Excursion Fund, the officers of the N. S. S. were last week enabled to take 150 children to Pinner, and to provide them with all that was necessary for their comfort. About eleven o'clock five brakes started filled with happy faces. The day was an ideal one, not too hot, and the scenery through which we passed was really delightful. Among those who accompanied the excursion were Mr. and Mrs. Foote, with their four children, Mr. and Mrs. Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. Seisemann, Miss Annie Brown, Mrs. Henderson, and Messrs. Harry Brown, Quay, Loafer, and Leat. Of course, Miss Vance was well to the front. All the above-named were most indefatigable in their efforts to make the children have "a good time." On arriving at Pinner ample provisions were at hand to satisfy the appetites of the little ones. Various games were arranged in a spacious field, while swings and donkey riding were well patronised. Mr. Foote did his share in conducting the running matches, and was assisted by Messrs. Cohen, Quay, Leat, Loafer, H. Brown, and many ladies. Miss Brown devoted most of her time in superintending the swings and donkey riding, and Miss Vance did "much in everything." In the afternoon many parents and friends came down, Mr. Heaford being among the number. At six o'clock preparations for the home journey commenced, and before ten o'clock the party reached London with happy recollections of a well-spent day.

I joined the "happy family" in the morning at the Athenæum Hall, Tottenham-court-road, and I am bound to say that the remembrance of the day's pleasure will have an abiding place in the storehouse of my memory.

Charles Watts.

## WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

*Per R. Forder*:—H. Croughan, 2s. 6d.; W. M., 5s.; Mr. Moses, 6s.

*Per Miss Vance*:—D. C., 2s. 6d.

## 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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## A LOOK BACKWARD AND A PROPHECY.

THE STEADY GAIN OF SCIENCE, FREETHOUGHT, AND REASON.

I CONGRATULATE the *Truthseeker* on its twenty-fifth birthday. It has fought a good fight. It has always been at the front. It has carried the flag, and its flag is a torch that sheds light.

Twenty-five years ago the people of this country, for the most part, were quite orthodox. The great "fundamental" falsehoods of Christianity were generally accepted. Those who were not Christians, as a rule, admitted that they ought to be; that they ought to repent and join the Church, and this they generally intended to do.

The ministers had few doubts. The most of them had been educated, not to think, but to believe. Thought was regarded as dangerous, and the clergy, as a rule, kept on the safe side. Investigation was discouraged. It was declared that faith was the only road that led to eternal joy.

Most of the schools and colleges were under sectarian control, and the presidents and professors were defenders of their creeds. The people were crammed with miracles and stuffed with absurdities. They were taught that the Bible was the "inspired" word of God, that it was absolutely perfect, that the contradictions were only apparent, and that it contained no mistakes in philosophy, none in science. The great scheme of salvation was declared to be the result of infinite wisdom and mercy. Heaven and hell were waiting for the human race. Only those could be saved who had faith and who had been born twice.

Most of the ministers taught the geology of Moses, the astronomy of Joshua, and the philosophy of Christ. They regarded scientists as enemies, and their principal business was to defend miracles and deny facts. They knew, however, that men were thinking, investigating in every direction, and they feared the result. They became a little malicious—somewhat hateful. With their congregations they relied on sophistry, and they answered their enemies with epithets, with misrepresentations and slanders; and yet their minds were filled with a vague fear, with a sickening dread. Some of the people were reading and some were thinking. Lyell had told them something about geology, and in the light of facts they were reading Genesis again. The clergy called Lyell an infidel, a blasphemer; but the facts seemed to care nothing for opprobrious names. Then the "called," the "set apart," the "Lord's anointed,' began changing the "inspired" word. They erased the word "day" and inserted "period," and then triumphantly exclaimed: "The world was created in six periods." This answer satisfied bigotry, hypocrisy, and honest ignorance; but honest intelligence was not satisfied.

More and more was being found about the history of life, of living things, the order in which the various forms had appeared, and the relations they had sustained to each other. Beneath the gaze of the biologist the fossils were again clothed with flesh, submerged continents and islands reappeared, the ancient forest grew once more, the air was filled with unknown birds, the seas with armored monsters, and the land with beasts of many forms that sought with tooth and claw each other's flesh.

Haeckel and Huxley followed life through all its changing forms, from monad up to man. They found that men, women, and children had been on this poor world for hundreds of thousands of years.

The clergy could not dodge these facts, this conclusion, by calling "days" periods, because the Bible gives the age of Adam when he died, the lives and ages to the flood, to Abraham, to David, and from David to Christ; so that, according to the Bible, man at the birth of Christ had been on this earth four thousand and four years, and no more.

There was no way in which the sacred record could be changed, but of course the dear ministers could not admit the conclusion arrived at by Haeckel and Huxley. If they did, they would have to give up original sin, the scheme of the atonement, and the consolation of eternal fire.

They took the only course they could. They promptly and solemnly, with upraised hands, denied the facts, denounced the biologists as irreverent wretches, and defended the Book. With tears in their voices they talked about "Mother's Bible," about the "faith of the fathers," about the prayers that the children had said, and they also talked about the wickedness of doubt. This satisfied bigotry, hypocrisy, and honest ignorance; but honest intelligence was not satisfied.

The works of Humboldt had been translated, and were being read; the intellectual horizon was enlarged, and the fact that the endless chain of cause and effect had never been broken, that Nature had never been interfered with, forced its way into many minds. This conception of Nature was beyond the clergy. They did not believe it; they could not comprehend it. They did not answer Humboldt, but they attacked him with great virulence. They measured his works by the Bible, because the Bible was then the standard.

In examining a philosophy, a system, the ministers asked: "Does it agree with the sacred book?" With the Bible they separated the gold from the dross. Every science had to be tested by the Scriptures. Humboldt did not agree with Moses. He differed from Joshua. He had his doubts about the flood. That was enough.

Yet, after all, the ministers felt that they were standing on thin ice, that they were surrounded by masked batteries, and that something unfortunate was liable at any moment to happen. This increased their efforts to avoid, to escape. The truth was that they feared the truth. They were afraid of facts. They became exceedingly anxious for morality, for the young, for the inexperienced. They were afraid to trust human nature. They insisted that without the Bible the world would rush to crime. They warned the thoughtless of the danger of thinking. They knew that it would be impossible for civilisation to exist without the Bible. They knew this because their God had tried it. He gave no Bible to the antediluvians, and they became so bad that he had to destroy them. He gave the Jews only the Old Testament, and they were dispersed. Irreverent people might say that Jehovah should have known this without a trial; but, after all, that has nothing to do with theology.

Attention had been called to the fact that two accounts of creation are in Genesis, and that they do not agree and cannot be harmonised, and that, in addition to that, the divine historian had made a mistake as to the order of creation; that, according to one account, Adam was made before the animals, and Eve last of all, from Adam's rib; and, by the other account, Adam and Eve were made after the animals, and both at the same time. A good many people were surprised to find that the Creator had written contradictory accounts of the creation, and had forgotten the order in which he created.

Then there was another difficulty. Jehovah had declared that on Tuesday, or during the second period, he had created the "firmament," to divide the waters which were below the firmament from the waters above the firmament. It was found that there is no firmament; that the moisture in the air is the result of evaporation, and that there was nothing to divide the waters above from the waters below. So that, according to the facts, Jehovah did nothing on the second day or period, because the moisture above the earth is not prevented from falling by the firmament, but because the mist is lighter than air.

The preachers, however, began to dodge, to evade, to talk about "oriental imagery." They declared that Genesis was a "sublime poem," a divine "panorama of creation," an "inspired vision"; that it was not intended to be exact in its details, but that it was true in a far higher sense, in a poetical sense, in a spiritual sense, conveying a truth much higher, much grander than simple fact. The contradictions were covered with the mantle of oriental imagery. This satisfied bigotry, hypocrisy, and honest ignorance; but honest intelligence was not satisfied.

People were reading Darwin. His works interested not only the scientific, but the intelligent in all the walks of life. Darwin was the keenest observer of all time, the greatest naturalist in all the world. He was patient, modest, logical, candid, courageous, and absolutely truthful. He told the actual facts. He colored nothing. He was anxious only to ascertain the truth. He had no prejudices, no theories, no creed. He was the apostle of the real.

The ministers greeted him with shouts of derision. From nearly all the pulpits came the sounds of ignorant laughter, one of the saddest of all sounds. The clergy, in a vague kind of way, believed the Bible account of creation; they accepted the Miltonic view; they believed that all animals, including man, had been made of clay, fashioned

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by Jehovah's hands, and that he had breathed into all forms, not only the breath of life, but instinct and reason. They were not in the habit of descending to particulars; they did not describe Jehovah as kneading the clay or modelling his forms like a sculptor, but what they did say included these things.

The theory of Darwin contradicted all their ideas on the subject, vague as they were. He showed that man had not appeared at first as man; that he had not fallen from perfection, but had slowly risen through many ages from lower forms. He took food, climate, and all conditions into consideration, and accounted for difference of form, function, instinct, and reason by natural causes. He dispensed with the supernatural. He did away with Jehovah the potter.

Of course the theologians denounced him as a blasphemer, as a dethroner of God. They even went so far as to smile at his ignorance. They said: "If the theory of Darwin is true, the Bible is false, our God is a myth, and our religion a fable."

In that they were right.

Against Darwin they rained texts of scripture like shot and shell. They believed that they were victorious, and their congregations were delighted. Poor little frightened professors in religious colleges sided with the clergy. Hundreds of backboneless "scientists" ranged themselves with the enemies of Darwin. It began to look as though the Church was victorious.

Slowly, steadily, the ideas of Darwin gained ground. He began to be understood. Men of sense were reading what he said. Men of genius were on his side. In a little while the really great in all departments of human thought declared in his favor. The tide began to turn. The smile on the face of the theologian became a frozen grin. The preachers began to hedge, to dodge. They admitted that the Bible was not inspired for the purpose of teaching science—only inspired about religion, about the spiritual, about the divine. The fortifications of faith were crumbling, the old guns had been spiked, and the armies of the "living God" were in retreat.

Great questions were being discussed, and freely discussed. People were not afraid to give their opinions, and they did give their honest thoughts. Draper had shown in his *Intellectual Development of Europe* that Catholicism had been the relentless enemy of progress, the bitter foe of all that is really useful. The Protestants were delighted with this book.

Buckle had shown in his *History of Civilisation in England* that Protestantism had also enslaved the mind, had also persecuted to the extent of its power, and that Protestantism in its last analysis was substantially the same as the creed of Rome. R. G. INGERSOLL.

—*New York "Truthseeker."*

*(To be concluded.)*

## BOOK CHAT.

*Sunaay, the People's Holiday*, is the title of an interesting and useful little volume by Dr. W. W. Hardwicke, published by W. R. Hill, Holywell-street, London. Dr. Hardwicke points out the Akkadian origin of the week, which he says is really astronomical, the week being a quarter of the lunar (that is, the *original*) month of twenty-eight days. Seven could not be further divided, and for that, and another reason, which Dr. Hardwicke does not mention and we need not now dwell upon, it became the most sacred of numbers. The Hebrew Sabbath was borrowed by the "chosen people" from their conquerors. With regard to the early Christians, Dr. Hardwicke argues that "such an institution as a Christian Sabbath" was unknown to them. In support of this view he gives many pertinent extracts from the Fathers, and from historians like Heylin and Mosheim. Sunday was definitely adopted by the Christians under Constantine. Its very name reveals its Pagan origin. The first day of the week was the Sun's Day, and it was the people's holiday, which Dr. Hardwicke wants to see it become again. It was during the Middle Ages that the Church laid Sunday as a burden upon the masses. Luther and other "Reformers" wrote against it. Dr. Hardwicke gives apposite quotations from Erasmus, Melancthon, Zwingle, Beza, and Calvin. A chapter is devoted to the Puritans, who are responsible for the dull, unlovely Sabbath in this country. Dr. Hardwicke defies them to prove their position either from the New Testament or on grounds of common sense and public utility. Altogether he has produced a very serviceable volume, which might be placed with great advantage into the hands of persons who, while not being exactly Freethinkers, have sense and taste enough to be dissatisfied with the Puritan abuse of our weekly day of rest.

* * *

Mr. Paul Laurence Dunbar, the negro poet, is of pure African blood. His father and mother were both slaves. The former escaped from Kentucky, and the latter was liberated in the civil war. Mr. Dunbar was in England some time ago on a visit, and was much liked and esteemed by those who met him. He now resides at Washington where he holds a post in the new Congressional Library. Two volumes of his poems have just been published in London, and are a proof that the negro race has possibilities which the white race is too apt to deny. Here is a verse, for instance, which many present-day English poets might be proud to have written:—

Love is no random road wayfarer
Who where he may must sip his glass.
Love is the King, the Purple-Wearer,
Whose guard recks not of tree or grass
To blaze the way that he may pass.
What if my heart be in the blast
That heralds his triumphant way
Shall I repine, shall I not say:
"Rejoice, my heart, the King has passed"?

* * *

The contribution to which most readers of the *Nineteenth Century* for September will give their first attention is Herbert Spencer's "What is Social Evolution?" In the same number Father Clarke writes strongly on "A Catholic's View of *Helbeck of Bannisdale*," and the irrepressible W. S. Lilly on "What was Primitive Christianity?" a question he by no means satisfactorily answers. We are pleased to see Mr. Frederic Harrison's article on "The Historical Method of J. A. Froude," and the veteran George Jacob Holyoake's opinions on "Emigrant Education." The September issue of this periodical is unusually interesting, and not, as frequently happens, a mere waste-paper basket for eminent writers.

* * *

At last we have sixpenny editions of Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*. Stevenson, like Dumas, was a born story-teller, and abhorred the methods of the modern school of novelists, which has ever the eye fixed upon morality, and carries the didactic tongue thrust in the cheek of the story. *Treasure Island* deserves to be as well known as *Robinson Crusoe*. Every male reader who has a smack of youth left may be a boy again for some happy hours, and for the trifling sum of sixpence. Only genius could have invented John Silver. As for *Kidnapped*, it is as fine a piece of writing as anyone has written since Scott died. It is Stevenson's masterpiece, as anyone who has made Alan Breck's acquaintance will readily admit. To those of us who are very tired of sex problems in novels, it is refreshing to remember that in neither of these stories are there any interfering petticoats.

* * *

Lower middle-class existence is generally supposed to be very humdrum. Mr. George Gissing has treated this subject with rare skill in a number of novels, which no student of contemporary fiction should miss reading. He is, however, a pessimistic author; but, on occasion, he can write both lightly and brightly. In his new story, *The Town Traveller*, he has abundance of humor, in the style of Dickens, and has even permitted himself to finish his story happily.

* * *

Detective Sweeney and the other censors will be distressed to hear that the first large edition of George Moore's book, *Evelyn Innes*, has been sold, and that a second edition is about to be issued. The disapproval of the "unco guid" has apparently not prevented the sale of ten thousand copies of this outspoken novel, with promise of even a larger circulation in the future

* * *

Most exponents of what has been facetiously called "the new humor" are sadly wanting in fun; but the richest volume we have come across for a very long time is *The Modern Marriage Market*, by Marie Corelli, Lady Jeune, Flora Annie Steel, and Susan, Lady Malmesbury. The author of *The Sorrows of Satan* is generally known as a somewhat amiable preacher of woe, but in this volume she runs amuck with a coke-hammer. For example:—

> "Never in all the passing pageant and phantasmagoria of history did a greater generation of civilised hypocrites cumber the face of the globe than cumber it to-day; never was the earth so oppressed with the weight of polite lying; never were there such crowds of civilised masqueraders, cultured tricksters, and social humbugs, who, though admirable as tricksters and humbugs, are wholly contemptible as men and women.'

Poor world! Such language has not been heard since the Sage of Chelsea declared that the thirty million inhabitants of England were mostly fools. Later on Miss Corelli

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observes: "What is marriage?" Really, now, surely! We must respectfully refer her to Detective Sweeney. Thank goodness! Lady Jeune comes to the rescue, with a few pailfuls of shrewd, motherly platitudes, and she manages to rebuke Marie very severely. Mrs. Steel is nothing if not philosophic, and the Countess of Malmesbury is a serene prophet of the practical. This is quite the most delightfully funny book on the subject of Love with a capital "L," although we fear it would not survive the test of a second reading.

* * *

Mark Twain used the platform to make money by in order to pay off the creditors of the publishing house he was connected with. Having apparently achieved that task, he has determined to be only an author henceforth. "After a good deal of deliberation," he writes to an applicant, "I have concluded to give up lecturing, and go on the platform no more."

* * *

The *Open Court* for September contains a fine portrait of Malebranche and a sketch of his philosophy by Professor L. Lévy-Bruhl. Mr. Moncure D. Conway continues his essay on "Solomonic Literature." Dr. Carus, the editor, who writes interestingly on philosophical questions, persists in demonstrating that he is no poet—at least in English.

* * *

According to Dr. Reginald R. Sharpe's recent work, *London and the Kingdom*, mainly based on the archives of the Guildhall, there were, between the years 1400 and 1440, no fewer than sixty clerks in holy orders who were "taken in adultery and clapped into prison by the ward beadles."

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE WATCH STORY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In view of your recent article on General Booth and Mrs. Besant, the following extract may be of interest. It is from a speech delivered in the Mechanics' Hall, Nottingham, October 8, 1849, by Rev. W. Griffith, jun.: "The three most distinguished, but least famous, men in the recent French revolution—Ledru Rollin, Louis Blanc, and Proudhon.....That last-named Frenchman, the blasphemous Atheist, what did he say at a recent assembly of the most solemn occasion? He denied the existence of a God, called God 'that infinite absurdity, that abortion of the human intellect, that ridiculous nothing,' and, proceeding in his career of bold infidelity, ventured to raise his right arm to heaven, and challenge God, if there was such a Being, to vindicate his insulted majesty by striking him down with one of his thunderbolts."

Excepting the watch and the five minutes, this is the same story which has been applied to so many different individuals.

Previous to coming across this version the oldest one I can remember occurred either in *The Cottager and Artisan* or *The British Workman* of about five-and-twenty years ago. By that time, however, the watch and the fixed time, five minutes, had been added. As to the truth of the story, I have not the opportunity of making an investigation; but sufficient is known of the truth of the later versions to make one extraordinarily dubious about it. E. G. B.

### THE "CAT" AND THE PREVENTION OF CRIME.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In an article on the new Prisons Bill which appears in the *Law Magazine*, Lord Norton, discussing what he describes as the "excesses of alternate severity and leniency" in the reform of penal legislation, gives as an instance the case of flogging. He says: "A period of brutal floggings in our army has led to nearly total disuse of a species of punishment of proved and sole suitability to certain classes of crimes in its proper application." I suppose the writer refers to what may be generally termed crimes of violence, including that of garroting; at any rate, I know of no other class of crime that it could well refer to, and I am confirmed in this view by some remarks made by Lord Norton in a previous paper contributed to the *Prisons' Service Review*. Writing on the subject of whipping as a punishment for juvenile offenders, he says: ".....We have recent full experience of the lash's efficacy in the way of counter-motive. It stopped the annual shooting at the Queen, it arrested frequent damages to works of art in the National Museums, it saved old gentlemen from being garroted for their watches, and it might have ignominiously extinguished the heroism of the dynamitards."

Periodic shootings at the Queen, and so forth, are not crimes which call for the lash, whatever its merits. People who do these things stand in need of being looked after by the Commissioners in Lunacy. As to garroting, the facts are as follows, and do not square with Lord Norton's assertion. In the year 1862 there was a sudden outbreak of garrote robberies in the streets of London. The epidemic began in July, and lasted just four months. At the November Sessions of the Central Criminal Court twenty-seven persons were indicted for this offence, and twenty-one were convicted, each receiving exemplary punishment. At the following Sessions, in January, the calendar showed very few offences of this character, and at the March Sessions the Recorder observed to the grand jury: "I am glad to say that there is an absence of those peculiar charges of robbery with violence of which there was a large number towards the end of last year, and which have been gradually decreasing during the last two or three months." On July 13, 1863, a Flogging Bill was passed into law by the House of Commons. According to these facts, it is clear that flogging did not put down garroting, for the crime had been suppressed several months before the Flogging Bill was even introduced into the House. Garroting at that time was practised by a particular gang of criminals, which was captured by the police, and the crime disappeared. In the transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1867, the late Mr. T. B. Baker stated, as though a matter within his knowledge, that the police were instructed to go round to the ticket-of-leave men known to be in the Metropolis, and inform them that if the garrote continued their tickets-of-leave would be cancelled. This, he said, put a sudden stop to garroting save for an occasional attempt by outsiders.

Lord Aberdare, when Home Secretary, stated to the House that robbery with violence had not decreased by means of the lash. Taking the country throughout, all crime, he said, was slowly diminishing, but this particular form decreased no faster. This statement has since been repeated by other Home Secretaries, and Mr. Asquith stated a few months ago at a public meeting that the lash was not approved by him for crimes of violence. Garroting declined elsewhere than in England, and I believe that in Scotland it was never punishable by flogging. It is a legal punishment in Ireland, but rarely employed. What we hear of the efficacy of flogging in our penal system is of the most shadowy description, and always melts away when brought to the test of statistics. JOSEPH COLLINSON.

### A REVIVAL MEETING.

SAY! What's become of all the boys?
Where's Joe? and where is Tim?
And what's become of Masher Ted,
And high-tone, stuck-up Jim?

Well, if you seeks them pious crowd,
Doan't fule yer time round here.
They're way down at the Sunday-skule
With their best gals at prayer.

It's "Holy Moses! Abraham!
Jesus, hear our prayer!—
O Lord, save us!"—Who's that gal—
That one with the golden hair?

Lord, I loves 'em, short or tall,
Loves 'em, dark or fair.
Jesus!—guess I loves 'em all!
Savior, hear my prayer!

Wot gal comed along o' you?
Sally! Tell yer, Joe,
There ain't no gal like Sal—Amen!
She's hard ter beat, yer know.

Maud's a daisy, too—O Lord,
Have pity on us!—Say,
Who's yonder dark gal dressed in blue?
Jane Jones!—Let us pray.

—*Secular Thought.* AMEN.

Scotch caution is well illustrated in the story told by a minister who taught a Bible-class in Edinburgh. Having missed one of his students for several Sundays, he said to one of her relatives: "I haena seen yeer cousin Bell at the class for a long while. Ye ken it's her duty tae attend the schule. Whaur has she gaen?" "I canna very well tell ye that, minister," was the careful reply; "but she's deed."

At the first Paris exposition in 1798 there were only 110 exhibitors; at the second, in 1801, there were 220; at the fourth, in 1806, there were 1,422; and at the eighth, in the reign of Louis Phillippe, there were 2,247. The first world's fair in Paris was in 1855. At the exposition of 1889 there were 55,486 exhibitors and 32,500,000 visitors.

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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, "Atheism and Agnosticism: Their Value and Relation to Each Other."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, A lecture.

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen. Peckham Rye: 3.15, A lecture.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, S. Jones; 7, W. J. Ramsey. September 21, at 8, C. Cohen.

FINSBURY BRANCH (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Doom of the Gods."

FINSBURY PARK (near bandstand): 3.15, E. Calvert, "History of the Shakespearean Drama."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen.

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7 15, E. Calvert.

HAMPSTEAD HEATH: (Fleet-road, corner of Downshire-hill): 7, E. White, "Jesus Christ."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): A. B. Moss—11.30, "Conversion of the Devil"; 3.30, "Saviors of Mankind."

KILBURN (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7.15, A. B. Moss, "Conversion of the Devil."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11 30, A lecture.

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, E. Pack. September 20, at 8, S. Jones.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, E. White, "Was Jesus a Socialist?"

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Historical View of the Old Testament."

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): G. W. Foote—11, "War Within the Church"; 3, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 7, "The Meaning of Death."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall. 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion class, Business meeting; 6.30, "Veritas," "The Curse of Religion."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "Secularism and the Social Problem."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Mr. Read.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): H. P. Ward—11, "Thomas Paine and His 'Age of Reason'"; 3 (Stevenson-square), "The Gospel of Secularism"; 6.30, "Freethought and Free Love."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—September 18, m., Camberwell; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 21, Mile End; 25, m., Camberwell; a., Finsbury Park; e., Camberwell. October 2, Motherwell; 9, Glasgow; 16, Newcastle; 28, Sheffield; 30, Leicester. November 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London.

A. B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, London, S.E.—September 18, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 25, m, Finsbury; a., Victoria Park.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—September 18, Manchester. October 2, Sheffield; 16, Birmingham. November 27, Liverpool. December 18, Birmingham.

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# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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## BIBLE BLUNDERS.

IT has come at last. The foremost oracle has spoken. The Archbishop of Canterbury not only admits, but declares, that the Bible contains inaccuracies. One Christian editor regards this as "astounding." We are left to conclude for ourselves whether the adjective applies to the fact or the confession. This gentleman may regard it as extraordinary that the Bible is not absolutely free from blunders, seeing it is trumpeted as the Word of God; or he may think it marvellous that an Archbishop has the courage or the folly to admit in public what is perfectly well known to every clergyman in private.

People who have given the subject fair attention have long known that the Bible does more than *contain* inaccuracies; it positively *abounds* in them. There are hundreds of substantial contradictions, and thousands of formal discrepancies. This fact must have been known, at least to a considerable extent, by the old orthodox divines, who went through the Bible with exemplary diligence, and sprinkled their sermons profusely with well-stocked pepper-dridges of more or less apposite texts. But they never admitted it. They kept on saying that Holy Writ was without a single mistake, and that the man who found one had an infidel squint or was misled by the Devil. Their theory was well expressed by the late Mr. Spurgeon, who once affirmed that every sentence of the Bible was written with an Almighty pen, and every word fell from Almighty lips. Spurgeon said that nearly fifty years ago. There is not one Christian minister who will say it now.

Bible blunders are indeed an inexhaustible theme. Mr. Gladstone, one of the prosiest and dullest of harmonisers, never touched more than the fringe of the subject. He confined himself to the stock illustrations which had been dealt with by hundreds of writers before him—a fact, by the way, which exemplifies the Grand Old Man's terrible lack of originality. He devoted whole pages to showing, in his peculiarly vague and diffuse manner, that the word "day" in the fantastic Creation Story really meant a chapter, that it had nothing to do with chronology, but was a device of composition. He devoted many more pages to showing that if the narrative were read slowly and carefully, attaching a Gladstonian meaning instead of a dictionary meaning to every word, and adding all sorts of amplifications and qualifications between the lines, that old Creation Story was a magnificent manual of astronomy, geology, and biology, and that all the writings of Darwin (supposing them to be true—which Gladstone would never admit or deny) were but commentaries on the science of Moses. But clergymen like Canon Driver and Dean Farrar laughed at him as politely as possible. They knew it was all nonsense, and that the man who "reconciled" the Bible and Modern Science did not understand either.

The ground taken by the new school of Bible defenders is this. They frankly admit that it contains a multitude of mistakes in science and history, and from the point of view of common sense. They no longer declare that it is the Word of God; they say it *contains* the Word of God. The revelation is not formal, but suggestive. Somewhere or other within it, if we seek aright, we shall find all that is necessary to our salvation, and that is all it was ever intended for. Its writers *were* inspired as religious teachers; they were *not* inspired as scientists or historians; nay, they were not even preserved from falling into any of the errors, superstitions, and prejudices of their own age and nation.

This theory sweeps away all the common difficulties of the case. It gets rid of the science of Genesis, the inaccuracies of the historical books, the absurdities of Balaam's ass and Jonah's whale, and all the self-contradictions between "In the beginning" and "Amen." It will serve the Church for some time. But it cannot last for ever. It is essentially a transition theory. It marks the progress of clerical surrender up to date. Simply this and nothing more. "Inspiration" cannot be given up all at once. It becomes slowly diluted by reason, until at length there remains but a trace of the original spirit, which finds its expression in the paradox, "That is inspired which inspires me."

The Bible is indeed a blunder altogether. Supposing there be a God, who is the Creator of all of us, and who communicates with us spiritually, it is childish to suppose that he said all he had to say two or three thousand years ago, speaking in two languages that are only understood by comparatively a handful of his children, and taking no care whatever to preserve the written word from the accidents of time and change. No one can ever be assured that God has spoken unless God speaks to him individually. Revelation must always be personal. What is revelation at first-hand is only hearsay at second-hand. He who has God's authority for anything only brings me his own authority when he conveys it to me.

Supposing God spoke to Moses, how do I know that this is what he said to him? The very lapse of time raises insuperable difficulties. It will not do to tell me that similar difficulties occur in regard to the works of all ancient writers. *Similar* is not the *same*. There is a fundamental difference at the starting point. It does not materially affect my life or my principles to believe or disbelieve that Cæsar wrote the "Commentaries," or Cicero delivered those Orations. As the man in the street would say, nothing hangs to it. But an alleged revelation involves the greatest and most decisive consequences, in private and public life, and in all modes of thinking and feeling. So much hangs to it, that the revelation should be unquestionable, which it cannot be in the case of a book like the Bible.

Freethought must keep on attacking the Bible. It is the Alpha and Omega of Christian theology and priestcraft. Theoretically the Christian has a God in heaven; practically his God is the Bible, and this is none the less true because he reads it in all sorts of different ways, for that is precisely how every God is understood by his devotees.

G. W. FOOTE.



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## PROGRESS OF FREETHOUGHT.

It is pleasant to us to notice the still rapid progress of Freethought which is manifesting itself in our midst. This advancement is not confined to the Secular ranks, but, as we shall show presently, it is evident in nearly all the Christian sects. In spite of the existence among us of the relics of an arbitrary faith and narrow creeds, the love of inquiry and the desire to be free from theological restrictions have taken a firm hold upon the minds of the present generation. It must be understood that for this advantage we are not indebted to what is called "progressive Christianity," or to the boasted tendency towards a fuller appreciation of "Christlike toleration." In the presence of the results of modern thought, both these phrases are absolutely meaningless. Christianity, *per se*, can never progress if it is based upon the teachings of the Bible, which are supposed to be those of an unchanging God. Men's conceptions of the nature of the faith may change, as intelligence supplants ignorance; but this does not alter the faith itself. It does, however, afford evidence that the emancipated intellect of man can evolve more useful views of human life than those supposed to be taught by Christ. When Dean Farrar uttered the truth that "in the mirror of the Bible each partizan will practically see nothing but his own face," he stated that which is equally true in reference to Christ and Christianity. Protestants of the Kensit type have very different notions to those held by Roman Catholics as to Christ and his teachings. And to learn the kind of "toleration" practised by the followers of the "meek and lowly Jesus," it is only necessary to read the pages of the pious *Rock*, and the recent correspondence which has gone on in the *Times*. It will be there seen how very "tolerant" Christians are towards each other, to say nothing of their treatment of Secularists and unbelievers in general. In those journals Catholics have been charged by their "brothers in the Lord" with the worst kind of immorality, while, on the other hand, Cardinal Vaughan retaliates by saying: "It is simply a lie" (*Times*, Sept. 6). A happy and polite family, truly, are these members who pride themselves on having Christ at their head!

No, the cause of that progress of Freethought at which we rejoice is not to be found in the Christianity associated with Christ's name; on the contrary, it is to be discovered in that scepticism which Buckle and Lecky have shown to be the forerunner of all advancement. It is this sceptical spirit, to which Christ and his system are thoroughly opposed, which has broken down the theological barriers, and foiled those who would endeavor to crush the liberal aspirations of modern times. Bonham, in his *Secularism: its Progress and Morals*, writes: "Every step of advance since then [the Reformation] has been marked by some degree of scepticism due to the underlying force of the law of diversity. Every Protestant to-day owes his Protestantism to a degree of scepticism generated by this law" (pp. 7, 8, and 9). Canon Farrar also remarks in his *Modern Claims upon the Pulpit*: "No one who is acquainted with the history of science, and has sufficient honesty to accept facts, can possibly deny that scarcely a single truth of capital importance in science has ever been enunciated without having to struggle for life against the fury of theological dogmatists. In every instance the dogmatists have been ignominiously defeated. The world moved, as Galileo said it did, in spite of the Inquisition. A great Puritan divine thought that he had checked the progress of astronomical inquiry when he said that he preferred to believe the Holy Ghost rather than Newton; yet Newton was absolutely right, and the Puritan divine was hopelessly wrong.....In our own time, to give but one instance more, we have heard from preachers, and sometimes from men who could barely scrape through the matriculation examination of a tenth-rate college, the most furious denunciations of Darwinism and the doctrine of evolution" (*The Forum* for November, 1889, p. 254). When we read of these gloomy and retarding effects of the traditional faith, and contrast them with the scepticism within the Church of to-day, who can doubt the onward march of Freethought?

But it is not only in the National Church that Christianity is dying, for we have striking evidence that Nonconformity is also falling off. Mr. Arthur Clayden, who can speak with authority upon this subject, writes thus in a letter to the *Times* of September 6: "Nothing has impressed me more, as an old Nonconformist, since my return from the Antipodes, than the declining force of British Nonconformity. In all directions one hears of the scions of once powerful dissenting families deserting their colors and going over to the Anglican or Romish faith. I have just been spending a week in my native county of Berks, and throughout that once Nonconformist stronghold I found, with here and there an exception, only weakness and decay. As the old standard-bearers have died off, chapel after chapel has been left either to drag on a hopeless existence, or, like the once flourishing 'market-place chapel' of my native town of Wallingford, to drop out of existence. At Reading, where I remember, a generation back, at least three powerful Congregational chapels flourished, I found two out of the three with empty pulpits, and a fourth, which had been erected in view of the rapidly-increased population, had ignominiously failed, and fallen into the hands of an enterprising theatre company." The avowal of regret made by Mr. Clayden exhibits the lack of harmony and brotherly love within the Christian fold. He says: "The much-vaunted Anglicanism of the hour has as its supreme task the crushing out of British Nonconformity. In two out of every three English parishes the enemy to be vanquished is dissent. No pains are spared to draw the Nonconformist youth from their chapels to the church. The natural pleasure-seeking of young folk is unscrupulously appealed to. Instead of the gloomy morning and evening services of the dissenting conventicle, with their various conventional restrictions, the youngsters have put before them a brief eucharistic early celebration as an abundant fulfilment of Sabbath-day devotions, and for the rest of the day they are free to pursue their respective cycling or boating enjoyments. Hundreds of British Nonconformist ministers are doomed to see one after another of their hopeful youth thus diverted from their religious lead, and borne away to what they conscientiously believe disastrous moral influences." And thus the work of mental freedom goes on. Here we see not only discord in the religious camp, but also an increasing fondness for secular recreation rather than an adherence to old ecclesiastical restrictions.

We are not at all surprised at the present decay of Nonconformity, for the reason that its leading professors ignore the very principle upon which their dissent from the Church of England is based. That principle is that all should be allowed to judge for themselves upon religious matters without being exposed to the penalty of persecution, or of any form of ostracism for so doing. When Nonconformists consistently act upon this principle they will have our support. The truth, however, is that in their attitude towards Secularists and Freethinkers in general they practically ignore the right they claim for themselves. They assume that with them the height of intellectual liberty has been reached, and to those who seek to soar above them they seem to say: "Thus far shalt thou come, but no further." This love of ruling tyrannically the human mind is common to all theologians, and it is the force of Freethought alone that will curb its disastrous influence. The doctrine that a wrong belief, or no belief at all, will lead to the consignment of the soul to eternal fire prompts men to exert all their powers towards preserving their fellow men from becoming victims to Satan. The bigot has thus always pleaded, in extenuation of his intolerance, his anxiety to secure the salvation of souls. Happily, to a large extent, Freethought has destroyed this fatal error by exposing the utter fallacy of the belief either in hell or the devil. Still there are bigots now who are ready to—

> Deal damnation round the land
> On each I deem thy foe.

A further testimony to the progress of Freethought is given by Mr. Clayden in his letter to the *Times*. He says: "In Laurence Oliphant's *Scientific Religion* there is a remarkable confession of a 'parish priest,' which so exactly bears out my experience of the value of the teaching which is to be substituted for Nonconformist teaching that I venture to give it. Referring to certain unsettling convictions which had come to him as a clergyman, he says: 'The first thing that I remarked was that all my preaching, all the services of my church, all my religious functions and sacraments, had very little, or rather no practical, effect on the daily life and conduct either of myself or of those to whom I ministered.'" This, no doubt, would be the testimony of many "ministers of the gospel" if they were in a position to "speak out." We hail with profound satisfaction the Freethought progress which is now going on, and for

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this advance we feel indebted to no National Church, nor to the Nonconformists, but to those brave and honest Freethinkers whose Nonconformity meant a deep-rooted aversion to every power which presumed to hold inquiry in check, and to keep reason in abeyance; to those grand martyrs, such as Vanini, Bruno, Voltaire, and Paine, who cared nothing for the obloquy and abuse of society in comparison with liberty and truth.

CHARLES WATTS.

## SPREADING THE GOSPEL.

IMPORTANT as the out-door propaganda undoubtedly is, when one has to address three meetings every Sunday—in addition to lectures delivered during the week—at places as far apart as Camberwell, Victoria Park, and Edmonton, in a temperature registering 88 degrees in the shade, and sometimes with a free fight to round the whole affair off, one begins to feel like the frogs in the fable—that, while it is pleasant enough for those looking on, it is a far more serious matter for those engaged in the work. In fact, for keeping down one's weight, I should say that open-air speaking—plenty of it—on a summer's day is without a rival.

Still, as a method of propaganda, open-air speaking is far too valuable to be neglected. Provincial visitors usually express great surprise at the appearance presented by our London parks on the "blessed Sabbath." Speakers representing High Church, Low Church, and no Church; Roman Catholics, Protestants, the lost ten tribes, and tribes that should be lost as speedily as possible; the Society for relieving the Jewish community of its chronic loafers and cadgers by bringing them to Christ; Socialists, Anarchists, and others whom it would puzzle that astute gentleman, a "Philadelphian Lawyer," to properly classify, gather within a stone's throw of each other to propound remedies for all the ills that flesh is heir to. And, what is more striking still, thousands of people attend these meetings with far greater regularity than others attend church, eager to listen and willing to be informed. There are exceptions to the latter, but of that more presently. Consequently, the parks and open spaces of London present a rare opportunity for propaganda; and, to paraphrase a statement reported of another open-air speaker, wherever people are gathered together willing to listen, there should we be in the midst of them.

The time I have spent in London this summer has been unusually brief, but during that period I have addressed more meetings, faced larger audiences, and received more enthusiastic support than at any other time. I have visited few stations, but have visited them frequently; and, while I can only speak of my own meetings, I have no reason to believe that others have not been quite as successful in other parts of the metropolis.

In the East of London Victoria Park more than holds its own. At my own meetings the audiences range from 1,000 to 2,000, and the determination of the people to listen to what is being said has completely crushed the rowdyism that was so prominent at these meetings a few years back. The numbers of these disorderly followers of Jesus have diminished to a mere handful, which usually locates itself at the back of the meeting, reminding one of those rudimentary organs characteristic of a lower stage of animal development. Messrs. Neate and Clogg are two indefatigable workers here, the latter being untiring in his efforts to disseminate our literature among the bystanders.

The East London Branch is making capital headway both at Mile End Waste and Limehouse. Mr. Loafer, who is present at all the meetings, and never idle at any, is the principal worker, but is well supported by a small but devoted band of workers. At Mile End the meetings are always large and orderly, but Limehouse leaves much to be desired from the standpoint of conduct. I had resolved not to lecture there this season, as I began to find that I was over-rating my strength; but, as there were several disturbances, I changed my mind. My meetings were fairly quiet until August 30, when, owing to the importation of a number of rowdies from different parts of London, a disturbance took place. I was sorry to learn the following day that one of our young friends had received a stab in the hand from a knife. I was told that it was intended for me, but the aim was evidently as defective as the reasoning that emanates from the same quarter. However, I returned the following week, and had a very large, attentive, and enthusiastic meeting.

Before I leave the East End, it is well to note the latest growth of Christian evidences. The withdrawal of the better class of Christians from the various anti-Secularistic societies that have been formed from time to time has left the field clear for the rise of a class that could not be very conspicuous while respectable people were associated in the work. The result has been the formation of a new body, which contains the very dregs of metropolitan Christian advocacy. When I say that on its limited platform it has one ex-burglar and three others who have been convicted for stealing, it will be seen that it is a body admirably adapted to inspire public confidence and regard. One of its members a Sunday or so ago declared, in opposition to my lecture, that Christianity was not a history, but a conviction. Both myself and the audience fully agreed that there was a strong air of probability about the statement. It was this body that made itself so prominent at the Freethought demonstrations, and assured the public that the President of the N. S. S. was unworthy of respect because he had actually spent twelve months in Holloway Gaol. Needless to say, the nature of the offence was not indicated.

In the North of London I have visited Wood Green, Edmonton, Finsbury Park, and Ridley-road, Dalston; the three first-named places always provide good and attentive audiences, which leave one little to chronicle, but which are perhaps all the better on that account. The work goes steadily forward, and new friends and converts are being made in a very quiet and unobtrusive fashion. Dalston, however, has witnessed several disturbances this season, and on more than one occasion the behavior of the defenders of Christianity was such that the police threatened to take them into custody unless they behaved in a more decent manner. However, Mr. Simons and his small band of helpers stick manfully to their work, and although they are working in a district where middle-class snobbery is conspicuous, and where Christianity is regarded as an indispensable piece of household furniture, they are making capital headway.

South London has the questionable honor of having provided the greatest disturbances during the season. The Camberwell Branch maintains its hall in New Church-road, an open-air platform at Station-road, and afternoon and evening meetings on Peckham Rye. Nearly all of the meetings on the Rye leave little to be desired, either in size or attention. This year, however, has proved an exception. Led on by a fellow named Taylor, a Christian by conviction—three months, I believe, was its length—a crowd of young rowdies from Deptford and various parts of South London have gathered round the Secular platform and made the air as hideous with their yells as it was rendered unpleasant by their presence. Usually, I am pleased to say, by far the larger portion of the crowd have shown their strong disapproval of such tactics; but of late these "holy Hooligans," as my friend Mr. Heaford aptly called them, have received support from a South London paper, the editor of which rejoices in the name of B. Sykes, who has not only incited the readers of his not over-odorous journal to acts of violence, but has actually suggested a public subscription for the purpose of prosecuting Secular speakers for blasphemy. I have sufficient faith in Christians generally to believe that money may be raised for that purpose, but I think I can safely say that the fools who part with their money will never see any of it spent in the direction indicated by the editor.

At the demonstration held on the Rye on September 4 this band assembled, singing (?) and howling during the whole of the meeting. Fortunately, they were not numerous enough to seriously disturb the meeting, the only effect of their presence being to still further increase the size of an enormous audience, and to secure a good sale of Freethought literature. Personally, I have delivered nearly twenty lectures this season in this part of London, and I think I may say, without egotism, that on each occasion we have more than held our own. So far the only result of the filthy lies circulated concerning Secularism and Secularists—and some of them have been the filthiest and vilest I have yet heard—have been to secure us a number of new friends, fresh members, the formation of a new branch in Peckham, and preparations for extended work during the winter.

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A special feature of the present season has been the open-air demonstrations held in different parts of London. I was present and spoke at Regent's Park, Finsbury Park, Victoria Park, and Peckham Rye. All the meetings were very large, and some were simply enormous. In Victoria Park, and on Peckham Rye, one's lungs were taxed to the very utmost to make the fringe of the crowd hear. There can be no doubt as to the success or value of these demonstrations. To have the leading speakers of the Freethought party placing our views before audiences ranging from 1,500 to 3,000 people, the majority of whom are Christians, many of them probably never having heard Secularism publicly advocated before, must do a considerable amount of good. Some doubts are bound to be removed, while others are suggested; the spirit of inquiry is quickened, and so long as we succeed in doing that we have gone a long way towards winning converts.

These demonstrations were made all the more effective by the gratuitous advertisement given them by the band of Christian Evidence-mongers already referred to. They, too, hired a brake, and held a counter demonstration at each place. Their object was not so much to hold a meeting themselves—I am speaking upon reliable information—as to create a disturbance, and by that method prevent the Secular speakers being heard. Unfortunately for their plan, the authorities compelled them to hold their meeting at a reasonable distance from ours, where, to comparatively small audiences, they dwelt, in language more or less truthful, and in epithets more or less choice, upon the manifold evils of unbelief in general, and Secularism in particular.

Personally I am pleased they were there, and hope they will keep at it. They can never hurt Secularists, they are bound to disgust Christians, and they always serve as a dark background to throw Freethought into better relief.

On the whole, I think I may safely say that the out-door propaganda of 1898 is in every way satisfactory. It is hard work for those who are engaged in it, and the best thanks of the party are due to those who are on the spot at these meetings, ready to assist the speakers by every means in their power. Next summer I have hopes that new stations will be opened at places where none now exist; but by the time this article is printed my share of the season's work in London will be concluded. I leave for Scotland at the end of the month. I have a fairly extensive programme mapped out, and shall be pleased to communicate with friends along my line of travel, where week-night meetings might be held, and branches of our Society established. C. COHEN.

## CHRISTINA THE WONDERFUL.

ANYONE who visits the little church of St. Catherine at Milen, in Belgium, may behold the relics of Christina the Wonderful. If he attends the holy building on July 24, he will hear the priest say a mass in Christina's honor. For some six hundred years the country folk have paid the tribute of respect to her memory. For six hundred years she has been enrolled among the saints.

But she was mad. The Christians have canonised a mad woman.

Being left an orphan at the age of fifteen, Christina was sent by her two elder sisters to look after the cattle. Had Europe then arrived at the civilised stage when lunatics were sheltered in proper asylums, Christina would have been taken care of under skilled medical attendance, and never heard of by a pious posterity.

Christina suffered from catalepsy. One day she fell down in a fit, and people said she was dead. They carried her to the church in an open coffin, and the priest began muttering the funeral service. Suddenly Christina recovered, sprang out of her coffin, and, as most of the mourners ran shrieking from the building, she climbed a pillar, and sat, as if roosting, upon one of the cross-beams of the roof. In mortal terror the priest finished his appointed—though now somewhat unnecessary—task, and then proceeded to review the situation. He could see a mistake had been made. Christina was alive, according to all the tests of science and philosophy. The priest coaxed her down, and sent her home with her sisters. She related to them how she had been borne away to Hell and to Purgatory, and in each place she met old friends. Thence she was led to Heaven, and a choice was laid before her: she could either stay there, or return to earth and pray for the souls which she had seen wreathed in penal fire. Good-naturedly, she preferred to come back, and help in the emancipation of the slaves of God. But with all her good nature she felt a repugnance for too close a contact with her kind. She hated the smell of human beings, and, in order to escape their company, climbed up trees, and even scaled church steeples amid the wondering gaze of the rustics.

"She is full of devils," her sisters declared, thus logically applying New Testament doctrines in the diagnosis of this peculiar case. They placed her in chains, and kept her confined. She broke out, impelled by her misanthropic hysteria, and tore away to the forest, and found a haven of rest among the boughs of the trees. In this leafy retreat she dwelt for nine weeks, during which period, so the chronicles aver, she suckled herself from her own miraculously-filled breasts. The people captured her, and fettered her, and again she set herself free. Her antics furnished the staple gossip of the district. Village bakers were startled by her precipitate plunges into their ovens. In mid-winter she would stand waist-deep in the river Meuse until the parish priest bade her come out. She jumped into the mill-stream, and wriggled under the wheel, and emerged as scatheless as Jonah from the great fish's crypt. Hauling herself up the gallows which stood by the roadside, she suspended herself along with the decaying bodies of criminals. At night she incited the dogs of the town of St. Trend to pursue her, as she flew, unkempt, ragged, and panting, through the streets, and out into meadows and woods. These labors were undergone for a sacred purpose. She was wrestling with the Lord of Heaven, that he might take compassion on the souls in Hell and Purgatory. If these performances were prayers, they were more symbolical than liturgical. When she did actually offer up supplications, her attitude was extraordinary. She twisted her arms, legs, head, and spine as near as possible into a heap—a "globe" the old Latin history calls it. People knew her prayer was concluded when Christina kicked out her legs, and ran off to balance herself on the points of railings.

The neighborhood was now too much roused and scandalised to endure these freaks any longer. A stout villager was ordered to seize Christina and put her in an appropriate lock-up. So swiftly did she run that she had all but eluded him. He brought her to the ground, poor soul, by striking her on the thigh with a cudgel. The bone was apparently broken. They carried the maniac to a surgeon's house. He had her put on a mattress in his cellar, and chained to a post. After dark she wrenched the chain loose, made a hole in the cellar wall, and fled into the open country. Henceforward she was allowed to wander whither she would. Not quite so much distaste did she now feel for human society. The change was due to her one day leaping into a font; the immersion rendered her more sociable. She begged for crusts from door to door. Her gown was patched. Its sleeves were of different patterns. She haunted the locality like a ghost, and delighted to thrust herself into the chambers of the dying, and warn the departing Christians of the terrors of the Nether World. When the nuns of St. Catherine's took her in pity to their convent, she assumed her marvellous globe-form (her allotropic form, one might call it, in the language of chemistry), and rolled round the room. Then she sang a hymn, and vanished. To the convent, however, she often returned. The nuns were always tender with the poor waif. In this convent she died, an old woman of more than three-score years, on July 24, 1224. Twenty-five years afterwards the people conceived the notion that Christina the Wonderful was a saint. They dug up her body, and committed it to a shrine. Her life was written by Thomas de Chantpré, a contemporary.

This disagreeable story suggests reflections under two heads—psychological and medical.

It is perfectly clear that Christina was a mad woman; and yet she was raised to sainthood by the Flemings of the Middle Ages. Now, I believe some of the noblest characters in the history of Europe are registered in the book of the saints of the Catholic Church. Auguste Comte indicates a group of them in his Calendar of Great Men—St. Gregory, St. Bruno, St. Francis Xavier, St. Ignatius Loyola, and others. Even these noblest saints were tainted with fanaticism. They did not see things whole and clear.

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Their judgment was warped by their creed. Nevertheless, like ourselves, they could not rise beyond their age, and we may rank them as splendid personalities in relation to the moral standard of the time. But how comes it that a mere lunatic like Christina could be set in the same gallery as Loyola or Xavier? It was simply that Loyola and Xavier were elevated to sainthood by educated Spaniards and Italians. Christina was the darling of Flemish clowns and milkmaids. Like people, like heroes.

The second aspect is the medical one. The narrative of Christina reminds us that, from the first to the eighteenth century, the lunatic was practically neglected by Christendom. The gospel which was supposed to bring peace to nations could not invent a little consolation for the unhappy soul of the idiot, the imbecile, or the madman. I do not want to digress to the question of Theism, else I might dwell on the problem why an Almighty Master of the Skies permits the earth to be overladen with swarms of men and women bereft of the princely quality of reason. I merely point to the evidence that Christian medicine looked on helpless at the sad spectacle of lunacy until the century dawned which gave us the beginnings of modern Freethought, and saw the Rights of Man proclaimed in America and France.

F. J. GOULD.

## LOCKE'S "LETTERS ON TOLERATION."

MILTON'S *Areopagitica* made no apparent impression on his age. It was written in too high a vein for the populace, and it was never the characteristic of members of Parliament to pay much heed to literary men unless they exercised a wide influence on the masses. The great poet's plea for the liberty of unlicensed printing seems to have been almost entirely forgotten in the next generation, so that his arguments, and even his very words, could be safely plagiarised by inferior pamphleteers. When the licensing system was finally abolished, it fell by the hand of commerce rather than by the hand of genius. The booksellers revolted against it, and their opposition was more powerful than that of the noblest writers in whose productions they trafficked.

Notwithstanding the "glorious revolution," scarcely a voice was raised on behalf of a free press in the earliest years of William's reign. But when the Licensing Act of 1685, which was passed for eight years, came to be renewed in 1693, it obtained a fresh lease of life with considerable difficulty. Edmund Bohun was then Licenser, and a trick played upon him by Charles Blount brought the whole system into public odium. Charles Blount is described by Macaulay as "a man of good family, of some reading, and of some small literary talent." Dryden speaks of his abilities in higher terms. Macaulay was biassed by his antipathy to Blount's "flippant profaneness," or he would have allowed him greater merit as a writer. Such a fervent believer as our great Whig historian could not forgive the editor of the *Oracle of Reason*, who "worried the priests" with his criticisms, and appended the most shockingly blasphemous notes to the Life of Apollonius of Tyana. Besides, Blount was not only "an infidel," but he was "the head of a small school of infidels who were troubled with a morbid desire to make converts." That is, they were not content with cherishing their own convictions, but actually had the audacity to disseminate them.

Although Blount was a wicked infidel, Macaulay allows that "it is in a great measure to him that we must attribute the emancipation of the English press." More than one of his heterodox treatises had been mutilated by the Licensers, and he was provoked into making war on the censorship. Under the name of Philopatris, he issued an unlicensed pamphlet entitled *A Just Vindication of Learning and of the Liberty of the Press*. For the most part it consisted of extracts from Milton's forgotten *Areopagitica*. This act of plagiarism rouses the ire of Macaulay, who likens Blount to the barbarians who employ the remains of class architecture to build hovels and prop cowhouses, forgetting that in this case the arguments and eloquence of Milton were employed for the very purpose for which he intended them. Blount ended, as Milton had done, by recommending that books should be printed without a licence, provided that the name of the author or publisher were registered.

This pamphlet being well received, Blount followed it up with another entitled *Reasons for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*. "To these Reasons," says Macaulay, "he appended a postscript entitled a Just and True Character of Edmund Bohun. This Character was written with extreme bitterness. Passages were quoted from the Licenser's writings to prove that he held the doctrines of passive obedience and non-resistance. He was accused of using his power systematically for the purpose of favoring the enemies and silencing the friends of the Sovereigns whose bread he ate."

Right on the heels of this second pamphlet, Blount requested Bohun to authorise the publication of an anonymous work entitled *King William and Queen Mary Conquerors*. Bohun was in raptures with this work. It echoed his own sentiments more melodiously than he had ever expressed them. But a few hours after it was published poor Bohun learned that "the title-page had set all London in a flame." The odious word "Conquerors" had raised the patriotic pride of the multitude. A few days afterwards he was summoned to the bar of the House of Commons. The work he had licensed was ordered to be burnt in Palace Yard by the common hangman; he was himself taken to a place of confinement; and the King was requested to remove him from the office of Licenser. Poor Bohun was ruined, and Blount must be held responsible for whatever moral guilt attaches to his clever plot. Yet his efforts and intrigues produced great public good. Hitherto licensing acts had been passed without a division, but now people inquired whether they were, after all, of any value. Instead of passing the Commons unopposed, the Act of 1685 was only renewed for two years by a majority of ninety-nine to eighty. In the Lords the suggestion of Milton, and after him of Blount, was moved as an amendment. It was rejected, but eleven peers signed a protest against subjecting all learning to "the arbitrary will and pleasure of a mercenary, and perhaps ignorant, licenser." Tillotson and Burnet were present, but as good Churchmen they voted against liberty.

After the death of Mary, in 1695, a Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to ascertain what temporary statutes were about to expire, and to recommend which should be renewed. The Licensing Act of 1693 was included in their list, but when the Speaker asked the House if it should be continued, he pronounced that the Noes had it. When the list went up to the Lords they reinserted the Act, but the Commons would not agree to the amendment, and they appointed a Committee to confer with the Lords on the subject. Their reasons were carefully drawn up in a lengthy document. Every one was of a practical or commercial character. According to the *Craftsman*, as cited by Macaulay, this able document was drawn up by John Locke. Its arguments were suited to the taste and capacity of ordinary Englishmen, and they were so cogent that the Lords yielded without a contest. The peers probably thought that an improved bill would be sent up to them; but it never came, and the censorship of the English press was abolished for ever.

Directly the Licensing Act expired, on May 3, 1695, the press began to show its activity. Prior to that time, the only real newspaper in England was the *London Gazette*, and that was edited by a clerk in the office of the Secretary of State. But after that epochal Third of May, which is infinitely more important than the date of many decisive battles, newspaper followed newspaper in rapid succession, until there was enough for all parties and all tastes.

Whether John Locke did or did not compose the paper against the Licensing Act, it is certain that he hated such pettifogging tyranny. He was a friend of freedom in the broadest sense in which it was then understood. His famous *Letters on Toleration* show that he was imbued with the spirit which shone from the pages of Milton and gleamed from the pages of Taylor. Yet, although more than a generation had elapsed since the great poet and the great divine had written their defence of liberty, it is curious that Locke made no practical advance beyond their positions. His contribution to the debate on this transcendent question was theoretical. It consisted in the pregnant idea, which was destined to produce an offspring he never anticipated, that the civil magistrate had nothing to do with any man's religion.

Locke composed his first Letter on Toleration, of which the subsequent letters are only a defence, while he was an exile at Utrecht. Under James II., in 1685, he had been illegally deprived of his studentship of Christ Church in

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the University of Oxford, the Bishop acting as political pimp to the king's ministry. The prelate's letters to Lord Sunderland, as printed in Lord King's *Life of Locke*, show to what a depth of baseness a priest could descend to serve the party in power. Locke was on the continent when he heard of his deprivation, which robbed him of his home and his bread, and he did not hasten to return. But the tyrant had an implacable hatred for the philosopher, and his name was included in a list of the proscribed whom the king's minister at the Hague demanded of the States General. The Government, however, would not hand over a man of such an innocuous life. Yet he thought it prudent to retire to Utrecht, where he spent several weeks in seclusion with his friend M. Veen. It was there that he composed his first Letter on Toleration. The subject had long occupied his mind. From his Common-place Book, dated 1667, Lord King quotes some notes of a projected essay, in which the main points of the Letter are clearly stated.

The Letter on Toleration was first printed in Latin at Tergou. It bore no author's name, but the initials J. L. A. signified Joanne Lockio Anglo. This did not, however, reveal his identity; and, in a letter to Limborch, Locke reproaches him for having disclosed to a friend that he was the author of the Epistola. It was translated and printed in London after the Revolution, still without his name, and he defended it anonymously in a second Letter in 1690 against the attack of a Churchman.

Lord King says of Locke's first Letter that it is "in some sort the most useful, because the most practical, of all his works." Mackintosh calls it "the most original of Locke's work." Warburton said that those who subsequently wrote on behalf of "the divine principle of toleration" went back to it for their arguments.

Locke's object being, as he says, to "distinguish exactly the business of civil government from that of religion, and to settle the just bounds that lie between the one and the other," he naturally gives a definition of both.

> "The Commonwealth seems to me to be a society of men constituted only for the procuring, the preserving, and the advancing of their own civil interests.
>
> "Civil interests I call life, liberty, health, and indolency of body; and the possession of outward things, such as money, lands, houses, furniture, and the like.
>
> "It is the duty of the civil magistrate, by the impartial execution of equal laws, to secure unto all people in general, and to every one of his subjects in particular, the just possession of these things belonging to this life."

The definition of a Church is equally concise. It is "a voluntary society of men, joining themselves together of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God, in such a manner as they may judge acceptable to him, and effectual to the salvation of their souls." The powers of such a Church are entirely moral, and only over its own members. It may exhort, admonish, and excommunicate; but in casting a member out of its pale it has no right to subject him to any temporal punishment, and if the magistrate assists it in such an outrage he is guilty of persecution. Not only must no injury be inflicted, but charity, bounty, and liberality must be shown. "If any man err from the right way," says Locke, "it is his own misfortune, no injury to thee: nor, therefore, art thou to punish him in the things of this life, because thou supposest he will be miserable in that which is to come."

There are three reasons why the magistrate should not meddle with religion. First, because "the care of souls is not committed to the civil magistrate, any more than to other men." He can be of what religion he chooses, and so can his subjects, and he is as liable to be mistaken as they are. Secondly, his power consists in outward force, whereas religion is an inward persuasion of the mind. Confiscation, imprisonment, and torture cannot compel the judgment. "It is only light and evidence," Locke finely says, "that can work a change in men's opinions." Thirdly, because if penalties could change men's minds it would not therefore save their souls.

> "For, there being but one truth, one way to heaven; what hope is there that more men would be led into it, if they had no other rule to follow but the religion of the court, and were put under a necessity to quit the light of their own reason, to oppose the dictates of their own consciences, and blindly to resign up themselves to the will of their governors, and to the religion, which either ignorance, ambition, or superstition had chanced to establish in the countries where they were born? In the variety and contradictions of opinions in religion, wherein the princes of the world are as much divided as in their secular interests, the narrow way would be much straightened; one country alone would be in the right, and all the rest of the world put under an obligation of following their princes in the ways that lead to destruction; and that which heightens the absurdity, and very ill suits the notion of a deity, men would owe their eternal happiness or their eternal misery to the places of their nativity."

A shrewd thought! But it applies to all forms of salvation by faith as well as to the right of private judgment. As a matter of fact, the faith of nearly the whole human race is decided by the geographical accident of their birth; and if they are to be saved by faith, as the majority of Christian teachers assert, is it not true (however absurd and ill-suiting the notions of a deity) that they "owe their eternal happiness or their eternal misery to the places of their nativity"?

G. W. FOOTE.

*(To be concluded.)*

## ACID DROPS.

A FIRE was discovered early in the morning, a few days ago, in the machine room of the University Press at Oxford. A pile of printed sheets of an Oxford Bible was alight. Perhaps it was a case of spontaneous combustion. There are some very hot texts in that volume.

Dean Farrar has been preaching at Abbey Church, Hexham, to "overflowing congregations," and giving them a bit of his mind on the subject of Christian liberality. He drew attention to a certain Dean (Lefroy, of Norwich) who earnestly appealed for a week of self-denial on behalf of the needs of his cathedral, and got only £30. This was shameful, and it was to be hoped that the Hexham Christians would rise to a loftier sense of their responsibilities in the sight of God. What men spent on themselves they lost; what they gave to God was all they really saved; it was "invested in the treasures of heaven." In other words, give to the clergy, open a bank account with God, and look for good interest in the life to come; which is a most beautiful way of doing business, especially for the clergy.

A German lady named Christensen fasted fifteen days at Schleswig, and twenty days at Copenhagen. She is now attempting a thirty days' fast at the Westminster Aquarium. If she succeeds, she will probably try again and again until she beats the Bible record of forty days. Succi and Jaques have both considerably beaten that record already. But they were men. Just fancy Jesus Christ beaten by a woman!

The *Westminster Gazette*, the other evening, gave the whereabouts of most of the Bishops. London, Southwell, Chichester, Ely, Norwich, Manchester, Oxford, Salisbury, and St. Albans were all abroad; Gloucester was at Birchington, Lincoln at Buxton, Liverpool at Lowestoft, Newcastle at a country house on the Cheviots, and Chester in North Wales. Poor overworked right reverend fathers-in-God!

To use the language of paradox—and nothing else is equal to this occasion—the Welsh Nonconformists have reached the bottom of the bottomless pit of Sabbatarianism. They have Sunday closing of public-houses in the Principality, which of course has multiplied drinking-shops disguised as clubs. But this does not satisfy their fiery fanaticism. What they are now contemplating is almost incredible. They actually aim at a raid on lozenges and lemonade. "Nonsense," some people will say, "that is a *Freethinker* invention." Well, it isn't; it is sober, gospel truth.

The following is extracted from the *Daily News* of Friday, September 16:—"At a meeting of Nonconformist ministers and laymen, held at Llanelly last night, the Rev. Thomas Johns brought forward a proposition that the authorities should step in and compel all sweet-shops to be closed on Sundays. They kept thousands of young persons from Divine Service, he said, and others were eating lozenges during the whole time they were in chapel, and thought of nothing else. The shops in question were a great evil, and definite steps should be taken against their continuance. One speaker said it was a crying shame that shops should remain for indulgence in all kinds of games and improper practices, and another asked why the sale of milk on Sunday should not be stopped. Another speaker deprecated the sale of teetotal drinks, saying that the facilities thus afforded to young men often brought to them the longing for stronger drinks, which was followed by drunkenness. The matter is to be brought to the attention of the Standing Joint Committee of the County Council."

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There you are now. Who on earth can beat that? Shutting up the public-houses doesn't suffice to fill the gospel-shops. Men and women must be swept in from the ginger-beer shops, and boys from the toffy-houses. Not even dairies must be allowed to compete with the establishments that dispense the blood of the lamb. We daresay the very cows will be sternly warned against the awful crime of yielding milk on Sunday.

Note, by the way, the subtlety of the out-and-out teetotal section of these Welsh Nonconformists. If you make it too easy for a young man to drink lemonade or ginger-beer, to say nothing of that dangerous beverage soda-water, he is likely to go on to beer, and then to whiskey, and then to God knows what, in a most deadly progression. You must stop him, therefore, at the very beginning of his evil career. Cut off his teetotal drinks, make him drink nice microby fresh water; and, if that doesn't answer, go the whole hog and muzzle him, and compel him to come to the minister periodically to be watered at the chapel trough.

The Chinese have burst out again and wrecked missionary buildings, American and French, at Hochow; but as the missionaries themselves are reported as "safe," it is probable that China won't be ordered to hand over more territory by way of compensation.

The Baptist Foreign Mission, in the Huddersfield district, has just held its annual meeting, at which the treasurer reported subscriptions amounting to £344 2s. 7d., against £358 19s. 3d. in the previous year. Evidently the Huddersfield district is a little wiser than it was twelve months ago. Several reverend gentlemen gave glowing accounts of how the black heathen were being saved in West and Central Africa; but there are plenty of white heathen in Yorkshire on whom that £344 odd could easily be spent; at least it might be spent on their children, not so much in making them Christians as in giving them a chance to become decent citizens of England.

It is not surprising to find that many people are puzzled by the apparent powerlessness of the law to suppress lotteries in Ireland. Gambling for the glory of God is a favorite expedient used by priests and nuns for raising the wind for religious purposes. The authorities are unwilling to provoke the inevitable outcry which would be raised if any serious attempt were made to suppress the nuisance. The masses of the Irish people could easily be persuaded that a prosecution of the kind was really an attack upon their Church, a wicked attempt on the part of the government of Protestant England to persecute the poor Catholics of Ireland, and the authorities are at all times anxious to avoid any enforcement of the law which would furnish the Irish Catholics with a pretext for making a charge of that character. The police run in small boys for playing pitch and toss, but the "strongest government of modern times" is powerless to suppress gambling by the priests of what Carlyle calls "the great lying Church."

Our Spiritualist contemporary, the *Two Worlds*, in its last number, prints drawings from photographs of the foot of a materialised spirit known as "Bertie." If this sort of thing is capable—and why should it not be?—of further development, there is no reason why artists should not have materialised spirit models in their studios, and save the cost of hiring females who want money to buy food and clothes. On the whole, we are not in love with this curious philosophy of a future life.

The police have had to interfere with the crowds that assembled at St. Peter's Church, De Beauvoir-Town, Kingsland, to see the "ghost." Three young fellows were brought before the magistrate, who bound them over to keep the peace for three months, by the end of which period "the ghost would probably have disappeared."

The trial of James and Grace Cook, two of the Peculiar People, at the Old Bailey, on a charge of manslaughter, for not calling in medical assistance to their dying child, has resulted in a hopeless disagreement of the jury. Mr. Justice Darling bound them over to appear again at the October sessions. Perhaps the jury will disagree a second time, and what will be done then? It doesn't seem feasible to go on trying them forever.

Mr. Justice Darling had his little joke at the expense of these poor Peculiar People, who belong to the same religion as himself. Being asked by the Deputy Clerk of Arraigns whether they had any counsel to defend them, they replied: "Yes, the Lord Jehovah." Whereupon the judge turned to the jury and said: "Gentlemen, the defendants are defended by the Lord Jehovah." Of course it *is* very funny from a sceptical point of view, but it ought not to be funny at all to a Christian. But then Mr. Justice Darling is *not* a Christian. He is only a make-believe one.

In addressing the jury Mr. Justice Darling frequently referred to the belief of the Peculiar People as something special to themselves. "*They* say this," and "*they* say that," he remarked. But this is all nonsense. They *don't* say it. They say the *Bible* says it. And as that happens to be the volume on which the judge himself was sworn in, and is declared to be God's Word by the law of the land, it is gross humbug and hypocrisy to saddle these Peculiar People with the whole responsibility of the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer.

The Bishop of Truro desired all the clergy in his diocese to offer a thanksgiving to Almighty God on Sunday, September 18, for the "new hope of the Evangelisation of Africa given to us by the victory at Omdurman." Not a word about the ten thousand slaughtered dervishes, or the frightful number of wounded. What do their death and sufferings matter when a new field of enterprise and emolument is opened up for Christian missionaries?

The Rev. John Sharp, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, jumps to the conclusion that the Soudanese are lax Mohammedans, because some of them have been fighting in our army against their co-religionists. But does the reverend gentleman seriously think that men of the same religion will not fight each other? If so, he is singularly blind to the facts of European history. Christians have been fighting Christians for more than a thousand years.

"General Booth—one must give the reverend gentleman his military title, though it is sometimes absurdly misleading—is credited with repeating in Newcastle one of the most ridiculous fables ever invented. Twenty-five years ago, he is reported to have said, 'Mrs. Besant stood with her watch in her hand, giving the Christians' God five minutes to strike her dead.' This horrible story has been told of almost every Freethinker that has attained prominence in this country during the last fifty years. Freethinkers may be ignorant, conceited, wrong-headed—anything you like; but they are certainly not fools. Yet they would be utter fools if they were capable of anything so stupid and outrageous as the performance ascribed to Mrs. Besant. The late Mr. Bradlaugh had to contradict the same offensive falsehood respecting himself almost every year; sometimes he compelled the libellers to publish apologies; more than once, I believe, he made them not only retract the lying statement, but pay handsome sums to public charities, in lieu of running the risk of actions for damages. If it be true that Mr. Booth has really given new currency to the stale old slander, it is possible that he may yet hear from Mrs. Besant's solicitors. Let us be fair, gentlemen, even to our opponents. But it is decidedly not fair to bear false witness against them."—*Newcastle Chronicle.*

Mr. G. W. Foote was lecturing at Birmingham on Sunday, and his meetings were enthusiastic but orderly. John Kensit spoke at Birmingham on Monday, and there was a free fight on the Town Hall floor. The moral is obvious.

"Providence" has been very busy, or very negligent—we don't know which—in the West Indies. Hundreds of people have been killed, and nearly fifty thousand were rendered homeless, by a terrible hurricane, which swept everything before it.

What is the matter with the *Daily News*? It refers to the assassinated Empress of Austria as "singled out, by the mysterious permission of Providence, as the victim of the blindest fanaticism the world has yet produced." If Providence permitted this crime, the human assassin ought not to stand alone in the prisoner's dock.

Mr. G. R. Sims, in the *Referee*, says that Anarchist assassins don't fear death, because they have no belief in a hereafter. This may be true enough, but we do not see its relevance. There have been hundreds, nay thousands, of assassins in human history, and the overwhelming majority of them *have* believed in a future life. Mr. Sims should try again.

A conscientious objector under the new Vaccination Act, at the Birmingham Police-court, on being asked his grounds said: "I think our Creator would——" "Oh, never mind the Creator now," said the magistrate's clerk. They don't want him in the Police-court, though if half the things recorded of him in the Old Testament be true he ought to be there.

Marius Hedges Lewes, a minister of religion, aged fifty-nine, has been sentenced to fifteen months' hard labor at the Old Bailey for altering a cheque for £1 to £61, and getting it cashed for that amount. The Recorder, in sentencing him, said that from beginning to end he had lived a life of fraud.

Rev. Henry Dixon Jones, rector of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Intercession, New York, is in trouble

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in fact, he is at large on a two thousand dollar bail. He took to beating his servant girl, and the noise caused a crowd to assemble, who threw stones at him and called him a Spaniard. Jones grew angry and called in the police, who had much trouble in dispersing the mob. When the case comes before the jury, Jones will want a lot of the grace of God to pull him through.

Under the heading of "The Christian Life," our esteemed contemporary, the New York *Truthseeker*, prints half a column of cases of men of God who have recently gone wrong in the States. Rev. John H. Gill, Methodist, of Aspen, Col., has been expelled from the ministry for playing David to an Abigail of weak mind. Rev. George Kulp, of Grand Rapids, has been caught in *flagrante delicto* with a lady member of his congregation, the wife of his choir leader. These two cases will give our readers a good idea of most of the others. The clerical temperament seems much the same all over the world.

Dr. John Hall, the famous Presbyterian minister of New York, is dead. His income was several thousand pounds a year, and he was supposed to be a Christian. We have read the New Testament, and we shudder to think where he has gone.

Talmage says that "Evolution is up-and-down out-and-out infidelity." We are glad to hear it. Talmage deviates into sense now and then.

"Rotten, deceptive, infidel, and blasphemous evolution," exclaims Talmage. He can't deviate into good manners.

Talmage believes in the corruption of human nature. Perhaps his belief is founded on a pretty fair knowledge of himself. "When you can evolve autumn pippins from a basket of decayed crab-apples," he says, "then you can by natural evolution from the human heart develop goodness." We are quite satisfied with Talmage's description of himself. An old decayed crab-apple! What an exquisite piece of self-criticism! It is good to catch Talmage in his confidential moments.

Where, by the way, did Talmage learn that John Stuart Mill wrote his own epitaph: "Most unhappy!"? Mill never said that of himself, and it is not on his tombstone. Probably it was manufactured in some pious laboratory on the other side of the Atlantic.

The *Devon Weekly Times* draws attention to the Romanising business which is going on in St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Exeter. It also says that the children in the Exeter Central Schools are taught "the doctrine of the Real Presence and the duty of attending the Confessional." Yet these schools are maintained out of taxes levied upon citizens who abhor such teaching.

The *South London Mail*, assisted by Teapot Taylor and Happy Jack, continues its crusade against Peckham Rye "blasphemy." Its know-all editor, however, displays his ignorance by falling into a pretty little trap which we laid for him. He takes it for granted, on the strength of a satirical allusion of ours, that the law of maintenance would prevent his prosecuting us with other people's money. Well, it wouldn't. The law of maintenance applies to civil suits, not to criminal prosecutions. Let the editor of the *Mail*, then, beg, borrow, or steal the money, and come on.

We need not trouble about the *Mail's* nonsense as to Atheism breeding murderers. Nobody in South London believes it, not even the editor of the *Mail*. It would be a great mistake to suppose that this gentleman is really in a passion. He is simply engaged in business. At present he is paid to write against everything "Progressive," but he would probably have no objection to writing against the other side for a higher "consideration." One ought not to take the prostitutes of journalism too seriously. We did him the honor of replying to one of his articles, and now we have other fish to fry. We leave him collecting the half-pence of orthodox idiots for the purpose of "driving these Atheists back into their holes." And as a colossal sum of money is sure to be obtained, and a safe, substantial treasurer will be wanted, we dare say he will fall back on his friend Teapot Taylor.

The Sydney *Bulletin* prints a capital little sketch of a lushington sprawling on the ground, and exclaiming: "They shay—hic—the wicked shtand on slippery places, but I'm blowed—hic—if I can." "A Strange Scriptural Blunder" is the headline.

The Lymington Nonconformist ministers have obtained permission to conduct an evangelistic service once a month in the workhouse, and the chaplain says he doesn't mind, for forty-four of the fifty inmates belong to the Church of England, and of the remaining six available for Nonconformist manipulation two are deaf and one is imbecile.

The Rev. Robert Ransford, vicar of St. Paul's, Upper Norwood, has published a manual of Confession intended for children, who are told to ask themselves some pretty questions on the Seventh Commandment. Here are some lovely samples: "Have I detested indecency and all immodesty with all my heart? Have I resisted temptations immediately and bravely? Have I willingly dwelt on impure thoughts? Have I imprudently exposed myself to occasions of danger? Have I mixed with bad companions? Have I talked and laughed with them about bad things? Have I been so unhappy as to act indecently? How often gravely and wilfully?" Parson Ransford may mean well, but he has an odd way of showing it.

The Church Congress ought to be a splendid and useful gathering. The Bishop of Ripon has had special prayers offered up for it. "What is needed in such a assembly," he says, "is the spirit of Christ." A large supply of that article is solicited, but will it arrive? When one of Cromwell's soldiers was told to clear out a certain church, and found the parson and his friends in it praying, he asked them what they were at, and they replied that they were "seeking the Lord." "Then," said he, "you had better go elsewhere, for to my certain knowledge he has not been here for years."

How these Christians love one another! The Rev. Forbes Phillips, vicar of Gorleston, calls the Rev. Andrew Leggatt, Congregational minister, of Yarmouth, a "vulgar, hypocritical, ranting, smug-faced tub-thumper."

This same vicar of Gorleston is referred to in the *Vegetarian* as one who "has had the boldness to announce from the pulpit his convictions with regard to the immortality of animals"—including, we presume, Nonconformist preachers. It appears that the reverend gentleman—who is full of the subject, apparently not knowing its antiquity—holds that *all* animals will live again. He makes no exception even in the case of lice, fleas, bugs, scorpions, and mosquitoes. Well, we hope all those varieties will be gathered together in the place the reverend gentleman is booked for. It will be some consolation, at least, for those of us who are booked for the other establishment.

The *Church Gazette* thanks the Archbishop of Canterbury for admitting that there are inaccuracies in the Old Testament. This opinion, it says, is commonly held, and it is high time to put an end to the "conspiracy of silence" upon the subject. Nay, the New Testament should be treated with the same frankness as the Old Testament; for it also "contains inaccuracies," and, as one case is as good as twenty, the *Church Gazette* instances the following: "How," it asks, "can the most ingenious and determined harmonist, on any natural principles, reconcile the circumstantial narrative which tells us that the Ascension took place near Jerusalem with another which locates it on a mountain in Galilee?" Surely this is pretty plain speaking for a Church paper.

Referring to the Archbishop of Canterbury's letter on Bible inaccuracies, the *Oban Telegraph* ventures to print a few more of them. However, it is good enough to add that it is easy to see how these "verbal" mistakes happened. "The marvel rather is," it says, "considering from how many sources we have the sacred narrative, that there are so few of them." Surely "how many sources" is an unlucky expression. Christians generally assert that the Bible came from *one* source—God; but the *Oban Telegraph* says it came from *many* sources, which must have been human. This is the Freethought view of the matter.

Judge Willis has been relieving the monotony of his legal duties by discoursing to young men at Norwich on Christianity. We should like to have a full report of his address, but in the absence of it we must make what we can of the brief summary in a Christian journal. Judge Willis appears to have declared that it was a waste of time to argue about Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or about any creed, or about geology and the Flood, or even about the inspiration of the Bible. The one thing of importance, he said, was to trust in Christ as the Savior. But apparently he did not say from what Christ would save us, and without this information it is useless to attempt any criticism.

A Woolwich man named Carver took a very curious "conscientious objection" to vaccination. He told the magistrate that his child was made in the image and likeness of God, and "it was not meant that God's skin should be cut." The magistrate treated this as "ridiculous," as indeed it is in the light of the New Testament. Jesus Christ was God (they say), and his skin was cut. He wasn't vaccinated, but he suffered another operation peculiar to his nation.

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements

*Sunday*, September 25, Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool; 11, "War Within the Church"; 3, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 7, "The Meaning of Death."

October 2, Glasgow; 9, Leicester; 16 and 23, Athenæum Hall.

November 6, Manchester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 25, Athenæum Hall, London. October 2, New Brompton; 9, Athenæum Hall, London. November 20, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

T. WILMOT.—Sorry we cannot explain the mystery. It is too far back. We do not keep the manuscript of lecture notices.

STANLEY JONES desires to inform Branch secretaries and others concerned that he has changed his address, which is now No. 29 Cromwell-road, Holloway, N.

J. H. FOSTER.—The Treasurer's Scheme is still in operation, nor is there any change in the constitution and policy of the National Secular Society.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks.

REGULATOR.—Thanks. See paragraph.

R. SEWELL.—Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God* is an expensive book. The price is £1 nett. Perhaps you could get access to it at your local Free Library. It was reviewed in our columns by J. M. Wheeler, and we shall probably have something more to say about it shortly.

THOMAS SHARLE.—We understand your question to be this: Which side, the Christian or the Freethought, has the greater array of scientific men and scholars? But is it a wise method to settle what is true and what is false by counting heads or reckoning authorities? Great and good men have been on all sides, and have often opposed each other most vehemently. The only profitable discussion is on principles, not on personalities. Still, a cause has no reason to fear in any way which numbers men like Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Clifford, Haeckel, Büchner, Strauss, Renan, Ingersoll, Bradlaugh, Holyoake, Grant Allen, and a host of others too numerous to recite.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Thanks for enclosure and your good wishes, though we are sorry to hear of your misfortune.

W. TURNBULL joins the Secular Society, Limited, and wishes the scheme all success.

W. M. MCCLYMONT.—We think you attach too much importance to the leaflet you enclose. It is not in our opinion calculated to do Secularism any injury with thinking people, and what is the use of troubling about the rest?

JOSEPH MCCORMACK.—Robert Forster, the man at Spennymoor who says he debated three nights with Charles Bradlaugh, in the City Hall, Glasgow, and that Charles Bradlaugh acknowledged his defeat, may be a very good Christian, but he is a very bad liar.

W. W. LEAVIS.—Received.

SHAKESPEARE STUDENT.—You cannot do better than read, and if possible keep by you, the *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, by J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps. It is a bulky volume, and contains practically all that is positively known about our greatest poet.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—H. Good, 10s.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—Omicron, £1 (this contributor sends another £1 for the general benefit of the paper); W. Waite (per Miss Vance), 5s.; A. J. Marriott, 1s.; Charles Daviss, 2s. 6d.; Anonymous, 1s.; M. Christopher, 5s.

RHONDDA COLLIER.—We have read your letter with much interest. It is pleasant to meet with a hard-working man who devotes some of his scanty leisure to intellectual pursuits. We shall find room for one of your efforts in verse. The pamphlet you inquire about—Mr. Foote's *Folly of Prayer*—is reprinting.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for your batches of cuttings.

M. E. PEGG.—See paragraph. We are always glad to hear that young lecturers are making way. Mr. Ward has our best wishes.

A. KOHN, AND OTHERS.—Someone wrote to Mr. Foote, ostensibly on Mr. Waldron's behalf, suggesting another public discussion on Christianity and Secularism, which both have already discussed together at Camberwell. Mr. Foote has not yet replied. He will do so at leisure. He is inquiring carefully of persons who allege that Mr. Waldron has indulged in quite indefensible personalities about him at public meetings, and this is a matter that must be settled before he can give an affirmative answer.

CHARLES DAVISS joins the Secular Society, Limited, and hopes it will be the strong centre of great Freethought activity.

W. C. MARTIN.—Received.

WELL-WISHER.—We are obliged. Talmage is treated to a few "Acid Drops."

A SCOTTISH friend, who joins the Secular Society, Limited, says: "It is my intention to add to my Trust Disposition and Settlement a codicil instructing my trustees, in the event of my death, to pay to this Society one hundred pounds sterling as a gift or bequest absolutely, to be used in furthering the Society's general objects. I hope that by-and-bye hundreds of other members will do likewise, and some even give £1,000, as I have no doubt they could do."

M. CHRISTOPHER (Wolverhampton) and Thomas Stephens (Darleston) join the Secular Society, Limited.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Ethical World—Evening Chronicle (Newcastle)—Daily Examiner (Huddersfield)—Two Worlds—Rochdale Observer—Torch of Reason—Sydney Bulletin—Public Opinion—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Cornish Telegraph—New York Truthseeker—Christian Herald—Devon Weekly Times—South London Mail—Oban Telegraph—Scottish Nights—Secular Thought—People's Newspaper—Isle of Man Times—Liberator—Progressive Thinker—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 is due.

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.

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

## SPECIAL.

### ANOTHER SHILLING WEEK.

READERS of the *Freethinker* during the last seven or eight years will probably recollect that I have made several special appeals for various objects in connection with the work of the National Secular Society. A certain week has been fixed upon as "Shilling Week." During that time my readers have been invited to send me a subscription of one shilling or any number of shillings. Well, I am now going to make an appeal of this kind on behalf of the *Freethinker* itself. Friends are sending me some contributions every week towards the Circulation Fund, but the pace is very slow, and driblets during a long period will not serve the purpose as well as a reasonable sum at once. Consequently I have decided to make another "Shilling Week" of the first week in October. During that week I invite my readers to get a postal order for one shilling, or for several shillings if they can afford it, and to forward the same to me before October 8. Of course I have no objection to cheques. But I am anxious that the mass of the party should do something. If they all act together on this occasion, they will never miss what they give, and they will enable me to push the circulation of this journal, which is the right arm of all my work for Secularism, and, I venture to think, of very considerable importance to the whole party.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE delivers three lectures to-day (September 25) at Liverpool; not in the Oddfellows' Hall as hitherto, but in the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square. Local Freethinkers will please note the change. We understand that the (large) Alexandra Hall is just as commodious as the Oddfellows' Hall, and far more comfortable. Mr. Foote's subjects should attract large audiences, including Christians as well as Secularists.

Mr. Foote wrote to the secretary of the Birmingham Branch saying that if the hot weather continued he would not run the risk of delivering *three* lectures on Sunday. Morning and evening might be all right, but the afternoon too might lead to an inquest. Fortunately the weather cooled down suddenly; indeed, there was a tremendous drop in the temperature; so all three meetings took place as advertised. The morning and afternoon audiences were first-rate, and there was a great crush in the evening, every inch of standing room being occupied, while many people had to be turned away at the door. The utmost enthusiasm

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prevailed throughout the day, and the members of the Committee were all as happy as boys on a holiday. At the bookstall there was a large sale of literature, including six quires (162 copies) of the *Freethinker*. Altogether the Birmingham season opened most promisingly, and the Branch looks forward to a good winter's campaign.

Mr. Charles Watts lectured last Sunday evening to a good and enthusiastic audience in the Athenæum Hall upon "Atheism and Agnosticism." His exposition of the two "isms" was appreciated by the attentive listeners, judging from the repeated applause. Mr. Thurlow occupied the chair, and expressed "his great delight" at the lecture. He was pleased to see Mr. Watts "still, as of old, on the war-path.

Mr. Watts again occupies the same platform this evening, Sunday, September 25, taking for his subject "The New Bible." We hope defenders of the "Grand Old Book" will attend and offer some pertinent opposition.

The *Boston Investigator* for September 3 prints an article on "Some Epitaphs," by the late J. M. Wheeler, but (no doubt inadvertently) omits the acknowledgment.

One of the most useful and best-conducted societies in London is the Humanitarian League, which offers to send speakers, when possible, to clubs, institutes, school-rooms, etc., to open discussions on the following questions from the human standpoint: Criminal Law and Prison Reform, Capital Punishment, The Sweating System, The Poor Law, Women's Wages, Dangerous Trades, The Game Laws, Rights of Animals, Inhumanities of Science, Vivisection, Cattle-ships and Slaughterhouses, Cruel Sports, Treatment of Horses, and Protection of Birds. All communications to be addressed to the Hon. Sec., Humanitarian League, 53 Chancery-lane, W.C.

Of course the Humanitarian League is not a sectional body; still, our readers will be glad to know that some of its best workers are Freethinkers.

Mr. Hodgson, a member of the Reading School Board, did good work by moving that moral instruction on a non-theological basis should take the place of the present religious instruction. He supported this motion in a careful and able speech, which is well reported in the local *Observer*. It was seconded by Mr. Wilson in another excellent speech. Of course it was opposed by the Rev. A. Cheales, who said "it was impossible to have morality without the Bible," and by the Rev. Canon Ducat, who insolently said that the arguments of the other side were not worth replying to. The motion was lost, but the question was ventilated, and that is a considerable gain. Thousands of people will read the speeches of Messrs. Hodgson and Wilson, and some of them will perhaps have their eyes opened.

The Manchester Branch secretary informs us that Mr. Percy Ward's opening lectures there have been very successful, in spite of the hot weather. He had very large open-air audiences at Alexandra Park and Stevenson-square. His evening lecture last Sunday on the Bedborough case gave rise to long and animated discussion.

The Bedborough trial is adjourned until the next sessions at the Old Bailey, commencing on October 24. This gives further time for the Free Press Defence Committee's appeal for moral and financial support. Subscriptions should be forwarded to the honorary secretary, Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, London, N.

## Insuring the Kirk.

Nearly two generations ago the question of having their church building insured against fire was discussed by the kirk session of a religious sect in a country town. The economics of fire insurance might be sound enough as applied to their own personal property, but they took a different view of the matter where a sacred building was concerned. The climax of debate was reached, and with it the finding of the meeting, as one of these worthy men with the faith of a Peter said: "If God was not able to keep His own building, it was time to roup the business."—*Scottish Nights* (Sept. 17).

## WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.

J. Bandin, 2s.; H. M. Ridgway, 10s.

## ANIMALS IN HEAVEN.

To deny a life hereafter for a beast,
And affirm it for humanity,
Shows a lively lack of logic at the least,
And perhaps a lack of sanity.

All the arguments for man's eternal ghost
Are the ditto for the *sewer*-rat's;
And though Heav'n may not have *drains*, 'twill nathless boast
That it won't for that have *fewer* rats.

Does a paradise for parasites exist
In menageries celestial?
Will an entozoic soul itself encyst
In a spirit erst terrestrial?

Will the souls of men, and beasts that prowl by night,
Lose their inter-animosity?
Will the spirit of the tapeworm wing its flight
To a heav'nly sinuosity?

If a heav'n's reserved for witless louts that snoozed
In the Garden of Gethsemane,
Is it likely that a heav'n will be refused
To a shrimp, or sea-anemone?

Will the *moulted* prophet's *callow* critics find
That the bears that made a mess of them
Are in limbo with the spirits of their kind,
Say a billion, more or less, of them?

If the spirits of Jehovah's chartered whale
And its undigested passenger
Have a reminiscent chat "behind the veil,"
So will maggots from a "sassenjer."

If the talents folk exhibit here below
Are continued when they rise again,
Will the monkey's soul resume the *status quo*
And the bird's be catching flies again?

If the risen souls of men and fleas employ
Their correlative proclivities,
Will they mutually relish and enjoy
Their reciprocal activities?

Will the parasitic parsons, when they die,
Be endowed with immortality,
And impose on ghostly simpletons on high
With ethereal rascality?

Preaching person, answer!
Sniff not! Fly not!
Answer, if you can, sir!
If not, why not?

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## JEEMS.

JUST like a boy, he had been playing around all the morning. Other boys were getting ready for Sunday-school, and had their hair combed down behind their ears, and a religious look in their eyes, while this boy was drawing a cart up and down the walk, and encouraging peace-loving dogs to assault each other, and still further disturb the harmony of the pleasant morning. At length his mother walked down to the gate, caught sight of him half a block away, and she shouted: "Young m-a-n!"

He rose up from his seat on the walk, and brushed away at his pants as he turned his eyes towards her.

"Young man, you had better stir your stumps!" she shouted.

He stirred them. Travelling half the distance which separated them, he halted, and queried: "What yer want?"

"What do I want?" she screeched. "I want you!"

"I'm here, ain't I?"

"Yes, you are out here, cantering around, and yelling and howling on the Lord's Day. It's a wonder to me that Providence hasn't put some great affliction on you!"

"Biles!" he queried.

"Biles! Worse than biles! Now you come in here."

"What fur?"

"Come in here and get ready for Sunday-school!"

"I hate ter."

"Come here, young man!"

He slowly approached her, and as he came within reaching distance she seized him by the hair, shook him right and left, and remarked: "Hate to, do you? Want to be an heathen, eh! Don't love the Lord, eh!"

"Yas—oh!—oh, goll!" he yelled.

"Well, I thought you did. Now stump into the house and get ready for Sunday-school. I've been thinking over your case lately, and I've made up my mind to lick you to death, and hang your hide on the fence if you don't get religion and be somebody!"

And she hauled Jeems into the house, gave him a push through the hall, and exclaimed: "I don't care for the neighbors! It's my duty to save you from fire and brimstone, and I'll do it if I have to break every bone in your body!"

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## A LOOK BACKWARD AND A PROPHECY.

THE STEADY GAIN OF SCIENCE, FREETHOUGHT, AND REASON.

*(Concluded from page 604.)*

HEGEL, in his first book, had done a great work, and it did great good, in spite of the fact that his second book was almost a surrender. Lecky, in his first volume of *The History of Rationalism*, shed a flood of light on the meanness, the cruelty, and the malevolence of "revealed religion," and this did good, in spite of the fact that he almost apologises in the second volume for what he had said in the first.

The Universalists had done good. They had civilised a good many Christians. They declared that eternal punishment was infinite revenge, and that the God of Hell was an infinite savage.

Some of the Unitarians, following the example of Theodore Parker, denounced Jehovah as a brutal, tribal God. All these forces worked together for the development of the orthodox brain.

Herbert Spencer was being read and understood. The theories of this great philosopher were being adopted. He overwhelmed the theologians with facts, and from a great height he surveyed the world. Of course he was attacked, but not answered.

Emerson had sowed the seeds of thought—of doubt—in many minds, and from many directions the world was being flooded with intellectual light. The clergy became apologetic; they spoke with less certainty, with less emphasis, and lost a little confidence in the power of assertion. They felt the necessity of doing something, and they began to harmonise as best they could the old lies and the new truths. They tried to get the wreck ashore, and many of them were willing to surrender if they could keep their side-arms—that is to say, their salaries.

Conditions had been reversed. The Bible had ceased to be the standard. Science was the supreme and final test.

There was no peace for the pulpit; no peace for the shepherds. Students of the Bible in England and Germany had been examining the inspired Scriptures. They had been trying to find when and by whom the books of the Bible were written. They found that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses; that the authors of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Esther, and Job were not known; that the Psalms were not written by David; that Solomon had nothing to do with Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or the Song; that Isaiah was the work of at least three authors; that the prophecies of Daniel were written after the happening of the events prophesied. They found many mistakes and contradictions, and some of them went so far as to assert that the Hebrews had never been slaves in Egypt; that the story of the plague, the exodus, and the pursuit was only a myth.

The New Testament fared no better than the Old. These critics found that nearly all of the books of the New Testament had been written by unknown men; that it was impossible to fix the time when they were written; that many of the miracles were absurd and childish, and that, in addition to all of this, the gospels were found filled with mistakes, with interpolations and contradictions; that the writers of Matthew, Mark, and Luke did not understand the Christian religion as it was understood by the author of the gospel according to John.

Of course the critics were denounced from most of the pulpits, and the religious papers, edited generally by men who had failed as preachers, were filled with bitter denials and vicious attacks. The religious editors refused to be enlightened. They fought under the old flag. When dogmas became too absurd to be preached, they were taught in the Sunday-schools; when worn out there they were given to the missionaries; but the dear old religious weeklies, the *Banners*, the *Covenants*, the *Evangelists*, continued to feed their provincial subscribers with known mistakes and refuted lies.

There is another fact that should be taken into consideration. All religions are provincial. Mingled with them all, and at the foundation of all, are the egotism of ignorance, of isolation, the pride of race, and what is called patriotism. Every religion is a natural product—the result of conditions. When one tribe became acquainted with another, the ideas of both were somewhat modified. So when nations and races come into contact a change in thought, in opinion, is a necessary result.

A few years ago nations were strangers, and consequently hated each other's institutions and religions. Commerce has done a great work in destroying provincialism. To trade commodities is to exchange ideas. So the press, the steamships, the railways, cables, and telegraphs have brought the nations together, and enabled them to compare their prejudices, their religious laws and customs.

Recently many scholars have been studying the religions of the world, and have found them much the same. They have also found that there is nothing original in Christianity; that the legends, miracles, Christs, and conditions of salvation, the heavens, hells, angels, devils, and gods, were the common property of the ancient world. They found that Christ was a new name for an old biography; that he was not a life, but a legend; not a man, but a myth.

People began to suspect that our religion had not been supernaturally revealed, while others, far older and substantially the same, had been naturally produced. They found it difficult to account for the fact that poor, ignorant savages had, in the darkness of nature, written so well that Jehovah thousands of years afterwards copied it, and adopted it as his own. They thought it curious that God should be a plagiarist.

These scholars found that all the old religions had recognised the existence of devils, of evil spirits, who sought in countless ways to injure the children of men. In this respect they found that the sacred books of other nations were just the same as our Bible, as our New Testament.

Take the devil from our religion, and the entire fabric falls. No devil, no Fall of Man. No devil, no atonement. No devil, no hell.

The devil is the keystone of the arch.

And yet for many years the belief in the existence of the devil—of evil spirits—has been fading from the minds of intelligent people. This belief has now substantially vanished. The minister who now seriously talks about a personal devil is regarded with a kind of pitying contempt.

The devil has faded from his throne, and the evil spirits have vanished from the air.

The man who has really given up a belief in the existence of the devil cannot believe in the inspiration of the New Testament—in the divinity of Christ. If Christ taught anything, if he believed in anything, he taught a belief in the existence of the devil. His principal business was casting out devils. He himself was taken possession of by the devil, and carried to the top of the temple.

Thousands and thousands of people have ceased to believe the account in the New Testament regarding devils, and yet continue to believe in the dogma of "inspiration" and the divinity of Christ.

In the brain of the average Christian contradictions dwell in unity.

While a belief in the existence of the devil has almost faded away, the belief in the existence of a personal God has been somewhat weakened. The old belief that back of nature, back of all substance and force, was and is a personal God, an infinite intelligence who created and governs the world, began to be questioned. The scientists had shown the indestructibility of matter and force. Büchner's great work had convinced most readers that matter and force could not have been created. They also became satisfied that matter cannot exist apart from force, and that force cannot exist apart from matter.

They found, too, that thought is a form of force, and that consequently intelligence could not have existed before matter, because without matter force in any form cannot and could not exist.

The creator of anything is utterly unthinkable.

A few years ago God was supposed to govern the world. He rewarded the people with sunshine, with prosperity and health, or he punished with drought and flood, with plague and storm. He not only attended to the affairs of nations, but he watched the actions of individuals. He sunk ships, derailed trains, caused conflagrations, killed men and women with his lightnings, destroyed some with earthquakes, and tore the homes and bodies of thousands into fragments with his cyclones.

In spite of the Church, in spite of the ministers, the people began to lose confidence in Providence. The right

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did not seem always to triumph. Virtue was not always rewarded, and vice was not always punished. The good failed, the vicious succeeded, the strong and cruel enslaved the weak, toil was paid with the lash, babes were sold from the breasts of mothers, and Providence seemed to be absolutely heartless.

In other words, people began to think that the God of the Christians and the God of nature were about the same, and that neither appeared to take any care of the human race.

The Deists of the last century scoffed at the Bible God. He was too cruel, too savage. At the same time they praised the God of nature. They laughed at the idea of inspiration, and denied the supernatural origin of the scriptures.

Now, if the Bible is not inspired, then it is a natural production, and nature, not God, should be held responsible for the scriptures. Yet the Deists denied that God was the author, and, at the same time, asserted the perfection of nature.

This shows that even in the minds of Deists contradictions dwell in unity.

Against all these facts and forces, these theories and tendencies, the clergy fought and prayed. It is not claimed that they were consciously dishonest, but it is claimed that they were prejudiced—that they were incapable of examining the other side—that they were utterly destitute of the philosophic spirit. They were not searchers for the facts, but defenders of the creeds, and undoubtedly they were the product of conditions and surroundings, and acted as they must.

In spite of everything, a few rays of light penetrated the orthodox mind. Many ministers accepted some of the new facts, and began to mingle with Christian mistakes a few scientific truths. In many instances they excited the indignation of their congregations. Some were tried for heresy and driven from their pulpits, and some organised new churches and gathered about them a few people willing to listen to the sincere thoughts of an honest man.

The great body of the Church, however, held to the creed—not quite believing it, but still insisting that it was true. In private conversation they would apologise and admit that the old ideas were outgrown, but in public they were as orthodox as ever. In every church, however, there were many priests who accepted the new gospel—that is to say, welcomed the truth.

To-day it may truthfully be said that the Bible in the old sense is no longer regarded as the inspired word of God. Jehovah is no longer accepted or believed in as the creator of the universe. His place has been taken by the Unknown, the Unseen, the Invisible, the Incomprehensible Something, the Cosmic Dust, the First Cause, the Inconceivable, the Original Force, the Mystery. The God of the Bible, the gentleman who walked in the cool of the evening, who talked face to face with Moses, who revenged himself on unbelievers, and who gave laws written with his finger on tables of stone, has abdicated. He has become a myth.

So, too, the New Testament has lost its authority. People reason about it now as they do about other books, and even orthodox ministers pick out the miracles that ought to be believed, and when anything is attributed to Christ not in accordance with their views they take the liberty of explaining it away by saying "interpolation."

In other words, we have lived to see science the standard instead of the Bible. We have lived to see the Bible tested by science, and, what is more, we have lived to see reason the standard, not only in religion, but in all the domain of science. Now all civilised scientists appeal to reason. They get their facts, and then reason from the foundation. Now the theologian appeals to reason. Faith is no longer considered a foundation. The theologian has found that he must build upon the truth, and that he must establish this truth by satisfying human reason.

This is where we are now.

What is to be the result? Is progress to stop? Are we to retrace our steps? Are we going back to superstition? Are we going to take authority for truth?

Let me prophesy.

In modern times we have slowly lost confidence in the supernatural, and have slowly gained confidence in the natural. We have slowly lost confidence in gods, and have slowly gained confidence in man. For the cure of disease, for the stopping of plague, we depend on the natural—on science. We have lost confidence in holy water and religious processions. We have found that prayers are never answered.

In my judgment, all belief in the supernatural will be driven from the human mind. All religions must pass away. The augurs, the soothsayers, the seers, the preachers, the astrologers and alchemists, will all lie in the same cemetery, and one epitaph will do for them all. In a little while all will have had their day. They were naturally produced, and they will be naturally destroyed. Man at last will depend entirely upon himself—on the development of the brain—to the end that he may take advantage of the forces of nature—to the end that he may supply the wants of his body, and feed the hunger of his mind.

In my judgment teachers will take the place of preachers, and the interpreters of nature will be the only priests.

—*New York "Truthseeker."* R. G. INGERSOLL.

## PURITAN BOOZERS.

OUR Puritan ancestors hardly imagined that water is either a healthful or a sufficient beverage, if we may judge from some paragraphs in their letters and diaries. Governor Bradford bitterly complains of the hardship of having to drink water, as no beer or wine was to be had. In 1629 an appeal was sent to the Home Company for "ministers," a "patent under seale" that their legal status as colonists might be clear and stable, and also they want "vine planters," wheat, rye, barley, and also "hop planters." When the answer to this appeal was sent by a ship that was provisioned for the three months, it carried "forty-five tuns of beere," "two casks of Malega and Canarie," "twenty gallons of aquavita" (brandy), and for cooking, drinking, and all, only six tuns of water. The Rev. Mr. Higginson, the first minister, in writing back an account of the attractions of the country, said his health had been benefited by the fine air, and he added: "Whereas my stomach could only digest and did require such drinks as were both strong and stale; now I can, and do, oftentimes, drinke New England water verie well." One Wood wrote in the New England's Prospect that the country was well watered, and with a water unlike that to be found in England. "Not so sharpe, of a fatty substance, and of more jetty color. It is thought that there can be no better water in the world, yet dare I not prefer it to good beere, as some have done. Those that drink it be as healthful, fresh, and lustie, as they that drink beere." Those hop roots must have flourished, for as early as 1631 the people of the colony had passed a law putting drunkards in the stocks, and brewhouses multiplied, and an "ale quart of beere" could be bought for a penny. The manufacture of other drinks developed rapidly. Fifty years later Judde Sewall names ale, beer, mead, metheglin, cider, wine, sillabub, clort, sack, canary, punch, sackposset, and black cherry brandy. Everybody drank cider, which was produced on every farm in abundance. Besides these there was "beveridge" and "swizzle" made from molasses and water, and many kinds of beer; but the grand and universal drink was rum. Ships took corn, pork, and lumber to the West Indies, and brought back raw sugar, and molasses, which, once here, was speedily converted into rum. There was a distillery in every inland town, while those on the coast had scores of them. The significant name "kildivil" was universally given to it, and it was shipped to the African coast in exchange for slaves. "Flip" and "punch" were made and drunk on all imaginable occasions. Laborers would not work at the harvest, nor builders at the trades, without a liberal allowance of rum.

Large quantities of liquor were consumed when a minister was to be ordained, as is witnessed in many of the parish records still extant. The following record is that of the town of Beverley, Mass., at an ordination in 1785:—

"Thirty bowles punch before they went to meeting, £3; 80 people eating in the morning at 16d., £6; 10 bottles of wine before they went to meeting, £1 10s.; 68 dinners at 30d., £10 4s.; 44 bowles punch at dinner, £4 8s.; 28 bottles wine, £2 14s.; 8 bowles brandy, £1 2s.; cherry rum, £1 10s.; and six people drank tea, 9d."

Even at a raising of a meeting-house large stores of intoxicants must be laid in. When the meeting-house at Medfield, Mass., was raised, there were provided four barrels beer, twenty-four gallons West Indian rum, thirty gallons New England rum, thirty-five pounds loaf sugar, and four hundred and sixty-five lemons. When, a century ago, General Washington was engaging a gardener, it was explicitly stated in the contract that he should have "four dollars at Christmas with which he may be drunk for four days and nights; two dollars at Easter for the same purpose, two dollars at Whitsuntide to be drunk for two days, a dram in the morning, and a drink of grog at dinner at noon."

—*New York "Independent."*

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## BOOK CHAT.

We usually associate ghost stories with Christmas, but in this very hot September we have a volume, *Ghosts I Have Met*, by John Kendrick Bangs. The author, a well-known American humorist, is here at his best. A more amusing volume it would be difficult to find, and we are pleased to note that Transatlantic humor has not lost its savor.

* * *

M. De Rougemont has suffered a very severe heckling since his British Association address, and the columns of the *Daily Chronicle* have had some lively reading on this subject. The London *Figaro* is sceptical also, and has commenced in its pages "The Preposterous Adventures of George Washington Munchausen de Spoof." The story, which is illustrated, is a clever skit upon that related by M. De Rougemont, the writer substituting shrimps for pearls, and a winkle for the octopus. The hero's partner is named Peter Jackson, and the adventures occur off Southend.

* * *

It is a thousand pities that our very old friend, Captain Noah, didn't read his story before the British Association. We don't think he would have come through the heckling ordeal quite so well as his French successor.

* * *

Mr. Israel Zangwill has made a big reputation since he wrote *The Old Maids' Club* and *The Bachelors' Club*, and it was inevitable that these delightfully humorous volumes should again see the light. Mr. Zangwill has now incorporated the two books in one volume under the title of *The Celibates' Club*. It is some years since we last saw either of these efforts of Mr. Zangwill, but they bear a second perusal very well indeed, and no publication of his so displays the marvellous versatility of his powers as a writer.

* * *

We hear that Mr. William Sime, the well-known artist, is about to republish in book-form the very clever series of "supernatural" cartoons he contributed to *Pick-Me-Up* and the *Idler*. In their new form they should prove at least as popular as Punch's "Prehistoric Peeps," which made millions laugh.

* * *

The following advertisement appears in a leading literary paper :—

> "Readership in British Museum. Advertiser, a graduate and clergyman's son, will work eight hours a day for £1 a week."

This appears to be the market value of a "gentleman" who has received an expensive University education, which has fitted him for nothing. He would have spent less and earned more if he had learned plumbing.

* * *

An interesting table has recently been compiled which gives the fortunes left during the last ten years by 1,000 persons engaged in ten of the most lucrative businesses and professions. Art, literature, music, and the drama are conspicuous by their absence, and the learned professions, law and medicine, are placed at the bottom. The list includes bankers, coalowners, ironmasters, engineers, money-lenders, brewers, newspaper proprietors, printers and publishers, stockbrokers, and distillers. The moral of it all is that what we are pleased to term "brains" is the least lucrative of all the accomplishments, unless the owner also possesses "commercial ability," which latter is usually unaccompanied by any other form of talent.

### Religious Assassins.

A lamentable affair, which lately occurred not far from the city of Savannah, Georgia, reveals what many forget, that the disabilities under which the Southern negro suffers are largely such as naturally result from his own attitude. Mr. Fletcher, a colored Congregational minister and missionary, while organising a Congregational church at the town of Gimley, Georgia, was shot and dangerously wounded by assassins, who fired at him in the pulpit through a window. Detectives report the guilty parties, one of whom was speedily arrested, to the officials of a colored Methodist church. The antipathy of a certain sort of negro preachers and their adherents to the men of their own race who stand forth for pure teaching and moral living is notorious, though hardly ever shown in a murderous way. It is not too much to say that the non-moral and immoral type of religion that is fostered among the Southern blacks—and whites also—by many of their religious teachers is at the bottom of the most stubborn difficulties in the race problem. Educational influences only can transform such conditions, and such a transformation can only be gradual and slow.—*Christian World.*

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### CIRCULATING THE "FREETHINKER."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—With your permission I should like to add a few words to those of Mr. Dunbar as to the mode of circulating the *Freethinker*. I may say I have followed out the plan of Mr. Dunbar times out of number, by leaving the *Freethinker* in trains and in omnibuses; and after having come home after a hard day's work, I have taken out a large bundle of *Freethinkers* and gone down some streets in Battersea, and placed them in the letter-boxes; for I had in mind Mr. Dunbar's adage, "Being saved ourselves, we should try to save others." I might recall another time: working near Charing Cross, I have walked from there to Stonecutter-street in my dinner-time, and, instead of dining sumptuously on sixpence, I have laid out the enormous sum of twopence on bread and cheese, and fourpence on *Freethinkers*. For saying this my only reason is that our fellow Freethinkers might do the same. When taking a holiday at Ramsgate with a Freethinker of Battersea, Mr. George Dickenson—and this comes to my mind if all other Freethinkers had been as anxious as he for the enlightenment of our fellow-creatures, Battersea must inevitably have been the centre of Freethought—we essayed to combine pleasure with wisdom, for we went down several long streets, and delivered a *Freethinker* to each house. H. C. L.

## AFTER OMDURMAN.

[After killing 11,000 dervishes and wounding 16,000, the troops assembled at Khartoum, and the bands played "Abide with Me." It is suggested that a new version of this beautiful hymn, adapted to such occasions, would be desirable.]

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,
The shadows lengthen by the Nile's dark tide,
When the last remnants of the foemen flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!

Swift to its close draws near the sultry day,
The blood, the life of thousands ebb away,
Anguish or death in all around I see,
O Thou that changest not, abide with me!

Thou need'st my presence every passing hour,
Who but myself can crush barbaric power?
Whose arm but mine Thy rod and scourge should be?
'Mid smoke and slaughter, Lord, abide with me!

I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless—
If he be savage, poor, and Maxim-less—
I give Death's sting and Grave its victory,
And triumph still if Thou abide with me!

Hold Thou Thy cross before my dreaming eyes;
With pious thoughts imperial visions rise!
With sleep restore my strength to fight for Thee,
In charge, in massacre, abide with me!

—*Rochdale Observer.*

## PROFANE JOKES.

An Irish missionary returned from China was expatiating on the immorality of the Chinese, and their low estimate of the value of human life. "Why," said he, "a rich criminal condemned to death can easily hire a substitute to die for him!" Horror was depicted on the countenances of his hearers, and he continued: "I believe, indeed, that large numbers of the poor people make their living by acting as substitutes in that way."

Young Mr. Paine was holding singing-school at Ryefield one winter, years ago. And, by the way, he was much enamored of Miss Patience White. Being somewhat belated in his arrival on this particular evening, he gave out a hymn at random. His audience seemed much amused at something. Turning to the number assigned, what was his dismay to find the first lines reading, "See gentle Patience smile on Pain." Thinking to retrieve his mistake, he gave out another number at random, only to be greeted with a roar of laughter. This time he read, "Oh, give me grief for others' woes, and Patience for mine own." Then 'tis said that in despair he gave out the Doxology.—*Voice.*

"Yes, Bobby," said the minister, who was dining with the family, "everything in this world has its use, although we may not know what it is. Now, there is the fly, for instance. You would not think that flies are good for anything, yet—" "Oh, yes, I would," interrupted Bobby. "I know what flies are good for." "What, Bobby?" "Pa says that they are the only thing what keeps him awake when you are preaching."

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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, "The New Bible."

**Bradlaugh Club and Institute** (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Animated Photographs.

**Camberwell** (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen.

**West London Branch** (20 Edgware-road): September 29, at 8, Debate on "Secularism" followed by open discussion; opener R. P. Edwards, opposer Mr. Boyce (C.E.S.).

**Open-Air Propaganda.**

**Bethnal Green Branch** (Victoria Park, near the fountain): 8.15, Stanley Jones.

**Camberwell** (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen, Peckham Rye: 8.15, W. Heaford, "Christ and Common Sense."

**East London Branch** (Mile End Waste): 11.30, E. Pack; 7, W. J. Ramsey. September 28, at 8, C. Cohen.

**Edmonton** (corner of Angel-road): 7, E. Pack.

**Finsbury Branch** (Clerkenwell Green): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "A Crumbling Creed."

**Finsbury Park** (near bandstand): 8.15, C. Cohen, "Is the Bible a Moral Guide?"

**Hammersmith** (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, E. White.

**Hampstead Heath**: (Fleet-road, corner of Downshire-hill): 7, E. Calvert.

**Hyde Park** (near Marble Arch): Lucretius Keen—11.30, "Foundations of Religion"; 8.30, "The Fall and the Redemption."

**Kilburn** (High-road, corner Victoria-road): 7.15, Stanley Jones.

**Kingsland** (Ridley-road): 11.30, W. Heaford.

**Limehouse** (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. September 27, at 8, S. Jones.

**Westminster Secular Society** (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, E. White, "Was Jesus a Socialist?"

**Wood Green** (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Is Christianity Original?"

**COUNTRY.**

**Birmingham Branch** (Bristol-street Board-school): E. J. Sale—11, "Shelley's 'Queen Mab'"; 7, "A Criticism of the Sermon on the Mount." September 26, at 8, A Concert.

**Glasgow** (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick street): 12, Discussion class, P. Shaugnessy, "On the Soul"; 6.30, P. McGivern, "Civilisation: Ancient and Modern."

**Leicester Secular Hall** (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "Secularism in History."

**Liverpool** (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): G. W. Foote—11, "War within the Church"; 8, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 7, "The Meaning of Death."

**Manchester Secular Hall** (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. Wainscott, "What should the Liberal Party do Next?"

**Newcastle-on-Tyne** (Quayside): 11, J. Reid.

**Sheffield Secular Society** (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "The Liberty of the Press."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

**C. Cohen**, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—September 25, m., Camberwell; a., Finsbury Park; e., Camberwell. October 2, Motherwell; 9, Glasgow; 16, Newcastle; 28, Sheffield; 30, Leicester. November 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London.

**A. B. Moss, 44 Credon-road, London, S.E.**—September 25, m., Finsbury; a., Victoria Park.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

VOL. XVIII.—NO. 40. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1898. PRICE TWOPENCE.


## UP WITH THE CHURCH!

ALL the various sections of the happy family of the Church of England held preliminary meetings on Monday at Bradford, where the Church Congress opened on Tuesday. Lord Halifax presided over a meeting of the English Church Union, which is a collection of Ritualists; and in the course of his address he spoke as follows:—

> "The Society did not intend to see the worship of the Church of England degraded, and themselves and their children deprived of what they knew to be for their souls' health. While they submitted to the authority of the Queen and Parliament and the Courts in all civil and temporal matters, they repudiated the authority of the Privy Council and the Courts in all spiritual matters; and they denied the right of Parliament to determine the doctrine, discipline, and ceremonial of the Church."

Now we have no desire to see Lord Halifax, or any of his High Church friends, or any of his Low Church enemies, deprived of what they "know to be for their souls' health." We want to see England a perfectly free country to all its citizens. Let them buy and use whatever medicine they please, whether physical or spiritual. Let them attend in their own way to the health of their bodies and souls. What we object to is one man trying to make another take *his* physic, or trying by arbitrary means to induce a taste for it in other men's children. Nor do we desire to see "the worship of the Church of England degraded," although that is being fast accomplished by the heated, squabbling sections of the Church itself. So far from entertaining such a wish, we rather desire to see the Church of England absolutely abolished. There would be no possibility then of its degradation—or its elevation.

We do desire, however, to criticise the impudent declaration of Lord Halifax, that the Church of England owes no allegiance to the State. If it were merely the declaration of Lord Halifax, it would scarcely be worth a moment's notice; but his lordship speaks as the head of the English Church Union, and his views upon this matter may be taken as representing those of the High Church party in general.

His lordship is good enough to say that the Church submits to the State "in all civil and temporal matters." We suppose this means that if a clergyman commits a crime he may be punished like any other subject; and, further, that the Church agrees to let the State find the parsons, and secure to them, their livings from tithes and other public revenues. This is a kind of submission which the Church has always yielded with the greatest cheerfulness. But when it comes to "spiritual matters" the Church, or at least the High Church section, is anxious to repudiate every law but that of its own sweet will. It claims the right to teach anything it pleases—even that the moon is made of green cheese; and to do anything it pleases in the way of ceremonial—even worshipping the cross and celebrating Mass, although such practices were denounced by the "spiritual" founders of the Church, and are stigmatised as idolatrous in its very Articles.

These claims are seen to be preposterous in the light of history. The Church of England is the creature of the State. The sovereign takes an oath to maintain it "as by law established." Everything pertaining to it came from the Crown and Parliament. It is really a branch of the Public Service. Every clergyman is as much a public official as a policeman. He is, indeed, a spiritual policeman, paid by the State to inculcate obedience to the authorities. Theoretically he teaches the way to heaven; practically he teaches the multitude to keep their hands from picking and stealing, to remain content in their various stations in life, and to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters.

The High Church party tell us that there always was a Church of England ever since the days of Saint Augustine. But this is nonsense. What existed in the country prior to the Reformation was the English Branch of the Roman Catholic Church. It was not a separate house of business, but a branch of the great firm whose head office was at Rome. That head office regulated its doctrine and ritual, appointed or sanctioned the appointment of its directors, and even controlled its revenues. A complete change, however, took place at the Reformation. The old English Branch of the Roman Catholic Church was really abolished, and the modern Church of England established in its stead. It makes no difference that a good deal of the old material was used in the new structure. The bricks or stones of an old house may be used in building a new one, but that does not make the two identical.

Henry the Eighth—the man of six wives—broke up the old English Branch of the Roman Catholic Church. He and his greedy gang of aristocratic abettors took away the property of the small monasteries in 1535, and of the large monasteries in 1539. The plunder was immense. Half the peerage owe their estates to that spoliation. Yet most of the plunderers were Catholics. It was just the same in Scotland. The people were fooled with religious fanaticism, while the aristocracy laughed in their sleeves and appropriated the Church lands and revenues.

The people, however, were ignorant and superstitious. They were used to religion, and could not do without it. There would have been a general rebellion if ministers had not been provided to officiate in the churches. The clergy who would not acknowledge the King's supremacy in spiritual as well as in temporal matters were weeded out, and provision was made for those who remained. Under Edward the Sixth, Henry's successor, it was found necessary to draw up an official collection of prayers, rites, and ceremonies. This was done, and the result is known as the Prayer Book. The men who drew it up were appointed by the king, and their work was approved and accepted by Parliament. It was alleged to conduce to the "great comfort and quietness of mind" of the king, who was then *eleven years of age*. It was also alleged that it was done "by the aid of the Holy Ghost." Not long afterwards, for Edward was but a boy when he died, the very



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men who said this helped Queen Mary to kick the Prayer Book out, and declared that the Holy Ghost had nothing to do with it. But soon afterwards, when Mary was succeeded by Elizabeth, they helped her to bring the Prayer Book back; the old lie about the assistance of the Holy Ghost was repeated, and that lie and the Prayer Book have gone hand-in-hand ever since.

This Prayer Book, which is the source of all the doctrine and ceremonial, and most of the discipline, of the Church of England—matters in which Lord Halifax repudiates the authority of the State—was forced into the Church and upon the people by king and Parliament. The Act which did it was "for the Uniformity of Service and Administration of Sacraments throughout the Realm." It provided that if any rector, vicar, perpetual curate, or other priest, with benefice, did not use the Prayer Book, he should forfeit to the King one year's revenue of his benefice, and be imprisoned for six months. If he repeated the offence, he was to be deprived of his benefice altogether, and imprisoned for one whole year. If the clergyman had no benefice, he was to be imprisoned for six months for the first offence; and, in the case of a second offence, he was to be imprisoned for his natural life. Penalties were also proclaimed against the laity. Anyone who said anything "in derogation, depraving, or despising the said Book of Common Prayer" was to be visited with fine and imprisonment; the final penalty being the forfeiture of his property, and imprisonment for life.

That is how the Prayer Book was forced upon the clergy and the people. It was all done by the King and the Parliament. The revenues of the Church were secured by law, and by law its doctrines, prayers, rites, and ceremonies were established. Yet in the face of all this the High Church party deny the spiritual authority of the State. Was there ever greater impudence? And can it be cured by anything short of disestablishment and disendowment?

G. W. FOOTE.

## PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

It is a general opinion among orthodox believers that previous to the advent of Christianity the world was sunk in the depths of vice and general immorality, that intellectual darkness prevailed, and that genuine virtue had but few exemplars. These reckless denunciators of Paganism delude themselves that, with the dawn of Christianity, an entire transformation of the ethical condition of the people took place, and that the religion of Christ removed the blots that for a period stained the history of Rome. In refutation of such perversion of facts as these, we may refer to the noble characters of the Roman Emperors Domitian, Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus, and Aurelius, whose political honesty and moral force were never surpassed by any Christian rulers. We may also mention, in the language of J. S. Smith, "that few have had their names recorded in the book of history whose lives and characters can afford, in the perusal, more deep gratification to the benevolent and virtuous inquirer; few more worthy of our admiration and our imitation" than those of Socrates, Plato, Euclid of Megara, Epictetus, and many others whose moral teachings will survive and influence human conduct when orthodoxy shall be known only as an evil of the past. Those who seek to depreciate the moral teaching of Paganism should study the first volume of Lecky's *History of European Morals*, where the beauty of its ethical precepts, the sublimity of the motives to which they appealed, and their freedom from superstitious elements are pointed out. It is there frankly stated that "the love of truth in many forms was exhibited among the Pagan philosophers to a degree which has never been surpassed." Even the present Archbishop of Canterbury admits: "It is in the history of Rome, rather than in the Bible, that we find our models of precepts of political duty, and especially of the duty of patriotism.....To the Greeks we owe the corrective which conscience needs to borrow from nature."

The comparison which many professed Christians draw between Paganism and Christianity is exceedingly unfair. They take the worst periods of Roman history, and compare the morals of the people then with the ethical condition of Christendom to-day. It has been aptly remarked: "It is easy to make a catalogue of the glaring vices of antiquity, and to contrast them with the pure morality of Christian writings; but if we desire to form a just estimate of the realised improvement, we must compare the classical and ecclesiastical civilisations as wholes, and must observe in each case, not only the vices that were repressed, but also the degree and variety of positive excellence attained." Now let us test Paganism and Christianity by this equitable rule. We have already stated that in Pagan times the highest morality was both taught and practised. That Rome had her vices no one can deny. Every nation has had its drawbacks, and Christian countries are no exception to the general rule. Before the sixteenth century the Church was the hotbed of the most demoralising vices. "In the time of St. Cyprian, before the outbreak of the Decian persecution, it had been common to find clergy professing celibacy, but keeping, under various pretexts, their mistresses in their houses; and, after Constantine, the complaints on this subject became loud and general. Virgins and monks often lived together in the same house, and with a curious audacity of hypocrisy, which is very frequently noticed, they professed to have so overcome the passions of their nature that they shared in chastity the same bed.....The writers of the Middle Ages are full of accounts of nunneries that were like brothels, of the vast multitude of infanticides within their walls, and of that inveterate prevalence of incest among the clergy which rendered it necessary again and again to issue the most stringent enactments that priests should not be permitted to live with their mothers or sisters" (Lecky's *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., pp. 159–60, 351). Granted that immorality stained the history of ancient Rome, so it did that of those countries where the Christian religion was supreme. Under the very shadow of the Cross cruelties of the deepest dye have been practised; bull-fights, bear and badger hunting, cock-fighting, pigeon-shooting, have all been (and some still are) indulged in with the authority of Christian governments. Even in England, during the reigns of Henry VIII., Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, and George IV., the state of morals was a disgrace to any civilised country. We are told that "the Christianity of the reign of George III. was a bloody farce and an abomination.....The state of the Church of England was one of the most surprising deadness and corruption" (Cassell's *History of England*, vol. vi., pp. 572–574). The fact is, Greece and Rome, with all their immorality, will bear comparison with the early ages of Christianity.

Of course it is only reasonable to suppose that, as the centuries have flown on, improvement would take place. This is in accordance with the general law of progress. But to what are we indebted for the improvement that has been made? Certainly not to Christianity, inasmuch as for fifteen hundred years, when the Church had absolute authority, and when Christianity was adhered to more than at any other period, comparatively no physical, intellectual, and moral advance was perceptible. It was reserved for secular agencies to produce the reformation of modern times. It would never have been brought about by the faith accepted by the poverty-stricken people who lived along the shores of Galilee and the banks of the river Jordan. They paid no regard to industrial pursuits, and entirely ignored the classic literature of Greece and Rome. They quietly submitted to authority, and accepted slavery as a Christian institution. Their principal object was to gain a heavenly crown rather than to secure a happy home on earth. Lecky, in the second volume of his *History of European Morals* (pp. 17, 18), gives a list of secular agencies to which we owe our present civilisation. Let the reader study what is there written, and he will see that our modern ideas as to man's social condition, woman's proper position, the curse of slavery, the duty of resisting tyrants, the reliance upon human effort and natural law, and the proper use of wealth are based, not upon Christianity, but upon human experience and the other secular agencies to which the historian refers.

It is the boast of a certain class of Christian exponents that the decline of Paganism was the result of the dawn of Christianity, and that the better parts of the Pagan faith were corrupt notions of Bible conceptions. This last allegation Max Müller has shown to be utterly false. He says: "The opinion that the Pagan religions were mere corruptions of the religion of the Old Testament, once supported by men of high authority and great learning, is now as completely surrendered as the attempts of explaining

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Greek and Latin as corruptions of Hebrew" (*Lectures on the Science of Religion*, p. 24). As to the assertion that the decay of Paganism was due to the influence of Christianity, it has no foundation in fact. The decline of the Pagan faiths had commenced long before Christianity appeared. Lewes, in his *History of Philosophy*, writes: "The progress of Polytheism to Monotheism was a continuous development." It was, he intimates, "Greek philosophy that opened men's eyes to human duty." Cotter Morison, in his *Service of Man*, remarks: "It is often assumed that this proud heathenism and pagan glory were overthrown by the meek and unlearned disciples of the Galilean prophet of God. Nothing can be less true than this assumption" (p. 174). Even the Rev. Dr. Caird admits: "There had been a time when the Pagan mythologies were the expression of a real belief, instinct with the warmth and vitality of genuine, though mistaken, convictions. But the mind of man had outgrown them.....Even amongst the uneducated mass the worship of the old gods had dried up into a superstitious form from which the life had departed" (Introduction to *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 337). As a matter of fact, Paganism was never thoroughly destroyed, as many of its symbols, ceremonies, and doctrines were incorporated with Christianity, and still hold a prominent place in the Christian system.

Among the general causes of the decline of Paganism the following may be mentioned:—The people had grown weary of their gods; intellect and philosophy had become active forces; the masses were indifferent, and theology had lost its vitality. The fall of the Roman Empire, observes the Rev. Freeman Clarke in his *Ten Great Religions*, was caused by the curse of Cæsarian despotism and the increase of philosophy. "So," he adds, "ended the Roman religion; in superstition among the ignorant, and in unbelief among the wise."

CHARLES WATTS.

## THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF UNBELIEF.

"On religion in particular, the time appears to me to have come when it is the duty of all who, being qualified in point of knowledge, have, on mature consideration, satisfied themselves that the current opinions are not only false, but hurtful, to make their dissent known."—JOHN STUART MILL.

ALTHOUGH fully a quarter of a century has elapsed since Mill penned the above sentence, yet, despite the gradual decay of religious ideas that has been going on since his time, it is a deeply regrettable circumstance that his advice has by no means been adopted to the extent that it ought to have been. True, the incursions into the Freethought ranks have been by no means inconsiderable; while in literature, and the world at large, the growing strength of Freethought is obvious to all but those who clap their blind eye to the telescope and then complain that they can see nothing. Nevertheless, there must exist, and does exist, a very large number of people who, while holding heretical opinions, are content to float with the stream, sometimes openly professing a belief in orthodox religious views, at other times taking no public part on either one side or the other, but, like Brer Rabbit, content to "lay low and say nuffin."

Now this condition of affairs I hold to be bad for several reasons. First, I take it that few men play the hypocrite because they like the part. In almost every case there will be more or less conscious self-stultification and self-mortification attendant upon such a position. And yet it is very evident that by their conduct they are simply perpetuating the conditions that oppress them. In an age like ours bigotry is only strong when intellectual men are quiescent. It is their reticence which gives to intolerance a strength not rightly its own, and places at the mercy of bigots the few who have the courage to speak out. It is easy to boycott one, it is much more difficult to boycott a thousand, and it becomes almost impossible to boycott opinions as widespread as ours, if only those holding them publicly avowed their possession. Let all who hold opinions antagonistic to the current religion say so, and, just as numbers make treason respectable, so the numbers of those who have shaken off Christianity would command at least the respectful silence of those who condemn Freethought without understanding it, and are frequently destitute of the qualities that would enable them to do so.

Secondly, the attitude taken up by so many inflicts an injustice upon those who are doing their best to win for Freethought principles the respect they deserve. Rationalism has a sufficiently arduous task before it, fighting the forces of inherited prejudice, immense wealth, and enormous power, without having to fight in addition the apathy of its own followers. The task of the Freethought advocate is by no means an easy one; his couch is anything but a bed of roses; but the thorns that line his bed have frequently their sharpest sting given them by the consciousness that many who should be bearing their share of the work are standing quietly by, passive spectators instead of active helpers. Let each one realise that his abstention means a fresh force on the wrong side; that whatever his strength may be, little or much, so long as it is not exerted on behalf of those who are championing his opinions, it is so much force thrown upon the side of the common enemy In this matter there is no such thing as remaining neutral. As a matter of sober fact, the man who is not with us is against us.

I know it will be said that frequently an expression of opinion invites persecution, and that the average man is not cut out for a martyr, and will not become one. Be it so. It is a weakness of human nature that we may regret, but one that we have to reckon with. It is true, also, that the blame for hesitancy in this matter lies principally at the doors of those who make truth-speaking and general honesty such expensive luxuries to those who indulge in them. Habits of mental industry and straightforwardness are not so deeply engrained in the average man that he will brave all kinds of discomfort to express them. Undoubtedly the responsibility for a large part of the hypocrisy around rests with that religious world which rates a hypocritical conformity far higher than a frank avowal of unbelief. Yet, making all allowances, surely more might be done than is being done, even by the ordinary Freethinker, for the advancement of his principles. Certainly there are thousands of little compromises made where none need be made, and compromises which reflect little credit upon either party.

Nor does the evil of hiding one's real opinions end here. It destroys all confidence between man and man, and strikes at the very foundations of national security. How can I be certain that any man believes what he says, or that any profession of faith is sincere, so long as I feel that each is acting upon the principle of hiding his real opinions until it is safe to express them? The whole sense of public honesty is destroyed, the whole tone of public life is lowered, and that sense of mutual helpfulness and comradeship essential to a true democracy gradually annihilated.

It is not by methods such as these that the triumphs of civilisation have been secured. On the contrary, a weak-kneed, temporising frame of mind has always been the greatest obstacle in the way of healthy development, and the deadliest enemy of the few who saw the truth and strove to express it. Civilisation has been sown in blood and harvested in tears, as a result of the mental indolence of one class and the savage bigotry of another; and the very consciousness of the evil done by irrational opinions in the past should prove our strongest incentive for straightforward speech in the present.

To Freethinkers there is committed the solemn and, if the word is admissible, sacred duty of defending with all their power, of intensifying with all their might, and disseminating with all their strength, the truths that previous generations have fought and died for, and of which we to-day are the custodians. Too often this enormous responsibility is evaded by the plea—"I respect the opinions of others, and therefore let them alone," as though a Freethinker's duty was solely concerned with the opinions of other people. Do we owe no duty to our own convictions? And how are we carrying out that duty when we allow what we believe to be idle and evil tales to be promulgated without any effort on our part to counteract their influence? I do not believe in respecting the opinions of others. The phrase is a ridiculous one. I no more respect the opinion that a man's salvation is dependent upon swallowing a wafer, or having prayers mumbled over him in a tub of water, than I respect the opinions of an African savage, or of an Inquisitor about to sentence a heretic to the stake. All that I respect is the right of each man and woman to hold opinions differing from mine, and to express them by tongue or pen. It is because I respect their right that I assert my own. I do not believe that it

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is my duty as a Freethinker to remain silent while a man is flaunting his religious opinions in my face, as though there were some special virtue in believing a lie or cherishing an absurdity, if only it has a respectable antiquity behind it. To me the right of expression carries with it the right of denial; and the possession of truth the duty of enunciating it. I believe, therefore, that a Freethinker performs his duty but poorly who refrains from attacking erroneous opinions, no matter how cherished by their possessor, with every legitimate weapon that reason has in its armory.

Yet again, the "responsibilities of unbelief" are evaded by the question: "Why should I disturb the opinions in which others, even the members of my own family, find peace and consolation?" Although this plea appeals with peculiar force to many, I do not believe it is any more defensible than the one I have been criticising. In my opinion, the man who grasps a truth where others cherish error has thrown upon him a responsibility not to be evaded by the plea that people hug their delusions as some slaves do their chains. The truth that has been slowly and painfully elaborated by preceding generations is no man's private property, to be used solely in his own interest and on his own behalf. He who has it holds it in trust for others; he is responsible, so far as his powers and opportunities extend, for its right use and cultivation, and the heaviest responsibility of all is that of not assuming the responsibilities that are rightly ours. Who is there who can count the enormous responsibility of holding back truth upon such a feeble plea as this? "Do you believe," asks a writer in one of the reviews, "that a single individual has a right to hide from others that which he believes to be the truth? Do you seriously consider that a man is doing right in destroying, for the sake of the supposed happiness of his children, the spark of truth which happens to be in his power, and which belongs neither to him nor his children, but to the whole world? Can you assert that it is honest on your part, in order to save your children the pain of knowing that they will not meet you, or their mother, or their dead friends again in heaven, to refuse to give them that truth for which your ancestors have paid with their blood and their liberty, and which your children are bound to hand on to their children in order that this little spark of truth may grow into a fire which shall warm and light the whole world?"

Decidedly we have not that right. To suppress the truth is but one of many methods of suggesting error, or of telling a lie. It is a crime against ourselves, our fellows, and against generations yet unborn. In our day, when instincts for good are wildly groping for expression, when beliefs and make-beliefs are jostling each other all round, it is not easy to over-estimate the value of clear thinking and accurate expression. Upon the cultivation of these qualities largely depends the ultimate solution of most of the problems that beset us; and I for one fail to see how these qualities are to be developed so long as people are content to hide their real opinions in order to gain some fancied advantage, or fail to express their beliefs for fear they may disturb the intellectual serenity of those around them.

I do not mean that every Freethinker is morally bound to go round shouting out his convictions at all times and at all places, or inviting believers to take part in an intellectual Donnybrook by treading on the tail of his coat. I mean simply that it is our duty to stand honestly and manfully by our beliefs, to express them reasonably and clearly when the occasion demands, and at no time to suppress them on behalf of a feeble and dishonorable concession to bigotry, prejudice, or absurd social custom. I want each one to realise that the duty he owes to the truth he sees is far greater than any feeling of respect he may entertain for the errors that other men cherish; that each should "realise the fact that opinion is the agency through which character adapts external arrangements to itself—that his opinion rightly forms part of this agency—is a unit of force, constituting with other such units the general power which works out social changes; and he will perceive that he may properly give full utterance to his innermost conviction, leaving it to produce what effect it may.....He, with all his capacities and aspirations and beliefs, is not an accident, but a product of the time. He must remember that, while he is a descendant of the past, he is a parent of the future, and that his thoughts are as children born to him, which he may not carelessly let die.....The highest truth he sees he will fearlessly utter, knowing that, let what may come of it, he is thus playing his right part in the world—knowing that if he effect the change he aims at—well, if not—well also; though not so well."*

C. COHEN.

## LOCKE'S "LETTERS ON TOLERATION."

(*Concluded from page 614.*)

LOCKE notices that the greatest zealots for persecution are quiet enough when the magistrate is not on their side. "Where they have not the power to carry on persecution," he says, "there they desire to live upon fair terms, and preach up Toleration." This is the attitude of all sects, and yet how absurd as well as wicked!

> "In private domestic affairs, in the management of estates, in the conservation of bodily health, every man may consider what suits his own conveniency, and follow what course he likes best. No man complains of the ill-management of his neighbors' affairs. No man is angry with another for an error committed in sowing his land, or in marrying his daughter. Nobody corrects a spendthrift for consuming his substance in taverns. Let any man pull down, or build, or make whatsoever expenses he pleases, nobody controls him; he has his liberty. But if any man do not frequent the church, if he do not there conform his behavior exactly to the accustomed ceremonies, or if he brings not his children to be initiated in the sacred mysteries of this or that other congregation; this immediately causes an uproar, and the neighborhood is filled with noise and clamor. Every one is ready to be the avenger of so great a crime. And the zealots hardly have patience to refrain from violence and rapine, so long till the cause be heard, and the poor man be, according to form, condemned to the loss of liberty, goods, or life."

True, says Locke, a man may neglect the care of his soul; but so he may neglect his health or his estate; and how is either any business of mine?

Without explicitly saying so, Locke evidently saw, with Milton and Taylor, that the assumption of infallibility lies at the bottom of all persecution. If the magistrate coerce me on his own account, or on behalf of the Church, he is, in either case, imposing his own judgment on me; for "What difference is there, whether he lead me himself, or deliver me over to be led by others?" And why is his judgment better than mine on a matter in which I am deeply concerned, and he not at all? Judging from history, princes have turned religion this way and that as it suited them. Even in England "how easily and smoothly the clergy changed their decrees" under Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth. Now, if the prince, says Locke, orders me to follow any particular avocation, I will do so, for if I fail he can compensate me. But how can he compensate me in the life to come? If I take the wrong course thither, and I am once undone, "it is not in the magistrate's power to repair my loss, to ease my suffering, or to restore me in any measure, much less entirely, to a good estate. What security can be given for the kingdom of heaven?" Even if he happens to be right in the particular instance, his coercion will not save me. "I may grow rich by an art that I take not delight in; I may be cured of some disease by remedies that I have not faith in; but I cannot be saved by a religion that I distrust, and by a worship that I abhor."

With respect to public worship, Locke is ahead of Cromwell, who would not tolerate the Mass; and even ahead of Milton, who appears to have shared the Lord Protector's sentiment. Locke's rule is simple and incontrovertible. What is lawful outside a church is lawful inside, and what is unlawful inside is unlawful outside. He goes so far as to say: "If any people, congregated upon account of religion, should be desirous to sacrifice a calf, I deny that they ought to be prohibited by a law. Melibœus, whose calf it is, may lawfully kill his calf at home, and burn any part of it that he thinks fit. For no injury is thereby done to any one, no prejudice to another man's goods. And for the same reason he may kill his calf also at a religious meeting." But if it became necessary to stop the slaughter of beasts for some time, such sacrifices would have to cease, not on religious, but on political grounds.

If the religious worship of any church be idolatrous, the

* H. Spencer: *First Principles.*

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magistrate has still no right to interfere, for idolatry is a matter only of opinion among men, and whatsoever sin is in it is for God alone to judge. With his usual practical good sense, Locke takes an extreme illustration, so as to "trace this matter to the bottom."

> "An inconsiderable and weak number of Christians, destitute of everything, arrive in a pagan country; these foreigners beseech the inhabitants, by the bowels of humanity, that they would succor them with the necessaries of life; those necessaries are given them, habitations are granted, and they all join together, and grow up into one body of people. The Christian religion by this means takes root in that country, and spreads itself; but does not suddenly grow the strongest. While things are in this condition, peace, friendship, faith, and equal justice are preserved amongst them. At length the magistrate becomes a Christian, and by that means their party becomes the most powerful. Then immediately all compacts are to be broken, all civil rights to be violated, that idolatry may be extirpated, and unless these innocent pagans, strict observers of the rule of equity and the law of nature, and no ways offending against the laws of the society, I say unless they will forsake their ancient religion, and embrace a new and strange one, they are to be turned out of the lands and possessions of their forefathers, and perhaps deprived of life itself. Then at last it appears what zeal for the Church, joined with the desire of dominion, is capable to produce; and how easily the pretence of religion, and the care of souls, serves for a cloak to covetousness, rapine, and ambition."

As to the tenets that may be publicly taught, Locke urges a wide tolerance. He expressly mentions Roman Catholics, who were under legal disabilities, and Jews, who had not long been permitted to reside in England after centuries of banishment.

> "The magistrate ought not to forbid the preaching or professing of any speculative opinions in any church, because they have no manner of relation to the civil rights of the subjects. If a Roman Catholic believe that to be really the body of Christ which another man calls bread, he does no injury thereby to his neighbor. If a Jew does not believe the New Testament to be the Word of God, he does not thereby alter anything in men's civil rights. If a heathen doubt of both Testaments, he is not therefore to be punished as a pernicious citizen. The power of the magistrate, and the estates of the people, may be equally secure, whether any man believe these things or no."

Nothing could be plainer. "The temporal good and outward prosperity of society" is the only object of law, and "no man whatsoever ought to be deprived of his terrestrial enjoyments upon account of his religion." But, unfortunately, Locke did not realise the full extent of the great principle which sounds like a refrain through his Letter. If the magistrate has no concern with religion, he has no concern with irreligion. It is not this or that *opinion*, but the *subject* itself, which is withdrawn from its jurisdiction. This is Locke's argument throughout, yet strangely enough he fails to see it himself when he comes to an ultimate test. His intolerance of the Romish Church, which, by acknowledging the supremacy of the Pope, is really under the dominion of a foreign prince, was arguable on political grounds; but his intolerance of Atheism is nothing but sheer bigotry. Let us take his own words:—

> "Those are not to be tolerated who deny the being of a God. Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all. Besides also, those that by their atheism undermine and destroy all religion can have no pretence of religion whereupon to challenge the privilege of a Toleration."

Like Cardinal Newman, we have "a high respect both for the character and the ability of Locke, for his manly simplicity of mind and his outspoken candor." We cannot, therefore, believe that he deliberately made a concession to the bigots for the sake of a hearing, or that he threw them the atheists to glut their hunger in order to keep them from preying on each other. We assume that Locke meant what he said. In that case it must be allowed that he fell a victim to prejudice in the very midst of his letter on Toleration. He had the testimony of history, and the weighty authority of Bacon, against the statement that Atheism was a source of disorder; and whatever he may have conjectured as to the veracity of Atheists, he must surely have seen sufficient proof of the mendacity of believers. But that is by the way. The real point is that he stultifies himself by giving up his own argument. After contending that religion and the commonwealth are entirely distinct, and that the magistrate has nothing to do with men's opinions, but only with their actions as these affect the public peace, he puts Atheists outside the pale of toleration on the ground that they have no religion at all; which is exactly as though he had argued that the government had nothing to do with men's head-gear, and then called on it to punish these who wore no hats.

Locke did not see—he could not see, for it has only dawned on us since his time—that this very notion, so carefully instilled by the priests, that morality depends on belief in the supernatural, is the mental justification of all bigotry. For if morality depends on belief, it must, of course, depend on the *right* belief, and the right belief is, of course, the possession of every church. Each sect, therefore, when it gets the upper hand, can conscientiously persecute all other sects in the interest of civil society. Nor, on the other hand, did Locke see that Toleration is essentially irreligious. No such idea arose in Christendom until scepticism began to spread. The Reformers never harbored the idea of a truce with heresy. Luther and Calvin persecuted as heartily as the Pope. Toleration springs from doubt and indifference, and religion without bigotry is almost a contradiction in terms. G. W. FOOTE.

## YOM KIPPUR.

AT the moment of writing the Jews are engaged in observing their *Day of Atonement*—at least in these latitudes. Being kept from sunset to sunset, as are their feasts and Sabbath, there is good reason for considering it a moon ceremony. It falls within a period of twenty-one days, and is kept on the tenth day of the seventh month, or of the first month of the civil year. On this day the orthodox Jew neither eats, drinks, nor performs any of the varied duties of life, believing that by thus acting all his sins of the past year are expiated. For the origin of this superstition the Jew finds authority in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus. Some of our friends think that the superstitions and follies of the Jewish scriptures are obsolete; yet here we have to-day millions of men, women, and children subjecting themselves to the hardships and follies of a fetish that has been exploded, so far as its alleged origin is concerned, by Jew and Gentile alike. It is curious to note that the Douay version heads the chapter "The Feast of Expiation." Strange feast, to abstain from food and drink for twenty-four hours! The eighth verse of the chapter is: "And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one for the Lord [Yahveh], and the other lot for Azazel." For the latter word the Douay has "emissary goat." Samuel Sharpe, in his version, renders the word "scapegoat." This word "Azazel" is enough in itself to determine the late origin of the legend. These two unfortunate goats should command our sympathy—one being killed by Aaron for Yahveh; the other, with all the sins of the Jews upon its head, being taken to (and deserted) in the desert. A bullock also is slaughtered with Yahveh's goat; the blood of the two animals is daubed on the walls of the sanctuary, and the flesh, skin, and dung taken out and burned.

Smith (*Bible Dictionary*) tells us that the old commentators tried to identify Azazel with the goat; but, as the writer says, this "involves the Hebrew text into insuperable difficulties. If one expression is to be rendered for *Jehovah*, it would seem that the other must be for *Azazel*, with the preposition in the same sense." Kalisch says "there can be no doubt whatever that Azazel is *a personal, a superhuman*, and an *evil being*—in fact, a wicked demon." The Jews knew nothing of this being until after the Babylonian captivity; hence the fact is indubitable that the *Yom Kippur* is a post-exilic legend. In the apocryphal books, and in the writings of the Jewish rabbis (to again quote Kalisch), "the character, life, and fate of the demon Azazel, or Azael—for both names seem identical—are more fully unfolded. He was originally a good angel; and one of the chiefs of the two hundred who went down to the earth stayed longer than the lawful period of seven days, and held carnal intercourse with mortal women, upon which they were converted into evil spirits." Colenso makes it still more clear that the legend is an invention

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of the Jewish priests: "This mention of the evil spirit Azazel, whether identical with Satan or not, is another sign of the later origin of the L.L. (Later Leviticus), since the Jews appear to have first adopted the notion of the existence of evil spirits from the Persian religions during the captivity."* Gesenius is quoted by Mr. Bradlaugh† as saying: "By this name I suppose to be understood some idol, to be appeased by sacrifices, as Saturn and Mars. Afterwards, I suppose, from the names of idols being often applied to demons, this name was used for that of an evil demon inhabiting the wilderness, who had to be appeased by sacrifices by this very ancient and Gentile rite." Thus a similar superstition was rife in the non-Jewish world and anterior to this late, very late legend in Leviticus.

That it is a late legend, and unknown to the earlier writers of the Old Testament, suffice it to say that in Deuteronomy, Joshua, Kings, and Prophets no inkling appears of this extraordinary ceremonial and fast. Many references occur in the older writings; but, like the Passover, *Yom Kippur* could not have been celebrated, or a notice of it would appear.

Yet the chapter opens with these words: "And Yahveh spoke to Moses." Then follow all the ridiculous and cruel rites with which the narrative abounds. Kalisch, the learned Jewish Hebraist, shatters the whole story so far as its pretended origin is concerned. He conclusively proves that it was derived from a heathen—that is, a Gentile—source, and that it "was instituted considerably more than a thousand years after the death of Moses and Aaron";‡ and, further, he says and proves that it is of later origin than B.C. 440.

How sad it is to remember that priestcraft, both Jewish and Christian, still persistently labors to prop up these delusions as being revelations from God, contending that these ceremonies have been performed continuously from the time they were first instituted in an age when they were really—and for more than a thousand years after—totally unknown. This legend and others serve the purpose of the priests by keeping a poor and servile people in their power; for, though some Jews are wealthy, the great mass of them, in Europe especially, are probably worse off than the Irish peasantry. Of late, however, Freethought has reached the more intelligent of them, and on *Yom Kippur* they make holiday, feast instead of fast, dance and sing rather than moan and cry, and hold meetings to discuss their condition and prospects, greatly to the horror of their ignorant and superstitious brethren.

ROBERT FORDER.

## MILITARISM IN GERMANY.

### How Aristocratic Officers Kill Common Soldiers.

THE following particulars are given by the *Vorwärts* of the sensational death of Sergeant Scheinhardt. It was the duty of the sergeant to superintend the preparation of the food in a self-acting cooking apparatus. During the night preceding the sad occurrence Scheinhardt was, however, sent away for forage. During his absence the soldiers attending to the cooking forgot to fasten the indiarubber ring which hermetically closes the apparatus. The consequence was that the food was sour. When Sergeant Scheinhardt returned it had already been distributed to the men. Captain Count zu Stolberg-Wenigerode called Scheinhardt to account for the spoilt rations, and the sergeant excused himself by pointing out that during its preparation he had been absent. Later the captain, notwithstanding, renewed his reproaches, declaring that Scheinhardt was the "greatest scamp" and the "lowest hound" in the regiment. Scheinhardt was naturally greatly excited by this, and answered that he did not think he deserved such names. Upon this the Count gave him such a heavy blow on the ear that he was thrown against a wagon. Scheinhardt said to some of his comrades who had witnessed the scene: "You saw that I was struck." Count Stolberg thereupon drew his sword, struck the man first on the leg, and then stabbed him on the left side of the head. Scheinhardt pulled out his handkerchief to wipe away the blood, drew himself up once more in a soldierly attitude, and then dropped down unconscious. He was taken at once to the hospital at Hagenau, but died the next evening without having regained consciousness.

* New Bible Com., Levit., p. 30. † *Bible: What it is*, p. 319.
‡ Levit., p. 266.

## ACID DROPS.

THE battle between the Army and the Civil Government continues in France. By a clever but unscrupulous stroke on the part of General Zurlinden, the Army has got possession of the person of Colonel Picquart, who is the principal witness against the liars, forgers, and plotters of the General Staff. But it will not be easy to *burke* him in the military prison. Colonel Picquart threw down a terrible bombshell in open court. "Well," he said, "I shall sleep probably this evening at the Cherche Midi prison. But before I go there I wish to declare that I shall never make use of the cord of Lemercier Picard, or of the razor of Colonel Henry. If they find me dead, it will be because I was assassinated." Splendid! They can't kill him now. To do that would raise an irresistible storm of public wrath. France has been misled; she is not rotten enough to connive at open infamy.

There could be no stronger proof of the innocence of Dreyfus than the extraordinary and unspeakable means taken to hide the real facts. There is little room for doubt that he was picked out as a scape-goat because he was a Jew. The Anti-Semite feeling was strong enough to prevent any Jew accused of such a crime from finding friends or obtaining justice; and it is generally believed that the chief plotter against Dreyfus was a Catholic nobleman, a devoted son of Holy Mother Church. For our part, we are for justice anyhow, but we feel an especial disgust when injustice is perpetrated in the interest of religious bigotry.

During the first trial of Zola a lady witness stepped into the box, and a strange hush fell upon the crowded and excited court. It was Madame Dreyfus. Her husband's enemies were touched in spite of themselves. The sanctity of her sorrow awed the most brutal of them. Nay, not the *most* brutal, for one wretch dared to hiss the wife who believed in her husband's innocence, the mother who guarded the honor of his children. That wretch was viler than any criminal in the prisons of France.

When there is so much selfishness and frivolity in the world it is good to know that it also contains a woman like Madame Dreyfus. Through four years of incessant torture she has hoped and striven for her husband's vindication. Every woman with a heart must feel for her, and all true women must be proud of her. It is not in endless seeking of new rights of pleasure that woman realises her highest possibilities. It is when she stands for love in honor and honor in love, when she puts aside cheap delights for the sake of holy duties, when she rises sublimely to the lofty guardianship of the threatened altar fire of her home. Then she is a priestess more sacred than the vestal virgins of old; reverence and worship attend her footsteps, and man bows before her and adores. Compared with the sentiment she then evokes, what is usually called love is but froth on the ocean of life.

We have more than once referred to M. Casimir-Perier, ex-President of the French Republic, as a man of great ability and high character. We have said that he resigned because he would not countenance dishonorable proceedings that were being carried on by eminent personages. The whole truth has apparently now been given to the world. An evidently well-informed writer in the *Daily News* tells the whole inner story of M. Casimir-Perier's resignation. The German Ambassador's dispatch to the Emperor was broken open and photographed, and its contents communicated to the French Government. The French President was informed of this by the Ambassador. He was ignorant of it before. He was very indignant, and promised that he would exert his influence to prevent a repetition of it. Count Münster sent another despatch to the Emperor, and that was broken open in the same way. Count Münster then told the President that the Emperor would mobilise his army if satisfaction were not given immediately. M. Casimir-Perier thereupon said: "Tell your Emperor that this satisfaction shall be given to him by myself, the President, repudiating publicly such outrages committed against a power at peace with France. I do not want to sacrifice my country; I will leave the Presidency. Pray his Majesty to be satisfied." Two days afterwards M. Casimir-Perier resigned. "Perhaps," he said, in his striking public letter, "in resigning my functions I have pointed out their duty to those holding the power, whose care should be the good renown and the maintenance of France's dignity in the face of the world." Then he retired like an honorable man into private life.

It is a most extraordinary story, and it does not look like an invention. Anyhow it is now public property, and those concerned may deny it if they can. The chiefs of the Army and the War Ministers have been doing their best or worst to drag France in the mire. It is high time that a strong stand was made against them, and every friend of the Republic must be glad that the Government has at last

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handed over the Dreyfus case to the Court of Appeal for revision. This is restoring the reign of justice and legality, and perhaps it saves the Republic from destruction.

Admiral Cervera, whose fleet was annihilated off Santiago, has returned to Spain, where, of course, he did not meet with a very enthusiastic reception. Speaking to an interviewer, he said: "Spain has been living in an imaginary world, and it is necessary that she should now learn the realities of life." Wise words and brave! Spain has really been living in a fool's paradise, with the Catholic Church as her bamboozler and plunderer. What she has got to do is to break loose from priestcraft, and think and act for herself. She may then take her place in the march of civilisation. Her people have many good qualities if these were only allowed fair play.

Mr. Charles Williams, the *Daily Chronicle* war correspondent, praises General Kitchener's project of a Gordon Memorial College at Khartoum, to be unsectarian, and devoted to training the most promising young natives in the arts and sciences of civilisation. Mr. Williams says that "the scheme opens up a vista of light and leading for East Central Africa generally, and the Nile Valley in particular, which is entrancing." "But if," he adds, "according to some of our folk at home, an institution of this sort is to be identified with Christianity in any shape, then failure, hopeless failure, may be predicted for it."

The following advertisement appeared recently in a religious journal:—

> "BETHESDA, ——.—Beautiful country home, near the sea. Christian fellowship. 3s. per day. Sickly persons desiring to trust the Lord will be considered financially.—Apply——.—Stamped envelope."

What an unctuous mixture of religion and business! Note the hint of reduced terms for those who desire to trust the Lord—that is, to get rest and fresh air at a cheap rate. Nothing but piety is equal to these things.

James Bosley is resting from his labors at his country's expense. His holiday will last for three months. The physician who ordered it sits on a raised seat in the Woolwich Police-court. James Bosley has spent seven years in that way altogether. His latest achievement was begging in the streets. He saluted the passers-by with well-chosen Bible texts, such as "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," "Whoso giveth unto the poor lendeth unto the Lord." During his retreat he will have a Bible, and no other book, day and night. This should enable him to resume business with a fresh supply of texts.

The Queen has sent £100 to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. She had better have sent the money to some society for the promotion of knowledge amongst Christians. Lots of them want it badly.

People wonder that murderous Anarchists are bred in Italy, but the Government breeds them there. It is a miserable thing to assassinate a woman, whether an empress or a stair-washer, but is it any better to take a refined gentleman like the editor of the Milan *Secolo*, who is guilty of no crime according to English standards, and subjecting him to the torture of solitary confinement for four years, accompanied by semi-starvation? Why are the crimes of incensed subjects worse than the crimes of brutal governments? Will someone kindly explain?

While so much money is spent on converting the heathen in different parts of the world, it is well to reflect on the destitution and misery which exist at home. The following is from our Radical contemporary, the *New Age*:—

"From time to time the curtain is lifted on the tragedies that are taking place every day in the great cities of the nation; and, to the eyes of all who can see, terrible pictures are revealed. Here are the facts that were made plain last week in the coroner's court at Shoreditch, at an inquest on a little child, aged nine weeks. Four people—the father, a boot-finisher, the wife, a slipper-maker, and two children—occupied one small room, 'scantily furnished, but fairly clean,' for which a rent of 2s. a week was paid. The father had been out of work for five weeks, and the family had depended upon the earnings of the mother, who, for working all the week, received 4s.—1¾d. a pair was the price paid for slippers. After the rent was paid 2s. remained for the family to live upon. And the youngest child, an infant of nine weeks, was the first to succumb. Dr. Berdoe declared that all the organs of the child were healthy, that its death was entirely due to want of sufficient food and nourishment. The weight of this poor child, starved to death in the richest city in the world, was 4lb. 7oz. The coroner asked the mother why parish relief had not been applied for, and the woman's answer is remarkable: 'When my husband was ill I applied to them, and they refused to help me, so I thought it would be useless to apply again.' What answer can wealthy Christian England give to these facts; what answer to the cries of this little child, slowly tortured by hunger till Death, the merciful deliverer, came? A few inches in the daily paper, a passing observation, the whole matter judged of fleeting interest. But the facts, the damning facts, remain. No one is punished for the death of this infant, whom a few more pence more a day would have kept alive. What of the parents and child who remain? The horror of it all is too appalling for words."

A Vegetarian Church is being started at Bayswater. The leading spirit is a lady. We wish she would explain why the Lord accepted Abel's roast mutton, and turned up his nose at Cain's peas and asparagus.

The Free Churches in the Llantysilio district emphatically protest against the "desecration of the Lord's Day under the cloak of Christian worship and religion." This is a hit at the vicar, who, instead of preaching against Sunday cycling, invites cyclists to visit his gospel-shop. How they love one another!

When Mormon meets Mormon then comes the tug-of-war. Down at Tunbridge Wells a Mormon preacher of the "reorganised Church" denounces the polygamous gospel of two other Mormon preachers of the Brigham Young school as "animalistic." Religionists tell the truth about each other sometimes.

Christianity is always boasting—and a lying boast it is—of how it abolished slavery. Well, slavery is abolished in the United States, for instance; but how do the white Christians treat their black "brethren"? Not a single Young Men's Christian Association will allow a colored youth to become a member. Down in South Carolina the "Jim Crow" or negro car on the trains is now imperative. No matter how wealthy or intelligent the negro may be, he must not travel with the whites. They are all going to the same heaven, of course, but they won't mix till they get there.

The dear old *Rock* deprecates the formation of new Protestant societies, which is only "giving the enemy further occasion to blaspheme." Does the "enemy" mean Freethinkers or Roman Catholics?

Everybody knows that the Ritualist party in the Church of England is introducing private confession. But this party is not allowed to have its own way unchecked. The Bishop of Gibraltar, who is addressing congregations in England, says that confession is alien to the nature of the English people, who will "never again submit to a system which requires themselves, their wives, and daughters to tell into the ears of man their most secret sins, and the most sacred confidences of their personal and their domestic lives." Dr. Sandford predicts that "they will never again bow their necks beneath a yoke which their forefathers found intolerable."

Even the grave and reverent *Times* speaks out strongly against the High Church conspiracy. There can be no question, it says, that if this section of the clergy are not arrested in their present course they will have to "abandon their positions in the Church of England," or else "the nation will determine that, if the Church sanctions such teaching and practices, it must be as an independent religious body, not speaking in the name of the English people." This is a plain warning that disestablishment and disendowment are looming in the future.

Mr. Labouchere, in last week's *Truth*, wrote a tremendous attack upon Mr. John Kensit, the Protestant champion. It is of such a nature that, as the *Chronicle* observes, a libel action on Mr. Kensit's part should bring him "damages ample enough to secure him a modest fortune." Mr. Kensit, however, is not taking any.

Under the heading of "Brotherly Love in the Town Hall," the *Birmingham Daily Mail* makes some remarks on the recent Kensit meeting. "One half of the meeting," it says, "looked as though it would like to slaughter the other half. The fires of Smithfield seemed rekindled in the flashing eyes of some of the fanatics who shook their fists and flourished their sticks."

All the Christian Evidence and Anti-Infidel scum in London are having an innings in the *South London Mail*, but Freethinkers can afford to smile at the illiterate malignity of this ragged regiment of defenders of the faith. What is noticeable is that the public subscription for prosecuting Freethinkers languishes. Perhaps the editor of the *Mail* and his pious friends are unable to find a sufficient and suitable treasurer. Why not accept our suggestion of Mr. Teapot Taylor?

Undoubtedly the craze for sport and athletics is becomin-

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a dangerous nuisance in this country. But we shall hope in vain for an improvement if the only remedy is prayer, as we are told by the Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Kettering, who has recently been preaching at Watford. The reverend gentleman was also good enough to attribute the passion for football amongst young men to what he called the materialism of the age. This must be one of his little jokes. Many papers with great orthodox pretensions, sworn friends of Christianity in all its forms, give unlimited sporting news, but none ever appears in the *Freethinker*.

A Salvation Army man named Edward Watkinson, at New Normanton, stole a vegetable marrow from the garden of Henry Lemon, and gave it to the Army harvest festival. His explanations in court were decidedly amusing. He said that the marrow had dropped off, and he thought he had better take it, as the owner wouldn't be coming along for some time. He also said that he meant to pay the owner for it the first time he saw him, and would have sent on the money, but he didn't know where he lived. He was fined five shillings and costs, or seven days.

George Fair, a boy, had to give evidence at a Westminster inquest. Asked if he knew the nature of an oath, he did not reply, though we dare say he could have given an illustration. Asked if he knew what book he had kissed, he answered No, neither did he know what the New Testament was. Yet he had been taught at St. Mary's School, Stockton! Upon this the *Star*, which must be joking, says it shudders to think how these Church schools turn out boys and girls to "begin the battle of life without even knowing what the New Testament is, to say nothing of its teaching, its doctrine, and its morality."

The Rev. William Clark, an evangelist who makes Hoboken his headquarters, has been found guilty of grand larceny and sent to the penitentiary. Clark has a record for forgery, blackmail, horse theft, intimidation, bigamy, assault, obtaining money under false pretences, and robbery of a child. His matrimonial adventures are numerous and discreditable.—*New York "Truthseeker."*

The Bishops of London and Rochester have issued a joint letter to the clergy and laity of the Church of England in the metropolitan district on the subject of religious education in London Board schools. Their lordships point out with professional acumen that the great thing is to "attach a child to some church or chapel." Accordingly they urge that religious teaching should be given on denominational basis, and that every child should receive instruction in the religious beliefs of the denomination to which its parents belong. Well, we have no objection to this, provided it is done at the parents' expense in some other place than the public school. Their lordships, however, want this religious instruction given as far as possible by the school teachers—that is to say, the teachers should wield denominational branding-irons upon the children, marking them Anglican, Catholic, Wesleyan, Baptist, Congregationalist, etc. But this will never do; at least, the teachers will never do it.

What a poor restraint Christianity is upon human passions may be seen from what Dr. Busch relates of Bismarck near Sedan. Dr. Busch went into the Chancellor's room one morning and found he had just risen and gone out. Lying on the floor, as though just used, was a volume of *Daily Watchwords and Texts*, and on the toilette-table another volume of *Daily Spiritual Refreshment for Believing Christians*. Years afterwards Bismarck confessed that but for him three great wars would not have taken place, and "eighty thousand men would not have been killed, and would not now be mourned by parents, brothers, sisters, and widows." This reflection was enough to depress any man of the least sensibility, but Bismarck recovered himself, saying: "I have settled that with God, however." Yes, there are always accommodations with heaven, as Molière said.

We have often referred to pious advertisements in the newspapers, and we are pleased now to notice an advertisement of an opposite description. The following appeared in a recent number of the *Daily Chronicle*:—

> "Will someone kindly explain the following to Advertiser without employing texts from Scripture?—
>
> "1. Does the Church of England preach that none who do not believe that doctrine can be saved?
>
> "2. Is belief optional? Can a man believe just what he considers advisable?
>
> "3. Is not one's religious belief almost always an accident (as it is what language one speaks) owing to one's surroundings?
>
> "4. Do not religions change, like languages and everything else?
>
> "5. Does not the Church of England now admit that a great deal of what its Bishops taught a few hundred years ago was erroneous and wicked?
>
> "6. Does it not appear probable that a few hundred years hence its teaching of to-day will be much modified, as the observance of Sunday has been during the last twenty or thirty years?
>
> "Explanations will be esteemed by 'Doubt,' care of Street and Co., 164 Piccadilly."

The Rev. A. M. Mitchell, vicar of Barton Wood, near Liverpool, has been much criticised lately regarding his reply to the Bishop's letter, and his refusal to obey the rubric as to the necessity of at least three communicants. Like the ritualist of whom Sydney Smith wrote some fifty years since, this reverend gent "is only for the Bishop when the Bishop is for him."

The Bible tells us that one cannot serve "Gawd" and Mammon. The Very Rev. Canon Knox-Little of Worcester, acting on this advice, writes novels in his leisure time. So far nothing very startling has proceeded from this sky-pilot's pen, but perhaps the "clotted bosh" signed by the Canon is to be taken as an evidence of the Divine displeasure.

A number of synods of the Wesleyan Methodist Church have been held recently, when the question of the twentieth-century scheme came up for discussion. "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" do they think their foolish "ism" is going to last for ever?

London is suffering from want of rain, Spain is suffering from floods. There is enough water in the world, but it is badly distributed. The sky-pilots ought to make strong representations to the "Providence" they talk so much about.

Among the buildings destroyed by the hurricane at Kingston, Jamaica, were the Anglican and Catholic churches. Christians used to believe that the Devil brewed all the storms, and there is a good deal to be said for that view, for it is difficult to understand why God, if *he* is responsible for the storms, does not discriminate in favor of his own houses.

On Sunday last the unusual sight of his Lordship the Bishop of Stepney standing up to preach in the Pavilion Theatre, Whitechapel, was witnessed by some East-enders. If his lordship will only invoke the assistance of the *corps-de-ballet*, he might have the pleasure of putting up the pleasing notice of "House Full."

The Lord, we are told, counts the hairs of our heads, and watches the fall of the sparrows. If he had left those pleasing occupations alone for a short time, and paid some attention to a worm of the dust named Alice Keble, late of Walthamstow, the newspapers would not now be recording another case of starvation.

The Bishop of Winchester left Farnham Castle on Saturday, September 24, for an extended tour on the Continent, and does not expect to return until November. Times have changed since the fishing-nets of the Apostles were sold to the rag-and-bone dealers. Blessed be ye poor!

"God has joined hands with the Christian Endeavor across the sea." This free-and-easy way of speaking of the Almighty was indulged in by the Rev. J. T. Maxwell at Exeter. Commend us to a true believer when good strong blasphemy is wanted.

James Hickman committed suicide at his residence in Stanstead-road, Forest-hill. In the two letters he left for his wife and father he used the word *God* six times. He confessed to having gone wrong with a certain lady, but he said "there is One above who will forgive." Evidently this suicide was not an Atheist, Mr. Talmage.

Thomas Livingstone, a Boothite, appeared at the Lambeth Police-court to answer a summons complaining that he, a street singer, did unlawfully sing in a public place after being required by a householder to depart from the neighborhood. Mr. George Vickery, a newsagent, of Newington-butts, was the principal complainant. He said that the defendant preached and sang within about ten paces from his shop door and interfered with his business. He had asked him to shift, but he refused to "on principle." Mr. Colan, who appeared for the defendant, argued that the Act was never intended to apply to religious meetings; but the magistrate asked him whether he seriously thought that "in the present state of street noises in London any judge would hold that the Salvation Army are not street musicians?" The case was adjourned in order that the "Army" might give an undertaking not to annoy the plaintiff in future. Magistrate Hopkins appears to mean business.

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, October 2, Glasgow: Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street, at 11.30, 2.30, and 6.30.

October 9, Leicester; 16 and 23, Athenæum Hall.

November 6, Manchester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 2, New Brompton; 9, Athenæum Hall, London. November 20, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 42 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

ROBERT LAWSON.—Your application for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, is duly received.

C. E. S.—The "general," as you say, returns the salute with all cordiality and good wishes.

FREDERICK ROGERS.—Thanks for your letter. There is no reason whatever why many working men, like yourself, should not join the Secular Incorporation. Ten shillings might be spared for the first year; it is only twopence farthing a week; and the yearly subscription afterwards is only five shillings, a trifle over one penny.

J. W. IRVING.—Thanks. Cuttings are always welcome.

A. LEDGER.—You will find what you are seeking in the last chapter of Mark. No Christian has those "signs," not even Mr. Reader Harris.

GEORGE LANG.—We have acted on your suggestion. See acknowledgment elsewhere. We note your regret that our appeals are not responded to more warmly.

W. COX.—Please let us know as early as possible of any fresh developments at Liverpool. We note your promise of the two missing addresses. Mr. Foote will offer you another date very shortly.

H. C. LONG.—It is a subject that requires fuller and more careful treatment.

G. BERRY.—See paragraph. We hope Mr. Snell will have good meetings at Stockton.

JAMES BARN.—You will see Mr. Foote's Glasgow lectures fully announced at the top of this column. You are contemplating a long journey to hear him.

P. LEE.—In our next. Pressure of other matter this week.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—L. D. Hewitt, 2s. 6d.; W. H. Harrap, 1s.; Broxbourne Well Wisher, 2s. 6d.; Frederick Rogers, 5s.; J. W. Irving, 2s.; George Lang, 8s.; John, 1s.; J. C. B., 5s.; D. Mitchell, 5s.; W. Robinson, 2s. 6d.

W. KIRK.—St. Augustine's "Confessions" is to many a fascinating book. We have read it more than once with, we hope, some profit. The writer was a man of real genius, perhaps the first that the Christian Church could boast of. Before him there were Fathers of ridiculous "learning" and more or less rhetorical power. The best edition of the "Confessions" is Pusey's. The cheap reprint in the Scott Library lacks the valuable notes of the original. Pusey illustrated the "Confessions" with elaborate extracts from Augustine's other writings, which were very voluminous.

W. ROBINSON hopes our "Shilling Week" will be well supported. We hope so too. Hundreds of Freethinkers could easily help us, if they would, at this particular juncture.

L. A. GOYNE.—Thanks for the enclosures and for your bright and welcome letter.

A. S. V.—Will try to find room.

J. N. LEEDS.—Not so useful as your previous cuttings, or perhaps we had not time to extract the moral.

T. LANGFORD.—Have handed your order to Mr. Forder, who attends to publishing matters.

D. MITCHELL.—Thanks for your good wishes. Pleased to know you are joining the Secular Society, Limited. See acknowledgments under the various heads.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.—The following applications for membership have been received:—Frederick Rogers, W. Varley, W. Cox, E. Radcliffe, J. Phillips, H. Hall, L. Small, J. Birch, D. Mitchell, S. Berry.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Reading Observer—Ethical World—Birmingham Daily Mail—Freidenker—Westminster Gazette—Torch of Reason—New Century—Blue Grass Blade—Secular Thought—Colton's Magazine—Two Worlds—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Progressive Thinker—New York Herald—South London Mail—Record (Herts.)—Derby Daily Telegraph—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Isle of Man Times—Referee—Free Society—New York Truthseeker—Lucifer—Public Opinion—Liberator.

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 is due.

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.

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

## SPECIAL.

### ANOTHER SHILLING WEEK.

READERS of the *Freethinker* during the last seven or eight years will probably recollect that I have made several special appeals for various objects in connection with the work of the National Secular Society. A certain week has been fixed upon as "Shilling Week." During that time my readers have been invited to send me a subscription of one shilling or any number of shillings. Well, I am now going to make an appeal of this kind on behalf of the *Freethinker* itself. Friends are sending me some contributions every week towards the Circulation Fund, but the pace is very slow, and driblets during a long period will not serve the purpose as well as a reasonable sum at once. Consequently I have decided to make another "Shilling Week" of the first week in October. During that week I invite my readers to get a postal order for one shilling, or for several shillings if they can afford it, and to forward the same to me before October 8. Of course I have no objection to cheques. But I am anxious that the mass of the party should do something. If they all act together on this occasion, they will never miss what they give, and they will enable me to push the circulation of this journal, which is the right arm of all my work for Secularism, and, I venture to think, of very considerable importance to the whole party.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures to-day (Oct. 2) at Glasgow. For the information of visitors from other towns we may state that the hall in which the lectures are to be delivered is in Brunswick-street, near the municipal law courts, between Ingram-street and Argyle-street, not far from the Candleriggs, and about ten minutes' walk from St. Enoch and Central Stations.

The fine weather, and the presence of the Channel Squadron in the Mersey, were rather unfavorable to indoor meetings on Sunday at Liverpool. Nevertheless there were fair audiences at Mr. Foote's morning and afternoon lectures in the Alexandra Hall, and the room was full in the evening, the audience on that occasion being not only large, but very enthusiastic. Messrs. Ross, Hammond, and Small were the three chairmen for the day. Each made a good appeal on behalf of the new Secular Incorporation, and seven applications for membership were taken in addition to the five previously acknowledged. Further promises will probably bring the number up to twenty. Liverpool expects great things from the Secular Society, Limited, and we hope its expectations will be more than realised.

There was very nearly a rumpus at Liverpool. The police got anxious about the growth of Secularism in general, and about Mr. Foote's lectures in particular. The locality in which the Alexandra Hall is situated stinks of piety, and the advent of Secularism as a disinfectant was resented. It may be that the local sky-pilots were alarmed, or that the susceptibilities of some high-placed member of the police force were wounded. Anyhow, the good old dodge was tried of intimidating the lessee of the hall. On the Saturday afternoon he was informed that his dancing licence might be in danger if he allowed the Secularists to hold their meetings and charge (as advertised) for admission. The lessee, a decent sort of man, but with a tremendous irrational belief in the wisdom and power of the police, told Mr. Foote and the Committee in the morning that they could not have money taken at the door. They decided, however, that they would go on their own way. An attempt was made to close the street door, but this was resisted, and members of the Committee remained in possession between the meetings. Policemen dropped in

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looking very important, and were offered a seat, which they felt obliged to decline. Of course it is very unlikely that any action will be taken against the Secularists. The police were really hunting after the poor lessee. He was the man they wanted. They felt that their only chance was to frighten *him*. But he couldn't help himself on that occasion, whatever he may do in future.

It is very unpleasant to see an innocent man, who works hard to get an honest livelihood, persecuted in this way, and if the police try to ruin him on licensing day the Secularists will do their best to assist him. But it was not possible to give way out of mere compassion. There was a principle at stake. Besides, if the police were allowed to win in that easy fashion, by striking at a harmless third party, there would soon be an end to Secular propaganda altogether in half the towns in England. The Liverpool Branch is to be congratulated on the manner in which it acted on Sunday, and the committee can rely upon Mr. Foote's being with them whenever his presence may be required.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts had an excellent audience at the Athenæum Hall, London, when he lectured upon "The New Bible." He was warmly applauded, and the many points which he forcibly put were evidently appreciated by all present. There was no discussion, although it was repeatedly invited. Mr. Thurlow presided, and made an earnest appeal on behalf of the *Freethinker* Fund.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures to-day, Sunday, October 2, morning and evening, in the Secular Hall, New Brompton. They will be the opening meetings of the winter session, and we shall be pleased to hear of large gatherings.

The Chatham and New Brompton friends have worked hard at their hall, which has been re-decorated and somewhat altered. Some structural changes have enlarged the stage, and even left more room for the public. The members have given their labor voluntarily, besides subscribing heavily out of rather poor pockets for the inevitable expenses.

Mr. William Heaford occupies the Athenæum Hall platform this evening (Oct. 2). His subject is "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil." There must be something in it for most people. We hope he will have a good audience, as he deserves.

The Stockton Branch is having a course of lectures to-day (Oct. 2) by Mr. Harry Snell, and another course next Sunday. The lectures will be given in the Borough Hall Dining Room at 2.30 and 6.30. The subjects are attractive, and local Freethinkers should make the meetings widely known.

The Camberwell Branch reopens the Secular Hall, New Church-road, to-day (Oct. 2). Mr. E. Pack is the lecturer.

Mr. A. B. Moss, as a member of the Camberwell Vestry moved that another local paper should receive the Vestry advertisements instead of the *South London Mail*, as that journal had incited the Christian public to violence against the Freethinkers on Peckham Rye. Mr. Moss made a strong speech in support of his motion, which was seconded by Mr. Taylor. Most of the "Progressives" voted in favor of it, but it was defeated by the large number of "Moderates" present. However, the report of Mr. Moss's speech in the local journals, including the *Mail*, is sure to do good.

Mr. G. R. Sims, in last week's *Referee*, makes fun of the earthquakes, storms, and other surprising phenomena that have attended the deaths of distinguished persons like Cæsar, Cromwell, Napoleon, and Bismarck. We quite agree with Mr. Sims on this point. All he has to do now is to say what he thinks of the wonderful earthquake and still more wonderful eclipse of the sun that happened at the death of Jesus Christ. We hope Mr. Sims will devote a few of his bright paragraphs to this interesting topic.

Miss E. M. Vance, secretary of the National Secular Society, informs us that there is still a deficit of £2 on the Children's Excursion which passed off so happily. Someone ought to send her that amount at once. Address, 377 Strand, London, W.C.

A copy of *Colton's Magazine* reaches us from New Orleans. It contains an outspoken criticism of Marie Corelli's "Electric Creed" by Stephen H. Alison. We presume this is the gentleman who some time ago lectured on Freethought platforms in England.

Colonel Ingersoll wrote a brief funeral address for the funeral of Dr. Thomas Seton Robertson, of New York, which is reported in the *Herald*. There was no religious ceremony. Dr. Robertson left the bulk of his property to Vermont University. His valuable collection of jewels is to be divided between three friends, of whom Colonel Ingersoll is one.

"The Executive and both Houses," the Duke of Argyll says, "have been completely secularised. The House of Commons is full of men of all beliefs and of none; and even in the House of Lords I have noticed for many years that the Bishops themselves never employ theological argument on any subject without making some apology for doing so."

Editor Moore's *Blue Grass Blade* (Lexington, Kentucky) has taken a new lease of life. We thought it had dropped through for ever, but Editor Moore is irrepressible. He is like Jesus Christ in one thing—he rises from the dead, and apparently this is the prelude to his ascension, for we read that he has a new office and new printing machinery. We wish him all success, anyhow. He crusades against religion and whisky, and it is a good thing to make people sensible and sober. Where we part company with him is at the sign-post "To Prohibition." Too many reformers imagine that the way to improve the world is to stop somebody else from doing something. We believe, for our part, in personal liberty for all, even if it leads a man to drink a glass of beer instead of sharing Editor Moore's holy water.

The following is from the President's address delivered at the Annual Convention of the Canadian Secular Union: "The incorporation of the Secular Society in England is an event that bears testimony to the indefatigable energy of Mr. G. W. Foote, the President of the National Secular Society of England. Under this new organisation, the Secularists of Great Britain will be placed in possession of a nucleus which will enable Freethinkers who desire to forward their principles by substantial bequests to leave money and property in charge of a legally-constituted and permanent body. It is a distinct gain for Freethought in Britain."

## SILENCED HIS BATTERIES.

Colonel Robert Ingersoll, the American Agnostic, was invited to attend a banquet at the irresistible Clover Club of New York. "It is impossible to accept," he said. "I know your custom too well. I shall be called on for a speech, and shall be unmercifully guyed. I never could stand it. I refuse to put myself in such a position."

The club decided to waive its constitutional prerogative in his case, and he was informed of the fact. "Then I gladly accept the invitation," he said, "and will surely be on hand." He was.

No sooner was the gallant iconoclast on his feet than a man down at the end of the room began to interrupt. He was the only one in the club to say a word, but he was very annoying, and the Colonel remarked:

"I came here as a guest, with the understanding that I was not to be interrupted. There was an agreement to that effect."

"I never heard of any such agreement," returned the other.

The Colonel said: "My friend, you remind me of a story. There was a day set apart by the beasts of the field, the reptiles, and the birds of the air for a general peace. Animals in the habit of preying on each other agreed to meet together in one grand accord. A fox passing a chicken-roost on the way to the meeting invited a hen to accompany him, and, when she politely declined, informed her of the peace agreement. 'Well, Mr. Fox, I will go on those conditions,' she said, and they trotted along side by side through the field. Presently the baying of a pack of hounds was heard, and Mr. Fox started to run. 'Why do you run, Mr. Fox?' said Mrs. Hen; 'remember the peace agreement.' Restraining himself, Mr. Fox trotted on, but the pack drew nearer and nearer, until he could stand it no longer. 'Mr. Fox,' urged Mrs. Hen, 'don't be afraid. Remember what you told me about the peace agreement. No hound would hurt you to-day. Trot along with me, and don't be in the least alarmed.' He could almost feel the breath of the hounds. 'Mrs. Hen,' he whispered, prepared to spring away, 'I do well remember the peace agreement, but there may be some fool hound in that pack that hasn't heard of it. Good-bye.'"

When the Colonel had finished his story there was silence, and he concluded his speech without further interruption. The "fool-hound" at the further end of the room didn't say another word.

—*Cassell's Saturday Journal.*

Little Elmer—"Pa, what does 'Selah!' mean?" Professor Broadhead—"It is a good deal like the term 'senatorial courtesy,' my son. It sounds well, and nobody knows what it means."—*Puck.*

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## THE CHURCH AND LITERATURE.

(By the late J. M. Wheeler.)

Much has been written of the services of Christianity to literature. The monks, we are told, were the preservers of ancient learning, and to their devotion must be ascribed our knowledge of the classics of Greece and Rome. How comes it, then, that so large a portion of those classics are lost? What became of the vast libraries collected by the Romans? Is it but a casual coincidence that the decline of learning and the triumph of Christianity went side by side?

In the Augustan era the library was as essential to the completeness of a house in Rome as the eating or sleeping room. Such men as Julius Cæsar, Crassus, Cicero, and Lucullus were renowned for the beauty and value of their collections of books. Authors were treated with the utmost respect, and rich men vied for their patronage. Asinius Pollio is said first to have formed a public library in Rome. The great Freethinker, Julius Cæsar, had in view a large scheme of this kind, which was defeated by his assassination. Trajan, Vespasian, and Domitian founded vast libraries. Books were common in Rome, and sold at comparatively low prices, for slaves were taught to write, and it has been calculated that in a librarian's shop a hundred copies of a work could have been written off by dictation as quickly as a compositor would set one in type. The great bulk of works then famous are now lost. Histories, epics, dramas, orations, books of philosophy and education, verses almost without number, have perished. We have but slight specimens of even the best known Latin authors. Take but the historians. Of Livy's history, once containing one hundred and forty books, all but thirty-five have disappeared. Pliny's history of his own time, in thirty-one books, is entirely missing. Of the thirty books of Tacitus we have but four and a part of the fifth. Of the Greco-Roman histories, the works of Polybius, which originally comprised forty-five books, now contain but five. Dio Cassius, once in eighty books, now shows but twenty-five. Of the history of Ammianus Marcellinus the first thirteen books are missing. Similar instances might be given in other departments of literature. The allegation that all that was of value has been preserved is sufficiently refuted by the instance of Tacitus, coupled with the fact that the five books we have are from one single manuscript, whereas we know that the Emperor Tacitus (275) ordered copies of the works of his illustrious namesake to be placed in all the libraries of the empire, with a special direction that ten copies should be made each year at the public expense. It is usual to ascribe the loss of these works to the invasions of the barbarians, but it must not be forgotten that these barbarians were remarkably amenable to the authority of the Church, and it was not until Christian asceticism had sapped the patriotic virtue of the Roman empire that the irruptions took place.

When Christianity came to power it found no young and vigorous civilisation to combat it, but an effete and decaying civilisation that had run its course. The polytheistic superstition was universal, yet the tolerance of Rome had done much to destroy the exclusive claims of any particular deities. Culture and freethought were the property of the few. Such a civilisation was the only one which Christianity could have overcome, the only one it could safely assimilate with itself. This it only did after smothering the few pulsations of life and freethought which it contained. Christianity did not triumph by its superior culture. On the contrary, it was despised by philosophers as the pernicious superstition of slaves and fools. It triumphed by its organisation, which could utilise and assimilate the credulity and fanaticism of its followers. Its very intolerance was a means of success. The indifferent polytheist, admitting it might possibly be true, was led by mere prudence to embrace a faith declaring that it alone possessed salvation. From the primitive ages a dislike of Pagan learning was general among Christians. Warned by their spiritual guides to beware of philosophy and the knowledge which puffeth up, they despised the vain learning of a world soon to pass away. It is true those of the early Fathers who were converted from Paganism did not at once quit the philosophic temper of mind. Such men as Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Augustine, and Synesius brought heathen learning to combat heathenism. But the victory once achieved, the philosophic temper declined. Claiming exclusive possession of truth, the Church saw its enemy in all external learning. Physical science especially was held in avowed contempt as inconsistent with revealed truth. The Fathers exhorted the faithful to avoid all contact with Pagan culture. St. Antony, called the founder of Monachism, refused, when a boy, to learn letters, because it would bring him into too great intercourse with other boys. Under Theophilus, primate of Alexandria, the magnificent library of the Serapion was destroyed by the monks, and at a Synod held under this bishop all the works of Origen, the greatest glory of the early Christian Church, were interdicted. The fourth General Council of Carthage went so far as to forbid the reading of all Pagan books; and, says Jortin, "the bishops soon began to relish this good advice, and not to trouble their heads with literature." Mosheim also records that in the fourth century, although the emperors tried to cherish learning, their intentions were defeated by a numerous and powerful party in the Church, who "considered all learning, and especially philosophical learning, as injurious, and even destructive to true piety and godliness." The efforts of men like Julian were in vain. As Christianity extended, the number of works produced became fewer, and their merit less, so that from the sixth to the twelfth century there is scarcely an author of even the fourth or fifth rank.

Theodosius made a law (448) that the works of Porphyry should be burnt, and that all other works the doctrine of which did not conform to that of the Nicene Council, and of the Council of Ephesus, and to the decisions of St. Cyril, should be destroyed, and the concealers of them put to death. The original works of all the early opponents of Christianity, as well as of the heretics, are lost, and we have to trust to such representations of them as are found in the works of their opponents. Jortin remarks that many bishops in the General Council of Ephesus and Chalcedon could not write their own names. The learned Jerome condemned the study of profane authors, except for pious uses. He relates how, for having been too much addicted to such study, he fell into a fever, and was taken up in the night to the tribunal of Jesus, who severely reprimanded him for being rather a Ciceronian than a Christian, and for this offence he was flagellated by an angel.

Hallam, in his *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, says: "A prepossession against secular learning had taken hold of these ecclesiastics, who gave the tone to the rest; it was inculcated in the most extravagant degree by Gregory I., the founder, in a great measure, of the papal supremacy, and the chief authority in the Dark Ages." Saint Gregory is said by Brucker to have given orders that the collection of books formed by the Roman emperors, and kept in the temple of Apollo, adjoining the palace, should be burnt. In a letter to a teacher of grammar he severely censures him for polluting with hymns to Jupiter a tongue that ought to be employed in celebrating the praises of Christ. Gibbon is disposed to acquit Saint Gregory of the charge of burning the library, but certainly he was unfavorable to classical learning. Leo the Iconoclast is also accused of burning the library of the Basilica at Constantinople. One chronicler relates that he, not being able to gain the professors over to his views, imprisoned them in their college, and reduced them and their books to ashes. This improbable story has been doubted, if not disproved, by historians. Gibbon, however, believes that the library, which contained over thirty-six thousand volumes, was burned during the religious wars. Gregory VII. is also said to have burned a great number of ancient manuscripts. Even if these are only stories, their invention serves to throw some light on the spirit of the times.

Towards the close of the seventh century the manuscripts in the Papal library at Rome were so few that Pope Martin requested the Bishop of Maestricht to supply this defect from the remotest parts of Germany. Lupus Abbot, of Ferrieres, in a letter to the Pope (855), beseeches him to lend him copies of Cicero's *De Oratore* and Quintillian's *Institutions*, "for, although we have parts of these books, there is no complete copy of them in all France." The monks, too, became careless as to preserving their collection of books intact. They allowed their libraries to dwindle away under their eyes. They sold their books, gave them away, or allowed them to be stolen. It was asserted, at a council held in Rome in 992, that scarcely a single person was to be found in Rome itself who knew the first elements of letters. Not one priest of a thousand in Spain about the age of

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Charlemagne could address a common letter of salutation to another. In England, King Alfred declared that he knew no single priest south of the Thames (the most civilised part of England) who, at the time of his accession, understood the ordinary prayers, or could translate Latin into his mother tongue.

During the period rightly known as the Dark Ages the clergy were supreme. Proclaiming that the Church had the authority of God, they claimed control over minds and estates, and they demanded that their claims should be accepted without reasoning. To deny, or even to doubt, was to be a heretic, and to be subject to excommunication, fine, imprisonment, exile, and perhaps torture and the stake.

The Church only kept up so much of classic learning as was absolutely necessary for a literary education, and to give the clergy an elevated and imposing position among the barbarians. These tactics were especially successful with the northern tribes, who had a humble veneration for the Science of the Runes. Von Hartmann says :—

> "If, therefore, mediæval Christianity cultivated the study of the Greek and Latin authors, it was not from any appreciation of, or sympathy with, that culture which is to be derived from them, but solely in the pursuit of external and hierarchical interests. The old Pagan writings were looked upon as a necessary evil to which the Church submitted in order to give to the clergy a literary and theological training, but which, undoubted productions of the devil as they are, no man should take in his hands without first making the sign of the cross and trembling for his soul's salvation."

Lecky's testimony in his *History of European Morals* is that the literature of Christian asceticism "surpasses in its mendacious ferocity any that the world has seen." The Christians habitually spoke of those who deviated from the orthodox belief as demons, and exulted over the tortures which they believed were reserved for such miscreants. Lecky continues :—

> "The study of the Latin classics was for the most part positively discouraged. The writers, it was believed, were burning in hell. The monks were too inflated with their imaginary knowledge to regard with any respect a Pagan writer, and periodical panics about the approaching termination of the world continually checked any desire for secular learning. It was the custom among some monks, when they were under the discipline of silence, and desired to ask for Virgil, Horace, or any other Gentile work, to indicate their wish by scratching their ears like a dog, to which animal it was thought the Pagans might reasonably be compared."

Buckle declares that the learning of the Middle Ages only ministered to ignorance. He says :—

> "From the sixth to the tenth century there was not in all Europe more than three or four men who dared to think for themselves ; and even they were obliged to veil their meaning in obscure and mystical language. The remaining part of society was, during these four centuries, sunk in the most degrading ignorance. Under these circumstances, the few who were able to read confined their studies to works which encouraged and strengthened their superstition, such as the legends of the saints and the homilies of the fathers. From these sources they drew those lying and impudent fables of which the theology of the time is principally composed."

Of course the supply of literature was only proportionate to the demand. The classic works of the Pagans having fallen into disrepute, their manuscripts were erased and re-written with Christian legends. Copies of Cicero, Pliny, or Homer were valueless, and the parchments used for them were prepared by washing or scraping in order to make room for the ridiculous fables of the saints. These palimpsests or *codices rescripti* form a curious commentary on the zeal of the monks. Frequently the most valuable works were covered over with others now of no account. The long-lost treatise of Cicero, *De Republica*, was discovered written over with St. Augustine's *Commentary on the Psalms*. Within the present century Niebuhr discovered the *Institutes of Gaius*, a work throwing much light on Roman Law, and which was believed to have perished in the confusion of the Dark Ages, beneath a second and even a third writing consisting of the epistles of St. Jerome. Hallam, in his *Middle Ages*, says : "So gross and supine was the ignorance of the monks, within whose walls these treasures were concealed, that it was impossible to ascertain, but by indefatigable researches, the extent of what had saved out of the great shipwreck of antiquity."

The scarcity of books rendered their price so enormous during the palmy days of Christianity that even persons of fortune could not indulge in the luxury of reading. Private persons seldom possessed any books, and even monasteries of note had only one Missal. Persons who bequeathed a pious book to the library of a monastery were deemed thereby to obtain complete remission of sins. The Rev. Joseph Barrington, the Catholic author of the *Literary History of the Middle Ages*, admits that "in the most wealthy convents, where libraries were chiefly formed, a short catalogue was sufficient to comprise the number of their books ; and the price to those who were disposed to purchase was exorbitant." Hallam tells us that contracts were made verbally for want of notaries capable of drawing up charters, and these, when written, were frequently barbarous and ungrammatical to an incredible degree.

At this time, be it remembered, the Mohammedan caliphs were giving every encouragement to literature and science. Bagdad in the east, and Cordova in the west, were the seats of learning and culture, and the dawn of the renaissance of letters arose from the contact with Arabian civilisation. The Jews also cultivated literature, and produced many of their brightest lights during the long night of the Dark Ages. Their works were, of course, proscribed. St. Louis ordered the Talmud to be burnt. All the Jewish libraries were destroyed, and twenty-four cartloads of valuable manuscripts committed to the flames. All Jewish books, Bibles excepted, were ordered to be burnt because filled with blasphemies against Christ, and it is alleged that, at one time, twelve thousand copies of the Talmud were burnt at one holocaust in Cremona—a feat throwing into the shade the destruction of five thousand copies of the Koran by Cardinal Ximenes. All heretical works were hunted out and burnt. As early as the twelfth century Pope Innocent III. prohibited the reading of the Bible in the common tongue. The Council of Toulouse (1229) forbade the reading of the Bible in any vernacular tongue, and decreed that no layman should have in his possession any of the books of the Old or New Testament. The Council of Terragona orders that any priest or layman who possesses a translation of the Bible, and does not surrender it within eight days to be burnt, shall be deemed a heretic. The famous Council of Trent affirmed that no Bible should be held or read except by priests, and this canon remains unrepealed. The Council condemned wholesale the works of the most notorious heretics—*i.e.*, reformers. In 1557 Paul IV. published at Rome the first official *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. His Index includes all Bibles in modern languages, enumerating forty-eight editions chiefly printed in countries still under the jurisdiction of the Church. Sixty-one printers, among whom are Stephens and Oporinus, are put under a general ban—all works, of whatever description, from their presses being forbidden.

*(To be concluded.)*

## A FAMOUS FUNNY FELLOW.

A SCIENTIST—he must have been a Christian one—told the present writer that mankind was descended from babies. I believed him for some three months. But later I found that the Bible said that Adam was the first man, the father of the human race. I was interested at once about our earliest blood relation. In fact, he was a relation of my own—true, a distant one, but still a relation. The fountain of my far-off filial affection was stirred to its profoundest depths, and I had no rest until I had read all about the man whom Tennyson finely calls "the grand old greengrocer." Adam was the first man—if he had been a shoemaker he would have been the last man. His education was sadly neglected, for he started life as a full-grown man. It is not everyone who can throw half-hundred weights about on their first day on the earth. But think of what he had missed. He never learned to keep fruit and sweets in his mouth without the schoolmaster noticing it. The present writer knew a small boy who could keep two small pears and a pennyworth of toffee in his mouth without choking or getting very red in the face. Neither did Adam learn how to make noises like cats, or to smoke cheap cigarettes.

Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden, and acted as

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park-keeper and gardener. All the clothes he had for a long time was the close of day, while the mantle of night was his bed-clothing. It did not much matter, however, for, as yet, the County Council was not. He made the acquaintance of his staff, including the wasps. He ceased to be on speaking terms, however, when he found they had darning-needles in their tails.

Adam was the only human being employed in this situation, and at his earnest solicitation a lady was added to the show-room. She did not say where she came from, but her boxes were marked "A-rib-ia." Adam fell in love, and used to write the words "Eve" and "darling" on the fences in the intervals of business. He abjured fat bacon, and that's the reason the Chosen People do so to this day. Adam had not been in love very many years when a lot of small creatures, with rattles in their hands, began to creep about the house, and fall into pails, and drink boiling water, put soap in the teacups, and swallow tin-tacks. This accounts for the origin of the human race.

Eve was a pretty good cook, for she soon cooked up trouble for Adam about some apples, and got him the "sack," which is an ancient way of describing the loss of a situation. But they were not a happy couple, for, in the excitement of leaving his job, he forgot his marriage certificate, and as he only lived a few centuries subsequent to this sad event, he never had the heart to hunt up the registrar. Mr. and Mrs. Adam passed their later years in less style than their earlier. As I draw a veil over their fall, let me ask every reader of this respectable journal if he doesn't feel like howling when he remembers that Adam grudged that paltry seven-and-six for that marriage certificate, and that, in consequence, the whole human race is illegitimate!

MIMNERMUS.

## BOOK CHAT.

SMOKERS who read, or readers who smoke—whichever way you will—should be thankful to Mr. William G. Hutchison, who has edited the latest volume of the "Canterbury Poets," entitled *Lyra Nicotiana*, or "Poems and Verses concerning Tobacco." Mr. Hutchison has made a pretty anthology of verses on pipes, cigars, cigarettes, and all sorts of tobacco—in short, on smoking generally, from the age of Elizabeth to the age of Victoria. To non-smokers the result will be shocking; to smokers it will be delightful.

* * *

We are glad to see that Mr. Hutchison acknowledges a special indebtedness to the defunct *Tobacco Plant* conducted for some years by Mr. John Fraser, of the famous Cope firm of tobacconists. This was a very entertaining publication, and much good writing appeared in its pages, including many articles by James Thomson ("B.V.").

* * *

Most philosophers have smoked since tobacco came in, and many poets. No doubt Shakespeare did, though he does not mention tobacco anywhere; but that is not surprising when we remember that he did not, like Ben Jonson, paint the humors of his age. Plenty of smoking, as well as reasonable good drinking, went on at the Mermaid Tavern, where the poets and wits of the time gathered under the ægis of rare old Ben. In our own day Tennyson, our most consummate poetical artist, if not our greatest poet, was an inveterate smoker, like his great friend Carlyle; and it didn't kill him, for he lived to a fine old age; nor assuredly did it cloud the exquisite clarity of his verse. Mr. Swinburne, however, is said to abhor smoking in every form. There is an old story, which Mr. Hutchison repeats, of Swinburne's going into the Arts Club and vainly trying to find a room not filled with smokers, and delivering himself with characteristic emphasis as follows: "James the First was a knave, a tyrant, a fool, a liar, a coward; but I love him, I worship him, because he slit the throat of that blackguard Raleigh, who invented this filthy smoking."

* * *

There is no verse from Dekker, the Elizabethan dramatist and satirist, in this anthology; but what a fine simile (in its way) of his appears in Mr. Hutchison's introduction—"that lean tawny face tobacconist, Death, that turns all into smoke." One of the best pieces in praise of the "divine herb," as Spenser called it, is by an anonymous poet of the time of James the First, the monarch who was so hot against smoking and witchcraft. These are the concluding lines:—

> All goods, all pleasures it in one can link—
> 'Tis physic, clothing, music, meat, and drink.
> Gods would have revelled at their feasts of mirth
> With this pure distillation of the earth;
> The marrow of the world, star of the West,
> The pearl whereby this lower orb is blest;
> The joy of mortals, umpire of all strife,
> Delight of nature, mythridate of life;
> The daintiest dish of a delicious feast,
> By taking which man differs from a beast.

That last line is triumphant.

* * *

Charles Lamb's "Farewell to Tobacco" is here too, and it bears the bell. Of the many other pieces we have not room to speak. We must conclude by recommending this pretty little volume—its price is only a shilling—to all smokers who read this journal. It is a book to keep by them, and to dip into now and then, when more serious reading palls, or when the smoker watches the white wreaths from pipe or cigar, and, like Walt Whitman, loafs and invites his soul.

* * *

Some authors seem to be actuated by a passion for humanity. Ouida has written an eloquent letter to the *Daily News* denouncing the abominable treatment of the Italian political prisoners, recalling the worst features of the time of Bomba of Naples. We hope her letter will attract widespread attention.

* * *

Ouida is a Freethinker, and, like Zola, is a living proof that courage and nobility of character may be found in persons entirely destitute of religion.

* * *

Thomas Hardy issued a volume of verse at the outset of his literary career, which is now out of print, and rare. He is at present engaged in correcting the proofs of a new edition of his poetry, which will be published by Harper.

* * *

That excellent and almost indispensable publication, *The Index to the Periodicals*, issued by the *Review of Reviews*, is now in its eighth volume, just published. The new volume covers the year 1897, and the fact that it does not appear till we are far advanced in the succeeding year is due to the tremendous labor involved in its compilation. This publication is of inestimable value to the student and writer, for its classification enables one to see together in one place all the articles on any subject one wishes to get up, with cross references to kindred topics.

* * *

Dr. Paul Carus, editor of the *Open Court*, an excellent Monist monthly published at Chicago, sends us a handsomely-got-up song of his, set to music, on "The Anglo-Saxon Alliance." We don't keep a musical critic, so we do not give an opinion of the work of Dr. Carus's colleague. His own sentiments are admirable, but his verses are not. We hope he will not make further attempts in this unfortunate direction. When he writes prose he is interesting and instructive.

* * *

The *Literary Guide* for October contains some very good reading. Its leading articles are able and suggestive, and its paragraphs bright and interesting. Mr. F. J. Gould contributes an entertaining interview with himself, which is by no means the least valuable of his "Book Chats." The literary supplement is a good summary of Mr. Herbert Spencer's fourth part of the *Principles of Ethics*, done by Mr. C. T. Gorham.

### Agitation.

> Be this distinctly, wholly understood,
> Men must be agitated for their good;
> Grapes must be trodden first, and grain be ground,
> Ere wine be looked for, or ere bread be found.
> Though some opinions we are apt to shy at,
> Opinion hurts not truth, though it run riot;
> It's error always begs and prays for quiet.
> And aught that men do glorious or right
> They do with heart, with ardor, and with might.
>
> —*Philip James Bailey*, "*The Age*."

### Her Superiority.

"Why is it that women always lay so much more stress than men do upon the value of a pedigree?"

"They inherit it from Eve, I guess."

"From Eve? I don't see what she had to boast of in that line."

"It wasn't much, but she wasn't made out of clay, while Adam was, and I'll bet she never got through reminding him of her superior origin."—*Chicago News*.

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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, W. Heaford, "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, The Lyric Musical Comedy Company in the musical burlesque, "The Naughty Nautical Girl."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, Entertainment and Dance.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Stanton Coit, "The Power that Saves."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "Sir W. Crookes on Telepathy."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "The Ethics of Marriage." Peckham Rye: 8.15, Mr. Newland.

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, E. Pack, "Trisecting the Trinity." Peckham Rye: 8.15, E. Pack, "An Expurgated Bible."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, Stanley Jones; 7, A lecture. October 5, at 8, A lecture.

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, A lecture. October 4, at 8, A lecture.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, Debate between Messrs. R. P. Edwards and Sandover, "The Moral Ethics of Christianity the Salvation of Humanity."

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): 7, A. Scrimshire, Recital of Shakespeare's "Henry VIII."; Musical interludes by Social Bohemian Choir.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): C. Watts—11, "Morality and Religion: Which?"; 7, "The Cradle, the Altar, and the Tomb."

DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, W. G. Tunley, An Essay on "Jude the Obscure."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): G. W. Foote—11.30, 2.30, and 6.30.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Concert, arranged by Mr. Lowe.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Roberts, "Materialism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Mrs. Hodgson Bayfield, "Women, Lunatics, Minors, and Paupers."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): H. P. Ward—11, "The Law of Population"; 8, "Why Does Christianity Last?"; 7, "Why I am an Atheist." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Important business meeting.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—October 2, Motherwell; 5, Wishaw; 9, Glasgow; 16, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 23, Sheffield; 26, 27, 28, Derby; 30, Leicester. November 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London; 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester. November 30 and December 1, Failsworth. December 4, Manchester.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—October 2, Sheffield; 16, Birmingham. November 27, Liverpool. December 18, Birmingham.

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**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

VOL. XVIII.—No. 41. SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1898. PRICE TWOPENCE.


## HOLY RUSSIA.

INDEFATIGABLE, if not profound, Mr. W. T. Stead has projected a "Russian Library" for English readers, and the first volume was published as he left London for a tour of the capitals of Europe, in order to gather impressions as to the reception of the Czar's manifesto. This volume is entitled *Reflections of a Russian Statesman*, the said statesman being K. P. Pobyedonosteeff, whose terrible name we cannot venture to repeat, partly for our own sake, and partly for that of the printer. He is Procurator of the Holy Synod of Russia, and is thus a representative person. His views and opinions are naturally interesting to thoughtful people in these Western islands, who will be glad to learn what is in the minds of those who sway the destinies of the vast, dim populations of the great Eastern autocracy. We have read something of what the more advanced Russians are thinking, and now we have an opportunity of hearing something from the conservative side. We are therefore thankful to Mr. Stead for issuing this volume. Nor must we omit a word of thanks to the translator, Mr. Robert Crozier Long, who seems to have done his work admirably. His pure and strong English is everywhere adapted to the peculiar tone—if we may so express it—of the original; a fact which is obvious to a discriminating reader, even if he happens to know not a single word of the Russian language.

Madame Olga Novikoff ("O. K.") contributes a Preface to this book. She tells us that her friend, the late Mr. Kinglake, the voluminous historian of the Crimean War, and author of that most charming book of travels called *Eothen*, once asked her to write on "The Fall of Parliamentary Government." Mr. Froude also urged her to do it, but the task was beyond her power. "But that difficult task," she says, "was undertaken by a Russian, who possesses all the scientific qualifications for such an examination." His work has been translated into German, French, and Italian, and is now translated into English. This gentleman was tutor to the late Czar, Alexander III., on whose death he was called to the high position he now occupies, which is "tantamount to that of Cabinet Minister." His name, according to Madame Novikoff, is familiar throughout Europe.

> "It stands for Religion as opposed to Atheism, for Orthodoxy as opposed to Romanism on one hand and Protestantism on the other, and for Authority as opposed to Anarchy. In him all the irreligious forces of modern Nihilism, as well as the theological quacks, with their sham remedies for the ills of the soul, have long recognised the supreme embodiment of all the principles against which they wage unceasing war."

We have read this book through attentively, and we confess to a prepossession in the author's favor. He appears to be a high-minded man, who has thought out his own intellectual position; and he writes with a noticeable gravity, as though he always felt the weight of the issues at stake. Moreover, he is not a Conservative of the ultra-repressive school. We should say that he is a distinguished representative of the better side of the old-fashioned life of Russia. His criticism of Democracy is shrewd and sagacious. He hits many of its weak places with force and precision. He also points out that it has had a very short life as yet, that it is really on its trial, and that it need not shout too loudly until time and experience have demonstrated its value and durability. Madame Novikoff expects that English readers will be scandalised by his arguments and declarations. But we do not see why they should be. Russia is a very large and powerful nation; it is better to try to understand her than to indulge in mere hatred and denunciation; and the most diverse opinions on human life stand a better chance of coming to a final agreement under the ægis of truth, if they face each other in a spirit of intellectual hospitality.

Certainly this eminent Russian goes to the root of the matter. He sees very clearly that a sapping of the old religious principles is at the basis of the Western revolt against class privilege and unrepresentative authority. His opening chapter is therefore on Church and State. "However powerful the State may be," he says, "its power is based alone upon identity of religious profession with the people; the faith of the people sustains it; when discord once appears to weaken this identity, its foundations are sapped, its power dissolves away." Freethinkers everywhere demand the absolute separation of Church and State. But this writer holds that "the moral principle is never stedfast, and it loses its fundamental base, when it is bereft of the sanction of religion." And this cohesive force is lost to every State that cuts itself loose from all religious belief. The demand for a "Free Church in a Free State" embodies the principle of religious indifferentism, and really involves a contempt for religion as effete; whereas religion, and, above all, Christianity, is "the source of every right in political and social life, and of all true culture." Of course we need not pause to refute this; our readers are well aware of its fallacy. We proceed to the author's observation that, even when the State remains neutral, some particular Church will gain ascendancy by being more suitable to the general character of the people. The Church of England has gained, rather than lost, since religious freedom was granted to Catholics and Nonconformists, and "the Roman Catholic is rapidly becoming the dominant Church in America." Our author argues, therefore, that unless the State allies itself with the predominant Church, and uses it for political and social purposes, the predominant Church will endeavor to use the State for *its* purposes; and the result will be either a clerical tyranny or a revolution. Now, that there is something in this we do not deny. There is a real danger, but we think this writer exaggerates it. Relatively to each of the rest, one Church might be tremendously powerful; but a combination of all the rest against it might well suffice to keep it in check; and it must be remembered that religious equality always leads to the multiplication of sects.

Our author denies that freedom and equality are identical,



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or even dependent upon each other; and this is the prelude to a smart attack on the New Democracy. Freedom, in the democratic sense of the word, he says, is the right to participate in the government of the State. You give every man a vote, and you imagine that all men are equal. But they are not. Each vote represents an insignificant fragment of power; by itself it is utterly useless; but "he who controls a number of these fragmentary forces is master of all power, and directs all decisions and dispositions." The real rulers in Democracy are the skilful manipulators of votes with their placemen. Their instruments are organisation, bribery, and what is called eloquence, which is often associated with ignorance and superficiality. Unlimited flattery of the crowd is universal. Parliaments are elected to represent the people, but they really represent a majority, and sometimes a bare majority. Votes in Parliament are not affected by speeches, which are part of the show intended to amuse the masses; the votes are absolutely commanded by the party managers. As for the press, our author holds it in utter contempt. Journalists are not even elected, they serve private proprietors of newspapers, individuals or syndicates; they may be ever so ignorant, ever so shallow, and ever so disreputable; it is enough if they can write in a taking way, and flatter the prejudices and passions of their readers. They are also irresponsible, and after they have fomented enmities, paved the way for revolutions, and brought about desolating wars, no one can bring them to book. A minister may be impeached, disgraced, and punished, but a journalist is as free as air, and has no fear of consequences. Often he is personally unknown, being merged in the identity of a journal, which is nothing to the world by a name. G. W. FOOTE.

*(To be concluded.)*

## CHRISTIANITY AND FEAR.

THAT fear is a prominent feature in New Testament Christianity, and that it played an important part in its introduction and development, every impartial student of the Bible and of general history must admit. Both the Old and New Testaments contain many such passages as: "Fear God and keep his commandments," "It shall be well with them that fear God," "His mercy is on them that fear him." The dread of punishment is the predominating powers in orthodoxy. If the Christian faith gives its believers the hope of heaven to buoy them up, it also gives them the fear of hell to cast them down. The one is quite as certain as the other. As soon as the child of a professed orthodox Christian begins to lisp at its mother's knee its young mind is impressed with the notion that there is a "Heaven to gain and a Hell to avoid," and frequently its happiness is marred by gloomy imaginings of a being who is represented as sowing the seeds of discord and unhappiness among society, who has frowns for those who smile through life, and whose chief business is to crush and awe the human mind with fear. In the case of the more intelligent and "advanced" professors of Christianity the fear of the devil and hell has ceased to trouble them. Still, the New Testament teaches these figments as realities. Popular preachers of the Spurgeon and Talmage type recognise this fact, hence their favorite topics are "hell fire," "the wrath of God," "everlasting torments," etc. These are the subjects selected by the leaders of the Salvation Army to frighten their victims into mental slavery. Fear is the Christians' "trump card," and by them it is played at almost every opportunity.

Dr. Schwartz remarks: "A religion without mystery and legend, which does not appeal to the sense of awe and wonder, would not long survive its birth, supposing it had by some accident sprung into existence" (*Church Gazette*, Sept. 24, 1898). The writer of the Acts (11–43) tells us that at the first batch of converts to Christianity "fear came upon every soul." Lecky says, in his *History of European Morals*, that "Christianity floated into the Roman Empire on the wave of credulity that brought with it a long train of superstitions and legends." Further, he alleges Christianity "proclaimed with a thrilling power the immediate destruction of the globe—the glory of all its friends and the damnation of all its foes" (vol. i., pp. 397, 412). Mosheim, in writing of the fourth century, observes: "There is no doubt but that the victories of Constantine the Great, the fear of punishment, and the desire of pleasing this mighty conqueror and his imperial successors were the weighty arguments that moved whole nations, as well as particular persons, to embrace Christianity.....Multitudes were drawn to the profession of Christianity, not by the power of conviction and argument, but by the prospect of gain and the fear of punishment" (*Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 91, 102). This is equally true of thousands of the adherents to the religion of the Cross to-day. Reason has little or no part in their decision to "embrace Christianity." They are rather influenced with fear inspired by reading in the New Testament that the time will arrive when "the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction," etc. As if this were not enough to "harrow up thy soul," they are told in the "nightmare" of "St. John the divine" that at some future period, amidst the eruptions of mountains, the flashing of lightning, and the roar of thunder, while the stars are descending, the sun darkening, and the moon being converted into blood, the majority of mankind are to be exposed to the severest torture it is possible for the most barbarous nature to conceive.

We have been induced to deal with this subject through reading an article under the heading of "Fear in Religion" which appeared in the *Christian World*, dated Sept. 22, from the well-known pen of that able writer who signs himself "J. B." He is the principal contributor to our religious contemporary, and is, we believe, a retired clergyman. He would regard himself as one of the most "advanced Christians" of our time. In his article he admits that fear has predominated in the religions of the past. For instance, he writes: "Man's earliest impressions of religion carried with them undoubtedly a large element of terror. *Timor fecit Deos*, 'fear made the Gods,' says Statius, and the statement has its truth. The sense that he was in the hands of vast unknown powers, which might at any time become fatally hostile to him, was the impression on the savage which first drove him to prayer and sacrifice. The gleam of the lightning, the roar of the thunder, were to him certain indications of supernal wrath. In religion terror came first and love last. Everywhere in the early world, as in the primitive races which represent it to-day, the feeling seems to have been that man's fate was in the hands of hostile rather than benevolent powers, and that his pressing business was to placate them, or protect himself from them. The Dyaks of to-day, after an illness, change their names so that the demon who sent it may not recognise them and continue his persecutions. Modern anthropology is full of similar illustrations. The later Pagan philosophy, both of Greece and Rome, reached what it conceived to be its highest achievement in ridding the mind of these fears. Lucian turns them into a jest; while perhaps the best-quoted line in all Roman literature describes 'the happy man' as 'he who could put all fears and inexorable fate under his feet.' But the element of fear which classic philosophy sought to eliminate came back into the world through Christianity." Just so; this is what we contend—namely, that Christianity is a religion of fear. But "J. B." will not admit that it is so—that is, as he understands the Christian faith. Yet he asks: "But what of the New Testament appeal to fear? Is not the book full of warning; is not hell in its list of contents; and have not those preachers and those Churches been most successful who have most insisted on this side of its teaching? If we answer these questions in the affirmative, as we find ourselves compelled to do, where is the reconciliation between such a position and those others we have just been urging?" The position that he had been urging is this: That the "supreme Gospel," offered to man in the New Testament, "is that God is Love. But if God is Love anywhere He is Love everywhere, as much in the place called hell as in the place called heaven; as much the moment after a man's death as the moment before it. To imagine it possible that because the breath is out of a man's

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body the Providence which hitherto has cherished him should suddenly become his torturer, with mocking fiends for executioners, is as reasonable as to suppose that a mother, because her child has fallen asleep, should straightway cease to be a mother, and change into a murderess. The heart, which Schleiermacher says is the true theologian, will not permit such conclusions as these."

Now, if there be a God, we quite agree with what is here said about him, with one exception; but the opinion of "J. B." of what God should be is based upon the promptings of humanity, not the teachings of theology. The exception which we take is, that "God is love in the place called hell." No loving father, if he had the power to prevent it, would permit a hell to exist; yet "J. B." admits that the New Testament teaches that there is such a "place." According to this "supreme Gospel," its God is not simply a "loving Father," but in many instances a partial and cruel tyrant, who resorts to the demon fear to enforce his decrees. He has so arranged his plans that the few are saved and the many damned. "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. xxii. 14). At the "last judgment" all nations are to be separated "one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats," and those who are on the left hand will receive the "glad tidings," "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." "The children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Matt. xxv. 41; viii. 12; Mark xvi. 16). Surely these heartless declarations do not prove that the New Testament portrays a "God of love."

The fact is, "J. B.," like many other "advanced Christians," retains the name, but puts an entirely new interpretation upon its meaning. This may be laudable as a human effort, but it is not logical upon the part of those who profess to accept the New Testament as the basis of their religious belief. That book is their authority, and to its teachings they must bow, or give up their profession and endorse a faith which is the outcome of intellectual development and cultivated humanity. One of the great advantages of Secularism is, that it has no angry God to fear, no hell to appal, and no devil to inflict torture. Its incentive to right conduct is unalloyed with the fear of everlasting misery. *Its inducement* to virtue rests upon the desire to alleviate *human* woe, to lessen the evils of society, and to aid the progress of the human family. CHARLES WATTS.

## AFFIRMING GOD.

AN anonymous friend, interested, no doubt, in my spiritual welfare, sent me recently a small volume of lectures on *Positive Aspects of Unitarian Christianity*, accompanied by a courteous request that I would read the book at the earliest opportunity. The present article will be ample evidence that I have carried out the wish of the sender in this respect, although I am afraid the result of the reading has hardly produced the effect anticipated. The perusal of an opponent's argument seldom leaves a man in the same mental condition that it found him. If it does not modify his convictions, it usually confirms them, and in the present case the only result I can perceive is in the latter direction.

There is no need for me to dwell upon the many points Unitarians hold in common with Secularists, such as the rejection of revelation, of the divinity of Jesus, or of the belief in eternal damnation; the main bone of contention is contained in the opening essay by Mr. R. A. Armstrong, B.A., a Liverpool clergyman, of whom the local Secularists speak with the highest respect. Moreover, as this essay has been pencil-marked by the sender, I assume that it is this portion of the volume that I am specially desired to pay attention to.

Mr. Armstrong's essay bears the title, "The Affirmation of God," and its position is laid down in the following confession of faith:—

> "I hold that by three distinct faculties, if only we will trust them, we may know God with the most unequivocal certainty of knowledge. First, by that law of our minds which compels us to postulate Will as the fundamental cause of phenomena; secondly, and more clearly, by His unmistakable voice in the declaration to us of the moral law; thirdly, and this most intimately of all, by His revelation of His love to us either through the beautiful or sublime that meets our eye or ear, or immediately by the sheer speech of the Holy Spirit."

These assertions certainly lack nothing on the score of emphasis. It remains to be seen by what evidence they are supported.

Before taking these arguments in their order, however, there is one general observation called for, and one that has important bearings on the whole subject of Theism. Like most Theists, Mr. Armstrong lays stress upon the supposed universality of the belief in God, oblivious of the fact that what is universal is not the belief in deity, few or many, but the existence of a mental disposition which attributes to the phenomena around it inclinations and passions similar to its own. And this is a perfectly natural occurrence. Given the constitution of the human mind, and the development of religious beliefs at one stage of its development is an absolute necessity. One has only to note in the case of children how naturally and spontaneously they transfer their own feelings to the inanimate objects around them, petting them when pleased, chiding them when angry, to see how deeply engrained this fetishistic impulse is. Imagine the child grown to a man, but with the same mental outfit, and it requires but little reflection to understand how the savage came to read will and intelligence into the phenomena around him by the operation of the same causes that lead the child to give life and intelligence to its playthings.

Again, place a dozen savages in front of a phonograph, and each of them, destitute of any idea as to its real nature, will at once picture the machine as animated by a being similar to himself. Conceive the whole of the people in the same mental condition, face to face with the larger and more complex machinery of the universe, and again the same substantial conclusion is reached. The idea of God, therefore, like the belief in miracles or fairies, simply represents to the student stages in the long line of human development. It is not even the idea of God that is universal; all that is universal is the existence of a type of mind which inevitably reads itself into nature. The human mind, fundamentally the same under all conditions, placed in contact with the same general class of facts, naturally arrives at the same conclusions concerning them, without this substantial agreement being any proof of its accuracy.

Mr. Armstrong sees quite clearly that these primitive conclusions were inaccurate, and in addition points out that there has been a constant shrinkage in the area of the God idea (so to speak), side by side with the development of knowledge; but, instead of coming to any rational conclusion on the matter, contends that, while the form in which the idea was clothed was wrong, "the essence of the idea was right." But, to my mind, the "essence" of primitive theology *was* quite accurately expressed in the formulas that modern thought sees reason to reject. The conception of a spiritual power, as modern believers understand the term, was quite deficient in primitive man; it may even be contended that the idea of creation is a comparatively late growth. To him the world appears to have been just a bundle of forces similar to himself, only of a much larger pattern; and it is simply absurd of Theists to talk of what was "contained in primitive religious ideas" as though our savage ancestors were Hegelian metaphysicians, planning a universe, as the nigger made his wooden idol, out of his own head. All that we are justified in saying was contained in the early religious ideas is all that those who framed them saw there. But it is downright dishonest to take a formula, and, because it admits of having a wider meaning attached to it than its creators conceived, to say that *therefore* the larger thought was *contained* in it. It is nearly always possible to give a generalisation a much wider application than it originally bore; but this was not contained in it, it is something that we put in it, or find capable of expressing by the old order of words.

Apart from this criticism, Mr. Armstrong's first line of evidence is, it will be observed, the identity of all force with the will power of man. The tendency of science, he points out, is towards the recognition of but one force in the universe, with infinite combinations. But we are told: "I find a law quite unmistakable in my mind, that.....as I know that it is Will that causes my own personal deeds, the only phenomena behind which I can get to see the cause, so also can I conceive no other but that Will also causes all other motion, whatsoever be it.....the motion of the daisy petal, of the attracted steel, of the marshalled molecules of gas, of.....the meteor that shoots athwart the

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sky, or the giant sun revolving in the remotest chambers of the heavens."

Now, as a matter of fact, we do not *know* that it is will that causes human actions. Will as an entity *causing* actions is a pure assumption, and an unjustifiable one to boot. All that we actually know on the subject is that certain actions occur; one or more motives prompt that action, and it is the motives that emerge in action that we characterise as will, not an entity dominating action like a Grand Pasha ordering his slaves. Will, apart from action or motives to action, Mr. Armstrong *knows* nothing at all about—whatever pious opinions he may entertain on the subject.

And still less justifiable is it to assume that two sets of phenomena so widely dissimilar as human conduct and the phenomena of external nature are produced by the same causes. It is justifiable to assume that Smith, Brown, and Robertson are animated by the same feelings that animate myself, because their conduct agrees in its general characteristics with my own; but "the marshalled molecules of gas," etc., etc., cannot possibly be ranked in the same class of facts as human actions, and, therefore, cannot reasonably be referred to the same causes for their production. Mr. Armstrong's logic on the subject is as defective as his psychology.

The second line of defence is that derived from the supposed authority of conscience. "We need not trace its history," he says, thus closing the only line of inquiry likely to be of any real value; "the command, the prohibition, the approval, the rebuke, so clearly bear the mark of communication from some other than ourself that all ages have so interpreted them. They have ever been felt to be the utterance of a law and its sanctions, not of the man's own making. Whence then?.....Irresistible impulse replies, 'From God.'" Well, if Mr. Armstrong's impulses lead him to that conclusion, I can only regret that they are not of a more governable character. For my part I have no such "irresistible impulse," and can only marvel that a man of education can, after the research of the last half-century, continue to speak of conscience in such a strain. It appears to me to be almost in the nature of a commonplace that what we call conscience is the result partly of hereditary tendencies, partly of the individual education and general environment. Far from conscience representing the voice of an infallible authority, it is one of the tasks of all educationalists to school and tutor the conscience of man to act in a proper manner. Conscience will lead one man to die for the establishment of a belief that another man will sacrifice himself to destroy; and both, if Mr. Armstrong is correct, will be obeying the "voice of God speaking through the human conscience." Besides, conscience for conscience, that of one man's is as good as that of another's, and my conscience, which does not convey to me any impression of God, is quite as valuable in evidence as the opposite testimony of a Unitarian preacher.

But all this, says Mr. Armstrong, is insufficient to prove God; there is required in addition the perception of the presence of love in the universe. "The voices of the rosebud in the hedge, of the stream that gurgles down the shadowy vale, the mountain peak that throws back from its snowy crest the roseate light of the declining sun,.....of the little birds that make air tremulous with their song, .....the voices of all these carry knowledge that love is the law by which all things move." And again: "God sends the sunlight glancing about your hair, He moves the energising blood through the channels of your body, He ripens each individual grain that goes to make the food you eat.....All this we know by strictest science."

Now the absurdity of this style of argument is best shown by reversing the terms, thus: The voice of such vegetable poisons that madden and destroy human life, the roar of the swollen torrent, which, coming like a thief in the night, sweeps away hundreds of families in the twinkling of an eye; the frowning mountain ready to hurl from its side the mighty avalanche which sweeps all before it, or the volcanic outburst that buries cities in its awful grip; the howls of wild beasts eager to devour, or the groans of human agony that make the air vibrate with its throbs of pain—the voices of all these carry knowledge that malignity is the law by which all things move. God sends the flames of fever dancing through your blood, He moves the deadly poison with lightning speed through the channels of your body, He destroys the harvest with his storms and blights it with his heat, and thus robs men, women, and children of the wherewithal to live. All this we know by strictest science.

Of course it will be said that this is a one-sided picture, but is it more so than Mr. Armstrong's? Can anyone tell me why we should not credit God—if God there be—with the bad in the world as well as praise him for the good? Even Professor Knight, in that curiously contradictory volume of his, *Aspects of Theism*, is cute enough to admit that "If the constructor of the universe designed anything by the agency he has established, he must have designed all the results that actually emerge.....If, therefore, the inference of benevolence is valid, the inference of malevolence is at least equally valid; and, as equal and opposite, the one notion destroys the other." Mr. Armstrong does not even attempt to deal with the question of evil in the world; he passes it by altogether, as though it had no bearing upon the point at issue, or was not important enough to merit serious discussion.

In brief, Mr. Armstrong's "Affirmation of God" is an affirmation pure and simple. Anything in the nature of a really serious argument upon the subject is conspicuous by its absence. His idea of God is just upon all fours with that of the orthodox believer, and is not even stated with the force present in many orthodox treatises. And the crowning absurdity of his whole position is this: he sees clearly enough the primitive mental condition in which this idea originated; he sees also that there has been a constant weakening of it in the face of advancing knowledge; he rejects, as we all reject, the conception of the world entertained by early man, and upon which religions were founded; the premises are rejected as untenable, the conclusions are retained as genuine; and thus we are brought face to face with the spectacle of an educated man championing a belief which, in its essence, represents a set of conclusions derived from data that are confessedly erroneous.

C. COHEN.

## JEREMY TAYLOR'S "LIBERTY OF PROPHESYING."

WHILE Milton's *Areopagitica* was stirring the public mind, Jeremy Taylor was meditating his *Liberty of Prophesying*. This eloquent theologian was a clergyman of the Church of England. Of all her really great preachers (we except Butler as not specially claiming that title) he was the only one who attained to the dignity of a Bishop, and it is noteworthy that *his* bishopric was one of the poorest in the kingdom. Thus has our State Church rewarded its noblest sons, whose genius is now the only thing that reflects any glory upon her history! Taylor's mind was certainly not as strong as Milton's, nor do we ever, in all his multitudinous pages, meet with one of those spirit-stirring passages that move us like the high, clear notes of a clarion. He was more impetuous and diffuse; he lacked the poet's sense of form and logicality; and without a controlling logic the finest style is impossible. Perhaps the best comparison between Milton and Taylor has been furnished by Coleridge, than whom there is, on the whole, no saner and surer critic:—

> "Milton, austere, condensed, imaginative, supporting his truth by direct enunciation of lofty moral sentiment and by distinct visual representations, and in the same spirit overwhelming what he deemed falsehood by moral denunciation and a succession of pictures appalling or repulsive. In his prose, so many metaphors, so many allegorical miniatures. Taylor, eminently discursive, accumulative, and (to use one of his own words) agglomerative; still more rich in images than Milton himself, but images of fancy, and presented to the common and passive eye, rather than to the eye of the imagination. Whether supporting or assailing, he makes his way either by argument or by appeals to the affections, unsurpassed even by the schoolmen in subtlety, agility, and logic wit, and unrivalled by the most rhetorical of the fathers in the copiousness and vividness of his expressions and illustrations. Here words that convey feelings, and words that flash images, and words of abstract notion, flow together, and whirl and rush onward like a stream, at once rapid and full of eddies; and yet still interfused here and there, we see a tongue or islet of smooth water, with some picture in it of earth or sky, landscape or living group of quiet beauty."*

* S. T. Coleridge, Preface to *Fire, Famine, and Slaughter.*

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After this superb criticism, which will be best appreciated by those who are best acquainted with the writers who are its subject, it only remains to say that Taylor was a living encyclopædia of book-learning. His quotations, references, and allusions are fetched from all points of the compass.

Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying* was published in 1647, nearly three years after Milton's *Areopagitica*. It was evidently written during the early troubles of the Civil War. In his dedication to Lord Hatton, Taylor says: "In the great storm, which hath dashed the vessel of the Church all in pieces, I have been cast upon the coast of Wales." He goes on to say that there also he "broke cable and lost anchor." This has been taken to mean that he suffered imprisonment, and from other remarks it has been inferred that his life was endangered; but these suppositions may be regarded as groundless, for there is not a scrap of positive evidence to support them. It is not likely that Taylor would have left the fact of his imprisonment, if it were a fact, to remain in uncertainty of obscurity after the Restoration, when it would have spoken in his favor to the spiritual and temporal powers. This matter is not so unimportant as it seems, for to some extent it affects the question of Taylor's sincerity. His enemies have said that his plea for toleration was prompted partly by his own sense of peril, and if the *fact* is denied there is no need to confute the inference. His other motive is, by the same parties, alleged to have been a desire to gain breathing-room for episcopacy. Orme, in his *Life of Owen*, says Taylor "was then pleading for toleration to episcopacy. With the return of monarchy, Taylor emerged from obscurity, wrote no more on the 'Liberty of Prophesying,' and was made a member of the Privy Council of Charles II., from which all the persecuting edicts against the poor Nonconformists proceeded." But Bishop Heber points out that Taylor was a member of the *Irish* Privy Council, that "there is no reason to suppose that he took part in the measures of any administration," and that the administration of Ireland did *not* persecute the Dissenters. Milton has said of himself that "in his whole life he never spoke against a man even that his skin might be grazed," and we have no doubt that Taylor could have said the same with equal truth.

The *Liberty of Prophesying* was, according to Taylor, written with a scanty supply of books at hands for reference; but either the treatise does not bear him out, or his memory was prodigious. Hallam says that the work was "the first famous plea, in this country, for tolerance in religion, on a comprehensive basis and on deep-seated foundations."* It was certainly a remarkable composition from the pen of one who had been a friend of Laud, the arch-persecutor of the Puritans. We must also remember that Protestants believed in persecution as heartily as Catholics, only differing from them as to who should be its victims. So late as 1632 the Council of Geneva was so little ashamed of the murder of Servetus that it actually condemned Nicholas Antoine to be strangled and burnt for denying the Trinity. Even our good-natured Church historian, Thomas Fuller, still later in 1650, speaks disapprovingly of the popular sympathy with Legate and Wightman, who were burned by James I. in 1612. Still later than that, Cromwell's puritan parliament busied itself day after day with the question whether James Nayler should be branded and mutilated or burnt, until the great Protector, impatient at their silly bigotry, sent them packing.

To understand Taylor's position we should first glance at his limitations. Milton would not shield from civil penalties what was clearly "against the faith," nor would Taylor. "Whatsoever," he says, "is against the foundation of faith, or contrary to good life and the laws of obedience, or destructive to human society and the public and just interests of bodies politic, is out of the limits of my question, and does not pretend to compliance or toleration; so that I allow no indifferency, nor any countenance to those religions whose principles destroy government, nor to those religions, if there be any such, that teach ill life." Briefly, then, it may be said that Taylor's liberty of prophesying meant the liberty of a private interpretation of Scripture within the lines of the Apostles' Creed. He stands up for "fundamental articles," but in everything else he demands freedom.

Taylor's reasonings, however, carry him a good deal further. He is a signal proof that when a man slips from Popery he is on a declining plane to the bottomless pit of individual liberty. He laughs at those "empirics, that would cut off a man's head if they see but a wart upon his cheek, or a dimple upon his chin, or any lines in his face to distinguish him from another man." Like Milton, he points out that behind all persecution is the assumption of infallibility. Of a victim of bigotry he shrewdly observes: "If he be killed, he is certainly killed; but if he be called a heretic, it is not so certain that he is a heretic." He urges likewise the important truth, which all bigots lose sight of, that "there are, and ever were, and ever will be, variety of opinions, because there is variety of human understandings, and uncertainty in things." Elsewhere he says: "If you bid me follow your doctrine, you must tell me why; and perhaps when you have, I am not able to judge; or if I be as able as other people are, yet, when I have judged, I may be deceived too, and so may you, or any man else you bid me follow."

*Uncertainty* plays a large part in Taylor's reasoning, and he recurs to it with great frequency. Scripture contains "mysteries," there are "so many copies with infinite varieties of reading," and "a various interpunction, a parenthesis, a letter, an accent, may much alter the sense." Then there are literal senses and spiritual senses, tropes, metonymies, ironies, hyperboles, and so much depends on circumstances! Here Taylor was on slippery ground, for the reply was obvious: "If Scripture is so dark and perplexing, how can it be a guide for plain men, and how can they collect from it the true articles of faith?" Taylor asserts that "the articles of the creed are clearly and plainly set down." But those articles were drawn up by the Church, and every one of them has been denied on the authority of Scripture. Coleridge saw Taylor's dilemma clearly. "*The Liberty of Prophesying*," he says, "is a work of wonderful eloquence and skill; but if we believe the argument, what do we come to? Why to nothing more or less than this, that—so much can be said for every opinion and sect,—so impossible is it to settle anything by reasoning or authority of Scripture,—we must appeal to some positive jurisdiction on earth."* In other words, Taylor's argument leads either to popery or freedom. That he inclined to the latter speaks well for his natural tendency.

In his sixteenth section Taylor holds that "to tolerate is not to persecute," and when the matter is stated so simply he thinks it clear that princes (that is, governments) may "tolerate divers persuasions." He reduces the question, in fact, to one of politics, and insists that before heretics are molested it should be clear that "either themselves or their doctrines do really, and without color or feigned pretext, disturb the public peace." He even extends this toleration to Anabaptists on the one side and Roman Catholics on the other. In so doing, he really gives up the whole principle of persecution, which is entirely theological. Suppressing an association, not for its opinions, but because its policy endangers the public peace, may be wrong or foolish in the particular case, but it has nothing to do with the spirit of religious bigotry, the essence of which is compelling others to believe, or profess, what you believe yourself, and making their obstinacy a sin against God.

Curiously, while the *Liberty of Prophesying* came from a Churchman, the answer to it came from a Presbyterian. Samuel Rutherford—Milton's "Scotch what-d'-ye-call"—Professor of Divinity in the University of St. Andrew's, replied with *A Free Disputation Against Pretended Liberty of Conscience*. He argued that ecclesiastical authorities have a divine commission to punish heretics, even with death. To give a man liberty of conscience is to say that conscience is his guide, which is to put conscience in the place of God and the Bible. God's ministers declare truth, and the magistrates must help them to enforce it; and as heretics are murderers of souls, the Church must denounce them, and the magistrates must not suffer them to escape. Rutherford urges that toleration is without authority in the Old or the New Testament. As for the uncertainty of Scripture, he says that God has watched over his word, and suffered no error in copying or translating to affect its infallibility. Rutherford was a typical Scotch Presbyterian. That body wanted no bishops, but every minister was to be a pope. They took to fighting, and Cromwell took the conceit out of them. Since then Time has arbitrated in the controversy, and given a verdict against Samuel Rutherford and all his tribe.

G. W. FOOTE.

* *Literature of Europe*, vol. ii., p. 344.

* *Table Talk* (Murray ed.), p. 92.

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## ADDRESS TO THE MAKER.

*(With apologies to Burns.)*

Oh God, the universal beak,
Who doth command us all to seek
The laws of a creative freak
With Gospel crammed,
And on whose carpet I shall speak,
And p'rhaps be damned.

This faithful missive I indite
To learn who did that Bible write;
Also, I must confess, to spite
The gospel crew.
I half suspect that they are quite
Unknown to you.

Oh sole purveyor of genuine grace,
And boss of every blessed race;
For years a judge without a case;
Celestial Winger,
Is everything we see the trace
O' your fat finger?

I many a day and night did search
To find where such a chap could perch,
And often took the risk of birch
Because I found
The reasons why I went to church
Were far from sound.

Say, did you once yourself betray
In a disgusting human way,
Upon a mountain top one day,
To Holy Moses,
And caused a race to fast and pray,
And wear big noses?

And did you mean good folk to rave
From early manhood to the grave,
About a thing which you could save
With someone's gore;
And pinched your poor created slave
With priestly lore?

And did old charming Nicky sleek,
At Eve and Adam have a peep?
The Book says how it made you weep
To see the ruin.
Good God! you must have been asleep
While it was brewin'.

When I was young and chicken-hearted,
They told me how all things had started,
And where the dead would all be quartered.
With stiffened hairs,
I often meet with souls departed,
Upon our stairs.

I feared that varmint Nicholas,
And all the gentry of his class.
One night I dreamt that they would pass,
All crying death;
And almost smelt the hellish gas
Of Nicky's breath.

Is it a fact, most holy joker,
That you retain that sturdy stoker,
Whose combination fork and poker
Makes savory food
Of every infidel invoker
Of heaven's brood?

But there, I thought you were a tender,
Good, kind old love-and-mercy blender.
Is it because you have no gender,
And in that oven
Cook souls that will not homage render
To things unproven?

Old man, say is it all a cram
'Bout Adam, Eve, and Abraham?
And Noah, Moses, David, Sam—
Do they speak true?
They've spread such thick, suspicious jam
All over you.

A. S. V.

## A Lonesome Place.

Mamma—"It is very naughty to tell lies, Eva. People who do so don't go to heaven."

Eva—"Did you ever tell a lie, mamma?"

Mamma—"No, dear, never."

Eva—"Won't you be fearful lonely in heaven, mamma, with only George Washington?"—*Oswego Daily Palladium.*

## THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

Report of monthly Executive meeting held at the Society's offices on Thursday, September 29 (the President in the chair). Present:—Messrs. E. Bater, C. Cohen, R. Forder, T. Gorniot, S. Hartmann, C. Watts, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, E. W. Quay, C. Quinton, M. Loafer, W. Leate, B. Munton, H. Brown (Auditor), and the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting and those of the sub-committee were read and confirmed, and the cash statement was received.

The Secretary, on behalf of the Committee, reported a highly successful Children's Excursion, and hoped to be in a position by next meeting to announce that the donations had covered the expenditure.

The President reported upon the demonstrations he had recently arranged in Victoria, Finsbury, Regent's, and Hyde Parks, Clerkenwell Green, and Peckham Rye. Notwithstanding the fact that counter demonstrations had been got up by our opponents, who conducted their meetings after the fashion of showmen, and the impossibility of making collections (in consequence of park regulations) at two of the best meeting places, it was gratifying to learn that the collections amounted to £6 8s. In addition to giving his own services at each meeting, the President made up the amount required to pay the lecturers their usual fees.

On the motion of Mr. Bater, seconded by Mr. Gorniot, it was resolved to issue a Secular Almanack for 1899; and at the request of the meeting Mr. Foote kindly undertook the editorial responsibility.

Mr. Forder reported a large out-door meeting, addressed by himself and local friends, in Yarmouth recently. Much interest had been evoked, and it was suggested that Mr. Forder should be asked to revisit that town, on behalf of the Propaganda Committee, at an early date.

Mr. Heaford called attention to the disorderly behavior of a certain section of Christian opponents on Peckham Rye. The general opinion, after discussion, was that the matter was one to be dealt with by the Camberwell Branch, unless application be made to the Executive for assistance.

The meeting then adjourned.

Edith M. Vance, *Secretary.*

## ACID DROPS.

"Father" Black, at the Church Congress, protested against Bishop Barry being allowed to speak. His protest ran as follows: "My Lord Bishop Barry has recently, by the hands of his curate, married in the church of St. James, Piccadilly, a person whose canonical spouse is living. Publicly called upon to explain or apologise, he has done neither. As a Churchman, I therefore protest against his being heard here, because he has set aside the morality of the Church of which he is an officer. As an Englishman, I protest, in spite of the widespread dishonor of the times which lends countenance to these things, against his speaking here, because he has betrayed the trust he was pledged to fulfil. It is, I maintain, indecent that Bishop Barry should come forward to tell the Churchmen of England their duty, and your lordship will, I trust, refuse him a hearing."

This is a protest against a clergyman of the Church of England for obeying the law of England, and it shows what arrogance prevails in High Church circles. However, it came to nothing. The president took no notice of it, and Bishop Barry went on with his address. The more level heads in the Church know very well what must be the result of a revolt of the parsons against the laws enacted by Parliament.

Mr. George Hawkins, a working-man speaker at one of the Bradford meetings in connection with the Church Congress, denounced the immoral practices of manufacturers, and even complained that "Bibles and Prayer Books were manufactured under unfair conditions." This is a well-known fact, and the clergy should get it altered before they lecture the world at large on the "evils of commercialism."

What awful idiocy often passes in the name of religion! We notice in the *Cork Constitution* a report of the opening meeting of the Cork Convention for the Deepening of Spiritual Life. One of the speakers was the Rev. George Saltau. This gentleman ought to take the first prize for imbecility in any free and open competition. By way of illustrating the necessity of belief and obedience, he told a story of a young lady in Australia who was fastening a silver buckle to her waistband on Sunday morning, when she distinctly heard the voice of the Lord say: "Don't wear that buckle." Still she wore it, and "all the former brightness of her life left her." Fancy this sort of thing being supposed to tend towards the deepening of spiritual life!

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After all, though, it is worthy of the creed which damns most of the human race because Eve ate that apple.

Colonel Picquart is a prisoner in the hands of the French military party, and their notion of justice is that he shall be subjected, before trial, to the most infamous mental torture, and even be refused access to his legal adviser. He is kept *au secret*—in other words, only his enemies and persecutors are permitted to approach him. That is the penalty he has to pay for his sympathy with the unfortunate Dreyfus.

Now look on another picture. Madame Paulmier, who is an Anti-Dreyfusard deputy's wife, feels aggrieved at something that appeared in the *Lanterne*, which is in favor of justice to the prisoner on the Devil's Island. Her husband being away, she resolves to act in his stead; so she goes to the *Lanterne* office and asks to see the editor, M. Millerand. He not being in, she waits for a while, and then to save time shoots M. Ollivier, on the principle that she was bound to put bullets into somebody. Her victim had absolutely nothing to do with the obnoxious article; neither, for that matter, had M. Millerand. The writer was another person altogether, M. Henri Turot. Nothing could well be more recklessly wicked than this woman's conduct. M. Ollivier, however, although he has suffered terrible agony, has not died, and Madame Paulmier is liberated from custody. She is a woman, and that covers a multitude of sins—in Paris. Moreover, she is an Anti-Dreyfusard, and that covers anything.

The *New York Observer* declares that Admiral Cervera was beaten, and his fleet annihilated, because he dashed out of Santiago harbor on a Sunday. This pious journal should explain how Admiral Dewey was allowed to smash the Spanish fleet at Manila. That happened on Sunday.

It is not now necessary to go to France to get the benefit of the Lourdes miracles. The pope has set up a Lourdes church in Brooklyn, and states that all who go there will get as much good out of their pilgrimage as though they were to visit the original shrine; which is probably true.—*New York "Truthseeker."*

Mr. Plowden, one of the London magistrates, quite distinguished himself the other day in connection with the case of a "conscientious objector" under the New Vaccination Act. The applicant confessed, under magisterial cross-examination, that he had been vaccinated himself, and it had done him no harm. Thereupon he was told that his objection was not "a sincere and conscientious one," because his opinion was "formed from pamphlets and what he had been told." According to this grave and reverend decision, we have no right to trust to any knowledge but what we have gathered personally. It would be neither sincere nor conscientious to object to prussic acid, for instance, unless we had tried it and found it injurious. This is the sort of thing that makes one echo the exclamation that "the law's a hass."

Who wrote the Bible? This question was put recently by the headmaster in a Birmingham Board school, the boys being provided with slips of paper on which to write their replies. One boy answered "David," another "Shakespeare," and another "Mr. Jowett." A fourth answer was positively sublime. The boy who gave it wrote down "Mr. Cadbury." This gentleman is the famous cocoa manufacturer, whose works are in the locality. He is a well-advertised Christian philanthropist, and we imagine he has now reached the height of his ambition.

Those schoolboys didn't know who wrote the Bible. But then who does? Their elders only make guesses after all. They laugh at the boys, but hav'n't the sense to laugh at themselves.

Mr. Cadbury had quite as much to do as Moses with the authorship of the Pentateuch. Mr. Jowett had as much to do as David with the authorship of the Psalms. Shakespeare had as much to do as Solomon with the authorship of the Song of Songs. Those schoolboys at Birmingham are are not a bit more mixed than the orthodox divines of the whole Christian world.

"Commandant" Booth has been gaining a reputation for wit at Melbourne. By way of settling his critics he told a story of a tailor and a clergyman. Mr. Snip criticised Mr. Parson, and the latter turned the tables on his opponent. "Do you consider yourself a skilled tailor?" he asked. "Certainly," was the reply. "Then can you tell me," the parson asked, "how much cloth it would take to make a suit for the angel Gabriel, when he stands with one foot on the sea and the other on the dry land and proclaims that Time shall be no more?" Of course the tailor gave it up, and the man of God said: "Be master of your own trade before you criticise mine."

This is about the silliest "witticism" we ever heard of. The parson's conundrum was a ridiculous one. Any tailor at large could deal with it easily. If this is "Commandant" Booth's best effort, we shudder to think of his inferior performances.

Mrs. Scott, the wife of a local preacher, at Knockin, near Oswestry, went crazy, and cut the throats of all her four children. Of course there is nothing miraculous in this sad occurrence. We merely wish to remark that thousands of good Christians would have shaken their heads if it had happened in a Secularist household. Had the wife of a Secular lecturer killed her four children, and then tried to take her own life, it would have been looked upon as a "judgment," or as a sign of the unhappiness induced by Freethought principles.

Rev. William Backhouse Gowan, vicar of Ruyton of the Eleven Towns, and his wife, Isabella Gowan, were charged at Baschurch Petty Sessions with ill-treating and neglecting their orphan nieces aged twelve and nine. Evidence was given that the children were clothed in filthy rags covered with vermin, and frequently kept without food. Two girls stated that the defendants thrashed the poor things with hunting crops and brooms, and that Mrs. Gowan had stripped them naked after beating them, while the vicar had kicked them. Defendants' coachman said the children were always screaming "Murder," and as they complained that they were starving he often supplied them with food. The vicar and his wife were both committed for trial, bail being allowed.

This prosecution is being conducted by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Mr. Waugh, the Society's secretary, once said that Secularist parents were the worst ill-users of children, an odious and ridiculous falsehood which he afterwards corrected in a speech at Leeds. As a matter of fact—indeed he admitted it—some of the very worst culprits the Society had to deal with were persons of well-known piety.

Dr. Parker says that if he were rich enough he would employ a band of men to thrash wife-beaters. We do not know that this would improve matters, but if castigation *were* administered it might better be left to the women.

A correspondent of *Modern Society*, replying to Mr. Joseph Collinson, of the Humanitarian League, defends flogging as the best form of punishment for boys, and of course for certain criminals. "Why," he exclaims, "even Christ himself had to resort to corporal punishment." Yes, and he got a dose of it himself before his crucifixion. We always thought this a cruelty, but we live and learn, and now we see it was only a mistaken kindness.

Joseph Wilman appeared at the Watford Police-court to answer a charge of indecently assaulting certain little girls, and was committed for trial. His counsel dwelt at great length on his religious principles, his connection with a Baptist chapel in Mare-street, Hackney, and his work for Sunday schools. The magistrates, however, wanted substantial bail.

A few years ago an article of Mr. Foote's in the *Freethinker* was entitled "Fried Souls." Something nearly as wicked appeared, through the carelessness or devilry of the printers, in the program of the Baptist Missionary Society. The book used at the recent conferences gave a line of a well-known hymn as follows:—"Let our whole *sole* an offering be." There was no footnote to say whether it was to be fried or boiled.

The *Congregationalist* is responsible for the story that a Church clergyman got up an elaborate program for a special service, and that one line of a hymn, "Jesus reigns and heaven rejoices," got printed as "Jesus resigns and heaven rejoices"—which, to our mind, is a decided improvement.

The editor of the *South London Mail* is a curious person. Without the slightest provocation he wrote an article against Secularism and Secularists, stuffed with the most abusive epithets, and inciting the orthodox ruffianism of South London to mob the Freethought speakers on Peckham Rye; and because we replied to him he complains of "acrimonious personal attacks." This gentleman—if he is entitled to that designation, which some who know him regard as rather doubtful—crows over the "defeat" of the Secularists, whom he imagines to have been driven forever from the Rye. Poor, deluded mortal! The Secularists held their meeting on the Rye as usual last Sunday, in spite of all the efforts of the *Mail's* Hooligans.

It would serve this skulking scoundrel right if some South London Freethinker were to give him a sound thrashing. He openly incites fanatical Christians and sensation-seeking Hooligans to go and break up the Secular meetings

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on Peckham Rye, but he takes care to keep out of the rumpus himself. Why, however, should he escape? Why should he not have a taste of the forcible argument which he recommends for the Secularists? Perhaps it has not occurred to him that physical energy can be used on both sides. If he felt it he might be more careful.

Bishop Moorhouse, of Manchester, demolished Materialism to the satisfaction of his Church Congress audience. He said it was "a desolating theory," which dethrones God and depopulates heaven. But that is only his little joke. What his lordship means is that it dethrones the parson and depopulates the churches.

The vicar of Aston, in Shropshire, the Rev. G. B. Brown, is learning, or should be learning, a much-wanted lesson. Owing to his arbitrary treatment of the local schoolmaster, Mr. J. Plant, the villagers are in revolt against their parson, whose school and church are both half deserted, while ample support is given to the new school opened by Mr. Plant with the sanction of the Inspectors. It is high time that some of these rural God Almighties were taught that they are living in a democratic age, to which they will have to adjust themselves or fare worse.

Major Stuart Wortley, who was at Omdurman, is back in England, and has been speaking at a cricket club dinner. He speaks highly, in a general way, of the native troops under his command, but he says that they "thought the perfection of the fighting was to execute a war dance and then fire in the air, their creed being that God would direct the bullets." Unfortunately some of the bullets got directed too near to their commander, who had to tell them that, while he did not mind being shot by the enemy, he decidedly objected to being shot by his own men. That view of the case appears to have damped their piety and made them more practical.

There is a wicked legend (the *Outlook* says) that while at Peterborough Mrs. Creighton once wrote to a clergyman regretting that the Bishop could not come for a confirmation, but promising that she would come instead! More authentic is the story, already related in the *Outlook*, that, after addressing a meeting of working-class mothers on their home duties, Mrs. Creighton overheard one of them thus commenting to her gossip: "Yes, 'twas all very fine; she's a nice lady and a first-class speaker. But I should like to ask her this: What does she do when old Creighton comes home drunk?" It is also authentic that this tale was told to a very serious clergyman of the London diocese. His face grew very long, and he asked in sepulchral tones, "But does the Bishop ever come home ——?"

It is said that the late Emperor of China, who has disappeared from this earthly scene in true oriental fashion, had been worked upon by Christian missionaries, and was so far gone that he put the works of Confucius upon the fire. If this be true, it is a pity that he did not know that this Christian method of dealing with heathen writings has fallen out of use in Europe. It was common enough two hundred years ago, but the triumph of liberal ideas has made a wonderful difference. The clergy are now obliged to wait till the next life for the fire-cure of heresy.

The cremated remains of Mrs. Lynn Linton, novelist and Freethinker, were buried in Crosthwaite Churchyard. Canon Rawnsley, the vicar—the gentleman who is always writing sonnets—admitted that she had not a very "firm" belief in a future life, but he said that she had now acquired the "larger knowledge," and so he left her "with a sure and certain hope of the resurrection." How good of him! The dead lady's friends ought to be very grateful.

When we saw the headline in the newspapers of "A Salvationist in Flames" we thought of the story told of Talleyrand. When that old diplomatist and sinner was dying amidst great suffering, a friend called and asked him how he was getting on. "Oh," he exclaimed, "I am in hell," and his friend quietly said, "Deja?" which may be translated as "Already?" But when we read the paragraph we found it was not so bad as that. It was only the case of a Salvationist at Seaham Harbor who was carrying a paraffin lamp on a pole, and the lamp exploded and set fire to his hair. Now he knows what burning feels like he may be inclined to doubt the doctrine of everlasting fire.

The latest Zionist crank hails from a most unexpected quarter. Former adherents have been found in the army, in the ranks of literature, and among men of science; but this one is a "policeman." Who would have thought it?—suspected it is perhaps the more appropriate word! Mr. Robert Anderson, of Scotland Yard, regards the return of the "'Ebrew Jews" to Palestine as a dead certainty, and the partition of the "Roman" *(sic)* Empire as one of the most prominent political events of the future.

Detective Sweeney's superior "orficer" is not a raw recruit to the study of prophecy, which we all know finds a man mad or leaves him so. It has been his hobby for years. In fact, he has recently published an exegesis on the Book of Daniel, and his *Coming Prince: the Last Great Monarch of Christendom*, produced ten years since, was on the same silly subject. From a careful perusal of these two fascinating volumes we can arrive at no other conclusion than that the "coming prince" will be our old friend Detective Sweeney. Hallelujah!

A contributor to our columns recently contended that the Bible was a work of humor. There must be something funny about it, otherwise we should not have a burlesque with the title of "The Land of Nod."

*Apropos* of the Emperor's visit to Jerusalem, there has been trouble about the rival Gardens of Gethsemane. The proprietors both want the imperial patronage, so the man who owns the more recent *real* Garden, knowing that the trees look rather young, has gone to great expense to outstrip his rival. He has had some *genuine old* trees transplanted, and had the aged leaves stitched on to prevent them falling off, and the branches carefully nailed together. The leaves have also been painted an appropriate green, and the trunks made to correspond. Real fruit would have been introduced, but the natives have unconventional ideas about private property. Wooden fruit has therefore been made in Germany. Hoch! Hoch!

Dr. Theodor Herzl, of Vienna, the Zionist leader, addressed a big crowd of East-end Jews on Monday evening. He laughed to scorn the idea that the children of Israel were scattered amongst the nations for religious reasons, and prophesied that the exodus to Palestine would soon begin in earnest. It appears, however, that it is only the poorer Jews who are allured by the prospect of settling down in the Holy Land. The rich and well-to-do seem more inclined to tarry amongst the flesh-pots of Egypt. They prefer London, Paris, Berlin, and Vienna to a one-horse city like Jerusalem.

The true blue Protestants have had quite a festival at a Ritualist church in Ballymacarrett, Belfast. They broke the windows with stones, burst open the vestry door, and trampled the vestments under foot. How they love one another!

Mr. Charles Cook, who directs the Sunday evening services at the Metropolitan Theatre, Edgware-road, illustrated the phrase "Christ in me" in this way. A boy put a poker in the fire, and when it was red-hot he exclaimed: "See, the poker in the fire; the fire in the poker." This is called bringing it down to the general intelligence, and it shows what the general intelligence comes to under the influence of Christian superstition. It is a pity that Mr. Cook is not preaching to the Soudanese, who would probably laugh at his illustration, and set him thinking—perhaps for the first time in his life.

## TALMAGE.

A VOLLEY voluminous constantly pours
From the mighty expanse of his jaw;
At all elevations his oracle soars,
And unto himself he's a law.
The weather's no bar to his cherished pursuits,
He is at it in rain and in drought.
The aim doesn't count when he's ready to shoot—
The man with the seven-inch mouth.

A confident gleam always brightens his eye
As he ruthlessly blazes away,
Nor reckons on who, 'midst projectiles that fly,
May be hit by a wild ricochet.
The thirteen-inch cannon is silent at last
In the Orient isle and the south;
But the era reverberant never is past
For the man with the seven-inch mouth.

—*New York "Truthseeker."*

## Science and Faith.

An agitated mother made her way to the Headmaster of a Board school in one of our large Northern towns. "My James must leave your school at once," said she. "Why, madam?" "Why, that new-fangled science stuff yer a teachin' 'im of is makin' a hinfiddle of 'im." "Indeed!" "Well, it was only last night he was saying as that it wasn't God who made the Coral Islands—it was insecks!"

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, October 9, Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester; at 11, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 6.30, "The Meaning of Death."

October 16 and 23, Athenæum Hall.

November 6, Manchester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 9, Athenæum Hall, London. November 20, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

A. H. KOHN.—No doubt the advertisement in the *Mail* will do good. Pleased to hear that one result is a fresh accession of members to the nearest N. S. S. Branches.

C. E. S.—Thanks.

G. CRUDDAS.—The matter shall be looked into. Pleased to know you so highly value your weekly *Freethinker*. Mr. Foote expects to visit the Tyneside in November.

C. WATKINSON.—The trade have always had the *Freethinker* on sale or return. We will try to make this more widely known. Thanks for your judicious efforts to improve our circulation in your district.

V. PAGE hopes thousands of subscriptions will come in for Shilling Week. We give the opportunity at any rate by extending the Week to a Month.

C. H. CATTELL.—There are no *shares* in the Secular Society, Limited, and therefore the Birmingham Branch cannot join in the name of one of its officers. Membership is personal. Of course we appreciate the generous desire to induce other Branches to take an interest in the Incorporation.

J. STANWAY.—Thanks for your encouraging letter. Shall be pleased to see you at Manchester.

J. D. LEGGETT sincerely hopes our Shilling Week appeal will be liberally responded to this year.

F. WILMOT.—Mr. Edwards had already sent us a report of the meeting. Thanks for the cuttings.

"POLICEMAN," who has suffered much through leaving Methodism for Freethought, says that a thousand readers ought to respond to our appeal, as he has done himself. "The *Freethinker*," he writes, "is not only the right arm of your work for Secularism; it is the right arm of the English Freethought party."

CHILDREN'S EXCURSION.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—E. Lawson, 10s.; collected by F. Schaller, West London Branch, 13s. 9d. The deficit now is only about 16s. Some one please send it.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—G. L. Lupton, £1; H. A. Lupton, 10s.

G. WHITE.—Miss Vance has handed in your application for membership in the Secular Society, Limited.

A. BUTTON.—We do not propose to keep the Wheeler Memorial Fund open indefinitely. We said it would be closed at the end of September. Of course we shall not return any subscriptions that may yet reach us. Pleased to hear you intend subscribing to the Circulation Fund.

W. B. THOMPSON.—Glad to hear the reopening of the New Brompton Secular Hall was so successful, and that Mr. Watts was in such good form.

R. F. MACK.—Your order is handed to Mr. Forder, to whom please send direct in future. We have printed hosts of "argumentative" articles, including some on the Design Argument.

N. ASHWORTH.—Our thanks to the Blackburn friends.

G. W. BLYTHE.—Mr. Cohen, like other contributors, takes the entire responsibility for the contents of his signed articles.

MARTIN WEATHERBURN.—We value your support. It has moral weight, being that of a veteran stalwart. We note your hope that our appeal will meet with the general support of those who, like yourself, would greatly miss the *Freethinker*.

RICHARD JOHNSON, subscribing himself, trusts that everyone who loves the Freethought cause will do something for our Circulation Fund.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks for the paper. We are glad to see that the South London friends are holding their ground on Peckham Rye. You are in error when you say the Executive has resolved to do nothing. The Camberwell Branch has not asked the Executive for advice or assistance. When they do it will no doubt be given. Mr. Foote would take the matter up himself if necessary, but there does not appear to be any need at present for his intervention. Let the speakers stand firm, let the local Secularists support the platform, and the battle must end in a triumph for Freethought. Meanwhile our cause has the benefit of the advertisement.

R. WILKINSON.—Mr. Foote is in good health, but sometimes weary from overwork. On Saturday afternoon he travelled four hundred miles to Glasgow, delivering three lectures (a very hard day's work) there on Sunday, and travelling back again on Monday in order to attend to his editorial and other duties, which had to be resumed within an hour of arrival in London. Fortunately travelling is more comfortable, even by third class, than it used to be; but long journeys are always more or less wearisome when the only object is to get to the end of them.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your welcome weekly batch of cuttings.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—New Century Review—Cork Constitution—Ethical World—Humanity—New York Truthseeker—South London Mail—Zoophilist—Sydney Bulletin—Isle of Man Times—Leeds Mercury—Yorkshire Post—Liberator—Public Opinion—People's Newspaper—Progressive Thinker—Torch of Reason—Hackney Standard—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Freemason—Two Worlds—Secular Thought—Record—Islington Gazette.

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 is due.

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.

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

## SPECIAL.

SEVERAL correspondents have suggested that Shilling Week should be changed into Shilling Month. They say that this has had to be done on previous occasions, and should be done now, in order to give the less ready ones the opportunity of subscribing. Well, I have assented to this before, and I assent to it again. During the month of October, then, instead of merely during the first week of it, I ask my friends and readers to send me a contribution of one or any number of shillings, for the purpose of enabling me to advertise the *Freethinker* judiciously and to promote its circulation in other ways. The matter has already been explained, and I leave it now with the Freethought party.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE lectures twice to-day (October 9) in the Secular Hall, Leicester; in the morning on "The Czar's Appeal to Europe," which is a live topic that should interest all sections of reformers; and in the evening on "The Meaning of Death," which is of interest to everybody.

After an absence of nearly six months Mr. Foote revisited Glasgow on Sunday and delivered three lectures. The morning and afternoon audiences were good, and the evening audience was a bumper. The lecturer was told that he was in his very best form, and the committee expressed themselves as delighted with the day's proceedings. Mr. Black, who took the chair in the evening, urged upon Freethinkers the necessity of supporting the Secular Society, Limited. A collection was made on behalf of the *Freethinker* Circulation Fund.

It was announced that Mr. Cohen would follow Mr. Foote at Glasgow to-day (October 9). He lectures three times in the same hall, and we hope the Glasgow Secularists will see that he has good audiences.

We are happy to report that the Glasgow Branch is in a most flourishing condition, and full of hope and enterprise. The prospect is rosier than it has been for years. There is nothing particularly exciting, but plenty of good, steady, fruitful work, and a most gratifying internal harmony.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts reopened the Secular Hall at New Brompton for the season. He lectured morning and evening to excellent audiences, who gave him a hearty reception and enthusiastically applauded him throughout his lectures. A goodly number of ladies were present, also many young persons of both sexes. Mr. Watts was highly pleased with the great improvement that has been made in the hall during the recess. The whole of the alterations

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have been done free of charge by members of the Branch. The result of their labors reflects the highest credit upon the Secularists of Chatham and New Brompton.

Mr. Watts lectures this evening (October 9) at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, taking for his subject "The Doom of the Churches."

Owing to the prolonged fine weather it was thought best to postpone the first General Members' Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, which is now fixed to take place on Friday, November 4. The place of meeting will be duly announced. Members' certificates will be sent out with the notices and proxy forms. Another meeting of the Board of Directors will be held within a week of the date of this issue of the *Freethinker*. All who wish to attend, or to vote at, the Members' Meeting should therefore apply for membership immediately. Nearly one hundred are already admitted, but this number ought to be considerably increased. London Freethinkers should join more numerously, in order that the new Board of Directors, to be elected on November 4, may be as representative as possible.

The *South London Press* condemns the attempt to break up the Secular meetings on Peckham Rye, and declares the *Mail's* policy to be "repugnant to the English idea of fair play." "It is singularly unfortunate for us, as Christians," it remarks, "that the elements of disorder have emerged from our own ranks."

Mr. William Heaford occupied the Athenæum Hall platform on Sunday evening, and had a good audience. His address was much appreciated. Mr. Heaford lectures on Peckham Rye this afternoon (Oct. 9), and we earnestly hope he will be thoroughly well supported by the local Secularists, especially in view of the organised disorder of the Holy Hooligans of the *South London Mail*.

Miss Vance, the N. S. S. Secretary, desires to call attention to the necessity for all Branch Secretaries to immediately forward particulars for the Almanack on the forms supplied. Certain space will be set apart for business announcements and advertisements, and members and friends of the movement would greatly assist her by suggesting likely advertisers. Terms and particulars can be obtained from the office of the Society, 376 and 377, Strand, W.C.

The Finsbury Branch of the N. S. S. concluded their outdoor season on Clerkenwell-green on Sunday last, when Mr. A. B. Moss lectured to a good audience. Twenty-four lectures have been delivered during the season, and a highly successful demonstration arranged by Mr. G. W. Foote. The thanks of the Committee are due to Mr. E. Bater, Miss Bater, and Messrs. Gregory and Quay for their assiduous attentions during the summer season.—H. Brown.

Mr. J. M. Robertson delivers a course of lectures at South Place Institute on "The History of Freethought, Ancient and Modern." The course opens on Tuesday evening, October 18, when the admission is free. Tickets for the other Tuesday evenings (4s.) can be obtained at the Institute.

"A. G. W." in the Glasgow *Weekly Citizen* contributes an interesting account of his "Two Hours in a Monastery." The writer's temper is impartial, but he saw nothing to tempt him into becoming a monk. As he left the monastery he caught sight of a convent in the distance, and wondered whether "vagrant thoughts ever troubled the souls of the gentle monks as they too gazed across the valley to where the *belles filles* lay immured."

The Birmingham Branch celebrated the anniversary of the birth of Charles Bradlaugh in a social way. A capital concert was held, at which Mr. Harrison, Miss L. Skett, Miss Berkeley, and Messrs. Skett, Berkeley, and the Brothers Terry and other friends assisted. Mr. Partridge gave two readings, and short addresses were given by Messrs. Ridgway and Percy Ward. On Sunday last Mr. A. Scrimshire had a crowded and appreciative house for his recital of "Henry VIII.," which he generously gave for the benefit of the funds of the Branch. To-day (October 9) Mr. G. J. Holyoake occupies the platform, and we trust that the Freethinkers of Birmingham and the surrounding district will attend in full strength and give the veteran a hearty welcome.

"Christianity and Sabbatarianism" is the heading of an excellent letter by Mr. J. M. Headley in the *Yarmouth Mercury*. A longer letter bears the name of J. W. de Caux. It is well-written and very outspoken on the Freethought side, and incidentally shows that Christianity neither abolished slavery nor promoted peace. Such letters as these in ordinary newspapers do a great deal of good. They reach a public which is otherwise not easily accessible.

## SHILLING WEEK.

[*Where no figure accompanies the name the amount acknowledged is one shilling.*]

A Glasgow Friend £5, James Thomson 2s. 6d., Hugh Thomson 5s., J. W. 2s. 6d., W. H. Deakin 5s., H. F. Sesemann 15s., J. Stanway 2s. 6d., J. Lawson, J. G. Dobson, J. D. Leggett 2s., John Walker 2s., H. A. Cumber 5s., S. Holmes 2s. 6d., Policeman 2s., E. Lawson 10s., R. B. M., J. Lawson, Annie Hampson, Louie Hampson, Mrs. Hampson, J. F. Hampson, T. Holstead 2s., J. W. Griffiths, W. Lamb 3s., G. Cruddas, J. Hockin, C. Parmiter 2s., C. E. Hall 2s., W. H. Spivey, T. Whiteley, S. Whiteley, A. J. Marriott 3s., C. Watkinson, V. Page, J. W. Lancaster, F. J. Thurlow 2s., J. Titherington 3s., J. Haworth, J. E. Harley, N. Ashworth, F. Morgan 2s., Old Nick, W. Waymark, Martin Weatherburn 2s., Richard Johnson 10s., Two Brothers 2s., C. Heaton 2s., F. J. Voisey 2s., R. Bulman 2s. 6d., collection at Glasgow £1 10s., T. H. Seymour £1, E. C. Cooke £2 10s., Thorney, J. Wetherell 2s, J. Pruett 5s., Appreciator, W. H. Lawrence, Castor 5s.

## UP ABOVE AND DOWN BELOW.

There's a city—oh, so splendid !—
Up above !
In the "Milky Way" suspended
Up above !
'Tis Jerusalem the golden—
Not the Asiatic "old" 'un—
Cranky Johnny's "new" extolled 'un
Up above.

There's a party who can "spot" you,
Up above !
Thank your stars he hasn't got you
Up above.
To his whims you'd have to pander,
Or you'd quickly raise the dander
Of the "touchy" goosey-gander
Up above !

There are angels in that city
Up above !
They are anything but witty
Up above !
They're for ever shouting "Glory"
To Almighty Jah, the gory,
For they're empty in their "storey"
Up above !

My advice is, keep away from
Up above !
Keep for ever and a day from
Up above !
If you go there you're a silly,
For you'll stop there, willy-nilly,
And you'll find it very chilly
Up above !

Seek the City that is warmer,
Down below !
'Tis more pleasant than the former,
Down below !
My advice is good—don't scorn it,
You will have no cause to mourn it,
*No one plays upon the cornet,*
Down below !

Like the angels, you and I, when
Down below !
Will have wings, for we shall fly, when
Down below !
Yes, the fact that we'll be soaring
It is useless their ignoring,
*For there isn't any flooring*
Down below !

You will find no "beasts" in Hades,
Down below !
Only "gentlemen" and "ladies"
Down below !
Though they've had old Jah's rejection,
They would bear a close inspection ;
Satan's got a choice collection
Down below !

Ess Jay Bee.

Iceland has but one jail in the entire country, and there are no illiterates, no tramps, and no one suffers for the necessities of life ; and yet the resources of the country are very meagre, and subsistence is only obtainable by frugal industry.

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## THE CHURCH AND LITERATURE.

(By the Late J. M. Wheeler.)

(*Concluded from page 636.*)

The Roman Catholic Church has taken the trouble to register its relationship to literature by publishing lists of the works it forbids to its followers. For a long time the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was itself a forbidden work. It showed not only the nature of the forbidden fruit, but made manifest what it was the Church really feared. Since, however, bibliographers have published unauthorised lists, the Society for the propagation of the faith has issued an Index from which, since it has the Papal *imprimatur*, there can be no appeal.

Just three centuries ago Pope Sixtus V. finally organised a special "Congregatio Indici," which is still in operation, and which, besides publishing a list of prohibited books the writing, printing, publishing, distribution, reading, lending, or having possession of any of which is visited with excommunication, publishes also an *Index Librorum Expurgandorum*—a list of books which may be read after being expurgated and freed from certain offensive passages. In the words of Milton, they "rake through the entrails of many an old good author, with a violation worse than any could be offered to his tomb."

The latest edition of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* on the reference shelves of the British Museum Library is dated Rome, 1877. A later one has been issued by the present Pope. It gives a list of over a thousand names of persons, from Abaelardus to Zwinglius, whose works must be avoided by the faithful. The work is a curiosity from many points of view. Thus it contains the name of Erasmus Darwin, but the works of his more famous grandson are apparently unknown. Many of the works of the heresiarchs are not enumerated, but have simply the words *opera omnia*, so that it is an offence to read even an ordinary letter by these authors. The list of works deemed objectionable by the Church contains some of the most eminent names in every department of literature. Our historians are represented by such men as Hume, Gibbon, Robertson, Hallam, and even Oliver Goldsmith. Among foreign historians Macchiavelli, Guicciardini, Raynal, Sismondi, Botta, Mosheim, and Ranke are interdicted. Philosophy is represented by the most illustrious names: Occam, Bruno, Bacon, Campanella, Pomponatius, Hobbes, Descartes, Bayle, Pascal, Leibnitz, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, Comte, Hegel, Kant, Fichte, V. Cousin, and Vera. J. S. Mill is catalogued as Stuart, not for his *Logic* or *Essays on Religion*, but for his *Political Economy*. Archbishop Whateley's *Elements of Logic* is forbidden. Hume is inserted both as Mr. Hume for his *Essays*, and as David Hume for his *History of England* and *opera omnia*. Addison is down for his *Tours in Italy*, Swift for his *Tale of a Tub*, Lord Chesterfield for his *Letters to his Son*. That exceedingly chaste novel, *Pamela*, is interdicted, although, apparently, the Congregation of the Index do not know the name of its author, Samuel Richardson. Among novelists are George Sand, Balzac, Soulié, Murger, and Flaubert. Poets are represented by Ariosto, Petrarch, Milton, La Fontaine, Lessing, Lamartine, Béranger, Carducci, and Heine. Shelley and Burns are apparently unknown to the Congregation. Dante has the honor of a place, not for his epic, but for his treatise, *De Monarchia*, in which he argues against the Pope's temporal power. Hugo is catalogued for his *Notre Dame*, not for his *Torquemada* or *Religions and Religion*. Among theologians one finds, of course, the names of Wiclif, Hus, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Servetus, Sherlock, Tillotson, and Michaelis. The critical works of such learned Catholics as Father Simon and Dupin are interdicted, as are also Fenelon's *Maxims of the Saints*, the complete works of Molinos, and the reconciliations of Bordas-Desmoulins.

Of the Freethinkers, of course, all works are excluded as far as known. In the case of Voltaire an attempt seems to have been made to enumerate his objectionable works, but it does not exhibit much bibliographical knowledge. The well-known works of Dupuis, Volney, and Pigault Le Brun are inserted, as well as the treatise on Religion by Benjamin Constant, and the modern works of Rénan, Strauss, Péyrat, Jules Soury, Baissac, Larroque, and Jacolliot. The numerous translations of Draper's *Conflict of Religion and Science*, and of Büchner's *Force and Matter*, have got those works inserted in the Index; but there is no mention of important Freethought works best known in England, possibly because it is understood that all works coming from heretics are forbidden.

There are also upon the Index a number of works such as most fathers would keep from their children. Rabelais, Boccacio, and others, of course are there. Among the smuttiest collections are the works of Aretino, who was a Cardinal's favorite, and the *Facetiæ* of Poggio, who was apostolical secretary to three popes. These are inserted, although, in several editions, Poggio is carefully concealed under the name of "Florentinus"; but we miss the works of Abbé Brantôme and others only too well known in the Church.

In addition to the published list of prohibited literature, bishops and priests are supposed to exercise a censorship over the reading of those under their charge. Peignot, in his "Dictionary of the principal works which have been committed to the flames," gives a ridiculous instance of the way in which this has sometimes been carried out. He says:—

> "In Styria the censorship of books is carried on in singular style, and one which shows that the function in Austrian states is not confided to very enlightened men. In the year VI. [*i.e.*, 1798] one of these censors condemned as heretical two books, of which one was entitled *Principles of Trigonometry*, and the other the *Destruction of Insects*. The censor thought Trigonometry was closely related to the Trinity, upon which it is forbidden to write; and took Insects for Jesuits."

Let not Protestants lay the flattering unction to their souls that it is the Catholic Church alone that has made war upon literature. Penal laws against the full expression of opinion are yet in force in every Protestant country. Many heretical works have been burnt by the common hangman and summarily suppressed both in England and Germany. In the reign of Elizabeth the Independents had to have a private travelling printing press to issue their Marprelate tracts. Among works publicly burnt were all the early Unitarian and Deistic pamphlets, John Milton's *Defence of the People of England*, and Defoe's *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*. The works of Servetus were seized by Bishop Gibson, and burnt in 1723; and the same dignitary suppressed the second volume of Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation*. In my Historical Sketches of Freethought in England I have, I believe, adduced sufficient evidence that it is to the labors and sufferings of the Freethinkers that we are mainly indebted for a free Press, the palladium of civilisation.

No doubt, in the palmy days of Christianity, the Church could claim that such literature as there was bore the impress of Christian teaching. The only opening for talent was by entering the service of the Church, and the blighting influence of its creeds is evident in all the writings of the Middle Ages, when it has been said there was no such thing as philosophy, but only scholastic logic and theology. The nature of the Trinity, of the soul; "whether angels in going from place to place move over the intermediate space"—such questions as these formed the intellectual exercises of the cultured, while the mental pabulum of the unlearned consisted mainly of lying legends of the saints. With the Renaissance of Pagan learning came a change for the better; Erasmus, Rabelais, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Spinoza, Hobbes Descartes, Bayle, and Voltaire found new directions for the human mind. Gradually the affairs of this world took pre-eminence over those of a speculative world to come. Historical criticism, directed at first to "profane" matters, gradually trenched upon the domain of Jewish records labelled "sacred." Science, ascertaining more and more of the workings of nature and of the immutability of law, has gradually displaced "Providence"; and literature, despite the copious publication of unheeded sermons, becomes ever more and more secular in its character. Theology, which a few centuries ago commanded the attention of the highest minds, is now left to rhetoricians like Farrar or charlatans like Cook. The world is beginning to give more heed to the opinions of the most insignificant journalist of the present than to the united pulpit speaking with the voice of a discredited Church of the past.

## Wheeler Memorial Fund.

E. C. Cooke, £1; James Thomson, 1s.; A. Button, 5s.; L. J. Slack, 2s. 6d.

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## PREHISTORIC PEEPS.

### I.—Mrs. Adam.

It is impossible to write about the lady whom Milton ungallantly terms "our general mother" without emotion. I do not, of course, pretend that Mister Milton is a last and final authority on any such subject; but, when it comes to ink-slinging, a first-class poet ought to be able to make a display. The more polite Tennyson had the supreme audacity to call her "the snow-limbed Eve," which is a fairly good chortle for Alfred the Great; but he knew nothing about her. Like the present writer, he lived some six thousand brief summers after her death. Mr. Moses has written her biography, it is true, but he omitted to mention whether she was a blonde or a brunette, and no portrait accompanies his monograph. So we must even leave the fact in the twilight of human history. We may, at least, be certain that she was—

> A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
> And most divinely fair.

The fabled Garden of Eden looked more delightful because she was in it, the grass greenest where she trod. The rose never was so lovely till it was twined in her hair, the lily never was so beautiful till it was held in her hand. Snow-limbed she certainly was not, for Mr. Moses emphatically tells us that she had "nodings on"—that is, she could have acted as an artist's model for what Trilby calls "the all-together."

Like her helpmeet, Adam, she never went to school; she was in the happy position of starting life at full age. Her friend Adam was put into a deep sleep, and Eve was carved out of one of his ribs, which interesting case has been facetiously termed by Colonel Ingersoll as the first operation under chloroform.

She was a very fortunate woman in one respect—she had no washing to do on Mondays; neither did she have to sew buttons on Adam's shirts, patch his pantaloons, get his overcoat out of pawn, or even argue with him about a long hair on his manly shirt-front. She had a great deal to be thankful for.

Before Adam was introduced to his future housekeeper he resembled nothing so much as the mule, being without pride of ancestry and without hope of progeny. But Mrs. Adam changed all that. I make no apology for giving this courtesy title to this lady, although it has ever been a matter of great surprise to me that pious forgers have neglected so long to furnish a marriage certificate for the grand old gardener and his lady friend.

I presume that Eve looked after the conservatories in the Garden of Eden. Adam was employed by the well-known firm of J. Hovah, Son, & Co., universal providers, and considerable intimacy must have ensued between employers and employed. Some descendants of Eve still call the senior partner their "'evinly fawther"; but, after reading about Adam suddenly receiving two weeks' money, I regret to add that he seems to me a papa who thinks more of his apples than he does of his children.

The row with Adam's employer appears to have been caused by a talking snake. Eve listened to him, and then the fat was in the fire. It was the first "household of three" on record. This is one reason why none of Eve's children even now will take advice on any mortal subject. The ending is sad. Adam must have sighed when he found he had to go down town daily, and work like thunder, so that his wife and daughters could have nice, clean, ornamental fig-leaves to wear to church on Sundays. He must have regretted the time when he always did his work lying in a meadow, and listening to the foolish larks and melancholy thrushes. He must have looked back with envy to the days when he was only a tramp—when in reality he was the first aristocrat. In his later years he once told Eve that the chief pleasure of work was—leaving it undone. That he was deeply sorry, and that he had the true commercial instinct, may be gathered from the fact that he used to exhibit his agonised countenance between sunrise and sunset daily (Sundays excepted) for the small charge of one shekel. On Sundays he could be seen in tears; entrance fee, two shekels.

Small wonder that the Chosen People of to-day are so smart that, even whilst attending divine worship, they wear their hats, because they know each other's little ways.

Mimnermus.

## BOOK CHAT.

*Humanity* (organ of the Humanitarian League) for October contains an excellent article by Mr. H. S. Salt on "De Quincey as a Humanitarian." The rest of the contents are on the usual sound lines of this admirable little monthly.

* * *

*Industrial Imperialism* is the title of the second of Mr. Malcolm Quin's "Political Tracts." It takes the form of an open letter to the members of the recent Trade Union Congress. We should have noticed it earlier, but somehow it got mislaid. Mr. Quin conducts the Church of Humanity at Newcastle. He is a man of great ability and firm character, which we always recognise even when we happen—as will happen in this world—to differ from him. In this tract he protests against the growing imperialism of English statesmanship, which works under the pretence of securing old and fresh industrial markets; and he prophesies that, unless it is checked, it will lead to disaster abroad and degeneration at home. Mr. Quin's tract is well worth reading. Copies can be obtained gratis on application to Mr. J. T. Looney, 119 Rodsley-avenue, Gateshead.

* * *

The *Adult* for October (still under Mr. Seymour's editorship) contains the full text of Mr. Bedborough's indictment. Dr. Havelock Ellis's book has the first count to itself. The second count is directed against a pamphlet by Oswald Dawson. Nine other counts refer to a large number of articles in various numbers of the *Adult*. A note from Mr. G. J. Holyoake is printed in "Editorial Memoranda," which is as follows:—"So far as I can learn, the prosecution violates all the pledges formerly given that scientific truth sold at a high price was exempt from the repression of the law. Your best defence is to do as we did in the defence of Hetherington—indict all books of a similar character, by whomsoever published. You will soon stop any similar proceedings, and probably this."

* * *

The Humanitarian League has just issued cheap editions of two new volumes through different publishers—viz., 1, *Humane Science Lectures*, the series of addresses given last winter in London by Edward Carpenter, the Rev. Douglas Morrison, chaplain of Wandsworth Prison; Professor Thomson, of Edinburgh University; and Dr. Milne Bramwell (Bell and Sons): and 2, *Humanitarian Essays*, being vol. iii. of *Cruelties of Civilisation*, dealing with various subjects contributed by Harry Roberts, Maurice Adams, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Joseph Collinson, G. W. Foote, and H. S. Salt (Reeves). The first part of this series dealt with certain social questions of immediate human interest; the second with those questions that more closely affect the welfare of animals. In the present volume both kinds are included, but in such proportion as to leave no ground for the complaint so often brought against humanitarians—that while pleading the cause of the lower animals they forget that of their fellow-men. It has, from the first, been the Humanitarian League's purpose to show that the cause of humanity is everywhere one and the same, and that it is iniquitous to inflict unnecessary suffering on any sentient being.

* * *

It is with real pleasure that we hear that Mr. Frazer is actively engaged in the revision of a second edition of his monumental work, *The Golden Bough*.

* * *

The October *Cornhill Magazine* contains a very interesting article on Mrs. Aphra Behn, whom the author claims as the first lady novelist. The publisher who ventured to reprint this lady's writings would, in all probability, make the acquaintance of Detective Sweeney (Phœbus, what a name!), Mister Anderson, and his amiable colleagues.

* * *

We are enabled to renew acquaintance with the delightful *Stories Toto Told Me*, by Baron Corvo, through the instrumentality of Mr. John Lane, of the "Bodley Head." We all smiled when we read these sly stories in the pages of *The Yellow Book*, of irreverent memory; but the quaint burlesques seem more exquisitely humorous than ever now they are collected into a volume. There is a laugh on every page, and a smile in every line. Such stories! As satirical as Heine, as profane as Voltaire, and as modern as Catulle Mendes. Toto is a very Ariel, or rather an imp of Satan. What sentiments he puts in the mouth of the Padre Eterno, of San Pietro and San Paolo. Nothing could be more daintily blasphemous than "A Caprice of the Cherubini." The Cherubini, who have neither arms, nor bodies, nor legs, but only heads with wings instead of ears, obtain permission to come down to earth and to have a little devil to play with. So the little devil was brought, and annoyed the cherubini by cheekily asking them to sit down, and then jeering at them because they had not the wherewithal.

* * *

Toto tells with great spirit the tale of San Pietro's mamma,

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who was allowed to leave hell if one good deed could be found recorded in her favor. She had once thrown a beggar the top of an onion; so the angel held the onion top over the pit; she gripped it, and the angel began to rise. But the other damned souls hung on her skirts, and others to the feet of those, and there was grave danger of hell being emptied. Nor was the onion-top too weak to bear the tremendous strain; so great is the virtue of a single good action. But San Pietro's ma, being greedy, took the onion-top in her teeth, so that she might use her hands to beat off the others. She bit through it, and tumbled back into "the place where there is no winter." The satire in the tale "About the Heresy of Fra Serafico" is quite as fine.

* * *

The humor is never forced in these tales, and all that is good is better than the best of recent works of humor. The star of this author is as yet but in its ascendancy, and readers who take these tales to pass an idle hour will find them too good to set aside and forget. There is every element in them that goes to the making of a live book. Quip, repartee, epigram, are to be found in these charming contes, and we confidently predict that years hence this volume will survive. We regard it as the very finest effort in the line of humor we have seen since the *Satires and Profanities of James Thomson.*

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### THE REASON WHY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Besides sending my mite in response to your appeal to the Freethought party for help in your endeavor to make the *Freethinker* more widely known by advertising, I feel constrained to say a few words as to why I think that the journal in question has a special claim, in this connection, upon all Freethinkers. In the first place, it is not only specially devoted to the distinctive work of promoting Freethought, but it is also conducted on such lines as to justify confidence in its permanency as the chief organ of our party. This was not the case with the late *National Reformer*, which, in addition to its Atheistic propaganda, professed to be Republican in politics and Malthusian in sociology, and which, therefore, commanded the support of a large circle of readers who could not be reasonably expected to support a paper like the *Freethinker*, seeing that it is specially and exclusively devoted to the first of those three items of policy *only*. The dear old *National Reformer* may be said to have died with its world-renowned editor—a fact that seems to warrant the opinion that it was only the great commanding influence of that distinguished leader of men that enabled it to live as long as it did. A due consideration of these and many other facts pointing the same moral goes to show that the *Freethinker* has a special claim upon the Freethought party, in that it can claim to be, as far as England is concerned, the first exclusively Freethought journal ever established.

I can only hope, sir, that the response to your very reasonable appeal will be such as to show that the Freethinkers of England are both numerous enough and generous enough to enable you to accomplish your very desirable object.

T. J. THURLOW.

### A CALL TO ARMS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—For the past two or three months our lecturers on Peckham Rye have had to meet a great deal of rowdyism, which has of late been greatly enhanced owing to the inflammatory language of one of the local organs. This state of affairs reached a climax on Sunday, Sept. 25, when Mr. Heaford was forced by the police to desist from speaking on account of disorder.

Yesterday (Oct. 2) I made my way to the Rye to help to swell the supporters of the meeting, and was asked to take the chair. I am bound to say it was the most colossal meeting I have seen assembled in our open spaces at Freethought platforms. This we owed to the splendid advertisement given us gratuitously by the local press.

Having made the announcement that we intended carrying the meeting through at all costs, I called upon the lecturer to commence his address; but he had barely spoken for a few minutes when a rush was made for the platform. This is instructive, as it proves that the disorder was not due to the language or bad tact of the lecturer, but obviously premeditated. Our supporters easily repulsed this attack, but the police stepped forward, and demanded that the meeting should be brought to a close, as it was disorderly. This we strenuously refused to do, and succeeded in carrying on the meeting for an hour, bringing it to a successful conclusion; so successful, in fact, that the total amount collected came to 33s.

But this is not my main object in appealing to the readers of the *Freethinker*—to give an account of the meeting. What I wish to do is to call for help for next Sunday.

At the close of the meeting the names and addresses of the chairman and speaker were demanded by the police, instructed by the Superintendent of Open Spaces, who was present; and this seems to indicate that next week we shall have to meet not only the rowdyism, but that the police, on the slightest disorder, will stop the meeting. In the old days an appeal of this sort would have drawn a contingent from every branch in London, and I confidently expect to meet some fifty or sixty Secularists willing to do their utmost in support of our right to as fair a hearing as is accorded to other bodies on Peckham Rye.

To those of us who have had to fight for the open spaces in the past this should be mere child's play.

Now that we have won over Victoria Park, Finsbury Park, Hyde Park, Clerkenwell, and other spaces, to our side, in face of the bitterest opposition, are we to give way at Peckham? Having reached the pinnacle of success, inasmuch that almost every argument put forward from our platforms is reiterated within the Church itself by its greatest lights; having accomplished such results, I ask, are we to give way to a rowdy gang of Christians who claim the right to dictate as to who shall speak, and what shall be said, at our public spaces?

I do not believe that the Secularists of London will allow such a stigma to be put upon them, and I trust that when the call for "friends to the front" is made next Sunday afternoon at Peckham Rye there will be such a muster as will ensure order till the end of the season.

ROBERT EDWARDS.

## PROFANE JOKES.

AT an elementary examination in English, which was lately held in a school near New York, two sentences were given out to be corrected. The first sentence was to be corrected as to its subject matter, and the second sentence as to its syntax. These were the sentences: "The hen has three legs"; "Who done it?" When the papers were handed in, it was found that one of the examinees had apparently regarded the sentences as subtly connected in thought, for his answer was as follows: "The hen didn't done it. God done it."

Congressman Linney, of North Carolina, created considerable laughter in the House of Representatives some time ago by telling the following story: "A dying man once said to a neighbor, 'Read me some comforting portions of the Scripture.' It was done. 'What next can I do for you?' inquired the zealous Christian. 'Will you pray for me?' 'Certainly,' he replied. Prayer being over, 'What next, my dear suffering brother?' 'Please give me a small drink of brandy from that little bottle of yours.' 'No, I can't,' was the reply. 'The Scripture-reading and the prayer were all free, they cost me nothing; but this brandy cost me 25 cents a quart; I can't afford it.'"

A Sunday-school teacher was talking to her class of the necessity of a divine friend, both in life and death. Finally she said: "Charley, if you were about to die, what would you want most of anything?" And Charley replied, with practical wisdom: "A doctor." He was recently matched, however, by another small boy. "Johnny," asked his teacher, "what must we do before our sins can be forgiven?" "Sin," replied Johnny.

"And will you be mine forever?" he asked, after he had her head nicely pillowed on his shoulder. She straightened up with a start. "Now, look here," she said, in her eminently practical way, "if you want to get up a discussion on the future life, you might just as well be moving along. Father is an Agnostic and mother is a Methodist, and I'm marrying as much as anything to get away from controversies about this forever business."—*Chicago Evening Post.*

Adam—"Cain, how did you come to kill Abel?" Cain—"He asked me if it was hot enough for me."

"You kin git yo' daily bread by prayin'," says Uncle Mose. "But de nightly chicken has to be hustled fo'."—*Indianapolis Journal.*

"Here's an article which says preachers should never work at their sermons when tired." "How about working at them when their congregations are tired?"—*Chicago Record.*

The war-cloud has shifted, and is now hovering over Xenia, Ohio. The *Herald* of that place proclaims it thus: "The time has come for action. The streets are in a horrible condition. The police fund is exhausted, and our militia has gone to the war. 'Ed' Schmidt owns the council, and the city is in darkness. Burglars are at large, and the Methodist Conference will be here in a few days. Johnny, get your gun!"—*Voice.*

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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, "The Doom of the Churches."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, F. A. Davies, "Faith and Finance."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. Heaford, "The World, the Flesh, and the Devil."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "The Crusade against Ritualism."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 7, Dr. Washington Sullivan, "Heredity." Peckham Rye: 3.15, Mr. Sanders.

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, W. Heaford. Peckham Rye: 3.15, W. Heaford.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, Stanley Jones; 7, W. Heaford. October 12, at 8, W. J. Ramsey.

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, Mr. Hunter, "God."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.15, R. P. Edwards, "The Church Congress."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, Meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute, 36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond, N.; Balance-sheet and other business.

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, E. Pack. October 11, at 8, W. J. Ramsey.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): G. J. Holyoake—11, "The Profanities of Piety"; 7, "Policy in Politics."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): C. Cohen—11.30, "Present-Day Problems"; 2.30, "Substitutes for Religion"; 6.30, "Jewish Testimony to Christ."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): G. W. Foote—11, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 6.30, "The Meaning of Death."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, W. T. Haydon, "Ancient Egypt's Literature, Arts, and Science."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. M. Robertson—11, "Recent Pleas for Theism"; 3, "Patriotism and Ethics"; 6.30, "The Revival of Catholicism." Tea at 5.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "Reflections on the Late Church Congress." Members' and friends' dance every Wednesday evening at 8.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Readings, etc.

## Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—October 9, Glasgow; 16, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 23, Sheffield; 26, 27, 28, Derby; 30, Leicester. November 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London; 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester. November 30 and December 1, Failsworth. December 4, Manchester.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—October 16, Birmingham. November 27, Liverpool. December 18, Birmingham.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## HOLY RUSSIA.

II.—CONCLUSION.

IT cannot be denied that there is much force in this Russian criticism of our Western democracy. The late Prince Albert was not exactly a political genius, and he was sneered at for saying that parliamentary government was on its trial; nevertheless there was a certain truth in what he said. Look, for instance, at France. What she requires is an element of stability, which she does not find in the perpetual sinking of ministries in the quicksand of haphazard parliamentary majorities. The consequence is that the Army, instead of the civil power, has become not only the sign but the substance of national unity; and it seems pretty clear that the Republic would be short-lived if there were only a strong, popular soldier to deal her the fatal blow. Government in England is only ostensibly conducted by parliament; it is really carried on by the Cabinet, which is quite unknown to the Constitution, and has crept into power undesignedly, through the force of circumstances. Seven hundred men cannot govern a nation; they cannot even make laws efficiently; and this is the reason why the government has passed into the hands of the Cabinet. It is a mere matter of business and common sense. Parliament is little else than a talking machine; what Carlyle called our great National Palaver; and many of us believe it will have to undergo serious changes in the near future if it is to survive as an organ of our public life.

Russia has no parliament, and our author hopes she will never have one. He prays God to save her from such an affliction. "Ability to find and to choose men," he says, "is the first essential attribute to power; the second is ability to direct them and to establish due discipline upon their activity." This is true and well said. But hereditary rulers are not commonly possessed of this attribute. The problem is how to get your ruler who does possess it, and this has never been seriously faced by the critics of democracy. Only one comity on earth has solved this problem of government, and that is the Roman Catholic Church. There must be election *somewhere*, or you have mere usurpation and tyranny; so every new Pope is elected by the Council of Cardinals. But he is the only officer who is *elected*; all the rest are *appointed*; and the student of human affairs knows what immense difference that makes in practical efficiency.

"The most precious gift of a statesman," our author says, "is ability to organise. It is a talent seldom met—a talent inborn, which no study will produce." Here is his picture of the born statesman:—

> "Strength of imagination must unite to the capacity of promptly choosing the means of realisation. A comprehensive and foreseeing intellect is demanded, resolution in action, ability to seize the proper moment, to embrace rapidly the details of all work, without losing sight of its fundamental principles. Fine observation of men and knowledge of character are indispensable; knowledge of whom to trust, and experience that the best of men are not free from low instincts and interested motives."

Excellent! But this is not a picture of the Czar, Nicholas the Second, unless his portraits terribly belie him. Is it, indeed, a picture of any hereditary ruler in Europe?

M. Pobyedonosteff (we print his terrible name once more, under protest), with his eye on the evils of parliamentary government, points out that organising talent and great eloquence are not only distinct, but "almost incompatible." But is not this an exaggeration? There is no reason why these two faculties should be found in the same individual; on the other hand, there is no reason why they should not. Cromwell was not an eloquent man, though he was a born ruler; but Chatham's eloquence was splendid and overwhelming, and he had great capacities of statesmanship. Perhaps the greatest ruler in history was Julius Cæsar, and Cicero admitted that his eloquence was consummate. A man may have great powers of mind, and great strength of character, *without* the gift of expression; he may also have them *with* the gift of expression. Rarity of co-existence is not incompatibility.

Let us now turn to this Russian statesman's views on religion. Faith, to him, is the basis of everything. "On faith," he says, "the life of man sustains itself in the midst of the tears, the regrets, the misfortunes, and falsehoods with which it is afflicted." There can be no religion without supernaturalism. A personal God is the necessary starting point. Reason has rights of its own, but they must not trench on the province of faith. Religion recognises "axiomatic truths unattainable by the path of induction"—which means that God, as Newman declared, does not speak through the wonders of nature, but through the voice of conscience. Mystery is not only inevitable, it is beneficial; it "embraces and calms the troubled soul." "Only fools," our author says, "have clear conceptions of everything. The most cherished ideas of the human mind are found in the depths and in twilight." He has a colossal scorn of scientific and philosophical substitutes for supernatural religion. After a long quotation from Mill on the Religion of Humanity, he writes:—

> "Such a religion may indeed be sufficient for thinkers like Mill, secluded from the world in abstract speculation, but how shall the people accept and understand it?—the people, a living organism held in communion only by living sentiment and conscience, and repelled by abstractions and generalities. In the people such a religion, if it bore fruit at all, would bear fruit in reversion to paganism."

We may mention, in passing, that our author has fallen into a very curious mistake with regard to the late Mr. Justice Stephen, whom he refers to as "a convinced Anglican churchman," and as "a believer deeply and jealously attached to his Church." A little knowledge is a dangerous thing! Had our author read more of Sir James Stephen's writings than his reply to Mill's essay *On Liberty*, he would have known that this "convinced Anglican churchman" was a thoroughgoing sceptic, who looked upon religion as very largely artificial, and as having been forced upon the people everywhere by authority in education and government. Christianity (he remarked), like other religions, did not triumph without employing all the terrors of this life as well as those of the life to come.

Our author regards Scripture as the indubitable voice of God, and his devotion to Christianity is quite touching. He believes in spite of all difficulties. "When we consider," he says, "the endless tale of sanguinary warfare, dissension, violence, injustice, ignorance, and superstition in public as in private life, with terror we ask ourselves, Where is the fulfilment of the law of Christ in the hell in which we live?" Unbelief would sweep away Christianity altogether, and "fancy religions"—as the old swearing colonel called them—spring up on all sides to point a way out of this fatal contradiction between the profession and practice of Christendom. But there is only one remedy. Men



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must cling to the true Church of Christ, founded upon the rock of ages. And which is the true Church of Christ? Why, the Orthodox Greek Church, of course. Our author criticises both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches most severely. "Enter an English church," he says, "and watch the congregation. It is devout; solemn it may be, but it is a congregation of 'ladies and gentlemen,' each with a place specially reserved; the rich in separate and embellished pews, like the boxes of an opera-house. We cannot help thinking that this church is merely a reunion of people in society, and that there is place in it only for what society calls 'the respectable.'" Everything is bought and paid for, even church livings, in which there is a shameful traffic. "For the most part," in Protestant churches, "the preachers are the journeymen of the Church, with extraordinary whining voices, infinite affectation, and vigorous gestures, who turn from side to side, repeating in varying tones conventional phrases." All is different, our author says, in Russia. The Church there is the Church of the people. All meet together equal in the sight of God. Moreover, sermons are excluded from its services. Nor is this the whole difference between Russian religion and the religion of Western Europe, whether Catholic or Protestant. The dead are reverenced and watched over with chanting and prayer before burial. Southerners fly from the presence of a corpse, and Germans and Englishmen are actually beginning to dispose of it by cremation. But this is strange, inhospitable, and cold to the Russian. "May God deliver us," our author exclaims, "from dying in the land of strangers, far away from our native Russian soil!"

It will be seen, therefore, that this Russian statesman is deeply and sincerely old-fashioned. He belongs to a type which was once common in our own country. This type has largely disappeared in England, and it is already beginning to disappear in Russia—where, as our author laments, the "well-beloved of translators" are John Stuart Mill, George Eliot, and Herbert Spencer. The ferment of Western ideas is going on beneath the solid crust of orthodox religion and autocratic government.

G. W. FOOTE.

## "THE SILENT TOMB."

In our article last week we endeavored to show that fear is a potent factor in the Christian faith; and probably this feeling is most strongly manifested in reference to death. With ordinary Christians the cessation of life is considered of far greater importance than its active periods. Such persons derive comparatively little pleasure from the goodness in the world unless it is thought to have some relation to an assumed hereafter. They fail to experience happiness simply from the performance of useful work. Right-doing with them has but few charms unless it is regarded as the means of securing "mansions in the skies." Nobility of character, heroism of conduct, and devotion to duty are partially ignored except such virtues are stimulated by the hope of future bliss. If Christians think their faith will conduct them safely to the "next world," they appear to trouble very little about its effects in this. And yet, with the usual orthodox consistency, while they seem to be filled with joy in anticipation of their future existence, their lives are clouded with dread as to what will be their condition "beyond the tomb." Hence they exclaim: "What after death for me remains, celestial joys or hellish pains, to all eternity?" "Shall I be with the damned cast out, or numbered with the blest?" Further, they do their "level best" to put off as long as possible their departure to "heaven above." It may suit their purpose to dilate upon the beauties and happiness of the "kingdom of heaven," but "distance lends enchantment to the view." They have no desire to "be with God" while it is possible for them to remain with man.

The tomb should be looked upon as the abode of peace, but theology has made it, as it were, the entrance to the domain of anguish and torments. Christians are haunted with the devilish spectre of a being who is supposed to be the personification of evil. In fact, this notion forms the basis of the Christian system. As the Rev. Dr. Sewell, of Oxford, in his *Christian Morals*, writes: "No sooner does an infant draw the vital air than, in consequence of it, being under the wrath of God, it is taken possession of by the spirit of evil.....We will hold and realise, and act upon the true, unfigurative, literal personality of a spirit of evil, tempting man, lying in wait for him, triumphing over him, hating him, going about seeking whom he may devour. On this main fact must rest the foundation of all Christian ethics." This is plain writing, but not more so than the language of the Rev. George G. Macleod, of Edinburgh, who, in his pamphlet on *Hell*, writes thus: "Why, men, if there is no hell, there is no heaven. They have the same foundation—God's truth—and if hell be a fable, heaven is a fable too! There is as much proof in this Bible for a hell as for a heaven. The threatenings are as numerous as the promises. God woos, and as distinctly thunders. Drown the fires of hell, and you drown the music of heaven, and, like our dogs, let us die. The plan of redemption is one. Take hell out of it, and the whole scheme is a dead failure."

Now, unfortunately, this is true, and the fact that the more intelligent professors of Christianity will not admit it to be so does not alter its truth. Take the fear of hell out of the Christian faith, and you rob the orthodox masses of the most powerful factor of their belief. Of course we rejoice that this cruel and revolting figment is being given up; but what does it prove? Simply that Christianity is incompatible with the intellectual status of the age. It is not, however, consistent for persons who have ceased to believe in the principal doctrines of Christianity to still cling to the name of Christian. To do so is only to pander to the dictates of fashion. Well might a weekly contemporary observe: "Those who still believe in the old theology—or who have not been taught by half-educated pastors the results of modern knowledge as to the Bible—will read with astonishment the sweeping repudiations made at the Church Congress of large portions of the Bible, seemingly with the approval of all the representatives of the clergy of the Established Church. It is really time that the shocking veil of hypocrisy and cowardice with which these subjects have been covered should be torn aside, that people should no longer be treated as credulous fools, but be told the truth. Alas! so many of the clergy are quite as incompetent, through ignorance, to perform this duty as the poor, illiterate lasses of the Salvation Army, who know as much about the history and foundation of religion as a parrot."

To us the tomb represents the anodyne of repose. In reference to it there is nothing to fear, for when once within its precincts all trouble is over. If it is asked why we make this allegation, our reply is that we do so for three reasons. (1) So far as we know, the feeling of happiness or misery depends upon consciousness, a mental condition unknown within the tomb. (2) Consciousness is always associated with life, which ceases before the tomb is reached. (3) Physical organisation is indispensable to life, and that organisation cannot continue in the tomb. These facts, which appear to us indisputable, should prevent anyone from having any dread of the tomb. In the language of the Bible, "the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten." "The very day man goeth to the grave his thoughts perish." Thus to mar the happiness of life with the fear of imaginary evils after death is condemned by the Secular view of the philosophy of existence. In the words of Shakespeare:—

> The valiant never taste of death but once;
> Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
> It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
> Seeing that death, a necessary end,
> Will come when it will come.

Christianity has invested the tomb with gloom, and with horrors which are detrimental to mental vigor, and which cast a blight upon the happiness of mankind. Secularism, on the contrary, professes to know nothing of worlds or duties beyond the tomb, feeling assured that if it should be discovered that there are such nothing can be known of them during our sojourn in what theology calls this "vale of tears." It is, therefore, worse than folly to feel alarmed about that of which we know nothing.

We wish to strongly emphasize the fact that, while theology does not rob the tomb of its alleged terrors, Secular philosophy does. We have watched at the death-beds of Atheists, who passed away calmly without any misgivings, having no fear of the "beyond." We can fully appreciate the testimony of Professor Tyndall, who wrote:

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"I have known Atheists, not only in life, but in death—seen them approaching with open eyes the inexorable goal, with no dread of a 'hangman's whip,' with no hope of a heavenly crown, and still as mindful of their duties, and as faithful in the discharge of them, as if their eternal future depended on their latest deeds." And why should not this be the mental attitude of all in the "last great scene"? Probably it would be so if it were not for the horrible teachings of the Churches and the New Testament. Lord Bacon said: "I have often thought upon death, and I find it the least of all evils." We are not sure death is an evil; sometimes it has proved a great blessing. But even if it were, we have nothing to fear. If there be an eternal sleep, it promises the positive gain of release from all suffering and sorrow, while the seeming loss of pleasure is cancelled by unconsciousness. The dreamless slumberer desires nothing, regrets nothing. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master.

In the presence of the silent tomb how insignificant are the passions, the jealousies, and the misunderstandings of life. Let us therefore recognise that it is our duty, ere we enter its portals, to strive to leave behind us a legacy of truth, love, honor, and usefulness, so that the world shall be the better for the good work we have done. Our immortality should consist in so living that when we are gone those who knew us during our "fleeting existence" shall have cause to delight in the recollection of their association with us. This would be an immortality not of creeds, but of deeds; not of theological faith, but of practical Secular work. Those who thus live can, when life's work is done, say with Brutus:—

> If we do meet again, why we shall smile;
> If not, why then this parting was well made.

CHARLES WATTS.

## WOMAN DISDAINED BY THE BIBLE.

THE zeal of the advocates of Women's Rights occasionally runs in quaint directions. Some time ago I read in a feminist paper a letter from a lady who complained that men had monopolised the study of theology. Why, she asked, should not women take up this important science, and earn distinctions in so noble a branch of scholarship? I know not if her appeal found response. The Girton girls have not yet shown much disposition to write commentaries on the epistles to Timothy. It really is a singular thing that a great woman theologian has never appeared. Who expects to see a lady Calvin? And will Newnham ever turn out a female Hooker? Even if the women make a rush into this department of learning, and load their minds with exegesis, what will they do with it all when they have got it? A lady trying to turn to useful account her original analysis of the Athanasian Creed would be a very sad spectacle. No brutal man, of course, would desire to buy her precious science; and even the sisters of the Pioneer Club might not be eager to assist the lovely theologian.

All this, however, is only the economic aspect of the question. Even if women agree to let theology alone as a subject not likely to yield suitable salaries, a slight examination of the Bible might suggest other objections. Apologists of the Christian religion, and of the Bible generally, frequently declare that woman owes a great deal of the amelioration of her lot to the influence of Judaism and the Gospel. This is a topic often argued, and I shall not travel over the well-beaten field. I shall not stop to criticise the position of woman under the law, or her prospects under the New Testament. It is always open to the friends of orthodoxy to declare that they consider Jael an exalted character, and Sarah a nobler creature than Antigone. To answer such people is beyond my feeble powers. If a clergyman thinks it a fine thing for a woman to ram a big nail into a sleeping man's brain, there is no more to be said; we must leave him alone in his incumbency and his peculiar opinions. But there are two points which are beyond dispute, which, nevertheless, are seldom discussed, and which, to some readers, will come with an air of some novelty.

I have heard Christian people retort upon Freethinkers who speak of the Brotherhood of Man: "What! brotherhood of man! Illogical sceptics that you are! out of your own mouths we condemn you. How can you talk of men being brothers without implying the Fatherhood of God?" It is a wretchedly superficial answer, and the reply is very simple. The phrase is only a figure of speech; but if Christian people insist on being so solemnly precise, we may rejoin: "Very well, if brotherhood implies the fatherhood, it also implies the motherhood of God." It is remarkable that the Bible discloses but one supreme throne in heaven, and the throne is occupied by a male divinity. Beside him is seated no fair queen. His sorrows—for God is said to have his sorrows—are eased by no consort. His joys he cannot share. There is no wifely hand to check the flight of his angry bolts. The bounties he grudgingly bestows must needs be scattered by his own hand, though a lady of heaven would dispense them with infinitely more grace. God dwells alone on the black peak of Sinai, or in the dark chamber of the Temple, or in the circle of the emerald rainbow. It is true that certain early Christian sects sought to give a mate to God. In the Gospel of the Hebrews a curious passage runs: "My mother, the Holy Spirit, took me by one of my hairs, and bore me up on the great mountain Tabor." There is also a hint at a mother-god in a Gnostic *Hymn of the Soul.** In this old Syriac anthem the soul is represented as leaving Heaven by direction of its "parents," and coming down to the earth. There it receives a letter: "From thy Father, the King of Kings, and thy Mother, the Mistress of the East." These were stamped as heretical ideas and phrases. The Christian Church did indeed admit the Virgin Mary to a position of high rank in the celestial regions, but she was not permitted to carry the orb and sceptre of the universe. The cosmos is governed by a Salic law. I should have thought women—I mean New Women—would have felt seriously affronted at such a scheme of divine policy. The administration is wholly masculine. Even the Civil Service is nothing better than neuter; for in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage. Yet (but I may be a little deaf) I have never caught any murmur or protest from the ladies at this manifest onesidedness. This is the first point.

Now I come to the second. It is an extremely significant fact that not a single book in the Bible was composed by a woman—that is to say, according to the traditional view. The Higher Criticism has played havoc with our grandfathers' conceptions of the origin of the Scriptures. Certainly the Pentateuch was not the work of Moses; and, for all I know, the five books were penned by five spinsters. The dreadful Germans have long ago proved that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were not likely to have written the gospels which bear their names; and perhaps four deaconesses were responsible for the four gospels. But neither the Higher Critics nor the Lower Critics (whoever they are) have mooted any such theory, and I will wait till I hear it elaborated by a professor at Jena or Heidelberg. Meanwhile, I think it will be allowed that, so far as our information goes, no lady was considered sufficiently well qualified to take part in the writing of the Bible. I do not know what the women will say to this omission. My own opinion is that some passages would have been better edited had a council of ladies been consulted. A female historian would assuredly have given a more favorable picture of Eve in the episode of the Fall, and would either have reduced the number of Solomon's wives, or appended a scathing footnote to the record of his harem. I do not suppose that the ladies would have been uncandid enough to cut out the ominous text: "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than with a contentious woman in a wide house"; but I imagine they would have added a companion proverb which would have gently admonished ill-tempered husbands. When men occupy the pulpits, the sins of women are trumpeted forth to heaven and earth; but when the ladies mount the steps the vices of men are faithfully laid bare, and the Recording Angel has no excuse for overlooking male transgressions. Between Adam and Eve one may always be sure of getting the whole truth. Women would have added other delightful chapters to Holy Writ. We should have had scenes from domestic life in the Ark; we should have been edified with a very different ending to the story of David's dance and Michal's frank criticism; and we should have had twenty-four apostles instead of twelve, a dozen ladies being added to the original committee.

* Published by the Cambridge University Press last year; translated from the Syriac by Professor A. A. Bevan.

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Like Figaro, I have made haste to laugh for fear I should weep. Let me close with a more sober word. I do not ignore the fact that in ancient Jewish and Christian times it would have been impossible to find women who could have taken a share in the production of the national and religious literature. On the whole, I am content with the Bible as it is, even though it contains no psalms by Rebekah, and has not delivered down to us the private correspondence of Queen Esther. But in these humaner days, when woman is rightfully accorded equality in work and honor, it should surely be clear that a Bible in which not a page is indited by a feminine hand is not the most appropriate standard of manners or morals.

F. J. GOULD.

## FREETHOUGHT IN SPAIN.

I HAVE just returned from a brief visit to Northern Spain, and my experiences there with regard to the political and religious attitude of the people have caused me so much surprise that I think some account of them will not only be highly interesting to readers of the *Freethinker*, but also pleasing to all who rejoice in the advancement of the cause.

Spain is so generally believed to be still in a state of mediæval darkness in religious matters, so staunchly devoted to and so under the thrall of the Catholic Church, that to speak of Freethought in connection with it may appear almost incongruous.

Prior to my setting out on this journey, I was told by many who professed to have a knowledge of the country that a visit, whilst it was still feeling the effect of its recent misfortunes, might be very unpleasant, and even be attended with some personal risk. I was warned not to go out after sundown, and to avoid, above all things, making any allusion to political or religious topics. This counsel I readily accepted and determined to act upon, being myself possessed of the common impression that Spain is still the great stronghold of bigoted Popery, and that differences in religious opinion scarcely existed. I may mention that, though my long residence in South America had given me the advantage of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the language and some acquaintance with the Spanish character as developed in its former colonies, this was my first visit to the mother country. My observations upon the political aspect of the country would be perhaps of more general interest, and may be published elsewhere; but in this article I only propose to deal with the views of the people upon religion.

My first experience in this direction happened upon the day after I arrived in the country. I had engaged a boat to take me round the Port of Pasages, a beautiful little bay near San Sebastian. The boatman was an intelligent-looking fellow, a typical Basque in appearance and dress, and very talkative. He pointed out all the various points of interest as we passed them, and at length we came to a place named "Los Capuchinos." "This," he said, "was formerly the site of a great Capuchin settlement."

"Then they are no longer here?"

"No; and a good job too," he replied; "we don't want such gentry in our parts. It would be a good riddance if all the other priests were driven out; they are the curse of our country."

This was rather surprising language to hear from one of his race—the Basque peasantry—who had so freely laid down their lives only about a quarter of a century ago in defence of the cause of Don Carlos and the Church.

"Then Don Carlos," I remarked, forgetting all my previous cautious resolutions, "would not have much chance here now?"

"None whatever," he quickly replied; "the clergy deceived us once, but we shall not be so silly as to let them do it again!"

Of course it would not be wise to generalise from the utterances of an individual met by chance, but that a man of this class and race should speak so freely to a stranger on such subjects was certainly significant, and showed that he had no fear of being made to suffer for his words.

The next evidence I had came from a more representative and better-informed source. I had made the acquaintance of the editor of a local newspaper, whom I found to be very intelligent, and both freely communicative and ready to discuss the affairs of his country with a foreigner. After much talk on the political outlook, our conversation turned to religious affairs. "Bah!" he remarked, "I know perfectly well what you English think about us, for I have been myself in England when a young man; but you are quite mistaken. The Catholic Church has very little hold upon men here; but for the feminine element, and of course its accumulated wealth of past years, it would soon have to close its doors. This must be evident to anyone who visits a church. There is scarcely even a man to be seen in the congregation, except a few old dotards."

"No," he said, in answer to my query, "Freemasonry has never made much progress here. Its forms of ritual and nonsense about 'The Grand Architect of the Universe' and Biblical traditions are distasteful to those who have left the Catholic Church in disgust at somewhat similar practices. In Italy it was somewhat different. Masons' Lodges were merely pretexts to cover political conspiracy."

This gentleman stated that most of his friends on the press are more or less of his way of thinking, except, perhaps, those who write for avowedly clerical papers. This is a hopeful sign of the times.

My next experience was yet more interesting. I had just arrived in Bilbao, and was walking for the first time through its well-built and bustling streets. At a corner I accosted a policeman, asking him the name of a large building in front. He was most obliging, and, seeing that I was a stranger, he walked with me all the length of his beat, pointing out whatever he thought would interest me. "There is much to see here," he remarked; "I shall be off duty the day after to-morrow, and if you would like it I shall be glad to guide you round."

This offer I readily accepted, and, as a guarantee of good faith, I gently endeavored to put a tip into his hand. What was my astonishment when he suddenly drew himself up to his full height, pushed my hand aside almost roughly, and said: "Señor, you have made a mistake; we Spaniards can accept nothing for mere courtesy."

Here was an indication of the celebrated Spanish pride, coming from a most unexpected quarter. I could only apologise in the most penitent manner, and explain that I had been misled by my experience of policemen in other countries. This breeze having blown over, the affable official asked where I was staying, and whom he should ask for at the hotel. I gave him my card.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "you have the same name as the Admiral of the North American fleet. Are you by chance any connection of his?"

"No," I replied, "but if I had been would you have considered me as an enemy?"

"Not I," said he quickly; "for my part, I look upon the Yankees as the best friends that the Spanish people have had for many a year."

"How can you make that out?" replied I, somewhat astonished.

"It is like this. In the hands of the Americans our colonies will become better places for people like me than they have ever been. I know what I am talking of, for I have served seven years in Cuba in the army, and have seen the great chances for making money. With an administration such as the Yankees will give it, an industrious man will have the security of being able to secure and enjoy all that he can earn, instead of having had, as in the past, to submit to the impositions of a horde of blackmailing officials. So much do I believe this that I have determined, and so have many of my friends, to emigrate to Cuba as soon as the Peace is definitely settled."

"Well," I remarked, "you are very liberal in your views."

"I am in everything—religion as well as politics. You may judge this by the papers which I read—the *War to Privilege* and the *Freethinker*." (The names mentioned were, of course, those of Spanish papers of equivalent meaning.)

"What," I exclaimed, "do your authorities allow the publication of such periodicals, and are you, a public employee, not rather afraid for it to be known that you read and approve of them?"

"There is nothing in the law of Spain to prevent either free speech or free publication, as I shall be able to show you when we next meet. Meantime, I must be off on my round. *Hasta pasada mañana, Adios.*"

Punctually at the time arranged my *cicerone* appeared, this time in plain clothes. He saluted militarily, but evidently expected to be treated as an equal.

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"I have brought you," he said, while on our walk, "copies of the papers I mentioned. Here they are; I think they will interest you, as you say that you also are a Liberal and Freethinker. But here is something which I think will interest you still more."

So saying, he produced a little pamphlet entitled *La Redencion* (*The Redemption*). I glanced over it, and saw at once that its contents were very similar to the leaflets which were at one time widely distributed by our own National Secular Society. It was actually a reprint of an article which had appeared in the Freethought paper he had mentioned—*Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento*.

"Is there not opposition," I asked, "to the circulation of such tracts?"

"There is, of course; but what can the objectors do? If you will look at the note at the end of the pamphlet, you will see it stated: 'This article, when published, was denounced, but the case was dismissed.' You understand that by our Constitution everyone has the right of 'denouncing'—that is, of making a complaint to a magistrate about anything which he considers as a wrong to himself or the public; but a magistrate can only convict when he finds a law has been broken, and, as I have said, there is nothing in the law of Spain to prevent such publications."

Again I expressed my surprise, but, upon reflection, I said that perhaps it was not actually that the framers of the laws had been so liberal, but that they had been really incapable of conceiving at the time that anyone could ever be so wicked as to venture upon attacking the Christian religion, and so had omitted to make any provision against an unimaginable offence.

"I can tell you an interesting story about this very pamphlet," said my guide. "You know that on Good Friday we have here, as in all other parts of Spain, what the priests call 'a solemn procession'—a wretched farce I call it. Well, last Good Friday this affair was going on, when some disturbance was observed amongst the crowd of spectators. It turned out that a man was moving on just in front of the head of the procession, and was distributing copies of this pamphlet. This elicited several noisy protests, and the Alcalde (Mayor), who was taking *part* in the procession, as he usually does officially, gave orders to have the man arrested. I happened to be the nearest policeman, and so, curiously enough, I had to walk off my co-religionary to the station. On the way I asked him for some copies, and it is one of these which I have just given you. Next morning he was brought up before his worship the Alcalde, but they had to let him go. All they could do was to apply a small fine on account of conduct tending to disturb the public peace. So you see I am quite right in saying that there is nothing in our laws to prevent the publication of such works."

"Are there many of your acquaintances of your way of thinking?" I asked.

"Yes, a good many, and I believe that there are also Freethinkers among the rich people, though of course, in my position, I am not brought in intimate contact with them. Those whom I know are mostly employees, and a few artizans whom I meet at the *cafés* which I frequent."

"You have no Freethought society, nor any organisation?"

"None; nor do I think there is any in other parts of Spain."

"Have you the right of meeting and speaking publicly on religious and political questions?"

"There is nothing in the police regulations to prevent such meetings being held, and, so long as orderly conduct is observed, I do not think they would be interfered with by the authorities. I should explain, however, that since the war broke out the Government has declared a state of siege, which still exists, so that there is no guarantee as to what they would do."

"I can quite understand," I here remarked, "that Freethought was bound inevitably to make some progress in such a community as that of Bilbao, where there is a large body of industrious and intelligent workers, independent, to a certain extent, by their own work; but what about the South and other parts of the country?"

I proceeded to explain to my friend the analagous case of Ireland, showing that Bilbao might correspond to Belfast, whilst Cadiz and Cork might be similar in nature.

"No," he replied, "the Basque provinces in the north have always been the most devout adherents of the Church. If they secede, you may take it that the priests have lost much of their power in Spain. In the South the people are more indifferent, perhaps, because too lazy and ignorant."

This ended our colloquy as far as the subject of religion was concerned.

The pamphlet which my guide had given me is of small form, 16 mo. (about 3 by 2¼ inches), and twenty-four pages in length. It begins by stating that the Christian legend of the Redemption is only a reminiscence of a far older Indian legend concerning one Christna, who is alleged to have lived about 3,500 years before the presumed era of Christ. The booklet proceeds to set forth the wonderful series of parallels which exist between these two legends; facts which are already well known to most of the readers of the *Freethinker*. The writer then asks: "What good did the coming of God to earth, in the mortal form of Christna, do for India? Do we not see it to-day, after having been for thousands of years enslaved by priests, fall at last degraded into the hands of the English? And so what good has the Christian Redemption done for the world?"

The long and eloquent answer given to this can be readily inferred by the readers of this paper, where so many similar ones have appeared. I shall only translate the concluding passage, which is remarkable as having been written and published some time before the declaration of war, but when Spain and America seemed drifting towards a rupture.

"People!" it says, "the great North American Republic, which piously leads by the hand all its children to school, and which does not tear sons from mothers' arms to send them to barracks or to war; which is doing away with servitude, and is substituting the man of mechanics for the mechanical man (*hombre maquina por la maquina hombre*); it is this great and powerful people, and not the Calvary before which heads have been bowed for so many ages, which is showing to you the way to the true redemption. People, the Redeemer whom you hope for will not come down from the heavens; you carry it within yourselves!"

I think that no one will be able to read these lines without some emotion, and it might perhaps be well if the Freethought party in England would convey some message of sympathy to their brethren in Spain. But what would be most pleasing of all would be if these few facts of my experience should become widely known in the United States, as they would lead the Americans to form a better idea of the Spanish nation, against whom so much has been said in their papers, all of which is doubtless believed.

JOHN SAMSON.

## REMEDYING SOCIAL EVILS.

EIGHTEEN centuries of Christianity have not brought us the promised peace and goodwill. Social reformers are still brooding over the problems of life. They have still their riddles to solve, their tasks to perform. In the midst of our boasted Christian civilization we are surrounded by savagery unsurpassed. Gangs of ruffians infest the streets of London and commit unprovoked assaults upon peaceful citizens. Children are beaten and starved, bought, sold, and slain for profit. Men and women are murdered for gold, "thieves break in and steal," and little girls are brutally outraged. Czars, presidents, prime ministers, and empresses are assassinated, and wrongs innumerable flood the land.

Now, while we are all agreed that these and similar evils should be removed, and the sooner the better, we disagree as to the means whereby they are to be removed. What, then, are the means suggested? "The full penalty of the law," "extension of the cat," "united action against anarchists," are the cries raised—the first from the magistrates, the second from fancy journalists, the third from the various Governments. And penal servitude and hard labor with the lash is dealt out wholesale by men who, were they not themselves without sin, would not dare to cast the first stone. Some, no doubt will be deterred for a time by these methods; others will not, and never can be But beneath the surface of society, away from the gaze of rigorous judges, legislators, and superficial observers, subtle forces are at work manufacturing criminals side by side with all other culminative results of a civilised society. In-

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sufficient and bad education, the individualistic competitive system under which we live, unsanitary conditions, too much wealth for some and not enough for others, too long working hours and too low wages for the working class, too much work for some and none at all for others, are some of the forces at work. And I venture to predict that, unless these forces are arrested in their course, or modified, or else the effect thereof be led into other channels, criminality will not only not decrease, but will increase.

Let men go on whipping and imprisoning their fellows; but let them also stay for a moment and think. Is there, under the present conditions of society, work for all of us? Is society, as at present constituted, not bound to breed parasites? Suppose all those whom we lash and incarcerate for illegality were for a single year to stay their course, and turn their hands to a useful task—would they not, being of pushful dispositions, turn us, and some of their accusers, who are now earning an honest livelihood, into the streets; and should we—and they—not have to either meet our death by starvation, or get a crust as best we could? Let us consider before we accuse, and let us think before we act, when so much is at stake!

I repeat it: it will grow worse yet. The population is steadily increasing. Nothing is done to check its growth; everything is done to encourage it. The inventor burns the midnight oil, brooding over new scientific problems, in order to still further dispense with manual labor; and the millionaire is multiplying his millions at the expense of the workers. The "cat" may deter some timid souls for a time, but in the long run the great upon earth will have to adopt the course indicated by us, their humble brethren, as they have been compelled to do so many times heretofore.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

## PITILESS PIETY.

THE earth, as it spins on its axis,
Reveals to the day and the night
A struggle that wanes not, but waxes;
A deadly perpetual fight.
A struggle 'twixt ev'rything living,
And also 'twixt living and dead;
E'en charity plunders in giving,
And joy is the parent of dread.

Our ev'ry intent is a mixture,
Compounded of present and past;
The past with the present's a fixture,
And both with the future are fast.
Although our dislike of an adder
Is minus admixture of blame,
Our killing it scarce makes us sadder;
Our wounding it ne'er gives us shame.

Philosophy steadies our thinking,
And softens the point of our hate;
The thought of all facts interlinking
Makes rancorous feelings abate.
But still, though we aim at perfection,
We cannot, we're bound to confess,
Bring all our dislikes in subjection,
Nor all of our hatreds suppress.

We often attempt—and not vainly—
To look upon reptiles, "and such,"
With some sort of kindliness, mainly
*Because we must hate them so much.*
'Tis hard to be fashioned and fated
To live as a cause of disgust;
To live out a life that is hated
By haters who hate as they must.

But some of our foes we can scarcely
Regard with a feeling of ruth,
Because they oppose so perversely
Our efforts for progress and truth.
The pest that excites most our loathing,
And rouses our pity the least,
Is he that gives house, food, and clothing
To deity, parson, or priest.

With heartless folk earth is infested,
But none is more heartless than he
Whose virtues are loudly attested
And praised by a priestly donee.
The man is a foe of the people
Who gives—be he living or dead—
A farthing to parson or steeple,
While workers work vainly for bread.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## PRIESTCRAFT IN AUSTRIA.

AT Wels, in Upper Austria, the trial took place to-day [October 6] of M. Sieveking, the Dutch pianist, who, it will be remembered, was arrested at Ischl on the charge of having offended the Roman Catholic Church by refusing to take off his hat to a priest who was on his way to administer the sacrament to a dying man, and aggravated his case by whistling. He was arrested at the close of a charity concert at Ischl, where he had been playing. The accused, looking very tall and thin, was to-day dressed in black. His hair is very long, and surrounds his face. A splendid diamond sparkled on his black cravat, and he wore the ribbon of an Officer of the Academy at his button-hole. He admitted that when the priest threatened to have him arrested for not taking his hat off he asked: "Are you a priest or a scamp?" He did not whistle intending to be rude to the priest, but to call his dog. It was his invariable custom to whistle for his dog the first phrase of the Fifth Symphony, and he treated the court to a small performance gratis, in illustration. Having always lived in Protestant countries, he had no notion what the priest was carrying; but his landlady at Ischl had told him afterwards. A juryman asked the accused whether, having lived so long in Vienna, he had never seen the people kneel in the streets to a priest on his way to a death-bed. M. Sieveking answered: "No; the Vienna people do not kneel in the streets." The Wels juryman shook his head, not so much at the wickedness of M. Sieveking as at the godlessness of the capital.

M. Sieveking's counsel said all the blame lay with the priest (who gave evidence in the dialect of the province), and said it was certainly not consistent with his clerical garb and position to stop a foreigner in the street, and quarrel with him; and certainly not while he had in his hand what his Church declares to be the body of our Lord.

M. Sieveking was finally acquitted of the offence of having behaved indecently by whistling and refusing to take off his hat, but was sentenced to three days' detention for having called a priest who was performing a sacred function a scamp.

—*Daily News.*

## ACID DROPS.

JOHN KENSIT'S "Protestant Crusade" seems to be simmering down. It was a decided novelty to go and make a row in church, but the novelty is wearing off now; besides the Ritualists are taking "precautions" of a "muscular Christianity" character. Sir William Harcourt thunders away in the *Times*, but will he have the courage to lead a practical agitation in the House of Commons? Does he even think that the Liberal party would be united against the High Church "conspiracy"? It is just as likely that the whole thing will fizzle out. The fact is that Christian doctrines have very much fallen into discredit, and the High Church party has the sense to see that compensation must be sought in attractive ritual. Churches will more and more have to be run on the show principle to succeed. They must give Sunday entertainments, please eyes and ears, and cut down the sermons. Even the Nonconformists are subject to the same necessity. Everywhere they are going in for Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, the very name of which is an admission that the old Sunday performances were *un*pleasant. What we are witnessing is a grand transformation scene, preparatory to the final harlequinade.

Mr. G. R. Sims was very funny in last week's *Referee*—not consciously and deliberately funny, but funny in an unintentional way. After sundry reflections on the smashing of the Mahdi's tomb and the desecration of his body, and sundry remarks on the superior value of Old Testament methods over those of the New Testament when it comes to fighting your enemies, Mr. Sims wound up with a sort of reservation rigmarole about the advisability of restoring the old honesty and morality amongst us. "It is the duty of the Church," he said, "to start the crusade." "But," he added, "before the Church can give us back those things it must set the example by being moral and honest itself." Well now, that *is* funny! Fancy the Church turning moral and honest! Mr. Sims must be dreaming with his eyes open. We thought he knew better.

Major Cecil Lester died, and an inquest had to be held over his body at Camberley. He had been treated by a lady Christian scientist, who did nothing but pray for him, for which the jury censured her; in fact, they regarded it with "a strong sense of abhorrence." Yet we dare say these gentlemen of the jury were all very good Christians. What a mad world it is! Those who pray on Sundays revile those who believe in prayer any other day in the week.

When the trouble began—or became rather acute—in

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Crete, and there was endless praise of the Christian population as dear, sweet, innocent lambs, and endless denunciation of the Mohammedans as cruel and ravenous tigers, we ventured to remark that this was the veriest nonsense. The good and bad people in the world are not divided up in this simple way. The division between virtue and vice does not correspond with the division between this and that particular faith. Bigotry is always apt to think so, but bigotry is only a mixture of ignorance, prejudice, and egotism.

We pointed out that, in previous quarrels and fightings between Greeks and Turks, the former were quite as cruel as the latter, and sometimes more so; and we gave chapter and verse from Finlay's standard and impartial history. Finlay was a supporter of the Greek cause, but he set down the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, on both sides. Greeks hated Turks as Mohammedans, and Turks hated Greeks as Christians. Religion aggravated instead of softening the quarrel, and both parties too often behaved like devils rather than men, massacring unarmed men wholesale, and shooting and cutting to pieces helpless women and children.

Now we have a well-informed special correspondent of the *Daily News* gravely proposing that all the Moslem population should be sent away, at least from the inland parts of Crete, which should be left entirely to the Christians, as it is utterly impossible for them to live together. The Christians are in the majority, and the Moslems will have no peace; indeed, they will soon be exterminated.

Let us hear this *Daily News* correspondent: "The Christian leaders still deny that religion plays any part in the conflict, but the evidences of fanaticism are only too numerous. The communal banners too often bear the motto, 'Jesus Christ conquers,' and in a village merry-making the men address their partners in the dance by the name of 'Fellow Christian' with something of that emphasis which must have marked the title 'citoyenne' in the speech of a Jacobin during the Reign of Terror. The policy of the Christians of the interior has slowly changed as the conflict prolonged itself into its second and third years. Houses and olive groves abandoned by the Moslems, which had been left intact during the first revolt, were levelled to the ground in the second. This work of desolation had but one object. It was resolved that the Moslems should never return to their villages again. Whatever assurances the Christian leaders may give—and their promises to guarantee the lives of the refugees, and even to escort them to their own again, are doubtless sincere—it would not be in their power to save them against the determination of the rank and file of their following. The first murder of a Christian by a Moslem would be the signal for a massacre which, under the name of revenge, would aim at exterminating the minority root and branch. And occasions would not be wanting, nor pretexts hard to find. There are hundreds of villages where sons would be in daily contact with the murderers of fathers, husbands with the men whose boast it was to have violated their wives."

The religious journals have always pretended that the violation of women was a Mohammedan speciality. Christians, of course, were incapable of such horrors. But here we have the damning confession that the Cretan Christians have violated the wives of their Mohammedan neighbors; and, so far from being ashamed of it, they make it their boast. Of course it may be said that the Mohammedans first taught them this lesson. Well, they have copied it with great alacrity.

It is not often we find ourselves in agreement with any of the servants of the Most High. But the Rev. Forbes Phillips, Vicar of Gorleston, has our complete sympathy in his stirring attack on the steam-preachers on the beach at Gorleston. He says: "It is very hard that young children should be pursued in their holidays and hunted out of watering places by religious cranks, whose ideas of God would disgrace a North American Indian." From waxing contemptuous, the reverend gent grows indignant. He goes on: "Every year sees a migration of English parents to the French watering places, simply on account of so many English seaside resorts being pestered with these cranks, who howl and whine on our sands, and seem to take a delight in being miserable, and whose object in life is to convert our bright-faced, laughing youngsters into sullen-faced little prigs. If the borough authorities are going to permit this another year, certainly I shall do my best to warn parents not to come here with their children." Then he tells a pathetic sequel to the teaching of one of these whining, ignorant, miserable, howling Dervishes. "A delicate, sensible child," the Vicar says, "had a most horrible nightmare after attending some of these services, and listening to some nonsense about a monster, to whom he gave the name of God, who was going to send them to hell for their little faults." We should like to see this copied into every religious publication in the English language.

The Kilburn Sisterhood, numbering sixty-seven ladies under a Mother Superior, expected to have sixty-seven votes at parliamentary elections, which would naturally be cast on the Conservative side; but the Revising Barrister has disfranchised the lot of them, on the ground that their vows made them more dependent even than domestic servants.

Mr. Haldane Macfall, author of the *Wooings of Jezebel Pettyfer*, dealing with West Indian negro life, has been interviewed by a representative of the *Westminster Gazette*. This gentleman does not appear to regard Christianity as of very much use to the blacks. "Mohammedanism," he says, "though a more stern, savage, and primitive civilisation, compels them to action—keeps them moving. That is the religion for the negro without any doubt. On the West Coast I always found the Mohammedan negro the finest type, for every man-jack of them had a trade or a craft. This was compelled by his religion."

Amongst themselves the negroes cherish the old Obeah worship—the cult of Death the Destroyer, symbolised by a snake—which their forefathers brought from Africa. Christianity is only skin-deep with them. "I can remember," says Mr. Macfall, "once floating round a corner in my surplice to take a negro funeral, and finding them gathered round the dead body chanting an Obeah incantation, which they very swiftly changed, as they caught sight of me, into 'A few more years shall roll.'"

Could there be a more decisive proof that Christianity is not a religion for all the world and every creature? Every religion which succeeds, and lasts for a long time, must be (as a religion) adapted to the peculiar ideas, opinions, and temperaments of its devotees. Above all, a religion for the temperate zones will never do for the tropics. Gods, like men, are creatures of circumstance, and natural selection is lord of all.

Professor Virchow, the eminent German biologist, after delivering the Huxley lecture at Oxford, and vigorously praising our dead Agnostic—not, indeed, for his Agnosticism, but for his scientific labors and his demonstrations of the truth of Evolution—let himself be interviewed in an evil moment by the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Coming from a drilled and regimented country like Germany, it is not surprising that Professor Virchow fails to understand the liberty allowed in England to parents who conscientiously object to vaccination. "You give the man in the street the right to a medical opinion!" he exclaimed Yes, we do. We do not believe that doctors are infallible. We happen, indeed, to know that they hold amongst themselves the most diverse opinions on nearly every point of treatment. All that they really agree about is just what common sense teaches everybody—the importance of cleanliness, good food, exercise, and fresh air.

We are not inclined to let doctor Elisha wear the mantle and carry on the craft of priest Elijah. A medical dogma is no more respectable than a theological dogma. The despotism of body-curers is no better than the despotism of soul-savers. When they try compulsion upon their fellow-citizens they should be taught, firmly and even sternly, to mind their own business.

There is nothing like a dogma for making a sensible, and even a wise, man an imbecile. A religionist shall be bright and clever, and perhaps a man of genius, yet he will talk like a fool about the articles of his faith, and defend them with arguments which provoke the derision of every outsider—that is to say, of every person who is not under the same dogmatic spell. For the time being he is as much a lunatic as any inmate of an asylum.

Now the dogma of vaccination is as provocative of folly as any dogma in the repertoire of the Churches. Medical men are taught it in their novitiate, and it becomes a fixed idea in their minds; and, like other fixed ideas, it plays the devil with evidence and logic, and even with common sagacity. We are not in the least surprised, therefore, to find so distinguished a man as Professor Virchow talking the greatest trash on the subject of vaccination. He even went to the length of giving a case from his own personal experience; a method of proof which, on such a matter, is the most ridiculous. After declaring that vaccination gave almost absolute immunity from small-pox, he stated that his mother-in-law refused to be vaccinated, and she was *the only one of the family* who so refused. The result was that she caught small-pox, and "spread the contagion to nearly every person in the house"—*all of whom were vaccinated!* After that we can only wish Professor Virchow a safe journey home.

The Salvation Army has been feasting the Hooligans in South London. They did not pay much heed to the talkee-talkee, but they fell valiantly upon the victuals. We wonder

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if the Army will try to make an impression upon the Holy Hooligans of Peckham Rye.

John MacMahon, a single gentleman, aged sixty-nine, died while on his knees praying in the chapel of the Roman Catholic convent, North Kensington. That ought to have made him pretty sure of heaven; nevertheless, they fetched a doctor to bring him back if possible to this miserable vale of tears.

Canton Vaud has decided to give a vote to all adult women members of the Church. Henceforth they will vote at the election of pastors, and in all other Church business. This is a dreadful slap in the face for St. Paul.

The women incline more decidedly than the men do towards orthodox traditions. But this may mend itself in time. Now they are enfranchised they will probably give more thought to the subject. It may work wonders in freeing them from the oppression of priestcraft. At any rate we shall see.

"The ignorance so frequently shown by the children of the upper and middle classes in religious knowledge" is deplored by the St. Alban's Diocesan Conference. We hope there will be still greater cause for mourning in the future.

"Ensign" Gattrall, of the Salvation Army, has been fined 40s. and 15s. costs at Eastbourne for refusing to cease singing in Cavendish-square when requested to do so. He said he would rather suffer for Christ's sake than pay, and a distress warrant was issued. It is a pity that Christ does not look after his servants, and save them from becoming public nuisances. Hamlet said that Polonius should play the fool nowhere but in his own house, and that is where a Salvationist should murder melody.

Father Didon, who wrote a Life of Christ in opposition to Renan's, is hand in glove with the military party in France. He has been telling the people that it is their duty to stimulate the military spirit, to direct it, and to give it its most vigorous and manly impulse. In fact, he said, a country could get on better without science, art, literature, and philosophy, than without force. He did not include religion amongst the things that could be dispensed with. Religion and force, priestcraft and violence—these are evidently the two agencies which Father Didon relies upon. And perhaps he is wise—from his point of view.

The Bishop of Truro, in his way, is about as bad as Father Didon. Opening a new Sunday school in his diocese, he said that the first book to put in the hands of every child was the Church Catechism. That book was the foundation of all knowledge, the only foundation upon which they could build knowledge which would last and bear fruit. They could do without everything but that. The imagery is rather Hibernian, but the meaning is plain. "There is nothing like leather."

Mr. Quaritch, the great bookseller, is reported to have sold his copy of the Mazarin Bible for £5,250, the purchaser being an American. We wonder what a copy would fetch, if it turned up in the market, of the English Bible printed in the reign of Charles II., in which the "not" was omitted from the seventh commandment.

"Father" Dolling returned to Portsmouth to preach a sermon in All Angel's Church. After prophesying that the Church of England would be entirely Ritualistic in another fifty years, he "deplored the sparse attendance of men at Divine service," and declared that "the lack of men at the Holy Communion and confession was most serious." Well, if the men see through the tomfoolery and desert the Church, will it *last* another fifty years? "Father" Dolling should ponder this question.

We clip the following pious advertisement from a newspaper: "SPIRITUAL.—Wanted, Situation in the Lord's Field, anything, anywhere." We omit the advertiser's name and address. Our readers can have nothing to offer him. The only observation we make is that the Lord's field must be getting over-populated to inspire such an *ad misericordiam* advertisement.

Captain Ellis reported to the Hampstead Board of Guardians that he had visited Leavesden Asylum and found the inmates mainly occupied in going to church. Mrs. Finlay said that there were two services daily, morning and evening; it helped to relieve the monotony. For our part we should be sorry to see them deprived of this amusement. It is well known that lunatics have a strong taste for religion. We wish it were confined to them, and perhaps it will be some day.

Christians are progressing; yes, actually progressing. Here is Dr. Barrett, in the *Evangelical Magazine*, asking whether it is really possible to believe that "a multitude of those little ones who were called away from this sinful world before they knew right from wrong, before the dawn of even the faintest light of moral consciousness, are in hell." Christians have taken nearly two thousand years to mistrust that infamous idea. Perhaps in twenty thousand years—if there are any Christians left then—they will discard the idea of hell altogether. Anybody can see that Christianity is a progressive religion. While other religions stick in the mud, Christianity advances at the rate of an inch in a century.

According to the *Christian World*, a child died recently in a certain parish without having been baptised by the clergyman, who told the parents that he could not bury it. If they liked, the child could be buried by the clerk without any service—at night! Evidently that clergyman does not quite agree with Dr. Barrett.

The Protestant Secretaries' Federation—whatever that is—appeals to all ministers of Protestant denominations to preach sermons on Sunday, November 6, in commemoration of God's wonderful deliverance of England from the Spanish Armada and the Gunpowder Plot. We always thought that Drake, Howard, and others, had a good deal to do with the smashing of the Spanish Armada, and that the Gunpowder Plot was detected and frustrated in a natural way. It appears that the ultra-Protestants run a special history of England on their own account.

The Czar of Russia should really keep some of his fine humanitarian sentiments for home consumption. Fresh measures are being taken against the Stundists, who have the impudence to differ from the orthodox Greek Church, and to live honest, sober, and industrious lives. For a long time they have been hunted down, imprisoned, and deprived of their property and civil rights. Nevertheless they increase rather than diminish in numbers, and it is therefore decided that they shall be treated still more severely; indeed, they may be suppressed by the simple process of annihilation. Holy Russia!

"Poetry and Religion" is the heading of a curious article in the *Christian Life*, an organ of Unitarianism, which boasts of being the only true form of Christianity. "The world," says the writer of this article, "has never known either any great Atheist poet, or any great Atheist painter or musician." Now this betrays inexcusable ignorance or worse dishonesty. Was not Shelley a great poet? Was not Leopardi a great poet? And what about Swinburne and William Morris, to say nothing of James Thomson? What, too, about half-a-dozen French names that might be cited, including that of Leconte de Lisle? Even when we take novelists, was not the great Flaubert an Atheist? Is not Zola an Atheist? With regard to painters, perhaps the *Christian Life* will find out what was the religion of Turner. With regard to musicians, Wagner was a pronounced Atheist, and Sir Charles Macfarren admits that the mighty Beethoven was an utter unbeliever. Finally, in order to give our Unitarian contemporary something to do that may improve its mind and add to its information, we venture to suggest that it should discover the religion of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy.

The ignoramus who edits the *South London Mail* refers in a leading article to "the atheistical writings of Rousseau and Voltaire." In all probability he has never read a page of either. Rousseau and Voltaire were both Theists and wrote against Atheism. It may be all very well to go in for a "fiercely earnest crusade" against "infidelity," but it would be still better on the part of a journalist to be decently informed on the subjects he writes about.

The editor of the *Mail* once more indignantly denies that he opposes the right of free speech. Stopping the mouths of Atheists is not persecution. This noble editor regards it as the height of toleration to allow all men the right to agree with him.

Two farmers riding along encountered a number of clergymen, when one of them said to the other: "Where be all these parsons coming from, neighbor?" To which his neighbor friend replied: "They be coming from a visitation." The other, no wiser than before, resumed: "What be a 'visitation'?" "Why," came his friend's answer, "it be where all the parsons goes once a year and swops their sermons." Being thus "enlightened," the questioner quietly but sadly remarked: "Ah, that be it, then. Well, dang it, but our chap mun get the worst of it every time."

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, October 16, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, "Confession in the Church: A Study in Priestcraft and Demoralisation."

October 23 and 30, Athenæum Hall.

November 6, Manchester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 20, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

A. E. ELDERKIN.—Inserted. Thanks for cuttings.

W. COX.—Glad to hear that the Liverpool difficulty is taking a more favorable turn.

G. BERRY (Stockton) reports that Mr. Harry Snell has had four good meetings there, and that his lectures were much appreciated, particularly the last one.

EX-RITUALIST.—Your generous and encouraging letter is very welcome. Pleased you are joining the Secular Society, Limited, and so highly appreciate our efforts in designing and launching it. Your goodwill compensates us for a hundred insults.

F. J. HARBORNE.—Accidentally omitted last week. Now acknowledged.

W. H. HARRAP.—Mr. Foote does not supply literature to customers. Please apply direct to R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., to whom we have handed your postcard.

WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.—S. Alward, 7s. 6d.; J. Hague, 5s.; Bingley Friends *(per F. Gell)*, 4s. 6d.; J. H. *(per R. Forder)*, 2s. 6d.

C. J. WHITWELL.—Appreciated in the circumstances.

W. ELCOAT.—Thanks; see separate acknowledgments.

L. ORGAN.—Thanks for cuttings, etc. We note that you consider Mr. Mackenzie's verses first-class.

PETER WESTON.—See acknowledgment. Thanks. The matter you wrote about in July has not been lost sight of. The time was hardly favorable then.

J. HAGUE joins the Secular Society, Limited. This acknowledgment has been delayed.

E. JONES (Porth).—Glad to have your good wishes for the Secular Incorporation, in which you apply for membership.

HAROLD ELLIOT.—Thanks; see "Acid Drops."

F. GELL.—See acknowledgment.

W. G. ALLAN.—Glad you are joining the Secular Society, Limited. See acknowledgment and "Sugar Plums." Paper shall be sent.

N. S. S. TREASURER'S SCHEME.—Miss Vance acknowledges *(per R. Forder)*:—J. W. de Caux, 10s.

R. TAYLOR.—Miss Vance has spoken to us on the matter. It is not true that the Christian Evidence Society puts Mr. Waldron forward as its representative to debate with Mr. Foote. If it does, Mr. Foote will debate with him immediately.

A. S. WELL.—Pleased to hear from a five years' subscriber who still looks forward to his weekly *Freethinker*.

STUDENT.—Spencer's works are very expensive, but that is principally owing to the limited demand for such books. We believe, however, that cheaper issues would lead to a considerably wider circulation. Mill's *Utilitarianism* we think is out of print. Copies can sometimes be picked up second-hand. His notes to his father's chief philosophical work, *The Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, are often valuable, like those of his co-editors, but that book is also expensive. Guyau's *Sketch of Morality* will well repay perusal.

A. W. HUTTY.—It is good of you to "wish it was much more," but if all who can would send what they can afford we should soon be working with a light heart.

J. H. FOSTER, joining the Secular Society, Limited, writes: "Too much credit cannot be given to you for the able manner in which you have conceived this project, and every Freethinker worthy of the name should rally to its support."

W. W. STRICKLAND.—We do not quite understand your objections. We are unable to recollect anything in the *Freethinker* to which they can apply.

ALICE M. BAKER.—It is pleasant to know that we are remembered by the widow of the veteran Daniel Baker. Kindly convey to her our best regards.

THOMAS MORGAN.—It is the best method of "nerving" a poor editor.

F. W. SWAIN.—Pray don't inconvenience yourself. All in good time.

J. JONES.—We have already explained what is to be done with the Circulation Fund. What *is* done must depend upon our resources, and we cannot further particularise until we are more ahead with the subscriptions. Perhaps we shall say something on this point next week.

RECEIVED.—Seaweed: a Cornish Idyll, by Edith Ellis—The Ethical World—Awakener of India—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Truthseeker—Torch—Public Opinion—Isle of Man Times—Progressive Thinker—Buddhist—South London Mail—Free Society—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Independent Pulpit—Lucifer—Freidenker—Torch of Reason—Secular Thought—Two Worlds—Christian Life—English Mechanic.

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

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 is due.

*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.

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

## SPECIAL.

SEVERAL correspondents have suggested that Shilling Week should be changed into Shilling Month. They say that this has had to be done on previous occasions, and should be done now, in order to give the less ready ones the opportunity of subscribing. Well, I have assented to this before, and I assent to it again. During the month of October, then, instead of merely during the first week of it, I ask my friends and readers to send me a contribution of one or any number of shillings, for the purpose of enabling me to advertise the *Freethinker* judiciously and to promote its circulation in other ways. The matter has already been explained, and I leave it now with the Freethought party.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE will occupy the Athenæum Hall platform for three Sunday evenings prior to his next series of provincial lectures. This evening (Oct. 16) he will take for his subject "Confession in the Church: A Study in Priestcraft and Demoralisation." Mr. Foote has not been at the Athenæum Hall for some time, and no doubt there will be a large audience on this occasion. His subject is of grave importance just now.

Mr. Foote lectured twice in the Secular Hall, Leicester, on Sunday. The morning lecture on "the Czar's Appeal to Europe" drew a good audience, which appeared to be deeply interested. Mr. Joseph McCabe occupied the chair. The evening lecture on "The Meaning of Death" packed the hall in every corner, and a more appreciative and enthusiastic audience could not be wished for. Mr. Sydney Gimson, who occupied the chair, made a touching reference to the death of an old frequenter of the hall who had just died at the great age of ninety-five.

The Leicester Secular Society is making a big effort in the line of organisation. Mr. Joseph McCabe, formerly the Very Rev. Father Antony, O.S.F., Professor of Philosophy at Forest Gate, and Rector of St. Bernardine's College, Buckingham, has been engaged as organising secretary. That is his technical designation, but he is really to be a resident "minister" of the Gospel of Secularism, which may as well have its ministers as any system of superstition. Classes are being started for the study of Astronomy, Logic, Psychology, Political Economy, Comparative Religion, Ethics, and Modern Philosophy, which Mr. McCabe will superintend himself. It is also intended to teach Modern Languages, Shorthand, and Type Writing. This enterprise will, of course, involve considerable expense, and the Leicester friends are straining themselves to find the wherewithal.

Mr. Foote was glad of the opportunity to spend an hour or two in Mr. McCabe's company. This gentleman is highly accomplished and possesses great ability. His manner is very unassuming. He is entirely without "side"—to use a slang word, whose excuse is its expressiveness. His latest book on *Monastic Life* is being widely and favorably noticed in the press. He has lost the career which was open to him in the Catholic Church, but we hope he will find compensation in being able to labor for the spread of his own con-

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victions; and perhaps—for he is still a young man—he may live to see the Secular movement strong enough to afford its officers a satisfactory position, even if they miss red hats and high-sounding titles and pecuniary wealth. Anyhow, he is very much in earnest, and we congratulate the movement on having secured his services.

Despite the rain, which continued the whole of Sunday evening last up to about nine o'clock, Mr. Charles Watts had a very good audience at the Athenæum Hall, the largest he has had there this season. He was in his best form, and his lecture upon "The Doom of the Churches" "caught on." The applause throughout and at the close was most hearty, and testified that the address was appreciated. Mr. A. J. Marriott made an excellent chairman, and delivered a brief but appropriate speech. "If," said he, "we had more forcible speakers like Mr. Watts, the doom of the Churches would be even nearer than it is."

Under the heading of "Good News for Freethinkers," the *Awakener of India* prints the Memorandum of Association of the Secular Society, Limited, which it refers to as "a happy scheme which is free from all difficulties." It hopes "that the Freethinkers of India will lose no time in joining this new Society."

New Zealand is going ahead. It has passed an Old Age Pension Bill, granting £18 a year to persons over sixty-five who have been twenty years in the colony. This would rejoice the heart of Thomas Paine, who was the first to formulate a definite proposal in this direction. It may be found in his *Rights of Man*.

The *Isle of Man Times* draws attention to the lack of amusements during the day at Douglas. "How comes it," our contemporary asks, "that along the whole stretch of that beautiful beach there is not to be seen the jolly face of the grimy nigger, or the shaggy 'Toby' of the Punch and Judy show? Why should the Salvation Army have the place to themselves?"

An excellent and outspoken review of Guyau's *Sketch of Morality* appears over the initials of "A. G. W." in the Glasgow *Weekly Citizen*. The writer quotes a certain critic as saying that Guyau "reasons like a mathematician and writes like a poet," and remarks that "in this criticism is summed up Guyau's whole nature." The critic in question is the editor of the *Freethinker*.

A copy of the *Buddhist* for September reaches us from Colombo, Ceylon. The Christian missionaries and teachers are not allowed to have it all their own way. They have to face a formidable rivalry. There was one Buddhist school earning the Government grant in 1881, and the number was eighty-six in 1897. Buddhism in Ceylon is not of the superstitious type which abounds on the continent of Asia. It is nearer to the primitive type, and is more ethical. We notice that the *Buddhist* quotes a paragraph from the *Freethinker*.

Mr. W. Heaford was busy last Sunday. In the morning he lectured at Camberwell, in the afternoon he faced the holy Hooligans on Peckham Rye, and in the evening he lectured twice, once in the open air at Mile End, and afterwards at Swaby's Coffee Rooms in the neighborhood there—a hard day's work decidedly for one man. At Peckham Rye the Secularists appeared in numbers sufficiently large to overawe the cowards who came there to kill, but remained to howl. The lecture was delivered in spite of the beast-like noises of the low, but religious, ruffians, and was well received by the exceedingly large and attentive audience. An excellent collection was made, and the meeting was in every way characterised by enthusiasm and success.

Hartlepool Secularists who may see this paragraph are requested to note that a meeting will be held at Mr. W. G. Allan's, 19 Mary-street, on Tuesday, October 18, at 7, for the purpose of seeing what can be done to organise and promote Secularism there. Every sympathiser will be welcome.

The Free Press Defence Committee announces a final public meeting before Mr. George Bedborough's trial, which is to take place at the Old Bailey sessions commencing on October 24. This public meeting will be held on Tuesday evening next (Oct. 18) at eight o'clock in St. Martin's Town Hall. Mr. G. W. Foote is advertised to preside, and "many well-known speakers will attend."

Mr. Charles Watts has still a fair supply of his leaflet on "Secular and Theological Forces." This is a good tract for general distribution. Copies can now be obtained at the low price of sixpence per hundred, or post free eightpence. Order of Charles Watts, 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

## SHILLING MONTH.

FOR THE "FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.

[*Where no figure accompanies the name the amount acknowledged is one shilling.*]

Toreador 5s., F. J. Harborne 10s., A. K. T., S. Alward 3s., C. J. Whitwell, R. H. Leake 2s., G. Thwaites 2s. 6d., P. M. 2s. 6d., Mr. and Mrs. Clarke 2s., J. Crookes, S. Leeson 5s., W. Wilber, G. Woodford, T. Hurst, C. Pell, G. Waplington, H. Surham, H. Gunn, S. Woolley, G. H. Hopkins, G. Wheatley, J. Hardy, J. Barrs, Louis Organ, J. G. 2s. 6d., Peter Weston 5s., A. Button, W. Shadwell, Alfred Window and Two Friends 3s., J. Hague 5s., S. Hartmann 10s., C. H. G. 2s. 6d., A. W. Huttey 2s., R. W. 10s., John Clarke 2s., Mrs. C. Jackson 2s. 6d., P. Dye, F. H. 2s., Mrs. D. Baker 5s., J. H. Foster 2s., A. Briggate 2s., Thomas Morgan 2s. 6d., W. Barks 2s. 6d., F. W. Swain, J. Jones 2s. 6d., A. S. Well, W. W. R. 2s., E. Grizzell, G. Grizzell, H. J. Thorp, W. G. Allan. *Per R. Forder:* Avalon 5s., E. Self 2s. 6d., D. Powell 2s. 6d., D. Forrest 2s. *Per Miss Vance:* E. Bater, W. Davey, F. F. 2s. 6d., J. Bawden 2s., T. A., W. Hunt 5s., T. Thornett 2s. 6d., L. Horne, W. C. M. 5s., John and Lizzie Davis 2s.; J. F. 3s., N. B., Unknown, P. Bridger 1s. 6d., C. Sedgwick, A. J. Hooper.

## THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

*(Company Limited by Guarantee.)*

### MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION.

1.—The name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.

2.—The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.

3.—The objects for which the Company is formed are:—

(*a*) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.

(*b*) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.

(*c*) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.

(*d*) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.

(*e*) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.

(*f*) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.

(*g*) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.

(*h*) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.

(*i*) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.

(*j*) To employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants for the same end.

(*k*) To publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals.

(*l*) To assist, by votes of money or otherwise, other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects.

(*m*) To have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

(*n*) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred society in any part of the world.

(*o*) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

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## CHRISTIANITY AND WAR.

If I had the slightest faith in the efficacy of prayer, I should certainly ask for the petitions of members of the Freethought party to assist me in recovering from the ordeal I have just passed through. Seventy-five columns of newspaper type, recording the doings of the Church Congress at Bradford, have I solemnly and conscientiously waded through. I have been astonished by the historical insight which enabled Mr. Harwood, M.P., to discover that Jesus Christ was the first true democrat that ever lived; mystified by the Bishop of Melanesia saying that in the Solomon Islands "the natives kill their children rather than be bothered with the trouble of bringing them up"—a statement that has left me wondering where on earth the adults come from; pleased that some thirty-year-old commonplaces of Biblical criticism have been put before the Congress as *probably* true; and perfectly flabbergasted at the cuteness of the Rev. Professor Gwatkin, who made the unexpected discovery that unbelief had become very general in these degenerate days. If perfection is only to be gained through suffering, the reading of that seventy-five columns should send me a good distance on my upward career.

It was only to be expected that during the Congress the question of the disarmament of Europe having been fixed upon the public attention by the Czar's recent manifesto, would call forth some notice; and it was quite certain that as the peace movement, so far as the body of the people are concerned, gains strength yearly, we should have the usual unctuous announcement that Christianity is before all things the religion of peace. True, it is the Christian nations of the earth that uphold the largest and most destructive armaments; true, also, that the five principal Christian powers of Europe are spending, in round figures, nearly £200,000,000 annually on war, and could place on the field of battle nearly 13,000,000 men, and that even on a peace footing Christian nations require, *for the purpose of watching each other*, nearly 4,000,000 soldiers; it is also undeniable that in the early part of the year the clergy of Great Britain and America were shrieking their loudest, in the name of Christianity, to bring about a war between America and Spain, and thus aid in saddling the people of the United States with the same burden that oppresses the peoples of Europe; still "Christianity is a religion of peace," and the fact that there was nearly a free fight when Mr. Kensit appeared on the platform may be taken as fresh evidence of the truth of the statement.

It was very noticeable that none of the speakers who dealt with this subject condescended to point out in what manner Christianity had restrained war in the past, or hoped to restrain war in the future. Certainly the Bishop of Calcutta (Dr. Welldon) pointed out that the British arms in the Soudan were "consecrated" by the ministers of different religious denominations joining hands at Khartoum and thanking God Almighty for the deaths of 10,000 Dervishes; while the Bishop of Hereford agreed with him in thinking that we are "providentially ordained .....to be the carriers of trade and European influence to every shore, but that it was our duty to use force to compel Mohammedan governments to treat Christians living under their jurisdiction properly." The murder of hundreds of Jews and the outraging of hundreds of Jewesses under the Christian government of Russia, and with its full connivance, doesn't matter; but it is difficult to see much evidence in either of these statements as to the peaceful tendencies of Christianity.

The plain truth is that the Christian clergy are ready to preach either peace or war, as public opinion may demand it; and in that jumble of contradictory teachings, the Bible, they can appeal either to the Lord, "who is a mighty man of war," who "teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight," or to some text promising a time when "nation shall not lift a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"; and it may be safely prophesied that whether they play on one string or the other will largely depend upon which fills their churches and chapels in the most satisfactory manner.

It would, I imagine, have puzzled even the combined intelligences of the Bishops of Hereford and Calcutta to have shown in what manner Christianity has at any period of its history made for peace rather than war. So far from its ascendancy having exerted any good influence on the military spirit, the period of its greatest power was precisely the period when wars were most frequent and bloody. For downright lust of fighting and boundless brutality the Christian Dark and Middle Ages far surpassed anything that we know of in the civilised nations of antiquity. Rome was essentially a military nation, and yet Rome failed to provide such scenes of internecine wars with barons and bishops, burning each other's castles, murdering each other's serfs, or such pictures of wholesale butchery as fill page after page of European history from the fifth to the fourteenth century.

The wars of the Dark and Middle Ages were largely religious, and some of them were entirely so. Even the profession of a soldier carried with it an odor of religion. Says Hallam: "Writers of the Middle Ages compare the knightly to the priestly character in an elaborate parallel, and the investiture of the one was supposed analogous to the ordination of the other. The ceremonies upon this occasion were almost wholly religious. The candidate passed nights in prayer among priests in a church; he received the sacraments, he entered into a bath, and was clad with a white robe, in allusion to the supposed purification of his life; his sword was solemnly blessed; everything, in short, was contrived to identify his new condition with the defence of religion."*

The crusades were almost entirely religious in motive and object; and in these wars there is not only evidence of the bloodthirsty instincts deliberately set loose by Christianity, but these wars were conducted with every circumstance of brutality and barbarism of which the age was capable. They were initiated by the wholesale slaughter of Jews and heretics in England, France, and Germany; and, upon "the sacred city" falling into the hands of the Crusaders in 1099, the conquered Mohammedans, then in the enjoyment of a civilisation that must have appeared little short of miraculous to the uncivilised Christian hordes that swarmed into Jerusalem, saw to their horror what soldiers of the Cross were like. "The brains of young children," says Draper, "were dashed out against the walls, infants were thrown over the battlements, every woman that could be seized was violated, men were roasted at fires, some were ripped open to see if they had swallowed gold, the Jews were driven into their synagogue and there burnt, a massacre of nearly seventy thousand took place, and the Pope's legate was seen partaking in the triumph."† I imagine that it would puzzle even his Reverend Lordship of Hereford to deny the purely religious nature of the Crusades, or to indicate the refining influence of Christianity in their conduct.

Although the Crusades may be said to have practically closed the era of purely religious wars, yet in the struggles during the period of the Reformation Christianity played a prominent part, while in Ireland, under the puritan Cromwell, differing Christian views gave an air of divine sanction to brutalities that cannot be read to-day without a shudder. And even when Christian feeling has not prompted an outbreak of war, seldom, if ever, has the weight of Christian belief been thrown upon the side of peace. Sheldon Amos, in his *Remedies for War* (p. 42), remarks that "past experience of professed Christianity certainly shows it to be compatible with every phase of the warlike spirit, and, indeed, to afford the occasion, or the pretext, for the bitterest of all wars." Mr. Lecky, with all his obvious bias to give Christianity credit for so much good as is possible, says:—

> "When all.....qualifications have been fully admitted, the broad fact will remain that, with the exception of Mohammedanism, no other religion has done so much to produce war as was done by the religious teachers of Christendom during several centuries. The military fanaticism evoked by the indulgence of the Popes, by the exhortations of the pulpit, by the religious importance attached to the relics at Jerusalem, and the prevailing hatred of misbelievers, has scarcely ever been equalled in its intensity; and it has caused the effusion of oceans of blood, and has been productive of incalculable misery to the world. Religious fanaticism was a main cause of the earlier wars, and an important ingredient in the later ones. The peace principles, that were so common before Constantine, have found scarcely any echo except from Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Quakers; and, although some very important pacific

* *Middle Ages*, vol. ii., p. 455.
† *Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. ii., p. 23.

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agencies have arisen out of the industrial progress of modern times, these have been for the most part wholly unconnected with, and have in some cases been directly opposed to, theological interest."*

In every one of the wars that England has been engaged in, big or little, the clergy have, as a body, been on the wrong side. In the infamous Chinese war of 1860, out of twenty-five bishops who registered their votes eighteen were for war; while there is no instance on record of a protest on behalf of peace ever having been made by the clergy of the Established Church. On the contrary, Bishop Ellicott, of Gloucester, and the late Bishop Magee, of Peterborough, both made elaborate protests against the "Peace Party," and even Charles Kingsley once compared "Peace-mongers" with criminals.

In brief, the Christian clergy have just piped whatever tune the nation was anxious to dance to. If peace was in the air, it piped peace; if war was in the ascendant, it pointed to the soldier as an ideal of duty and of excellence; while as to curbing racial, national, or economic hatreds, that is a task which Christianity has failed most miserably to accomplish, even if it ever attempted it. Upon this head Canon Scott Holland may be allowed to speak. In a sermon preached in St. Paul's last June† he said: "The Roman Empire far more nearly succeeded in giving unity of life, culture, government, and intercourse to the entire body of civilised men, European, Asiatic, and African, than we, in our wildest dreams, could ever imagine possible to-day. Ancient Rome got far nearer to realising the fusion of black and white races.....than our empire ever ventures to attempt. Her citizenship embraced with perfect ease every variety of race, from barbaric Scotland to hot Africa. .....All fell under one policy, under one municipal system, and recognised each other on a legal equality of rights and duties. A Roman citizen might journey from Edinburgh to Babylon, and never cease to find himself perfectly at home amid a circle of familiar scenes and usages and institutions; and the throne of the Cæsars was open to a Slav or Spaniard alike.....A common unity for Christian Europe is infinitely less conceivable now, eighteen hundred years after Christ, than it was for pre-Christian Europe. It is Christian Europe which gives us the spectacle of race divided against race by implacable enmities; it is Christian Europe which has just given us the ironical illustration of its inability to act in concert for any single object under the sun.....Racial differences grow more intense, and let us note it is Christianity itself which tends to sharpen them." Anything that I might say further would only weaken the force of the indictment. C. COHEN.

## PREHISTORIC PEEPS.

### II.—A QUESTION OF COLOR.

Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun.
—*The Immortal Somebody.*

A CURLY-HEADED, pug-nosed, thick-lipped, ebony-complexioned soul-saver once assured his dusky congregation that he was perfectly certain that Adam was—Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!—*a black man!* Let us (you and I, dear reader) calmly, seriously, and dispassionately think this matter over.

Although the lily and the rose fight for mastery in the lovely complexion of the scribe who writes these lines, he has no wish to reproach those brethren and sistren who have, through no fault of their own, a touch of the tar-brush in their composition.

As to the question of color, it may be that, when our Heavenly Father has piled the Wallsend round me, my delicate skin will be charred beyond recall. But let us return to our "muttons." This suggestion of our colored sky-pilot puts a very different complexion on the whole rib story. It brings an atmosphere of originality into the romance of the first man.

Bearing in mind the well-known weakness of "niggers" for chickens, or, indeed, any private property, it was positively absurd on the part of Mr. J. Hovah to imagine that Massa Adam would respect the fruit of the forbidden tree. I know that Moses condemns Mrs. Adam as a bad lot. He tells us that it was Eve who listened to the seductive serpent who, with his ribstone pippin, upset the apple-cart of creation. It was also Eve who tempted our sage ancestor; and it seems that the grand old gardener would have always been quite a superior plaster saint if he had had the Plantation of Eden to himself. But Moses always had a pretty little wit of his own. For example, he calmly tells us that Adam "knew" Eve—just as if a man would be likely to be unacquainted with his own wife. This is absolutely the finest *Jew d'esprit* that Holy Moses was ever guilty of, and he wrote a full account of his own funeral. It won't compare with the jokes of Mr. G. L. Mackenzie; but then comparisons, as Mrs. Malaprop tells us, are always "odoriferous."

There was always this excuse for Eve, that, seeing the snake curled round the tree, she may have thought it was the garden-hose which Adam had left whilst he went off to play the banjo in his leisure moments. Besides, she was not to know that snakes do not usually argue. Ladies usually resemble Artemus Ward's friend "who couldn't ratiocinate worth a cent." In the event of a fight, what chance had she with a creature beside which the octopus of our well-advertised explorer, De Rougemont, was but a periwinkle?

Let us take a closer peep at the plantation. Mr. J. Hovah stalks haughtily around and meets his gardener.

"Watered the plants, Adam?"

"Yes, massa."

"Stoves alight in the conservatories?"

"Yes, massa."

"Missis all right?"

"Yes, massa."

"By the way, Adam, is my halo on straight?"

"Quite straight, massa."

Then he unloads the harmless, necessary shekel, tells Adam to get himself some lemonade, bids him good-night, and passes from sight.

Mr. J. Hovah, unlike Detective Sweeney, evidently believes that beauty unadorned is adorned the most. No sooner did he perceive Eve going about her duties arrayed in an apron of fig-leaves than he proceeded to fall into a most tremendous passion. He bullyragged "our general mother" so much that she yelled for her husband, who came rushing up. With one mighty blow from his banjo he felled Mr. J. Hovah to the ground. This was the last indignity of all. The very sun nearly fell out of heaven with fright. From the Dog Star to Alpha Centauri the stars shook with fear. The whole creation groaned, and Adam and Eve, paralysed with fright, *turned pale.* The frightened pair did not resume their mahogany complexions for many years. During this time of extreme pallor white children were born, all the others being black. This explains satisfactorily the appearance of the white man on the earth. It may not be a strictly scientific explanation; but, as Mr. Engström's energetic expositors continually remind us, science has nothing to do with the writings of the Holy Ghost.

Our prehistoric Othello and his Desdemona had sealed their doom. A board meeting was hastily summoned, and the three Lord Shaftesburys, as Matthew Arnold wittily called the Trinity, made things very warm for our ancestor and his helpmeet. *God does nothing*, said Thomas Carlyle, bitterly; but Mr. and Mrs. Adam would not have agreed with the sage of Chelsea. Mr. J. Hovah cursed like a trooper. Jesus, who called people vipers and whitewashed sepulchres, had a fine command of language, but distinctly inferior to that of his pa. The senior partner cursed the man, and he cursed the woman. His fearful and unquenchable rage was also directed against unborn millions. The other two Lord Shaftesburys silently acquiesced. They didn't evidently keep a dog and bark themselves.

The next day the following advertisement appeared in the *Garden of Eden Gazette*:—

"WANTED, as Gardener and Caretaker, a respectable Man and Wife. Wages, £1 a week and free vegetables. No encumbrances.—J. Hovah, Son, and Co., Florists and Nurserymen, Euphrates-valley."

MIMNERMUS.

The venerable Father Albinger, of Mount Vernon, N.Y., who gained a reputation for sanctity by his sermons against the curse of wealth, died the other day at an advanced age, when it was found that he had saved up more than $100,000. —*Truthseeker* (New York).

* *History of European Morals*, vol. ii., p. 255.
† Reported in *Christian World Pulpit* of July 6.

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# BOOK CHAT.

Mr. H. S. Salt published his *Life of James Thomson* ("B.V.") nearly ten years ago. It was an admirable piece of work, characterised by tact as well as ability, and impartiality as well as devotion. It contained all that most admirers of Thomson's genius would want to know about him, and perhaps more than they were entitled to know. We merely say *perhaps*, and not at all as reflecting on Mr. Salt's taste or judgment. It seems a settled thing that every distinguished man must have a biography, and that he must be depicted in his habit as he lived. He must be painted like Cromwell, warts and all. But whether the veil should be drawn aside from the privacies of life, according to the modern fashion, is at least debateable. Has the public really a right to know more about a dead man than it had to know about him when he was living? That is a problem which has yet to be solved. Tennyson, for instance, had his opinion on the subject, and expressed it in his lines "To ——, After Reading a Life and Letters"—which the reader, if he does not already know it, may hunt up for himself.

* * *

Mr. Salt has now issued a new and cheaper edition (3s. 6d. nett) of his biography of Thomson through the firm of A. and H. B. Bonner. The appearance of the volume is not exactly perfection. There are no very bad faults to be indicated, and yet the general result is unsatisfactory. Perhaps the characteristic most lacking is elegance. One thing at least may be definitely complained of. Printers have a regulation and stupid way of dealing with the *register* of the page, so that when the book lies open in front of you the margin—to use an apparent Hibernicism—looks all in the middle.

* * *

The portrait of Thomson, which forms the frontispiece, is well executed. It is like Thomson, and yet it is not like him. The features are there, but the character is missing. For this, however, nobody is to blame. The portrait, although directly from a crayon drawing, is probably, after all, from a photograph, and photographs rarely give character. It takes the hand (and brain) of a great painter to give us a counterfeit presentment of the actual man; not one expression—often inane or artificial—but the total impression of his individuality.

* * *

Much of the critical part of the first edition has been cu away, but fresh biographical matter has been added; particularly a long and touching account by Mr. Herbert Clarke of Thomson's final breakdown in the rooms of Philip Marston, the blind poet, whence he was removed to the hospital where he died. Of course the most important thing in this new edition is the hitherto unpublished letter to Mr. Salt from Mr. George Meredith. It was hoped, in 1891, that a popular volume might be published of selections from Thomson's poetry, and that Mr. Meredith might write an Introduction. However, the Master had to be excused—though an Introduction from *him* might have consoled Thomson—if he had not been past consolation—in his grave. "He was a man of big heart," Mr. Meredith wrote, "of such entire sincerity that he wrote directly from the impression carved in him by his desolate experience of life. Nothing is feigned, all is positive. No Inferno could be darker. But the practical effect of a greater part of the Poems is that of a litany of the vaults below. The task of a preface will be to show him pursued and precipitated by his malady in the blood to do this perpetual offence of dark monotonousness which the clear soul of the man would have been far from committing had he not been so driven, as the beautiful 'Om-el-Bonain' may witness. Bright achievement was plucked out of the most tragic life in our literature."

* * *

This ill-fated man of genius has found a sympathetic and competent biographer in Mr. Salt, and we hope this cheaper edition of his labor of love will find a fairly wide circulation. More than this is scarcely to be expected. Thomson's career was not a public one, and it was not exciting. It was only infinitely pathetic. One reads the record with an added sense of the meaning of Heine's terrible phrase of "the Aristophanes of the Universe."

* * *

In response to numerous inquiries from our readers, we may mention that *Stories Toto Told Me*, by Baron Corvo, which we noticed at length last week, is published at the modest sum of one shilling.

* * *

Messrs. Newnes and Co. have just added to their very popular "Story" Series *The Story of Religions*. We took the book up with some expectation; but the work is so obviously a compilation that we cannot do more than make a passing reference to the volume.

A new book has just been published entitled *Ananias*. We have been asked to state that this volume has no reference to the *Atheist Shoemaker*.

## ON PRAYING.

I'd like to know, if you can tell,
Is praying any good?
Won't human effort do as well
When rightly understood?

If God is changeless, how can he
Be influenced by prayer?
And if he changes, how can we
Trust in him anywhere?

Since no effect can be produced
On God, who changes not,
How foolish 'tis such time be used
Where good can ne'er be got.

It seems to me 'twould wiser be
To work and never pray;
Our day is brief, then why should we
Be wasting it away?

## Chaplain and Patient.

In the *Cornhill Magazine* a writer tells some pleasant stories of the humors of hospital life. A poor little street arab was brought in by the police. He had been run over by an omnibus, and was badly injured. The chaplain was sent for, as it was thought improbable that the boy would live many hours. With little tact the chaplain began the interview thus: "My boy, the doctors think you are very much hurt. Have you been a good little boy?"

Boy (much bored): "You git aout!"

Chaplain (shocked): "But I am afraid you are not a good little boy, and you know you may perhaps be going to die."

Boy (anxious to end the interview): "Well, 'taint none o' your business any'ow. Wot's me death got to do with you? 'Ave you got a pal in the corffin line?'

The boy finally recovered.

Patients' gratitude to the doctor sometimes overflows in speeches like the following remark made by a poor woman after a long illness: "I wouldn't never 'ave got over my lawst illness if it 'adn't a bin for Surgeon-Captain Jones and the Lord."

## Mixed.

The pastor of the First Baptist church, Ukiah, Cal., is Mr. Farmer.

The proprietress of a hotel in the same town is Mrs. Smith.

One of the members of the church is Mrs. Southard, and, on the authority of two women who know, Mrs. Southard charged that the pastor and the proprietress remained in a locked room at the hotel several hours on several separate occasions.

By a two-thirds vote the church expelled Mrs. Southard for telling tales out of school, and Mr. Southard has now sued the church for damages for depriving his wife of her usual spiritual consolation. He seems unduly sensitive.—*New York "Truthseeker."*

## A Dilemma.

A little girl in Philadelphia posed her papa quite unconsciously, but very neatly. She had put to him the common question, "Can God do anything?" and received the common answer, "Yes." Then, however, she pursued him with an instance: "Papa, can God make a stone bigger than he can lift?" Papa's discomfiture was exquisite to behold. Whichever way he answered it, he saw himself constrained to contradict himself.

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(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.

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

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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, "Confession in the Church: A Study in Priestcraft and Demoralisation."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, R. P. Edwards, "Christianity the Product of Buddhism."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, F. J. Gould, "The Religion of the Hebrew Prophets."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Stanton Coit, "The Crusade Against Ritualism."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "America among the Nations."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (20 Edgware-road): October 20, at 8.30, Mr. Schaller will open a discussion on "Necessitarianism."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "A New Bible." Peckham Rye: 3.15, A. B. Moss, "The Glory of Freethought."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): R. P. Edwards—11.30 and 7. October 19, at 8, Stanley Jones.

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, Mr. Papernow.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, E. White.

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey. October 18, at 8, Stanley Jones.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Christian Doctrines Abandoned."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): H. P. Ward—11, "The Law of Population"; 7, "Why I am an Atheist."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, A. E. Rowcroft, "The Uselessness of Strikes."

DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, W. Fletcher, "A Few Remarks on the Recent Church Congress."

GATESHEAD (Town Hall): C. Cohen—8, "Substitutes for Religion"; 7, "The Testimony of the Jews to Christianity."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, Mr. Armour, "Chartism"; 6.30, A. G. Nostik, A lecture with lantern illustrations.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): Touzeau Parris—11, "Occultism: Is it Wisdom or Folly?" 6.30, "Theosophy: A Criticism."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Ross, "What it is Blasphemy to Deny."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. M. Robertson—11, "The Financial Basis of Religion"; 8, "Militarism and Social Science"; 6.30, "The New Creed of Miracle."

PRESTON BRANCH: October 20 and 21, C. Cohen.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—October 16, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 20 and 21, Preston; 23, Sheffield; 26, 27, 28, Derby; 30, Leicester. November 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London; 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester. November 30 and December 1, Failsworth. December 4, Manchester.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—October 16, Birmingham. November 27, Liverpool. December 18, Birmingham.

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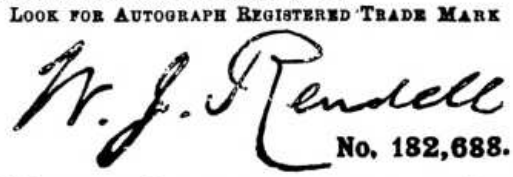
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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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## A FREETHOUGHT NOVEL.

*A Celibate's Wife.* By Herbert Flowerdew. (London: John Lane.)

NOVELS with a purpose are a mistake in art. They may, or may not, serve an immediate turn, but they can hardly outlive it. Those who withstand this view sometimes point to *Don Quixote*. They say that the object of Cervantes was to laugh down the ridiculous chivalry of Spain, that he succeeded in this, and that his great book has nevertheless achieved immortality. But they forget that Cervantes has been credited with several different objects. Heine even sees in Don Quixote and Sancho Panza the everlasting antithesis between imagination and common sense; the latter always being dragged at the former's heels, as honest Sancho danced after the adventurous Don, although he pretty well knew in his heart that it was all midsummer madness. Twenty critics, too, will give twenty different theories about *Hamlet*. But our supreme poet was too great an artist to tell us what he meant. Like a god, he manifested himself in his creations.

Novelists with a purpose are liable to two great dangers. If they advocate certain opinions, and make their personages argue, they are apt to put all the strength of reason on one side and all the weakness on the other. They set out with a foregone conclusion, and betray it in the very first chapter. And if they seek to promote one cause, and damage another, by types of character, they are apt to put all the good people on one side, and all the wicked people on the other. Of course this is untrue to nature. It is also perilous. For all an opponent has to do is to reverse the characters, and your thesis is disproved.

Still, this is an age of novels with a purpose, and the Christians are the chief practitioners in this line. They employ fiction—quite mistakenly, as we think—to bolster up their tottering faith. This may be taken as an excuse for Freethinkers meeting them on their own ground. Mr. Flowerdew, the author of the novel before us, seems to work in that spirit. His chief characters are three—a High Church clergyman, a literary Infidel, and a charming woman. Canon Presyllett marries the handsome and enthusiastic Angela for clerical reasons. They live in the same house, but as celibates, for he looks upon sexual intercourse as unspiritual, if not actually sinful. Angela tries to convert Gabriel Lyne, the Infidel, who is infinitely superior in every way to her nominal husband. But the Infidel converts her, and they fall in love with each other. Then the beast is aroused in Canon Presyllett. He desires the woman he may lose. Finally, after she leaves him, with a view to obtaining a divorce, he abducts and outrages her, which he regards as quite proper in the sight of God. The poor girl feels her pollution and commits suicide, and the Infidel kills the Canon as a murderer in the sight of Humanity. We extract this scene to show Mr. Flowerdew's power of writing:—

> "Canon Presyllett looked up, with panic on his gaunt face, as the figure of Gabriel entered silently. He had justified himself to God, with the complete assurance that his victim's defender was too weak and ill to interfere with that settlement of the question; and with fear and surprise he remained on his knees, unable to move a muscle or close the loose-lipped mouth that had been open in invocation.
>
> "Gabriel had put down the lamp and locked the door without uttering a word. He was standing with his back against it now, tearing the bandages off his injured arm. The flesh showed all red and scarred beneath, and he moved his exposed fingers as if trying their strength.
>
> "There was a fiercer exultation in his heart than that which had stirred the pulses of the man of God, when *he* found himself alone with his prey. But even now the Infidel's dread of any unthought emotion made him curb himself, trying to look upon his action from the broad point of view from which he examined everything.
>
> "To the trembling Canon the silence became unbearable.
>
> "'May I ask why you have forced yourself into my house?' he asked, trying to give his voice the strength of angry indignation.
>
> "'I came to tell you that your crime is finished,' said Gabriel quietly. 'The woman you have wronged has poisoned herself. You are a murderer, Canon Presyllett.'
>
> "The clergyman rose to his feet, the new fear and horror forcing back the old. For a moment he felt convicted of the crime of which he was accused.
>
> "But it was only for a moment. The next he had put away the idea of his own responsibility as ridiculous. The sin lay with the wicked woman herself, who had so far forgotten the laws of her God that she dared to enter his presence uncalled, and with the man who by his wicked blasphemies had robbed her of the faith which would have held her back.
>
> "The completeness with which his conscience absolved him gave him courage, and he drew himself erect, with something of his old pulpit manner.
>
> "'My wife a suicide!' he said. 'And so this is the end of your horrible work. You have shattered her faith, you have blinded her to the bindingness of the holy marriage tie, and your teaching has ended in this, a suicide's terrible death.'
>
> "But Gabriel held himself back no longer. The emotion in him could find no more useful expression than in the thing he meant to do. His decision was a just one, if any decision is just by which society puts an end to an existence which menaces the safety of all its members. His instinct was as worthy as any which makes us wipe the venomous reptile from our path without scruple."

The actual killing of the Canon is told with relentless realism. Gabriel Lyne defends his action on the ground that the law provided no redress. He scorns to escape, gives himself up to the police, and presumably is executed. He had been admired and respected before, in spite of his infidelity, but public opinion swung round in favor of the man of God after his death.

> "Windlehurst was frantic with excitement over the twin tragedy, and shook its head sagely over the result of a non-Christian belief. The Infidel of Windlehurst had acted more respectably than they expected as a general rule, but his cloven hoof was sure to show sooner or later. There was nothing like the good old faith to keep a man respectable. People who had begun to admit openly that there might be certain things in the Christian creed about which a man may honestly hold two opinions ceased to make public a theory so dangerous, and fought against its existence in their minds, for fear that it might ultimately lead them to the gallows. That an opinion which by any possibility can lead one to the gallows must be irreligious was an unquestionable axiom, the precedent of Jesus notwithstanding."

We must not conclude without saying that Mr. Flowerdew's novel contains some excellent descriptive writing, and some really good studies amongst the minor characters. Perhaps the strongest part of the book is the account of the rising of the beast in Canon Presyllett.

G. W. FOOTE.



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## THE CHURCHES' DILEMMA.

An important object lesson is to be learned from a careful perusal of the reports of the proceedings at the late Church Congress at Bradford, and at the Baptist's meetings at Nottingham. That lesson is, that the whole of the Churches are in a dilemma, the escape from which it is difficult to foresee. We can quite understand the anxiety of the Archbishop of Canterbury when he stated last week at his first "Visitation": "There is much uneasiness in the Church just now.....there are angry disputes, some of great importance.....causing very serious consequences." Equally significant was the statement of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, of Brighton, made at the Session of the Baptist Union at Nottingham, when he said: "There was in the present day a certain hesitation of utterance in regard to the doctrine of the Atonement. There preachers were puzzled to know what to say. They did not know where to place emphasis. They were puzzled to find an adequate re-statement of the Atonement that would satisfy the aspirations and the tendencies of the twentieth century." The difficulty is not based simply upon minor differences, as some Christians frequently urge, for the Rev. R. C. Fillingham, Vicar of Hexton, writes thus upon this point: "The Catholic Church, say they, hath three branches—the Roman, the Greek, the Anglican. They all agree in essentials; they all represent antiquity; they are all part of the same universal body. Now, to the plain man it would appear that no wilder theory, no theory more opposed to fact, ever entered into the brain of man. It would seem as if a special conclave of theologians had been selected out of Bedlam to invent this strange faith. The Greek, the Anglican, the Roman Churches all one! But the Roman Church anathematises and curses the Greek under the name of 'the Photian Schism'; the Greek Church holds the English Church to be heretical in her version of the Nicene Creed; the English Church denounces the Roman Church as having been sunk in idolatry for 800 years; the Roman Church denies that we have valid Orders, denies that the Church of England is a Church at all—but they are all one, all branches of the same infallible teaching body! If that be so, surely nothing can ever be different from anything else. Surely, my brothers, this is the creed of Colney Hatch! Surely they who for some purpose assert it *cannot* be such fools as to believe it!" (*Christian World*, Sept. 29).

One feature of the present dilemma of the Churches is that, as Dr. Watson said at the Nottingham meeting, "the old religions had served their day, and they were passing away." This fact is corroborated by history, which clearly shows that religions rise, flourish for a time, and then decay. As J. Cotter Morison aptly put it: "There seems to be no exception to the rule that the older religions grow, the more infirm do they become, the less hold do they keep on the minds of well-informed and thoughtful minds." This is certainly true of Christianity, as its record testifies. At first, we are told, it was readily accepted and enthusiastically professed. Then doubts arose as to the accuracy of its claims, which were severely criticised. This was followed by internal divisions and open rejection of many of its tenets. At the present time we see unmistakeable proofs of its approaching decay. It is no longer an active factor in our national affairs; it has ceased to be a monitor in daily life, and it stands self-condemned as a united teacher. It may be said of Christianity in the words of the Bible: "Destruction cometh, and they [its adherents] shall seek peace, and there shall be none. Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumor shall be upon rumor; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients. One built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar."

This appears to us to be a fair description of the Churches to-day. Destruction has come upon them, and they seek for peace and can find none. Even the Bishop of Ripon avows that "Our internal divisions are perhaps our greatest foe." He fears "the unguarded temper, the intolerant spirit [among Christians] which seeks to damage a brother's character.....It summons to its aid bigotry armed with ignorance; reckless, it heeds not what it destroys." The Archbishop of York deplores that "another Gospel is being preached which is not the Gospel of revelation." Mr. Justice Grantham admitted at the Church Congress that "with some clergymen a layman might go to the devil before the clergy would abate their opinions..... Churchmen would not allow themselves to be dragged at the heels of noisy demagogues, or itinerant street brawlers [their brothers in Christ], nightly pouring out their venom into the ears of the Church's most pronounced enemies; they exposed the cloven hoof of self-interest as the motive power of their action." Writing before the Church Congress, the *Church Gazette* observed: "There will have been a good deal of heated party strife [at the Congress]. High Churchmen will have been horrified at Low Churchmen, and the latter will have returned the feeling with usury; and Broad Churchmen will have horrified everyone..... The dangers which menace our Church have arisen from the backward or reactionary tendencies of its clergy" (Oct. 1, 1898). The *Church Review* designates Nonconformists as "dissenting hordes." The *Church Gazette* says the one thing proved at the late Church Congress was "the impotency of the Church," and the officials of the "Christian Fellowship Society" alludes to "the much wrangling and ill-feeling, not only between different sects, but between members of the same denomination, and even of the same congregation" (*Church Gazette*, October 15, 1898). Add to these ebullitions of bad feeling the bitter conflict which is constantly going on between Roman Catholics and Protestants, and the Kensit crusade against the Bishops, and then it will be seen what a "happy family" these professing Christians are. Surely the "Prince of Peace" was not far wrong when he said: "Think not that I am come to send peace."

And yet, in the face of this record, Christians taunt Freethinkers with lack of agreement. Whatever differences may exist among Secularists upon methods of organisation, none obtain as to our fundamental principles; whereas, in the Churches, the divergency pertains to the very essentials of their faith. No uniformity of opinion exists among the various theological schools as to the nature and character of the God they worship, the divinity and functions of Christ, the personality of the devil, the kind and duration of future punishments, the inspiration of the Bible, and the true meaning of its contradictory teachings. We are told in the New Testament that "A house divided against itself cannot stand." That serious divisions now exist within the Churches is an admitted fact. Their adherents are, therefore, in this dilemma: either the Gospels state what is not true, or the Churches are doomed to destruction.

It appears to us that ample evidence is at hand to justify the opinion that unless the Churches give up the faith which, we are told, "was once delivered unto the saints," and arouse from their lethargy, they will speedily lose, much more than they have done already, their hold upon the people. In speaking of his own Church Dean Farrar frankly said: "The great work of the Church was to be an intense effort always for the amelioration of the world. Many incidents in our own day, and in the past history of the Church, went to show that work was, and had been, slackly and imperfectly done. Take the slave trade and its heroes, Thomas Clarkson, Zachary, Macaulay, Granville, Sharp, and William Wilberforce. What was the attitude of the Church towards these men? As a matter of plain, historic fact, the ordinary attitude was one of sullen indifference, and, in some quarters, of actual hostility. In America, on the same question, how did the Church deal with one of its noblest sons? As one of the great orators had said: 'The Church loomed over him like a dark and sullen cloud.' This I will say, if the Church be false to its great duty.....she is in danger" (*Church Gazette*, Oct. 8, 1898). The present lamentable social condition of the poorer classes of this country is a standing proof of the incapacity of the Churches either to initiate or to carry on any practical reform that will confer upon the masses any real mundane advantages. No wonder the Bishop of Derry deplored at the Church Congress "the lapse of tens of thousands of baptised souls from all worship of God, all consciousness of a Father's benediction."

The true remedy for the unfortunate evils which afflict society is to turn the Churches into institutions for the moral, social, and scientific instruction of the people, and to substitute practical reformers for the priests, who live, not for, but upon, the general masses. Morality is indispensable to the individual and national welfare, while religion, even if it were true, is not an absolute necessity to human progress. Let us study earth more, and trouble

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about heaven less. Our home is here, and the loved ones should claim our attention and command our efforts to enhance their happiness. The evils and wrongs of life are not to be removed by purely emotional ideals, theological absurdities, or Church agencies. These have been "tried and found wanting." What we now require is secular effort, allied with intellectual activity and moral stability. Upon these factors of progress rest our hopes for the regeneration of the human race. CHARLES WATTS.

## JOYLESS UNBELIEF?

BROWN, Jones, and Robinson, in their dealings with unbelief, represent three very common types of Christians; and each in his way throws considerable light upon the workings of the religious mind.

Brown belongs to the mildly incredulous type. He finds it impossible to understand how anyone who has once examined the stupendous evidences of Christianity can possibly put them on one side as being worthless. A man is an unbeliever simply because he has not examined carefully enough, or perhaps has not examined at all; and, therefore, an unbeliever in the sense of one who knows all that can be said on behalf of Christianity, and deliberately rejects that religion, is an utter impossibility. What so many generations of people have believed must be true; and even when that argument breaks down, it is easy to prove the truth of the Resurrection by a reference to the number of hospitals Christians have built, and it is equally simple to demonstrate the accuracy of the Genesaic story of creation by pointing to the charitable institutions erected by believers in Christ for diminishing a little of the volume of misery that other believers in Christ have helped to create.

Jones belongs to the fiercely intolerant type. To him all unbelief is in the nature of a criminal offence against God and man, to be put down as speedily as possible, and by whatever means society finds readiest to hand. Like Louis XI., he believes the only way to argue with heretics is to plunge a sword into their stomachs; and one may readily admit that it is about the only method by which Christianity could really settle unbelief. True, the sword is not advocated nowadays; it is the policeman and the prison, or, failing these, social ostracism; but the method is the same at bottom, and appeals to the same class of people for support. The unbeliever is a plague spot, a centre of disease, that society must exterminate if it would remain pure; and, to speak frankly, I am inclined to regard this view of the matter as being more Christian at bottom than any other. If Christianity is true, the unbeliever *is* a centre of contamination. He is not only bent upon going to hell himself, but is resolved to take as many with him for company's sake as he can possibly secure. If Christianity is true, persecution is a duty, and every step that the Christian makes towards the toleration of heretical opinions is a fresh admission that after all he may be wrong.

Robinson belongs to a much commoner species nowadays, and one that hardly carries with it such presumptive proofs of sincerity as the foregoing. He is of the sweetly sympathetic type. His soul is much concerned for his "poor erring brother," and he is usually a nuisance in his efforts to bring the lost sheep back into the fold, and perfectly nauseating in the sympathy extended to those who have rejected the comforting doctrines of Christianity, and are now treading the cold and cheerless paths of unbelief. Of course, it would be very difficult for the believer to say why the unbeliever's existence must be a joyless one. Certainly it cannot be because he misses any of the good things of this life; for one of the charges urged against him is that, instead of mortifying his affections as a preparation for what lies beyond the grave, he surrenders himself to purely earthly joys, and at last terminates his existence without even the knowledge that there is a hell for him to go to.

Nor could it be shown that, so far as this life is concerned, the unbeliever, in rejecting Christianity, throws on one side anything of real value. So far as can be seen, he mourns with the sorrow and laughs with the joy of all around him; the friendship of men and women, the love and affection of the home circle, are as dear to him as to others; the organic relations of man to society lose none of their reality or importance with the rejection of religion; rather do the joys and comforts of earth become all the more valuable as those of heaven are dissipated into thin air by the criticism of advanced thought. And, curiously enough, while the unbelievers are pictured, for preaching purposes, as leading a miserable existence, one of the commonest accusations brought against them is that they are always laughing at religion. How a man who is always laughing at something he doesn't possess can be miserable for want of it is a problem not easy to solve.

Strange, too, that the only people who talk about the miseries of unbelief are the believers themselves. The unbeliever never complains. I have never met one who felt less comfortable as a Secularist than he did as a Christian, while I have met thousands the reverse. The lives of prominent unbelievers, such as Mill, Darwin, Huxley, or Spencer, do not present pictures of any preponderating sorrow; while George Eliot has left it on record that the pleasure she felt in surrendering Christianity was "akin to laughter." And I imagine that not even the most rabid believer would argue that Mark Twain's unbelief has had any demoralising effect upon his sense of humor.

Nor would it be difficult to show, from the lives of believers of all classes, that Christianity frequently brings anything but joyousness in its train. One would not seriously argue that such beliefs as eternal damnation, or the conviction that the devil lies hidden in all pleasures for the purpose of entrapping the souls of men, had any cheerful effect upon the minds of those who entertained them. As a matter of fact, the lives of the most eminent saints in Christian history present us with brief periods of hysterical rapture alternating with periods of complete despair and mortification. With rare exceptions leaders of religion have been men who avoided what they were pleased to term "worldly pleasures," preferring constant mortification to the most innocent enjoyment. The figure-head of Christianity is the "man of sorrows"; our present Sunday, with its combination of alcohol and orthodoxy, toned down as it is by modern scepticism, is a standing evidence of how much Christianity did to destroy the pleasures of life and give even a sharper edge to its sorrows. Altogether one thinks of the Christian's idea of a joyous creed as just upon all fours with that of the woman who declared after a visit to the theatre: "Really I never enjoyed myself so much in all my life. *I cried right through the piece.*"

That the unbeliever no longer finds comfort in the same set of beliefs as the Christian is undeniable; but it by no means follows that the beliefs rejected are not replaced by others quite as valuable and quite as cheerful to those that hold them. Indeed, if a comparison of beliefs were instituted, one might show that not only has the unbeliever a far more helpful set of beliefs than the believer, but that they are far more cheering in their general view of human nature. The unbeliever is at least free from that paralysing dread of intellectual development which fears lest every new discovery should destroy the whole fabric of religion. To him knowledge is really power; and every fresh discovery, every invention, is a new lever by which to raise the world to a higher level of existence. The world may be imperfect, human nature may be faulty, but we are not weighed down by the conviction that the world is suffering from God's curse, and are cheered in our efforts to improve life by the thought that human ills are removable, given time, knowledge, and industry. And there is surely something in the feeling that the world is ours to have and to enjoy, that the materials for making it better are well within our reach, and that human welfare is ultimately dependent upon the acquisition and application of natural knowledge rather than the acceptance of barbaric records as true that are condemned as false by the best knowledge of our times.

The mistake made by the believer, however, is a curious, although not an uncommon, one. He imagines himself in the position of the unbeliever, still retaining his old feelings, and finding nothing in his new condition to satisfy them. Obviously this is a blunder. Whatever a man's opinions may be, his feelings sooner or later accommodate themselves to them. The emotions of a Christian, a Buddhist, a Mohammedan, or an Atheist are all modified, and correspond in the main to the intellectual convictions entertained by each; and any change in opinion necessarily involves a change in the feelings or emotions previously existing. It is this process of gradual development that is

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lost sight of by the ordinary believer. He fails to realise that, step by step with the acquisition of fresh knowledge, there goes a profound modification of feeling; until by the time that his old opinions have been destroyed by the dissolving agency of inquiry, and he steps out into the new world of Freethought, he no more needs the childish consolation that religion offers than he needs the wooden horses and toy guns of the nursery.

And what, after all, does the Christian know of the sense of freedom and happiness accompanying unbelief? What does he realise of the feeling of liberty arising from an absence of priestly or theological terrors; of the sense of responsibility springing from the consciousness that, by our actions and our thoughts, be they great or small, we are each of us moulding for good or ill the lives of all around us, or the incentive to renewed exertion acquired by a knowledge of the age-long story of human progress, or the conviction that, as the past has created the present, so the present has it in its power to build up a brighter and nobler future for those who follow in our steps? He is in the position of a man who has never left the slums of a city, moralising upon the dangerous effects of a breath of mountain air, or the evil of being shut-off from the fetid odors that he has by long residence become habituated to. Like a slave hugging his chains, he caresses the fetters that bind him. To him unbelief is unattractive because it is unknown. But to those who have broken down the barriers of hereditary intolerance, and who know what the real position of an unbeliever is, the beliefs that seem cold and dead are pulsating with life and instinct, with promises of hope and happiness; while the possibilities of a life honestly and courageously lived in the "Service of Man" far outweighs any devoted to the service of a God known by none, and believed in only by a vanishing number of intelligent men and women. C. COHEN.

## RELIGION AND MORALITY.

[Translated by G. W. Foote from Letourneau's *L'Evolution de la Morale.*]

JEWISH morality is less comprehensive; it was produced among a small people, and has no regard for animal life, nor even for humanity. It has, however, certain aspects of relative elevation, which I have already indicated; but those aspects belong simply to the stage of mental development to which Israel had attained. With respect to clericalism, Jehovism was as absurd as Brahminism.

The Bible is sown with atrocious or unreasonable prescriptions. For Jehovah, the inexpiable crimes are idolatry and blasphemy. The Jews were always to stone whoever incited them to idolatry, whether son, daughter, brother, or wife. They were to exterminate the inhabitants and the animals, and destroy the belongings, of idolatrous cities where Hebrews had been attracted and converted.

The blasphemer was to be stoned, and so was the sorcerer. Death was decreed against those who resorted to wizards. This is justice after the fashion of the negroes of Central Africa. Jehovah was also like certain idols on the banks of the Niger in his pronounced taste for the odor of burning fat. To eat of that holy fat was to the Jew a capital crime. The same punishment was awarded to those who should eat of the blood.

Against the enemy Jehovah commanded a savage cruelty. All the males of cities carried by assault were to be put to the edge of the sword. In other cities, which Jehovah gave as a heritage to his people, the whole population was to be massacred.

Elsewhere it is said that every girl who marries without being a virgin should be stoned. The wife is also an impure being. To touch her, or any object which has been in contact with her during her menstrual period, is to become impure until the evening. She is further impure during seven days, if she gives birth to a son; and during fourteen days after the birth of a daughter.

The most singular prescriptions are solemnly formulated. It is forbidden to shave or cut the hair round. Quadrupeds may be eaten if they ruminate and are cloven-footed, but no one must eat the hare nor the cony, *which of course ruminate*, but do not divide the hoof. It is also necessary to abstain carefully from certain fantastic animals, having at the same time four feet and wings, etc., etc.

If the commandments of Jehovah are sometimes singular, the methods of appeasing him, and of effacing sins, are not more rational. The almighty Lord is, above all, hungry for victims. Formerly, as we have seen, he devoured the first-born children; later he is contented with animals. He pardons, for a calf, a sin committed in ignorance; a broken oath for a lamb or a goat; a fraud or a falsehood far a ram without spot. For an emissary he-goat the sins of all Israel are remitted.

The Koran, which was born of the Bible, is not more sensible. It orders abstinence from the blood and flesh of the pig, and of animals suffocated, stunned, killed by a fall, or slain by a wild beast. For Allah, as for Jehovah, the greatest virtue is belief. No infidel must be loved, be it a father, a son, a brother, or an ally. The believer is rewarded in this life by rich booty from the infidels, and in paradise by dwelling in delicious gardens, peopled with black-eyed houris, etc. Reprobates, on the other hand, will drink boiling water like molten metal, and liquid feculence.

Essentially all anthropomorphic religions resemble each other, whether monotheistic, like Judaism and Islamism, or polytheistic, like the religions of Greece and Rome. From the theological point of view the great moral question is how to please the supernatural being or beings who are feared and adored, and above all how not to displease them.

Yet the gods of Greece and Rome cared less for the current morality than those of Persia, India, and Judæa. They were not the authors of the moral law; they were its guardians. Certain crimes were chiefly regarded as direct offences against the deities, and it was in that light they were expiated. Mommsen affirms that, at least in the primitive ages of antiquity, capital sentences were regarded as the effect of the malediction of offended gods. Stealing fruit by night, for example, was to commit a theft on Ceres, etc.

The great reward after death consisted in conserving an interest in the life of posterity, in being able to protect and assist them. It was this terrestrial life, above all, about which the practical good sense of the ancients was solicitous. In the belief of Hesiod the shades of the men of the Golden Age had become good genii, wandering over the earth, and dispensing riches and repressing injustice; while the spirits of the wicked were tormented, and tormented men, in the form of spectres and lemures. These beliefs were generally prevalent, but there were no obligatory dogmas, nor was there any official preaching.

There was no theocratic code; nothing analogous to the amazing and often ferocious despotism of the great Asiatic religions; above all, no asceticism, and no doctrine of renunciation, except that which was preached by the Stoics, and which Christianity assimilated with such alacrity.

In sum, the morality of Greece and Rome, with its qualities and its defects, was laic and, above all, civil. Christianity came, and completely changed the direction of ethics. From that time this earthly life was considered as a pilgrimage, an exile; the heavenly Jerusalem was the destination. To arrive thither it was necessary to obey the orders that were reputed divine, whatever might be the result in this world. The great duty was to love and obey God; the great rock of danger was sin; and this, according to St. Augustine, could only be avoided, if it pleased the divinity, by the assistance of grace.

For the old philosophers death was a hard necessity, the effect of a law; for the Catholics it became a consequence of sin and an object of terror; for, after it, the soul had a thousand chances of being engulfed in the billows of infernal fire. Reprobates would burn there eternally, and, according to St. Gregory, the spectacle of their tortures would rejoice the elect.

This terror of infernal torment was, as we know, the great means by which Christianity inculcated its morality. None is more efficacious with believers, but it is certainly not the noblest.

It has been observed with reason that the antique virtues were masculine; they were courage, magnanimity, and, above all, patriotism. The whole influence of Christianity tended, on the contrary, to effeminate the character in addressing itself no longer to reason, but to emotion, in glorifying humility, meekness, love of God, continence, and faith. Faith above all; blind faith became the first of duties; *Credo quia absurdum.*

The ancient ideal was chiefly civil and patriotic; the

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Christian ideal was ascetic. For the sectary of Jesus the earthly country was little, and the Christian conscripts sometimes refused military service, even at the cost of martyrdom.

Abstinence, renunciation, and maceration were *par excellence* the means of attaining to sanctity. One should, if possible, be a monk; at the very least conform his life to the monastic ideal, lead a mechanical existence, and not think.....The body was profoundly despised and neglected, and dirtiness became agreeable to God. St. Anthony never washed his feet; St. Ammon never saw himself naked; Sylvia, a beautiful virgin of sixteen, never washed more than her fingers; Paula and Melania, whose consciences were directed by St. Jerome, believed that "baths were defiling."

The ascetic detachment of the Hindoos was imitated, and far surpassed. St. Melenia, having lost her husband and her two sons, knelt down and thanked the Lord that she could henceforth serve him more fully. It was good to forget one's mother, and to abandon one's children in order to consecrate one's self to the ascetic life. Evagrius burnt the letters of his parents from whom he had been long absent. St. Gregory relates that a young monk, being unable to repress his filial affection, went secretly by night to visit his parents, and God punished him with sudden death.

But the virtue of virtues was chastity. All that related to the union of the sexes was regarded as horrible. Woman was the great enemy; she should blush for her sex, for her beauty, and for her apparel. Marriage was only tolerated. "It is better to marry than to burn," said St. Paul. St. Jerome, for his part, saw but one good thing in marriage; it produced virgins.....By the unanimous testimony of Fathers and Councils all sexual intercourse outside marriage was criminal. From the moment Christianity triumphed under Constantine, the Mosaic penalties against sexual offences were adopted and aggravated; adultery became a capital crime, and sodomists were drowned, decapitated, burnt, or ingeniously tortured.

The Christian desire for the extinction of the human species should have maintained suicide in honor, as it had been in antiquity. But in the eyes of the Christians it was murder. It killed the soul. Yet one form of suicide was ardently sought by the fanatics—namely, martyrdom..... Nevertheless, with respect to suicide, Christianity wrought a kind of revolution, both moral and, indeed, beneficent. It was the same with respect to abortion and infanticide, to which antiquity attached no great importance. Christianity, on the contrary, condemned and repressed them, not through humanity, but because the death of the unbaptised fœtus or child entailed the terrible consequence of eternal damnation.

Christianity did some good also in relation to slavery. Not that its doctrine condemned slavery in itself. On the contrary, St. Paul advised Christian slaves to be the most docile; he even declared that the slave was the only property the Christians might keep, and taxed with vanity and stupidity those who thought otherwise. Indeed, in Europe the ecclesiastics were the last possessors of slaves. In the Christian doctrine equality was not for this world, and the servile virtues were glorified; yet the clergy carried on an active propaganda in favor of the enfranchisement of slaves.....Charity was also enjoyed as producing, above all, if displayed to monks, abundant spiritual benefits..... Christianity also opposed the bloody sports of the amphitheatre. In 329, after the Council of Nice, an edict of Constantine condemned the games of the circus, and the last combat of gladiators took place at Rome in 404.

These are real services; but, to say nothing of its anti-human and anti-social doctrines, they should not make us forget the frightful tyranny with which the religion of Jesus has burdened both spirit and body. The ancient world—above all, the Roman Empire, with its incongruous Pantheon—practised religious toleration until the day when Christianity came to sap the political constitution itself. The Christians had then their martyrs, and those martyrs were worthy of admiration. Nothing is finer than self-sacrifice for what is believed to be the truth. But the persecuted were scarcely in power before they surpassed their persecutors in cruelty. The rites of Pagan worship became high treason, which the Theodosian code unhesitatingly visited with capital punishment; the temples, even the finest, were demolished, and the idols destroyed. The Church haughtily arrogated the right of persecution, and used it largely from Constantine and Theodosius to the threshold of contemporary history.....

Here I end my exposition. As usual, I have let the facts speak for themselves. They are eloquent, and tell us loudly enough the good and the evil that religions have done to morality. Doubtless they have contributed to tame man's evil passions, by adding to the curb of laws that of religious cruelty; but their special share consists above all, as we are coming to see, in a deviation of the moral sense. Religious morality does not test the value of actions according to their social utility, but according to priestly fancy or the apprehension of a beyond. In its eyes, to eat forbidden food is as grave, if not more so, as to commit a murder; asceticism is, in certain religions, the supreme virtue. Lastly, when morality becomes divine, not only is it regarded as immutable and beyond improvement, but a right is claimed to impose it, if necessary, by fire and sword.

In this last respect the palm belongs beyond question to Christianity. Without doubt she has had her martyrs, but she has made many more; glorifying her own, vilifying others, and thus habituating men to the idea that they should be ready to give their life for her faith. The teaching has its value, but not that of the seas of blood it has cost.....To resume, what arises above all from our inquiry is that we should not ask religious conceptions to regulate conduct. Amongst the gods of the great religions those of Epicurus have alone been wise. Their great business was to relish their nectar; they ignored the human animalculæ. But the other gods have been pesterers and despots; they have meddled at random with our affairs; and in the interest of social progress we should remind them that their kingdom is not of this world, and exclude them from it.

## PREHISTORIC PEEPS.

### III.—The Original De Rougemont.

Cain is a curious commentary on the teachings of the estimable folk who tell us that there can be no truly great man who does not practise the virtues of the domestic circle, for he was not only great, but the greatest of his time. Yet there never lived one with less principle. Not a scintilla was in his composition. Not a trace can be found from his boyhood to his death. The major premises of morality were to him simply non-existent.

Cain's was, indeed, an extraordinary life, and to see it thoroughly we must examine the lion's lair in which he was dragged up. The wonder is, not that he became a ferocious man, but that he did not develop into a human panther.

Cain was *the first baby*. Both of his parents, who were the original progenitors of mankind, commenced their careers at full age. He was the first of the countless millions of the human race who started life as a bundle of flesh, one end somewhat resembling a fourpenny meat pudding. Babies do not differ much in temper, size, or disposition. Consequently we know that the infant Cain was violent, about the size of a pillow, and covetous. I have seen a baby with a corkscrew, a pair of tongs, a hand bell, and a boot brush, and not even the sight of Detective Sweeney could have induced it to part with any of these.

Whilst the ex-gardener was out hunting, Eve used to amuse herself with feeding little Cain. If she had lived in our own day and moved in the upper circles, she would have passed the hours by putting on tight dresses, haunting drapers' shops, and learnt her little one's name, if she found time after visiting her numerous friends.

Little Cain amused himself by playing horses with Adam's bow and arrow, by dragging his pa's garden tools from one place to another. A good deal of his time he spent on the door-mat, making unpleasant sounds like a railway whistle with a cold in its head.

Adam did not carry the baby about, because he said it was dangerous and would bite. It was a single man who said that little children are the odor of violets in the garden of life.

For very many centuries Cain has been execrated as one of the vilest of the human race. The whole vocabulary of ecclesiastical Billingsgate has been poured on his devoted head, until it is now taken for granted that nothing can possibly be said in his favor.

Yet he was undeniably a very clever man. After that

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unfortunate case of assault and battery on his brother Abel, which led to his collision with the police, his name suddenly became Walker. It is a curious coincidence that while the first row took place over an apple—or was it a banana?—the second disturbance was in connection with some vegetables, the names of which are unfortunately not mentioned. Cain's subsequent career merits our close attention. The astounding events connected with his name prove conclusively that he was a lovely liar, or else a great explorer. In either case he deserves something more than the brief obituary notice of Mr. Moses. Had he lived in our own time, his name would be everywhere, his announcements on every wall and in every journal. His portrait would be in every shop window and on every table. Even the editor of the *Chronicle*, wishing to increase the circulation of his paper, might have gone for him with a coke-hammer.

Unlike De Rougemont, Cain did not grow corn in a compost of blood and sand, nor did he live on a sandspit for a year or so. Neither did he start a distillery with an old kettle, nor save a schooner from complete wreck with a single oar. Cain did not start with a good, healthy lie, just feed it up more and more, till one day the buttons burst, so to speak. At least, I do not hold Cain responsible, whatever Mr. Fitzgerald Moses may have done in the Munchausen line.

I have already referred to Cain's trouble with the authorities. The policeman who arrested him was none other than Mr. J. Hovah, his father's old employer, now evidently in reduced circumstances. There were no prisons, so this prehistoric Sweeney branded Cain on the forehead. Surely, if any man needed a front of brass, it was Cain. Moreover, he must have had a forehead like Bill Shakespeare's to have allowed the inscription, "J. Hovah X his mark" (the first sign of the Cross), being displayed properly.

Cain became a traveller, and eastward of "the Garden" (not Covent Garden, but his pa's old place of business) he discovered the Land of Nod. So far, nothing out of the way had occurred. Moses has the audacity to say right here that Cain took unto himself a wife. This alleged fact is hard of digestion. Cain and his pa and ma comprised the total population. The coroner had sat on Abel (deceased), and his parents had drawn his club money. This exhausted the human beings, so what in thunder did he fall in love with? Presumably one of the primates (I don't mean archbishops), some fair ape, some sprightly chimpanzee, some lovely baboon, some bewitching orang-outang, some fascinating gorilla. Maybe it was one or the other, but which we shall never find out until that Great Day when all hearts shall be opened and all secrets known. Meanwhile we must possess our souls in patience.

Cain "builded a city." Wonderfully gifted man! Must have made use of his wife's relations, otherwise that city was a one-horse show! Beside such a feat as this, the achievements of De Rougemont pale into insignificance. Adam heard of this part of his son's life in the columns of the *Garden of Eden Gazette*, under the heading of "Fashionable Marriage": "The marriage took place yesterday afternoon, at the City of Nod Cathedral, of Fitzroy Yellow-plush Cain, only son of Charles James Adam, Esq., of the Garden of Eden, and the Hon. Gladys Blanche Orang-Outang, eldest daughter of Baron Orang-Outang, of this city. There were eight bridesmaids, and the service was choral. The bride wore a smile of great archness, and her fig-leaf apron was ornamented with orange blossoms. The reception held by Lady Orang-Outang at the family town residence was largely attended."

The broken-hearted father never recovered. Paralysis supervened, and death followed in a few days. When Cain reached home his father was no more. In the neighboring cemetery was a very fine tombstone, with the following inscription:—

In Loving Memory of
ADAM,
for a few centuries a
gardener in the employ of
Messrs. J. Hovah, Son, and Co.,
who departed this life
Aged 930 years.
"Those whom the gods love die young."

Eve did not press Mr. and Mrs. Cain and family to stay long. The half-caste brats were too much for the old lady. As she told a neighbor whilst leaning over the fence, she had had enough of "*all* Cain's Christians."

MIMNERMUS.

# ACID DROPS.

How religion makes humbugs of men! When the American fleet knocked the Spanish fleet to pieces off Santiago, and hundreds of Spaniards were shot to death or roasted alive in their ships, a Yankee man of God traced the Almighty's hand in what he was pleased to call "a bloodless victory." Now we have President McKinley himself, who is, we believe, a Methodist, talking in a similar fashion. "The faith of a Christian nation," he said at Cedar Rapids, "recognises the hand of Almighty God in the ordeal we have passed through. The divine favor seemed manifest everywhere." President McKinley forgets that Spain is a Christian nation too, and far more so than the United States, whose Constitution does not recognise any religious establishment. He also forgets that it was a comparatively easy job to lick the Spaniards, and that it would have taken a great deal more of the hand of Almighty God to enable America to lick a first-class naval power.

Is it not really a very poor compliment to the United States, with its seventy millions of people, and its vast resources, that it wasn't quite sure of licking poor Spain without supernatural assistance? When it is put in that way, every American will regard the compliment as an insult. We have the highest respect and affection for our American cousins, and we don't like to see them belittled by their own pious politicians.

The Austrian Government has introduced a Bill for the abolition of all taxes on clerical funds. This will mean a present of half a million florins (£50,000) a year to the bishops, convents, and livings. What a hungry lot these clericals are. "Give, give, give!" is their constant cry, and they can never have enough.

The Dundee Presbytery of the Church of Scotland has declined, by seventeen votes to seven, to pass a motion recording satisfaction with the Czar's peace manifesto. One man of God argued that the promotion of peace was outside the clergy's province, while another declared that the conscription was wanted rather than disarmament. No doubt he felt safe in recommending this. As a sky-pilot, he expects to stop at home while the fighting is on, to show the women and children the way to heaven.

Dr. Felkin, an English missionary in Uganda, thinks there will be a good field for white soul-savers in the new territory opened up by General Kitchener. "But I do hope," he says, "that the representatives of different religions will be kept to different districts." Such is the harmony and charity prevailing amongst the various Christian sects! They must be kept apart from each other, or the natives will be disgusted at their discord, and decline to be converted.

Rev. Alexander Young, a parish minister in Aberdeenshire, is a very peppery individual. He took a gun and fired at a young man who came courting his servant. Fortunately he only shot the amorous swain in the leg; and, instead of being tried for manslaughter, the irascible man of God was only fined £4, or fifteen days' imprisonment in default.

There's life in the old boy yet. The vicar of Nafferton, near Duffield—the Rev. James Davidson—aged eighty-four, has just got married. His bride is a widow of seventy-nine summers, "possessing ample means." Perhaps that explains the phenomenon.

"Owe no man anything," the Bible says; but the Rev. Marmaduke Hare, of the Rectory, Bow, got in debt to the famous and rapacious money-lender, Mr. Isaac Gordon. He is now in the bankruptcy court. Perhaps the "Marmaduke" was the cause of the mischief. A man with a name like that is heavily handicapped. How could a "Marmaduke" ride in a penny 'bus and eat fried fish for supper?

William Wilson, aged 52, late of 129 High-road, Leytonstone, and now of heaven or somewhere, attended divine service at St. Alban's Mission Church. After the service a Bible class was held, during which he fell from his seat and expired. Such an occurrence at a Secular meeting would be reckoned a "judgment." Happening at a Christian meeting, it has no significance.

Mohammedans do as Christians *used* to do: they take all that comes as the will of God. According to a Bombay telegram, the Mohammedans at Trichinopoly have burnt down the plague camp, as they object to these foreign preventive measures.

Reviewing Dr. W. T. Davison's new book on *The Christian Interpretation of Life*, the *Daily News* remarks that "Dr. Davison shrinks, as most men do in the present day, from

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admitting the possibility that evil and suffering shall be eternal." Most men, that is to say, are more humane than Jesus Christ was when he talked of the worm which never dieth and the fire which is never quenched.

There is plenty of rain in the world, but "Providence" distributes it badly. A water famine is threatened in South Lancashire, while an unprecedented deluge occurs in county Kerry, inundating the county for miles and wrecking the railway. Couldn't the clergy get this matter adjusted? It would be much more useful than quarrelling over Ritualism.

"A Business Man," who doesn't seem over busy, writes to the *Rock* about the drought. He says there is "very little acknowledgment of God in the literature of the day," and that the Almighty has perhaps kept back the rain to remind us of our religious duties. What should be done is this: the Bishops of "the afflicted dioceses," which presumably contain the most negligent sinners, should publicly call upon the people to *pray* for rain, and then God might send it. Well, it has come already; so this gentleman's "tip" may stand over till the next dry season.

The Canadian General Methodist Conference has rejected a motion to admit women to church courts and enable them to hold offices. Religion is mostly based upon women's soft hearts and soft heads, but the men run it for all it is worth. When it comes to profit and distinction man claims a monopoly, and tells woman to go on collecting subscriptions and working slippers.

The Congregational Union, at its recent Congress, passed a resolution that all elementary schools receiving assistance from public funds should be put under efficient local control, and that teachers should be appointed without reference to Church or creed. We quite agree with this, but the Congregationalists do not mean it. They only mean that Churchmen should have no advantage over Dissenters. They are quite satisfied that Churchmen *and* Dissenters should have an advantage over Secularists, Atheists, Agnostics, Jews, and all other non-Christians. One speaker complained that in twelve thousand schools in this country Nonconformist teachers had no hope of becoming the headmaster. Well, there are many more thousands of schools in which no Freethought teacher can hope to occupy that position. If he honestly objects to teaching Christianity from the Bible, he may as well abandon the scholastic profession at once, for he has no chance whatever of preferment.

Mr. Lloyd George, the Welsh parliamentary leader, addressing a large meeting of "young people" in connection with the Congregational Congress, declared that the only remedy for the ecclesiastical troubles was "perfect religious equality." We quite agree with him. The State Church should be disestablished. But that will not bring about perfect religious equality. To do this religion must be banished from parliament, from the courts of law, and from the public schools. We hope Mr. Lloyd George is prepared for this. If not, he is not prepared for perfect religious equality.

The Bishop of Chester, distributing the prizes to the boys on the reformatory ship *Akbar*, took occasion to celebrate the virtues of flogging—not for officers, of course, but for common sailors. "Perhaps they would forgive him," he said, "if he remarked that he was glad to see that corporal punishment was not entirely abolished on that ship. He believed it would be a dark day for education when corporal punishment was completely banished, although he knew it was of rare occurrence. He said this from a deep conviction, and he rejoiced to know that there was an instrument known as the birch to be found on the ship, although it was very rarely used." How pathetic are those expressions—"rare occurrence" and "very rarely used"! Sadness creeps over the episcopal mind at the thought that flogging is so infrequent. Still he is consoled by reflecting that it has not disappeared altogether, and while there is birch there is hope.

The Rev. Theodore N. Flintoff, rector of Doverdale, Droitwich, goes one better than the Bishop of Chester. Indeed, he plays right up to the first half of his surname. Writing to the *School Guardian*, he protests against the Act of 1893 "which enables juvenile offenders to be sent to a reformatory without previous imprisonment." "The proper place for young criminals," he says, "is the prison." Even those that *are* imprisoned get "very foolish and inadequate sentences." The reverend gentleman wants it laid on thick. Tenderness to young offenders is folly. What they want is plenty of severity. The Bishop of Chester would give them a flogging, and Parson Flintoff would give them a strong dose of imprisonment. And such men as these are spiritual guides of the English people!

An advertiser in the *Surrey Comet*—possibly a man, probably a woman, or even a clergyman—wants one or two board-lodgers, to live "a life of faith and worship," and help pay the rent. "Earnest profession of Christian creed" is "essential." And so, we dare say, is a weekly settlement.

The editor of the *South London Mail* should be a proud man. Most of the persons who write against Secularism in his paper hail from North London. The Surrey side remains calm under his incitations, with the exception of the holy young Hooligans who like a sensational Sunday afternoon, and fancy (quite mistakenly) that they can now get it on Peckham Rye at the expense of "the infidels." Yes, it is North London that is moved; or rather, to be accurate, that part of North London which is represented by a little gang of "anti-infidels" who have long been ignominiously beaten at their game of disturbing Freethought meetings. In their own locality they are regarded as beneath contempt, and we do not intend to notice their illiterate compositions—furbished up by friendly hands—which find shelter in the hospitable columns of the *South London Mail*. On the top of these, however, comes a real live minister, a duly certificated man of God. We refer to the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale. From the salubrious region of Dartmouth Park, where the air is so much sweeter than that of Somers Town (where his church is), the noble Woffendale sends his apostolic benediction to the editor of the *Mail*, who prints it in leaded type, with a full consciousness of its tremendous value.

The noble Woffendale first congratulates the *Mail* on its splendid "victory" over the Secularists. But he does not condescend to say in what the victory consists. The *Mail* called on the mob, and then on the County Council, to stop the Freethought meetings on Peckham Rye. Disorder and violence have been resorted to, but the meetings have been held every Sunday in spite of all and every kind of opposition. Where then does the "victory" come in? Is it not rather on the side of the Secularists?

Mr. Foote is referred to as remaining "prudently in the rear," but this is only the noble Woffendale's harmless little joke, which imposes on nobody. Mr. Foote went to Peckham Rye and spoke there when the *Mail* began its attacks, and he will go there again whenever his presence is necessary. Keeping in the rear was never one of Mr. Foote's failings. It seems to be one of Mr. Woffendale's. For years he has been gasing about his readiness to meet Mr. Foote in public debate, and every time he has been cornered on the subject he has covered himself with trumpery excuses. Now he puts himself outside the pale of discussion, for he deliberately calls upon the police to throw his opponents into prison. The man who does that is a skunk. He is also an impostor, for he poses all the time as a lover of "liberty, free speech, and open controversy"—whereas he is a professional religionist who wants his business protected by the suppression of his rivals. "Clear them away," is what he substantially says, "and let me have the crowd to myself."

Nothing could be worse, on the part of any sort of a public man, than the jargon in which the noble Woffendale indulges. "Every person," he says, "has a right to rational thought, to utter decent speech, to print moral literature, and to engage in any proper progressive inquiry." What *is* rational, decent, moral, and proper is to be decided, of course, by the noble Woffendale and his friends. Anyhow, no person has a right to propagate "execrable and destructive opinions." But who is to decide what is execrable and destructive? Why the noble Woffendale, of course. He knows, he knows!

What is a destructive opinion? Why, an opinion that destroys the noble Woffendale's opinion. That is what he really means. All the rest is hypocritical verbiage.

We do not suppose the police, or the County Council, or any other "authority," will spring forward to do this bigot's dirty work. The disreputable old law to which he appeals gives him the right, if he has the courage, to prosecute any assailant of Christianity he chooses to single out for "blasphemy." Let him do his dirty work himself.

This sweet apostle of the religion of charity which thinketh no evil tells an infamous lie about the late Mr. S. P. Putnam and Miss May Collins. It is so filthy, as well as false, that we will not stain our pages with it. Then he says that "in this country, a few months ago, a Secularist secretary was convicted and sent to prison for horrible practices." Now the case referred to happened *years* ago, not *months* ago; the culprit was not at the time a Secularist secretary; and his "horrible practices" consisted in the seduction of his wife's sister. And because of that one black sheep the noble Woffendale clamors for the suppression of Secularism. He does not stop to think what would become of Christianity on the same method of procedure. It has produced more than *one* black sheep. Its delinquents number thousands. Does the noble Woffendale, does the editor of the *Mail*, want a list of Christian ministers—yes,

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Christian *ministers*—who have been sent to prison of late years for abominable offences? If he does, we are ready to oblige him. And when he has dealt with it there will be plenty of time left to talk about "the rattlesnakes of infidelity."

Before leaving the noble Woffendale we may remark that he need not go so wide afield for persons who have been convicted and sent to prison. He could easily find some nearer home—and they might not be Secularists.

In August last the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children received no fewer than 2,283 complaints, of which 1,690 were attributed to neglect and starvation, and 384 to ill-treatment and assault. As we are the greatest gamblers and the hardest drinkers in the world, so also we have the horrid distinction of being the most brutal nation towards our offspring. And this in spite of the fact that we pay the Established Church some £10,000,000 a year to look after the morals of the people.—*Reynolds's.*

There must be a lot of piety and stupidity to the square yard in St. Pancras, where the ratepayers have just decided, by a majority of 8,278 to 4,849, not to have a Free Public Library. There were actually no less than 4,058 spoilt papers. Evidently the parish wants a Free Library or something very badly.

The Topeka (Kansas) Federation of Women's Clubs has excluded the "Woman's Bible" from its library on the ground that it is "written in a flippant, coarse, and inelegant style," and attacks what they all regard as sacred. Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who has largely contributed to the boycotted book, hits out at the lady bigots in the following fashion: "The commentators have done the best they could, considering the character of the text. Many passages relating to woman in the Pentateuch were found too coarse and obscene even for mention, and if those referred to in the 'Woman's Bible' are coarse and inelegant, the text is responsible; also, if the 'Woman's Bible' is to be abolished from the woman's library and schools of Topeka, the Jewish mythology should go also. I recommend these elegant, fastidious bigots to read the thirty-first chapter of Numbers to see the fate of the women and the child-women of the Midianites."

Even the *Christian World*, which is generally fair, condescends to refer to the "Woman's Bible" as the production of "a group of loose-thinking, rather than free-thinking, women." Our contemporary might have been more choice in selecting its words of condemnation. "Loose" is a very awkward word to use in connection with a group of women. It is likely to suggest to many readers what the *Christian World* does not, and could not, mean.

This story is told (the New York *Truthseeker* says) about a Maine man who recently experienced religion, and who now goes about the State preaching for the reformation of sinners. The other day he was announced to deliver a sermon in a school-house in the town of Wayne, the home of the gun-making Maxims. When he got to the school-house there was only one man in the building. After waiting a while for the crowd to appear, the evangelist declared to the audience of one that he should go on and preach just the same as if the room were crowded. So he did preach for about an hour and a half, and at the close he asked the lone listener to lead in prayer. The man looked puzzled, and then, fishing out a little slate, wrote: "I am deaf and dumb, and haven't heard a damned word you said."

Egypt is threatened with a new plague in the form of a Prayer Union, which is being organised by a young lady at Wimbledon. Why doesn't she start a Prayer Union—if there is any good in it—nearer home? There are some horrible slums, for instance, almost within the shadow of Westminster Abbey, where she might make a start. But working there is not so romantic as converting the heathen abroad. Besides, it doesn't lend itself to pleasant trips, all for the glory of God.

"Someone had blundered," says Tennyson of the order which sent the devoted Light Brigade against the belching Russian guns. That was a tragic mistake. But a still more tragic mistake was made by the framers of the new Irish Local Government Act, which fixed January 15 as the date of the first elections. Now, that date is a Sunday, and if the elections took place then the whole nation would be involved in the guilt of Sabbath-breaking, and Sabbath-breaking, as the clergy assure us, leads straight to hell. It is said that this terrible catastrophe will be averted by an order from the Privy Council, authorising the holding of the elections on January 16. Good! But it was a narrow escape.

According to the Newcastle *Evening Chronicle*, the Rev. A. B. Moleyns, rector of Chester-le-Street, has been warning England against the evils of education, which we have no doubt he sincerely deplores. "The people," the reverend gentleman said, "were being very much over-educated—educated, indeed, above their rank, and more than their intellect could carry. That, together with the lack of religious instruction, was educating a generation of atheists, and very clever atheists." Ay, there's the rub! The wretches are *clever*—clever enough to see through parsons and all the tricks of their trade.

"I'll never trust parsons alone," says Dr. John Clifford; "I like to see the laymen close by them." Probably the parsons prefer the contiguity of the laywomen.

M. Yves Guyot, the French publicist, has addressed the Maccabean Club in London on the Dreyfus case. A long report of his speech appeared in the *Daily News*, and the following extract will interest many of our readers: "The part taken by Anti-Semitism in this affair is a terrible one. But remember clearly that it is the revenge of the Jesuits for the enlightened march of the Freethinkers, the Jews, and the Protestants—it is the Revenge for the 16th of May. Ever since 1886 I have become absolutely convinced of their malignant activity in every trouble, in every crisis, in France. A Jesuit organisation, very elaborate, exists in our Army and our Navy, powerful and subtle in its methods of persecuting those who are not of it. Its program is well known, it hopes by its persecutions to hound Jews out of the army and equally to exclude Protestants, and when the army is entirely of its own color, to capture it, and, with and through it, France. The plan is infantile, but so it is."

Christians are Jew-hunting in East Galicia. One Jew's house was set on fire, and he and his wife and two young children were burnt in the flames. The Christian mob drove them back when they tried to escape, and jeered at their agony. Another Jew was thrown out of a window and killed on the spot. Some were stoned or beaten to death. Even women and children took part in the massacre. Their priests had taught them that all Jews were devils.

Stands Scotland where it did? We hardly think so. It seems drifting away towards paganism. At a meeting of the Established Synod of Glasgow and Ayr a Sabbath Observance report was agreed to, in which the statement occurred that "It was hopeless to expect that men would be induced to spend the whole day in public and private exercises of worship." What a change from the old days, when pulpits were occupied for many hours with relays of preachers, and godly men went prying into every house in the parish to see that nobody shirked the duty of listening to the sermons—sermons something like God's mercy, which endureth for ever. The Synod agreed that even Scotsmen will have a little relaxation on the Lord's Day, although it deplored the increased running of cars and omnibuses, and even the opening of shops, where children buy unholy toffee, and men buy milk to mix with their pocket-pistols of whiskey.

Perhaps the finest compliment ever paid to woman was coined by Richard Steele. Referring to a certain lady—he meant his own wife, the "Dear Prue" of all those short notes of his—he said that "To love her was a liberal education." Dick got drunk too often, he liked good living too well, he lost money at cards, he was a sad sinner in various ways—but *he said that*. And only a man with an essentially fine nature could have said it. It is simply perfect.

"I can go further," the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes alleges to an interviewer, "and say of my wife that she has been a means of grace to me." Going further is not always a real progress. Mr. Price Hughes hasn't improved on Richard Steele. He has simply changed a splendid compliment into a piece of cant.

Bournemouth was in darkness on Sunday evening through a failure in the gas supply. Divine worship had to be terminated in the churches. One or two preachers tried to go on in the obscurity, but their congregations skedaddled. A somewhat similar accident happened on a much smaller scale at Newark. The gas was lowered, as usual, at St. Leonard's Church, during the sermon, and when it had to be raised it was accidentally turned out. When the mistake was remedied, and the light restored, the minister gave out the hymn, which happened to be "Hail, gladdening light!" There must have been many broad faces in that congregation.

Parson (to youth riding on Sunday)—"Young man, do you know that you are following the path that leads to perdition?' Bicyclist—"That may be; but it's the only decent bicycle path in this neighborhood."—*Philadelphia North American.*

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, October 23, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, "Emperor William at Jerusalem."

October 30, Athenæum Hall.

November 6, Manchester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 6, Wigan; 20, Athenæum Hall, London; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

WILL our American exchanges please note that our address is, and long has been, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.? Some of them still direct to an old address of ours, and the post office naturally kicks against constant re-addressing.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks once more for your weekly batch of cuttings, always welcome and useful.

J. G. CROZIER.—See acknowledgments. Thanks. Yes, Mr. Foote is in very good health.

T. ROBERTSON.—See "Acid Drops."

J. FISH (Chester) writes: "I am sure the response to your appeal would be greater if each Branch secretary would only make it his business to see the members and friends. There must be hundreds who would give if they were only asked to personally, who would never think of writing for the sake of sending a shilling—perhaps forgetting that each shilling is something towards a pound. I sincerely trust you will get £500. Where are the wealthy Secularists? I have not seen any large donations. Perhaps they will send at the last. I hope so."

J. N. LEEDS.—Cuttings always welcome.

W. COX (Liverpool) sends three fresh names for membership in the Secular Society, Limited:—J. Hammond, R. Towers, and P. Torr.

W. H. MORRISH.—Glad to hear from a veteran like yourself, and pleased to know you hope our appeal "will get a liberal response." Thanks for your good wishes. We have conveyed your remembrance to the Watteses.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Our thanks to the Birmingham friends. See acknowledgments.

"JIM" writes from Dundee: "I often hear Freethinkers complaining of persecution. If they only realised that security lies in the strength of numbers, I am sure you would get all you require by the end of the month."

A. G. LEVETT.—We have made only one comment. See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

J. R. MAAGAARD.—We advise you to investigate that "young Atheist." He may turn out to have the ancient and fish-like smell of orthodoxy in his composition. He must be a very romantic liar, anyhow.

JAMES HOOPER (Devonport) says that he and his wife enjoy reading the *Freethinker* weekly, and would be very sorry to lose that pleasure.

W. BRADBURN.—We had already written on the subject. Thanks all the same.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks for the paper. See paragraphs.

J. R. WHITELL.—The complete edition of James Thomson's poems is published by B. Dobell, Charing Cross-road, London, W.C., in two volumes at 12s. Twenty-five per cent. discount brings the cash price to 9s.

W. JARVIS.—Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*, published by Macmillan, with a Preface by Dr. Alfred R. Wallace, is perhaps the best repository of information on this complicated and fascinating subject. McLennan's studies are published in several expensive volumes. They are very valuable.

JAMES LONDON.—There are too many churches already, are there not? Why add to the number by setting up an "Atheist Church"? No doubt there is something respectable in the name, and it might catch a certain class of people; but are they the sort we really want? Pleased to hear you admired Mr. Percy Ward's lecture. We like to encourage the young lecturers, and to see them encouraged. We shall have to drop off some day, and the better and more numerous the lecturers we leave behind are, the more comfortably we shall die.

J. UNSWORTH.—Glad to hear you intend to join the Secular Society, Limited.

E. BATER, one o the N. S. S. vice-presidents, and a loyal hard-worker for the cause, joins the Secular Society, Limited.

A. RUSHTON.—Mr. Foote takes all possible care of himself. Work hard he must, and sometimes too hard; but one thing helps him still, as it always did—he is able to throw all worries and pre-occupations off his mind when he finds a recreative hour, or when he lies down to sleep. A late supper may keep him awake; trouble, never. He slept like a top the night (for instance) before he stood in the Old Bailey dock. Probably this is the result of a good constitution, fortified by no end of exercise and fresh air in youth.

J. C. JORDAN.—Thanks for your kind letter. Glad to know you so highly appreciate the work of the *Freethinker* against superstition.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Progressive Thinker—Torch of Reason—Two Worlds—Crescent—Birmingham Daily Mail—Ethical World—Boston Investigator—Weekly Star—People's Newspaper—South London Mail—Yarmouth Mercury—Open Court—Freethought Magazine—Liberator—Public Opinion—Sydney Bulletin—Isle of Man Times—Secular Thought—Der Arme Teufel.

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

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 is due.

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.

*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.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

## SPECIAL.

I DO not want to worry my readers, but many of them have overlooked the fact that I am making a special appeal this month on behalf of "The *Freethinker* Circulation Fund." A journal like this really ought to have capital behind it. I have often been surprised that some wealthy Freethinker did not come along and put one or two thousand pounds into the enterprise. He would certainly get a good return on his investment, and do me and the party a benefit at the same time. However, in the absence of this capitalist, I have to do the best I can. It is something—all who have tried it have found that—to make a Freethought paper pay its way. I have done that, and I now want to push the circulation by judicious advertising, which will introduce the *Freethinker* to many potential subscribers, who are at present scarcely aware of its existence. This advertising would be through Liberal, Radical, and Socialist newspapers, and even one or two Christian journals, if they do not object; through special posters and handbills, and an extensive placarding of the weekly contents sheet; and through visits to newsagents who might give the *Freethinker* a chance with their customers, if it were properly brought before their notice. That is what I want to do. Will my friends enable me to do it? A thousand of them could easily send me something if they would.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

A LARGE audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Confession in the Church." Mr. Victor Roger occupied the chair, and said they were all glad to see "the President" lecturing in London again. Mr. Foote speaks at the same hall again this evening (Oct. 23), taking for his subject "Emperor William at Jerusalem"—which at least gives room for a very interesting address. Freethinkers should try to bring some of their more orthodox friends along to this lecture.

The *Secular Almanack* for 1899, issued under the auspices of the National Secular Society, is in the printer's hands, and will be published shortly—probably the first week in November. Branch secretaries who have not already forwarded particulars for insertion, in response to Miss Vance's circular, are requested to do so as quickly as possible. Mr. Wheeler is no longer here to look after the Almanack, as he used to do, and the editorial labor at present falls entirely upon Mr. Foote.

Special articles have been written for the Almanack by Messrs. Foote, Watts, Cohen, Gould, Moss, and Heaford. The Calendar has been revised and added to, and other improvements have been attempted.

We are always glad to receive the *Liberator*, edited by our old friend Joseph Symes at Melbourne. We hope it is doing better than it was some time ago during the hard times. In the latest number to hand Mr. Symes refers to the smashing of the Khalifa, and says: "We have got the empire, and must keep it." He hopes there will be no concessions to France in East Africa; at the same time he wishes that the Latin nations could unite, get rid of the

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priests and their poisonous ways, and form "a healthy counterpoise to the Teutonic and other elements of Europe."

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured at Peckham Rye on Sunday, and had a good audience in spite of the downpour of rain. The holy Hooligans, who represent the *South London Mail*, were present, but their interruptions were answered with good temper, and the presence of a dozen County Council policemen helped to keep them under restraint. The season is drawing to a close, and the Secularists have *not* been driven from Peckham Rye. They are not easy to drive.

South Place Institute has arranged a course of free Sunday afternoon lectures on "Our Cities and their Municipalities" by competent and representative speakers, including two provincial mayors.

The *Yarmouth Mercury* prints an excellent letter from "F. F. J." on Christianity, in which a local defender of the faith is very smartly answered. There is another good letter from "A Father" on the same side, and a capital letter on Sabbatarianism by J. W. de Caux. A. H. Smith also writes well in defence of Secularism, and J. M. Headley joins gallantly in the fray. Correspondence of this kind in the newspaper does much good. We wish Freethinkers recognised the fact more widely.

Editor Green's *Freethought Magazine* for October reaches us from Chicago. The frontispiece is a portrait of the late Parker Pillsbury, abolitionist and freethinker. This is followed by William Lloyd Garrison's discourse at his funeral, which concludes thus:—"Sleep in peace, friend of the oppressed, champion of women, defender of religious freedom. All the opprobrium of the past is now transformed into the glory of the future, for you have unselfishly served mankind." Elizabeth Cady Stanton, whose outspoken heresy has so alarmed the Woman Suffragists, adds her tribute of praise. Editor Green's magazine contains other interesting items, including a letter from Colonel Ingersoll on "Holy Smoke." We hope this publication has the wide circulation it merits.

J. C. Williamson thinks that the most interesting project he ever had on foot was one which he nearly brought to a head some years ago when Henry Ward Beecher was alive. It was to import both Colonel Ingersoll and Beecher at the same time, and let them orate alternately—a night with "Colonel Bob" and the "Mistakes of Moses," followed by a night of Beecher and eloquent orthodoxy. Beecher rather liked the idea, but Ingersoll's immense practice as a lawyer did not permit of his making engagements out of America. As a matter of fact, the heterodox Colonel has not yet been heard even in England on the lecturing platform, though he has promised to come over next year.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

The United States Government has issued some interesting statistics as to the rapid advances which American women have made in all fields of employment during the last eight-and-twenty years. Since 1870 the female architects have increased from 1 to 53; the dentists from 24 to 417; the lawyers from 5 to 417; the physicians and surgeons from 527 to 6,888; and the "clergywomen" from 67 to 1,522.

The *Independent Pulpit*, edited by J. D. Shaw, at Waco, Texas, reproduces the late J. M. Wheeler's article on "Christianity and Buddhism" from our columns. We have more than once reproduced a good article from our ever-welcome contemporary.

## SHILLING MONTH.

For the "Freethinker" Circulation Fund.

[*Where no figure accompanies the name the amount acknowledged is one shilling.*]

A. C. Brown, J. Proctor £1, J. Proctor, junr., 2s. 6d., J. G. Crozier 2s. 6d., W. Stewart, C. Bowman 5s., J. Smith 2s., J. Fish 2s., W. Todd, M. Roberts, D. Sutherland, A. Rushton 5s., W. H. Morrish 5s., J. H. Ridgway, W. H. Wood, T. Pitt, R. Taylor, G. Fathers, J. P., J. K. 4s., Jim 2s. 6d., J. Unsworth 2s. 6d., James Hooper 5s., Mrs. Firth 2s., H. Smith 2s., J. C. Jordan 2s.

A Jewish gentleman, the owner of a large store, had for ten years kept it heavily insured without during that time experiencing a fire. He decided that insurance did not pay, and cancelled his policy. The following day the store burned to the ground. The Jew, in despair, knelt before the ruins and cried out: "O God, strike me dead, strike me dead!" A brick coming loose from the ruins fell, striking the Jew an awful blow on the back. Amazed, as well as injured, he raised his hands towards heaven, and cried pitifully: "My Lord, can't you take a little joke?"

## AFTER THE WAR.

As I understand it, the United States went into this war against Spain in the cause of freedom. For three years Spain had been endeavoring to conquer these people. The means employed were savage. Hundreds of thousands were starved. Yet the Cubans, with great heroism, were continuing the struggle.

In spite of their burned homes, their wasted fields, their dead comrades, the Cubans were not conquered, and still waged war. Under those circumstances, we said to Spain: "You must withdraw from the western world. The Cubans have a right to be free."

It was understood and declared at the time that we were not waging war for the sake of territory, that we were not trying to annex Cuba, but that we were moved by compassion—a compassion that became as stern as justice. I did not think at the time that there would be war. I supposed that the Spanish people had some sense, that they knew their own condition, and the condition of this Republic.

But the improbable happened, and now, after the successes we have had, the end of the war appears to be in sight, and the question arises: "What shall we do with the Spanish islands that have been taken already, or that we may take before peace comes?"

Of course we could not, without stultifying ourselves and committing the greatest of crimes, hand back Cuba to Spain. But to do that would be no more criminal, no more infamous, than to hand back the Philippines. In those islands there are from 8,000,000 to 10,000,000 of people, and they have been robbed and enslaved by Spanish officers and soldiers. Undoubtedly they were savages when first found, and undoubtedly they are worse now than when discovered—more barbarous.

They wouldn't make very good citizens of the United States; they are probably incapable of self-government; but no people can be ignorant enough to be justly robbed, or savage enough to be rightly enslaved. I think that we should keep the islands; not for our own sake, but for the sake of those people.

As far as the Philippines are concerned, I think we should try to civilise them, and to do this we should send teachers, not preachers. We should not endeavor to give them our superstition in place of Spanish superstition. They have had superstition enough. They don't need churches; they need schools. We should teach them our arts; how to cultivate the soil, how to manufacture the things they need. In other words, we should deal honestly with them, and try our best to make them a self-supporting and a self-governing people.

The eagle should spread its wings over those islands for that and no other purpose. We cannot afford to give them to other nations, or to throw fragments of them to the wild beasts of Europe. We cannot say to Russia, "You may have a part"; and to Germany, "You may have a share"; and to France, "You take something"; and so divide out these people as thieves divide plunder. That we will never do.

There is, moreover, a little sentiment mixed with this matter in my mind. Manila Bay has been filled with American glory. There was won one of our greatest triumphs, one of the greatest naval victories of the world—won by American courage and genius. We cannot allow any other nation to become the owner of the stage on which this American drama was played. I know that we can be of great assistance to the inhabitants of the Philippines. I know that we can be an unmixed blessing to them, and that is the only ambition I have in regard to those islands. I would no more think of handing them back to Spain than I would of butchering the entire population in cold blood. Spain is unfit to govern.

Spain has always been a robber. She has never made an effort to civilise a human being. The history of Spain, I think, is the darkest page in the history of the world.

At the same time I have a kind of pity for the Spanish people. I feel that they have been victims—victims of superstition. Their blood has been sucked, their energies have been wasted and misdirected, and they excite my sympathies. Of course, there are many good Spaniards, good men, good women. Cervera appears to be a civilised man, a gentleman, and I feel obliged to him for his treatment of Hobson.

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The great mass of the Spaniards, however, must be exceedingly ignorant, and as passionate as they are ignorant. Their so-called leaders dare not tell them the truth about the progress of this war. They seem to be afraid to state the facts. They always commence with a lie, then change it a little, then change it a little more, and maybe at last tell the truth.

They never seem to dare to tell the truth at first, if the truth is bad. They put me in mind of the story of a man telegraphing to a wife about the condition of her husband. The first despatch was: "Your husband is well, never better." The second was: "Your husband is sick, but not very." The third was: "Your husband is much worse, but we still have hope." The fourth was: "You may as well know the truth—we buried your husband yesterday." This is about the way the Spanish people get their war news.

That is why it may be incorrect to assume that peace is coming quickly. If the Spaniards were a normal people, who acted as other folks do, we might prophesy a speedy peace; but nobody has prophetic vision enough to tell what such a people will do. In spite of all appearances, and all our successes, and of all sense, the war may drag on. But I hope not, not only for our sake, but for the sake of the Spaniards themselves.

I can't help thinking of the poor peasants who will be killed; neither can I help thinking of the poor peasants who will have to toil for many years on the melancholy fields of Spain to pay the costs of this war. I am sorry for them, and I am sorry also for the widows and orphans, and no one will be more delighted when peace comes.

The argument has been advanced in the national senate and elsewhere, that the Federal Constitution makes no provision for the holding of colonies or dependencies, such as the Philippines would be; that we can only acquire them as territories, and eventually must take them in as states, with their population of mixed and inferior races. That is hardly an effective argument.

When this country was an infant, still in its cradle, George Washington gave the child some very good advice; told him to beware of entangling alliances, to stay at home and attend to his own business. Under the circumstances this was all very good. But the infant has been growing, and the Republic is now one of the most powerful nations in the world, and yet, from its infant days until now, good conservative people have been repeating the advice of Washington.

It was repeated again and again when we were talking about purchasing Louisiana, and many senators and congressmen became hysterical, and predicted the fall of the Republic if that was done. The same thing took place when we purchased Florida, and again when we got 1,900,000 square miles from Mexico, and still again when we bought Alaska.

These ideas about violating the Constitution and wrecking the Republic were promulgated by our great and wise statesmen on all these previous occasions; but, after all, the Constitution seems to have borne the strain. There seems to be as much liberty now as there was then, and, in fact, a great deal more. Our territories have given us no trouble, while they have greatly added to our population, and vastly increased our wealth.

Yet, when we came to talk about annexing the Hawaiian Islands, the advice of George Washington was again repeated, and the older the senator, the fonder he was of this advice. These senators had the idea that the Constitution, having nothing in favor of it, must contain something, at least in spirit, against it. Of course, our fathers had no idea of the growth of the Republic. We have, because with us it is a matter of experience.

I don't see that Alaska has imperilled any of the liberties of New York. We need not admit Alaska as a state unless it has a population entitling it to admission, and we are not bound to take in the Sandwich Islands until the people are civilised, until they are fit companions of free men and free women. It may be that a good many of our citizens will go to the Sandwich Islands, and that in a short time the people there will be ready to be admitted as a state. All this the Constitution can stand, and in it there is no danger of imperialism.

I believe in national growth. As a rule, the prosperous farmer wants to buy the land that adjoins him, and I think a prosperous nation has the ambition of growth.

It is better to expand than to shrivel; and if our Constitution is too narrow to spread over the territory that we have the courage to acquire, why we can make a broader one. It is a very easy matter to make a constitution, and no human happiness, no prosperity, no progress, should be sacrificed for the sake of a piece of paper with writing on it; because there is plenty of paper, and plenty of men to do the writing, and plenty of people to say what the writing should be.

I take more interest in people than I do in constitutions. I regard constitutions as secondary; they are means to an end; but the dear, old conservative gentlemen seem to regard constitutions as ends in themselves.

I have read what ex-President Cleveland had to say on this important subject, and I am happy to say that I entirely disagree with him. So, too, I disagree with Senator Edmunds, with Mr. Bryan, with Senator Hoar, and with all the other gentlemen who wish to stop the growth of the Republic.

I want it to grow. Sometimes I have thought that there was only air enough on this hemisphere to float one flag, and in time that dream may come true.

As to the final destiny of the island possessions won from Spain, my idea is that the Philippine Islands will finally be free, protected, it may be, for a long time by the United States. I think Cuba will come to us for protection, naturally; so far as I am concerned, I want Cuba only when Cuba wants us.

I think that Porto Rico and some of those islands will belong permanently to the United States, and I believe Cuba will finally become a part of our Republic.

When the opponents of progress found that they couldn't make the American people take the back track by holding up their hands over the Constitution, they dragged in the Monroe doctrine. When we concluded not to allow Spain any longer to enslave her colonists, or the people who had been her colonists, in the new world, that was a very humane and a very wise resolve, and it was strictly in accord with the Monroe doctrine.

For the purpose of conquering Spain, we attacked her fleet in Manila Bay and destroyed it. I cannot conceive how that action of ours can be twisted into a violation of the Monroe doctrine. The most that can be said is, that it is an extension of that doctrine, and that we are now saying to Spain:—You shall not enslave, you shall not rob, anywhere that we have the power to prevent it.

Having taken the Philippines, the same humanity that dictated the declaration of what is called the Monroe doctrine will force us to act there in accordance with the spirit of that doctrine. The other day I saw in the paper an extract—I think from Goldwin Smith—in which he says that if we were to bombard Cadiz we would give up the Monroe doctrine.

I do not see the application. We are at war with Spain, and we have a right to invade that country; and the invasion would have nothing whatever to do with the Monroe doctrine. War being declared, we have the right to do anything consistent with civilised warfare to gain victory.

The bombardment of Cadiz would have no more to do with the Monroe doctrine than with the attraction of gravitation.

If by the Monroe doctrine is meant that we have agreed to stay in this hemisphere, and to prevent other nations from interfering with any people on this hemisphere, and if it is said that growing out of this is another doctrine—namely, that we are pledged not to interfere with any people living on the other hemisphere, then it might be called a violation of the Monroe doctrine for us to bombard Cadiz.

But such is not the Monroe doctrine. If, we being at war with England, she should bombard the city of New York, or we should bombard some city of England, would anybody say that either nation had violated the Monroe doctrine? I do not see how that doctrine is involved, whether we fight at sea or on the territory of the enemy.

This is the first war, so far as I know, in the history of the world that has been waged absolutely in the interest of humanity—the only war born of pity, of sympathy; and for that reason I have taken a deep interest in it, and I must say that I was greatly astonished by the victory of Admiral Dewey in Manila Bay.

I think it one of the most wonderful in the history of the world, and I think all that Dewey has done shows clearly that he is a man of thought, of courage, and

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genius. So, too, the victory over the fleet of Cervera by Commodore Schley is one of the most marvellous and the most brilliant in all the annals of the world.

The marksmanship, the courage, the absolute precision with which everything was done is, to my mind, astonishing. Neither should we forget Wainwright's heroic exploit, as commander of the *Gloucester*, by which he demonstrated that torpedo destroyers have no terrors for a yacht manned by American pluck. Manila Bay and Santiago both are surpassingly wonderful. There are no words with which to describe such deeds—deeds that leap like flames above the clouds and glorify the whole heavens.

The Spanish have shown in this contest that they possess courage, and they have displayed what you might call the heroism of desperation; but the Anglo-Saxon has courage and coolness—courage not blinded by passion, courage that is the absolute servant of intelligence.

The Anglo-Saxon has a fixedness of purpose that is never interfered with by feeling; he does not become enraged—he becomes firm, unyielding; his mind is absolutely made up, clasped, locked, and he carries out his will. With the Spaniard it is excitement, nervousness; he becomes frantic.

I think this war has shown the superiority, not simply of our ships, or our armor, or our guns, but the superiority of our men, of our officers, of our gunners. The courage of our army about Santiago was splendid; the steadiness and bravery of the volunteers magnificent. I think that what has already been done has given us the admiration of the civilised world.

I know, of course, that some countries hate us. Germany is filled with malice, and has been just on the crumbling edge of meanness for months, wishing, but not daring, to interfere; hateful, hostile, but keeping just within the overt act.

We could teach Germany a lesson, and her ships would go down before ours, just the same as the Spanish ships have done. Sometimes I have almost wished that a hostile German shot might be fired. But I think we will get even with Germany and with France—at least, I hope so.

And there is another thing I hope—that the good feeling now existing between England and the United States may be eternal. In other words, I hope it will be to the interests of both to be friends.

I think the English-speaking peoples are to rule this world. They are the kings of invention, of manufactures, of commerce, of administration, and they have a higher conception of human liberty than any other people.

Of course they are not entirely free; they still have some of the rags and tatters and ravellings of superstition; but they are tatters, and they are rags, and they are ravellings, and the people know it. And, besides all this, the English language holds the greatest literature of the world.

R. G. INGERSOLL.

—*Boston "Sunday Globe."*

## CHRISTIANITY AND TORTURE.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

HISTORY being what it is, the record of man's development from savagery contains many passages not to be read by any sensitive nature without a shudder. Perhaps the most horrible item is that of torture inflicted in the name of justice. The student of history finds it everywhere in the annals of ecclesiasticism, nor can he judge of many questions without having it before his mind. Did the Jews make a practice of crucifying Christian children at their Paschal feast? Did thousands of women fly through the air, and have commerce with Satan? The testimony to the reality of such things is overwhelming. Its worthlessness as evidence is only recognised when we remember that it was given under torture, which was well described by La Bruyere as a device to destroy the weak innocent and save the robust guilty.

Among both Greeks and Romans the deceitful and dangerous experiment of the criminal *question*, as the use of torture for the interrogation of criminals was termed, was admitted rather than approved. Torture was reserved only for slaves. Gibbon says: "The annals of tyranny from the reign of Tiberius to Domitian circumstantially relate the executions of many innocent victims; but, as long as the faintest remembrance was kept alive of the national freedom and honor, the last hours of a Roman were secure from the danger of ignominious torture."*

Constantine, the brutal establisher of Christianity, introduced torture to Roman citizens for crimes of State. Although he abolished crucifixion of slaves, he employed such remedies as pouring boiling lead down the throat as the proper treatment of those who stole virgins. As the Christian theories of the depravity of human nature, the vileness of the body, the sin of unbelief, and the doom of everlasting torments upon unbelievers became predominant, and the clergy acquired power, the employment of torture spread. No treatment was considered too severe for those for whom God reserved perpetual torture. It is a damning fact that the barbarian nations who were subdued to Christianity were more merciful in their punishments before the introduction of that divine religion. In France and Germany torture was never applied to free men until ecclesiastical tribunals replaced the earlier heathen justice. In Italy and Spain, the chief seats of religion, were invented the most horrible instruments of torture.

In 1252, when Pope Innocent IV. issued his bull, *De Extirpando*, with its elaborate instructions for the guidance of the Inquisition, he ordered the civil magistrates of Italy to exhort from all heretics by torture, not merely a confession of their own guilt, but an accusation of all others who might share their heresy. The system of the Inquisition was such as to render resort to torture inevitable. Its proceedings were secret. No advocate might appear before the tribunal. No witness was confronted with the accused, who was carefully kept in ignorance of the exact charges against him, and of the evidence upon which they were based. He was presumed to be guilty, and his judges bent all their energies to force him to confess. In the words of Dean Milman: "No falsehood was too false, no craft too crafty, no trick too base, for this calm, systematic, moral torture, which was to wring further confession against himself, denunciation against others."† From this to the rack and estrapade the step was easily taken, and was not long delayed. In 1301 we find even Philip the Fair protesting against the cruelty of the Inquisition, and interfering to protect his subjects from the refinements of torture to which, on simple suspicion of heresy, they were exposed. Yet when, soon after, the same monarch, in conjunction with Pope Clement V., resolved on the destruction of the Templars, he made the Inquisition his facile instrument for drawing forth the confessions which warranted him in seizing their property. In England, at the same time, the Archbishop of York proposed to Edward II. to torture the unfortunate Templars. Although Sir John Fortescue, Chief Justice of Henry VI.'s Court of King's Bench, in his book in praise of English laws, warmly denounces the law of torture as alien to the spirit of English law, it was nevertheless often resorted to for State and religious offences. Henry VIII. and Mary both used the rack vigorously. So did Elizabeth.

Dr. Lingard, in a note to his *History of England*, thus describes the rack:—

> "The rack was a large open frame of oak, raised three feet from the ground. The prisoner was laid under it, on his back, on the floor; his wrists and ankles were attached by cords to two rollers at the ends of the frame; these were moved by levers in opposite directions till the body rose to a level with the frame. Questions were then put; and, if the answers did not prove satisfactory, the sufferer was stretched more and more till the bones started from their sockets."‡

In theory there was a general prescription that no permanent injury was to be done to the victim. In practice this was little heeded. The meek Jesuit, Del Rio, in his instructions to Inquisitors, quietly observes that the flesh should not be wounded, nor the bones broken, but that torture could scarcely be properly administered without more or less dislocation of the joints.§

In 1628, in the case of Felton, who assassinated the Duke of Buckingham, Laud, then Bishop of London, suggested the employment of torture, whereupon Felton boldly observed that he did not know but that in his agony he might name his lordship as an accomplice. The judges

* *Decline and Fall*, chap. xvii.
† *History of Latin Christianity*, vol. vi., p. 312.
‡ Vol. vi., p. 688; 1849.
§ H. C. Lea, *Superstition and Force*, p. 364.

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in that case unanimously agreed that torture could not be employed to elicit confession; and the last instance of its employment for that purpose in this country was in 1640, when John Archer, a glover, was suspected of being concerned in a riotous attack on Archbishop Laud's palace at Lambeth. The Long Parliament abated this, with other nuisances; but in their treatment of James Naylor for the crime of blasphemy they showed that it was not Christianity that had mitigated their barbarity. The *peine forte et dure*, by which weights of iron could be piled upon a prisoner who refused to plead, until he was crushed to death, was not abolished till the reign of George III.

Against the cruelty which distinguished judicial procedure and punishment during the time when the Church was predominant no protests were heard from the Christian camp. It was in Christian communities, where the truths of the blessed gospel were received with unquestioned veneration, that the administration of torture was systematised with a cold-blooded ferocity unknown to the legislation of heathen nations. It was the sceptics, Montaigne and Beccaria, who first attacked the judicial use of torture, and to Voltaire, more than to any other man, it is owing that the barbarity fell into universal disrepute.

## BOOTH'S OBEDIAH.

THE Salvation Army Federal Band, numbering twenty-five performers, took possession of the local barracks on Thursday evening, September 1, and gave a miscellaneous entertainment to a very good audience at 2s. and 1s. per head. The band is finely balanced, and the music it renders under its capable conductor exceptionally good. But in the matter of inside entertainments the conductor makes a serious mistake. He should remember that such pieces as marches, etc., however admirable they may be in the open air, become simply awful when played inside a hall—especially when the hall happens to be a small one. But, apart from this drawback, the entertainment on Thursday night went off with great acceptance. Among the members of the band is an individual named "Obediah." Obediah explains that as many as half-a-dozen hangmen are in rapid pursuit of his parents for having started him out in life with this soulful name. However this may be, Obediah, besides doing all manner of funny things, at present plays the elephant trombone, and is emphatically far and away the brightest hard-case ornament of the band. Obediah has the face of one who, for a long time, looked with loving approval upon the wine when it was red, and when you see him working at his instrument you can quite understand that he must have been all he says he was—a contortionist, a kangaroo shooter, a dancer, a brumbee stealer, a snake charmer, a Tory politician, a comedian, a musician, a poet, and a mesmerist—and so on, and so forth, etc., etc., etc. When he blows his trombone with his mighty pair of lungs (or bellows) the audience simply forget the music of the band to watch his face. For, when Obediah gets going, the smoke of excitement seems to rise in clouds out of his hairless head; he threatens every moment to jump clean over his waistcoat; and the bewildered spectators each instant expect to see him come right through his instrument in musical notes. So, in Obediah, the Army band possesses a wonder, and, upon the band's return, all Rockhampton should see him and be thrilled by his manifold charms.

—*People's Newspaper.*

## He Wanted to Change.

A young matron on North Nevada Avenue was putting her five-year-old son to bed the other night during a terrific wind storm. When she was about to leave him he objected vociferously against staying alone while the storm raged. "But, dear," said the mother, "you must not mind the storm. Remember God is here, and protects you even while you sleep." This assurance quieted him for a time, but presently a terrific gust of wind struck the house and made it rock on its foundations. There was a pit-pat on the stairs, and the little fellow appeared at the door, his face white with fear. The mother took him back, and again comforted him with the assurance of God's presence; but she had hardly gained the sitting room before the wind struck the house another terrific blow. As it passed on a wee voice came from the head of the stairs: "Mamma, mamma, if you come up here and stay with God, I'll come down with papa."—*Colorado Spring Facts.*

# CORRESPONDENCE.

## FREETHOUGHT IN SPAIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In my article on "Freethought in Spain" in your issue of last week I quoted the words of my informant at Bilbao to the effect that he did not know of any Freethought societies being in existence in the country. Since that article was written I have received from Madrid a copy of *Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento*, already mentioned as the organ of Freethinkers in Spain. In this I observe an article headed "Rules for Freethought Societies," in which the editor in an introduction says: "As we are constantly being asked for models of rules for Freethought societies such as are now being formed in various parts of this country, we think it will be of service to reprint here the rules of the society at Vigo, which have been found to work satisfactorily."

Then follow the rules, ten in number. The first three run as follows:—

"1. The object of this Society is to promote the emancipation of consciences and secularise life. With this object it will do all in its power to disseminate instruction, to 'secularise,' schools and to 'popularise' the adoption as civil acts of marriage and burial, etc.

"2. Persons of both sexes over eighteen years of age are eligible as members; the children of the members may attend its debates and meetings. Young people over eighteen years, but less than twenty-three, who may wish to join the Society must produce evidence of the consent of their parents or guardians, or prove that they are independent of them.

"3. Members should cultivate between themselves relations of confraternity and equality; should inspire themselves with the spirit of ample tolerance; practise love for their neighbors, charity and mutual respect; avoid pride, envy, and all evil passions. To aid women, children, the poor, and the weak should be considered the aim of all members of this society."

The other rules refer to election of council, subscriptions, etc., usual in all societies.

The formation of the Society dates from 1891. The most remarkable point of all is a decree by the Governor of the Province to the effect that, the rules having been submitted to him, he declares the Society to be duly and legally constituted under the Law of June 30, 1887. Therefore, in the land of the Inquisition it appears that Freethought societies have more liberty than in this enlightened country of England!

JOHN SAMSON.

## AGNOSTICISM A DISQUALIFICATION FOR A MAYORALTY.

SOME surprise has been created at Rochester (writes our correspondent) at the action of the Corporation in passing over a town councillor who, according to precedent, should by reason of his seniority have received an invitation to become mayor of that ancient city. The councillor referred to, although not obtrusive in his views on the subject of religion, does not conceal the fact that his attitude in theology inclines to Agnosticism, and he made it known to his colleagues that he could only accept the mayoralty upon the understanding that he would not personally observe the resuscitated custom of attending service at the Cathedral with the Corporation, in civic state, on the first Sunday after Mayor's Day. He, however, expressed his willingness to attend the Cathedral on the other municipal Sunday, not as an act of religious relief, but because it was associated with the local hospital. The upshot of the councillor's refusal to attend the Cathedral was the election by the Corporation of another member as Mayor-elect—Councillor L. A. Goldie, who will be the fourth solicitor in succession who has filled the Chief Magistrate's chair at Rochester. A few years since a Nonconformist Mayor declined to attend the Cathedral officially for conscientious objections to a State religion.

—*Daily News.*

A tedious preacher had preached the assize sermon before Lord Yelverton. He came down smiling to his lordship after the service, and, expecting congratulations on his effort, asked: "Well, my lord, how did you like the sermon?" "Oh, most wonderful," replied Yelverton; "it was like the peace of God, it passed all understanding, and, like his mercy, I thought it would have endured forever."

A few days ago Magistrate Cornell, of this city, fined two young men $3 each for selling "extras" upon the street on Sunday. Did somebody make the proposition that we should establish religious liberty in Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines?—*Truthseeker* (New York).

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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, "Emperor William at Jerusalem."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, John M. Robertson, "The Indestructibility of Freethought."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, W. Sanders, "Francis Place the Chartist."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Stanton Coit, "America among the Nations."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "Bismarck."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones; Peckham Rye: 3.15, Stanley Jones.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, W. Heaford; 7, R. P. Edwards. October 26, at 8, S. Jones.

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, Mr. Hunter. October 27, Mr. Kraupa, "Clairvoyance."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Hunter.

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, R. P. Edwards. October 25, at 8, S. Jones.

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, Chilperic Edwards, "The Bible and the Monuments."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board school): 11, Members' Annual Meeting; 7, A Concert by members of the Social Bohemian Choir.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. Heaford, "Freethought at the Church Congress."

DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, J. Wright, "Freewill, Predestination, and Fatalism."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, Mr. Cochran, "Six Months in a Steamboat Stoke-hole"; 6.30, J. Scott-Smith, "The Logical Outcome of Freethought and Free Speech—Free Action."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, "Parliament: As it Has Been, Is, and Should Be."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Hammond, "Mental Slavery."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, W. Simpson, "Where Atheism Fails."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Cohen—11, "Some Present-day Problems; 3, "After Christianity, What"? 7, "The Jew as Christian Evidence." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Readings, etc.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—October 23, Sheffield; 26, 27, 28, Derby; 30, Leicester. November 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London; 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester. November 30 and December 1, Failsworth. December 4, Manchester.

H. PERCY WARD, 526 Moseley-road, Birmingham.—November 27, Liverpool. December 18, Birmingham.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## WILLIAM AT JERUSALEM.

EMPEROR WILLIAM is perhaps the most pious monarch in Europe. His father was somewhat tainted with Freethought, as well as inclined towards Liberalism in politics—if the two do not always go together. But there is none of this nonsense about William. He never speaks of his father, at least in public. He prefers to forget that unfortunate link in the Hohenzollern chain. His ideal is his grandfather and namesake, the first William; that pious and pipe-clayey old gentleman, for whom Bismarck supplied brains, foresight, and timely resolution. William has a tremendous belief in the efficacy of the Christian religion, particularly as an invisible but powerful support of the Hohenzollern throne. He says prayers at home and on board his yacht. He has even preached in the absence of a professional exhorter. Still more exemplary, if possible, is the piety of his wife. The Empress has devoted much of her time and means to the cause of religion. She has added considerably to the number of churches in Berlin. What she cannot do is to fill them. The people of Berlin are not churchgoers. They prefer spending Sunday in the beer-gardens, listening to good music, instead of being shut up in a dismal house of God, and undergoing dreary discourses about the day of judgment and the wrath to come.

One result of William's piety, however, is that religion is rather more ostentatious in Germany than it used to be, and Freethought a little less exuberant. The old law of blasphemy has of late years been frequently enforced, and several Freethinkers have been fined and imprisoned for saying what is thought by one-half of the whole male population of Germany. Still worse is it in respect to the law against "insulting the Emperor." No such sensitive vanity as William's has occupied a throne since the days of Nero. It is not safe to doubt his being as great a poet as Goethe, as great a musician as Beethoven, as great a soldier as Napoleon, or as handsome as the Apollo Belvedere. Hundreds of men have been imprisoned for speaking of him with what is called a want of proper respect. Loyalty in king-deluded Germany—as Shelley styled it—must be more than negative; it must be positive, or it becomes *dis*loyalty. Only the other day the editor of the principal comic paper in Berlin was sent to gaol for a mild satire on William's declaration that only Christians could be good soldiers. The shades of Alexander and Julius Cæsar—pre-Christian warriors, and of Napoleon and Frederick the Great—both sceptics, were simply made to smile at this imperial utterance. William cultivates the high and mighty attitude. I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark! It is almost a case of "me and my God." He likes to fill the stage and monopolise the footlights, and woe betide anyone who is caught grinning, either at the stage-wings or in the auditorium.

It was only natural that pious William should desire to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and see the various spots that were hallowed by the real or imaginary feet of Jesus Christ and his twelve Apostles—including, alas, the mercenary and miserable Judas; after whose death, we suppose, the Master had to perambulate the country afresh before ascending, in order to reconsecrate the aforesaid spots, just as a church has to be reconsecrated after it has been desecrated by a suicide. William set out on this glorious expedition with his wife, a large escort, and a heavy baggage, which taxed the powers of the largest railway engine. The King of Heaven visited Palestine, *via* Bethlehem, in a far less striking fashion; creeping in, so to speak, through a stable in the company of camels and jackasses. But the King of Prussia cannot cut such an ignominious figure. He goes with pomp and ceremony. Instead of having one poor garment, like Jesus Christ, he has a large assortment of costumes, some of which are specially designed for this pilgrimage. It is said that he has been photographed in one suit, in no less than forty different positions. This is an exhibition of modesty that could not be paralleled from the lives of mere Pagan rulers, such as Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, Antoninus, and Marcus Aurelius. Those benighted emperors did not understand the philosophy of the wardrobe. They labored under the heathen prejudice that their duty was to live simply and devote themselves to the welfare of their people. No doubt they would smile at William's photographs, but this only shows their backward and un-Christian state of moral cultivation.

There is, however, one touch of low comedy in this high imperial enterprise. William is to be taken round Palestine by Mr. Cook, and the great German Emperor will sink into a personally-conducted excursionist. Of course it is all for the best, but it is rather grotesque. We should have imagined that the Archangel Gabriel—the elegant personage who made that delicate announcement to Mary—would be proud to descend from heaven once more, in order to show Emperor William round the old haunts of the leaders of the first Salvation Army.

Egypt was to have been visited *en route*, but the opportune discovery was made of an Anarchist plot to assassinate Emperor William, who is thus relieved from the difficult task of comporting himself so as to avoid offending either England or France. No doubt the Anarchist plot was real, but perhaps there is more substance in the problem of Fashoda.

But the imperial pilgrim has not missed Constantinople. He has "done" the sights of that incomparably situated metropolis. He has seen what it is that Russia aspires to possess. He has been cheered by Turkish soldiers, who were probably paid a month's back salary for shouting. He has helped the Sultan to spend half a million of money. He has dined with "the Great Assassin." He has allowed his wife to go about arm-in-arm with "Abdul the Damned." He has exchanged cordial civilities—nay, fraternal greetings—with the man whose hands are red beyond all cleansing with Christian blood—red enough to incarnadine the multitudinous seas.

This is piety! This is diplomacy! This is Christian statesmanship! Emperor William forgets the poor Armenians. He has no thought for the men who were massacred, the wives who were outraged and then tortured to death, the girls who were polluted and left to bear their moral agony. What are these things in the great game of international politics? Germany stood aside cynically while England, France, Russia, and Italy took charge of the Cretan question. But the Turks at Candia made the fatal mistake of killing some English soldiers and sailors; which put Admiral Noel's back up, and in he went with his ultimatum and his watch in his hand—the finest sight in those parts for a long while; and, oh irony while William and Abdul were fraternising at Constantinople that English admiral was just settling the Cretan question, with the cordial co-operation of his brother salts of the three other fleets.

We rather like the good old sailor methods: ship-shape,



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up to time, no damned nonsense. Had the four Admirals been given a free hand, they would have settled the Cretan question fifteen months ago. They didn't understand the tricks of diplomacy, but they had common sense, and they knew that the one indispensable thing to be done was to clear out the Turkish garrisons and disarm the whole population.

But let us get back to Emperor William at Constantinople, where we left him while we dashed off to Crete. We have not mentioned that the Empress visited the Sultan's harem, and was welcomed by the particular lady who is called the Sultana, the other ladies being discreetly ignored. William was not privileged to accompany her. Had he done so, he would probably have investigated the establishment more thoroughly, in order to see what comparison it bore to Solomon's—the wisest fool that ever lived, the gentleman who had seven hundred wives and (as Ingersoll says) three hundred other ladies he was acquainted with.

G. W. FOOTE.

*(To be concluded.)*

## CHRISTIANITY AND DEATH.

WE recently drew attention in these columns to certain facts in connection with the "Silence of the Tomb." It is now our intention to consider the Christian theory of the origin of death, which no doubt will be seen to be as fallacious as most of the other groundless speculations advanced by the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus. The popular orthodox notion is, that death is the result of sin which was said to have been committed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We are told that Adam was created immortal, and would have remained so, had he not transgressed the command of his Deity. This transgression, it is alleged, caused a fall from his original condition, and entailed upon him and his posterity mortality, and thereby introduced death into the world. As St. Paul puts it, "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (Romans v. 12). True, we are told in another part of the Bible: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (Ezekiel xviii. 20). But this is only one of the many contradictions to be found in "God's word."

There are two serious objections to the Christian theory of the origin of death. In the first place, it is made to rest upon the supposition that Adam committed a sin in listening to the solicitation of Eve, and partaking of the forbidden fruit. If it can be shown that no sin was committed, as the Christians allege, then death could not have originated in the way orthodox believers describe. The Bible tells us that "sin is the transgression of the law"; but, at the time when it is said that Adam fell, what law was known to him? As the late Dr. Perfitt aptly remarked: "The idea of sin involves the idea of knowledge being possessed by the sinner; knowledge, again, involves the ideas of both experience and reasoning, and these two, in their turn, involve the ideas of good and evil forces, as existing in the sinner's mind. Sin is, in all cases, a conscious violation of, and departure from, the known right; and where this knowledge of the right, this consciousness of wrong-doing, does not exist, then, unquestionably, there may be error; but there can be no active wrong, no sin to be punished. But we inquire, did Adam know the right? Is he anywhere said to have known it? How could he know, not having either any experience of his own, or that accumulated experience of other men which we now possess? The writer in Genesis expressly tells us that it was 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' of which they ate, and thus plainly sets forth that, before eating thereof, Adam knew not one from the other, knew not the good from the evil; how, then, could there be sin? Then, again, we are informed that, through eating thereof, his eyes were opened, and, consequently, that the knowledge of wrong-doing came not until after the action was performed; which plainly establishes that there was no sin."

Besides, we submit that no act can be rightfully regarded as being sinful if the actor is compelled to perform it through the force of circumstances, over which he has no control. Now, in the Bible account of the origin of death through sin there were three circumstances forced upon Adam and Eve which, as events showed, they were powerless to resist. These were—the fruit that grew in the Garden, the desires which had been implanted within them, and the temptation of the serpent; these were arrangements in which Adam and Eve took no part. And to punish them and their posterity for that for which they were not responsible was manifestly unjust. Such cruelty and injustice should give the death-blow to any religion that teaches such a monstrous doctrine. And this, we must not forget, is one of the fundamental tenets of Christianity.

There are, however, other important difficulties involved in this theory of Adam being the cause of the introduction of death. Supposing life had been perpetual, could the world have contained its ever-increasing inhabitants? And would it have been capable of producing sufficient provisions to support such an immense multitude? Moreover, if the serpent had not played its "little game," could a man, who had no knowledge of swimming, have fallen into water, "out of his depth," without the possibility of his being drowned? Or could a person have remained in a fiery furnace and not be burned to death? Or if he were in a coal mine during what would be now called a fatal explosion, would he have escaped alive? The fact is, by our nature we must cease to live. Death is a necessity, in spite of what Adam did, or did not. Change is a universal law of existence, and we are no exception to that law. Death is the consequence of life, for all that lives must die. As Secularists, we do not repine at what we know must be the fate of all. We have this consolation—that if death cuts short our career, and sends us to rest with the multitudes who have gone before to the grave, yet it does not annul our lives, for what we have done remains, and cannot be undone. All our words and deeds have gone to form part of human history, from which they can never be taken. Regret cannot undo the evil we have done, or supply the least of our omissions. This thought should make us all sedulous in the practice of good and the avoidance of evil, while the days of our life last.

It has been demonstrated beyond the shadow of doubt that man lived and died ages before the alleged fall of Adam, whole races having previously flourished and passed away. No well-informed person will deny that, for thousands of years before the so-called creation of Adam, Egypt was the home of a race highly civilised. They passed away in very much the same manner as we die to-day. Death with them could not therefore have resulted from any act performed in the Garden of Eden centuries afterwards. Ought not this fact alone to prove the utter fallacy of the Christian notion of the origin of death? "There are, indeed, few persons of any education now," says an able writer, "who can doubt that at least the lower animals died long before man was created. Geology has brought to light their fossil remains entombed in the various rocks which go to make up the crust of the earth. They came into existence, played their brief part on life's stage, and passed away, not simply in individuals, but in whole races, long before the era dawned which gave man his birth. They preyed on one another then as now, the carnivora devouring the less ferocious tribes. Both together returned to the earth, their remains becoming preserved to tell their history to future generations. Race followed race in long succession, each to pass away as its predecessor had done, whilst as yet man had not made his appearance upon the scene. Nothing can be clearer than the fact that these animals were not immortal. This alone, one would imagine, would be sufficient to prove that man's sin could have had nothing to do with the death to which they were subject, seeing that they died ages before he appeared. Not so, however. There are always to be found persons who, to bolster up some whimsical fancy, endeavor to prove that black is white.

> Reversing nature, will appoint new laws,
> Cut off the effect from its connected cause."

It is to us surprising that persons possessing reasoning faculties should ever have been deluded by the palpable error that death is the result of the Garden of Eden episode. By some it is thought that the healthy human organisation presents no indications that its complex machinery was originally intended to be destroyed. We know nothing about the "original intention," but we have learnt by experience that, although the vital force is for a time

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replenished, it ultimately decays, and its elements pass into other forms of existence. The *how* science has explained, but beyond that all "is silence." When the brilliancy of the sun disappears below the western horizon no indication is afforded that it will reappear in the morning. But experience prompts us to expect it. It is much the same with human existence. In the prime of life decay is not perceptible, but with the approach of the decrepitude of age the signs of dissolution are forced upon us. Like other forms of matter, that of man indicates unstability, and death is inevitable.

In the *Church Gazette* there has recently occurred an interesting discussion upon the Fall of Man as reported in Genesis. In our article next week we will deal with what is there said, so far as it bears upon the question of Christianity and death. In the meantime let it be remembered, in the words of Young :—

> While man is growing, life is in decrease;
> And cradles rock us nearer to the tomb.
> Our birth is nothing but our death begun.

CHARLES WATTS.

*(To be concluded.)*

## CLERICS IN COUNCIL.

WHEN I left Glasgow a fortnight ago, *en route* for Dundee, I observed an abnormally large number of clergymen among my fellow-travellers; when I reached my destination I ran across two or three at every street corner, and, on coming down to breakfast at my hotel on the following morning, I found the smoking-room crowded by a full dozen of the same kidney, with myself the only layman among the lot. I began to fear that I was suffering from some sort of theological *delirium tremens*, or to wonder if I were really awake. The clouds of smoke arising from so many pipes and cigars, with a huge fire glowing in the grate, gave me the uneasy feeling that I had "shuffled off this mortal coil" in the night, and had actually reached the place to which so many Christians had consigned me—an impression still further strengthened by the number of parsons present.

A glance at the morning's paper solved the mystery. The Episcopal Church of Scotland was holding its annual conference in Dundee, and, with the assistance of the Bishops of Rochester and Bristol and Lord Hugh Cecil, discussing the old question of religious instruction in elementary schools.

It is curious, by-the-bye, how seldom, hardly ever in fact, a congress of clergymen discuss the *improvement* of education. Their whole time and attention seem given to the solitary question of how existing educational machinery may be subordinated to their own use, or to the use of Christianity—generally two names for the same thing. Not that this is any new phenomenon in the educational world. Ever since the centre of education was shifted from the Church to the University the Christian clergy have represented a body of people animated by the single desire of safeguarding its own interests. Even the quarrels between Church and Chapel have not been quarrels for the advancement of education, but simply for its control. The rivalry of religious bodies in this direction practically began with the Reformation. The printing press in the hands of the reformers became a most powerful weapon against the older Church, and Rome, finding it impossible to suppress it, was compelled in self-defence to utilise it in its own interests. In this the Church was powerfully aided by Ignatius Loyola and his followers. It was chiefly the Jesuits who taught Rome the absurdity of despising education and the absolute necessity of controlling it, and thus minimise its power to do harm.

There was not then, and there never has been since, any serious difference of opinion among Christian bodies as to the desirability of minimising general education as much as possible, or at least keeping the school under the control of the Church. The contest right through has been a struggle for the ecclesiastical direction of education, not for its improvement; while the reforms that have resulted from the clashing of sectarian interests may be taken as a fresh illustration of the old maxim, "When rogues fall out honest men get their due."

But on the present occasion there was a delightful air of unanimity about the whole proceedings. No opposition was allowed; they were all agreed as to which form of religion was the best, and the only question at issue was how to get that into our public elementary schools. The problem, as the chairman, the Marquis of Lothian, pointed out, was not an easy one. We had fallen upon degenerate days; the people no longer looked upon religion with the same favor as of yore; and "there was a serious danger of religion being crowded out of the field altogether." This position of affairs was quite bewildering to the poor Marquis. He could not understand "why in this Christian country all the pressure should be put by School Boards upon secular education, which was only for the temporal benefit of those who had it, and they left out of sight altogether that which was for eternity." A little reflection might have shown his lordship that, if School Boards evinced a decided tendency to drop theology, it was not because its educational value had never been tested. On this point the argument from experience may be used with tremendous force. Theological instruction has been tried and found wanting, and if to-day it is being steadily driven off the field by its secular adversary, it is because experience has shown that, whatever benefits theology might confer on man in the next world, it does him precious little good in this, while the presence of a number of clergymen on boards of education is as anomalous as would be a number of large landowners on the committee of the Land Restoration League.

Of course, their reverend lordships of Rochester and Bristol were quite in agreement with the chairman upon this matter. With perfectly unconscious truthfulness the Bishop of Bristol declared that "in Scotland, as in England, it was a question of money," while he of Rochester, with charming frankness, asserted that "the system called voluntary schools came very near their ideal in the matter." We need not doubt *that* statement at least. No doubt a system that gives the Churches £4,000,000 per annum out of the public funds, and under which ninepence out of every shilling spent in so-called voluntary schools comes out of the public purse, while those who pay have no proper control over its expenditure, comes very near their ideal; and it is equally beyond question that a system that paid the lot would realise their ideal altogether. The political injustice of teaching the religion of some with money raised from the taxation of all, or the ethical injustice of impressing upon children as demonstrably true beliefs that are, even to the most certain, open to question, and to others demonstrably false, never appears to have entered into their minds. It was not proposed to teach every religion in the schools, only the Christian, and that made a great difference—to the Bishops.

But the speech of the evening was undoubtedly that of Lord Hugh Cecil, who spoke last, and who has at least one of the characteristics of his father, that of blurting out unwelcome truths at the most inopportune moments. Definite religious instruction was necessary, said the Bishop of Bristol, because it made children grow up better men and women than they would otherwise become. Of course he meant more than that by the statement, and the commentary upon the text was made by Lord Cecil. Definite religious teaching was necessary, said he, because "under the system of undenominational teaching there was a tendency for the children after they left school to go elsewhere than to the church or chapel." That let the cat out of the bag with a vengeance, and we can imagine the dismay of the other speakers as this candid friend made it plain to the audience that all the pretended anxiety of the clergy to breed better men and women was merely a cloak for their real desire to secure clients for themselves or their church when the child reached maturity. And the best of it, or the worst of it, is, that it is quite true. Bring children up without forcing religious dogmas upon them, and, at the same time, equip them with a good secular education, and not one in a thousand nowadays would voluntarily adopt the Christian creed. We have long proclaimed this as being the case; the clergy know it as well as we do; Lord Hugh Cecil knows it as well as either, and said so. "Gentlemen of the black robe," he said in effect, "if you want to secure your church attendants, catch them while they are young. Impress their yielding minds with formulas that you yourselves do not understand, and usually do not believe, and at the same time seclude them from any information that has a tendency to shake their faith in the Christian creed. Do this, and by the time they go out into the world they will

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be the possessors of a mind so deadened by prejudice, so warped by training, and so narcotised by religion, that unbelief will have little influence over them." Nor did the candid friend pause here. Religion was in a parlous condition all round. "If he dwelt on the importance of teaching children some new art or craft, wanting to make them physically and mentally better, the House of Commons would have cheered to the echo; but the souls of children might be left to take care of themselves." Moreover. the real danger, the speaker went on to point out, was not that the people of this country would become Roman Catholics, but that the growing indifference to religion should, in the course of a few generations, lead to its rejection altogether. This was the real danger the Churches had to fight against, and in this view of the case I heartily agree with him. For, when all is said and done, attacks upon rival religions, or even attacks upon special forms of heresy, are largely wasted efforts. It is the spirit of the age that Christianity has to conquer if it would itself live on. The great enemy of religious beliefs is not so much any special organisation that exists, or that may exist, as it is the process of thought itself. Men are killed by many diseases; religions die of but one—being found out. Thought is to religious beliefs what microbes are to human beings. Just as science has shown in one direction that man's greatest enemies are not the large and palpable, but those minute, organisms whose very existence was unknown until recently, so it has shown in another direction that the deadliest foe of religion is that impalpable but all-penetrating process of mental development that no amount of coercion can thoroughly suppress. Thought is, in brief, the microbe of religion. It is the greatest enemy that religion has to face, and therefore Lord Hugh Cecil was wise in his generation in pointing out as much to the assembled clerics. Once encourage man to exercise his reason fully and fearlessly, and the traversing of the distance from Rome to Rationalism is only a question of time. The one effectual method of keeping a man religious is to stop him thinking. And, therefore, I join with this scion of the house of Salisbury in advising the Churches, if they wish to keep people religious, to take care that they commence early. Do not trust your creed to adults who have grown up without it. Remember that Jesus warned you that only by becoming as ignorant and as credulous as children is it possible to enter the kingdom of heaven, and waylay the children who are too helpless to dispute your absurd claims, or to effectively doubt your outrageous stories. Continue to bar the child from scientific knowledge, and fill its mind with stories discredited by the best thought of the times: do this, and thy days shall be long upon the land which the ignorance and credulity of ages have enabled you to rule.

This is the real problem of the Churches—to control the operations of the human mind, or to sign its own death-warrant. But can it be done? Well, to say the least, it is highly doubtful. The Catholic Church has always understood the real enemy it had to face, and has made herculean efforts to accomplish the task, and failed. And where that Church, supported as it was by the public opinion of the day, failed, it is hardly likely that present religious organisations, fighting among themselves, distracted by doubt, and dealing with a public opinion partly rationalised, and wholly ashamed of being openly intolerant, will succeed.

C. COHEN.

## SHELLEY'S PROSE WORKS.

NOT even the poorest can complain of the inaccessibility of good literature when Shelley's prose works can be bought for ninepence. How such a volume is produced at the nominal price of a shilling we confess ourselves unable to comprehend. The Camelot Classics, of which series it is an instalment, are a miracle of cheapness. Some of the best things by the very best English prose writers are now placed within the reach of the humblest reader. Surely this is a happy circumstance, and one of the compensations of "this mechanical age." Mr. Ruskin may deplore the fact that books may be purchased so cheaply, but there are few who will share his regret. There are even signs that this eccentric genius is relenting on this point, for some of his writings have recently been issued at a price which, to people of moderate means, is not absolutely prohibitive.

Some critics may, of course, doubt the value of this particular volume, for in a sceptical age and a free country everything is liable to be challenged. Mr. Swinburne entertains the meanest opinion of Shelley's prose, his letters being only worthy of a clever school-girl, and his essays of little more importance. The only reason assigned for this judgment is that Shelley refused to believe that Shakespeare wrote a word of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Mr. Swinburne feels equally sure of the contrary, and he therefore denies that Shelley had the least sense of style. Such a verdict seems to us nothing less than grotesque. Landor, whom Mr. Swinburne justly venerates as one of the masters of English literature, formed a very different estimate. Writing of Shelley after his death, Landor assigned him the third place among the poets of his age, and described him as "incomparably the most elegant, graceful, and harmonious of the prose writers." Subsequently this panegyric was slightly altered, Shelley being given, "if not the highest, almost the highest, place among our poets of the present age," and ranked "*among* the most elegant, graceful, and harmonious of the prose writers." Shelley's admirers may pit Landor against Swinburne without fear or trembling.

Shelley's early political writings are only represented by extracts, and his *Necessity of Atheism* and *Refutation of Deism* are excluded on the ground that they are embodied in the notes to *Queen Mab*. Nor is a place found for the prefaces to his various poems, which can be read in their proper places elsewhere. It is a great pity, however, that the exquisite and matchless translation of the *Banquet* is omitted, with a promise of its inclusion in a volume of selections from Plato. On the other hand, the Letters seem complete; and on the whole, if the volume is not all that could be desired, it is still a precious possession to the Shelleyans who cannot afford the luxury of Mr. Buxton Forman's expensive edition.

The finest piece of Shelley's original prose is undoubtedly the *Defence of Poetry*, which, as James Thomson said, "with the enthusiasm and ornate beauty of an ode, preserves throughout the logical precision and directness of an elegant mathematical demonstration." For richness and chastity it would be hard to find its parallel in the whole range of our literature. Take this sentence: "No living poet ever arrived at the fulness of his fame; the jury which sits in judgment upon a poet, belonging, as he does, to all time, must be composed of his peers: it must be impaneled by Time from the selectest of the wise of many generations." With what accuracy and beauty is the relation of poetry to ethics expounded. Morality prescribes laws of conduct, but "poetry acts in another and diviner manner."

> "The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void for ever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb."

Perfect! It is the final word on this profound subject. And listen to this glorious burst of living music, following a reference to the Dark Ages of faith:—

> "But mark how beautiful an order has sprung from the dust and blood of this fierce chaos! how the world, as from a resurrection, balancing itself on the golden wings of knowledge and of hope, has reassumed its yet unwearied flight into the heaven of time. Listen to the music, unheard by outward ears, which is as a ceaseless and invisible wind, nourishing its everlasting course with strength and swiftness."

Is there anything finer in the most famous passage of Milton's *Areopagitica*, which it suggests and rivals?

Mr. Matthew Arnold defines poetry as criticism of life. Shelley's definition is better: "Poetry is the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." The *happiest* in this definition must not be confused with

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any exaltation of pleasure; it means fortunate, or favored; otherwise it would exclude all melancholy and sombre poetry, unless we rise to the full appreciation of Shelley's apothegm, that "the pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself." A paradox, yet a truth; and if it sounds strained and strange, it is because words cannot express the ineffable.

The conclusion of the *Defence of Poetry* is one of the grandest passages extant. Here are the last sentences:—

> "Poets are the hierophants of an unapprehended inspiration; the mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present; the words which express what they understand not; the trumpets which sing to battle, and feel not what they inspire; the influence which is not moved, but moves. Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

Precisely the same truth is expressed less loftily in the saying ascribed to Fletcher of Saltoun: "Let me make the people's songs, and I care not who makes their laws."

The brief essays on the Punishment of Death, on Life, and a Future State are pithy and beautifully written. Shelley declares it incredible that *mind* can be the *basis* of all things; for mind, so far as we know it, "cannot create; it can only perceive." Life and thought, he allows, differ from anything else, although science has considerably diminished this difference since Shelley wrote; but he rejects the idea that this dissimilarity affords a shadow of proof that life "survives that period, beyond which we have no proof of its existence," and "nothing but our own desires could have led us to conjecture or imagine" that it does so.

The fragmentary essay on Christianity contains some excellent points, but it is on the whole a failure. The state of biblical scholarship in Shelley's time was very greatly behind that of the present, and he seems to have been imperfectly acquainted with what was accessible. His method is very uncritical. He sees that the evangelists attribute to Christ "sentiments which flatly contradict each other," that they often "represent him as narrow, superstitious, and exquisitely vindictive and malicious," and that "they insert, in the midst of a strain of impassioned eloquence or sagest exhortations, a sentiment only remarkable for its naked and drivelling folly." To escape from this difficulty Shelley assumes, as Mr. Matthew Arnold does, that Jesus spoke over the heads of his supporters, whose ignorance and fanaticism are mingled with his wisdom and benignity. But, as Strauss argues this process is arbitrary and impermissible. Our Gospels are not biographies of Jesus Christ, but undateable patchwork, made up of derivations from various sources. George Eliot justly remarked that the materials for a true portrait of Jesus Christ do not exist, and any attempt to paint one is a blunder. The result could only be a fancy portrait, like Shelley's and Mill's, achieved by idealising all the best features and omitting all the worst. Shelley's Essay on Christianity is replete with fine passages, but it is absolutely worthless as a disquisition on its subject.

Among the speculations on Metaphysics and Morals there are some subtle and striking thoughts. These are followed by other brief pieces, of which *The Age of Pericles* is the most important. It consists chiefly of observations on Greek sculpture. Each criticism is a model of eloquence, and any young writer who wishes to acquire a good style could not do better than learn them all by heart.

Of the Letters we have no room to speak at any length. They are certainly not as good as Byron's, but Shelley put all his thought into his poetry, while Byron put so little that he might well spare some for his correspondence. Besides, if the truth must be told, the best letter-writers are men of the world. Gray is perhaps an exception, but even *his* letters are only first-rate when he is travelling and gives a free rein to his fancy and his pen. Cowper may be cited as another exception, yet he also chats about things in general. Shelley's ordinary letters are of no interest except from a biographical point of view, while his best are too much in the manner of essays. Had he lived more in society as Byron did (of a sort), he would have been a more piquant and entertaining correspondent; but that would have been dearly purchased at the price of inferiority in his poems.

There are a few points in the Letters that will interest our readers. Writing to Thomas Hookham, the publisher, as early as December 17, 1812, Shelley says: "You will receive the *Biblical Extracts* in a day or two by the two-penny post. I confide them to the care of a person going to London. Would not Daniel J. Eaton publish them? Could the question be asked him in any manner?" These *Biblical Extracts* were never published. They were probably a collection of contradictory, absurd, and immoral passages from Scripture. Daniel J. Eaton was pilloried and imprisoned for publishing Paine's *Age of Reason*. This outrage occasioned Shelley's *Letter to Lord Ellenborough*, which is a noble vindication of free speech, and a wonderful document from the pen of a youth of eighteen. It may be added that Shelley never limited his sympathy to words. His name appeared for five pounds among the subscribers to William Hone's testimonial, after his abortive trial for blasphemy; and in the Letters we read again and again of similar acts of generosity. On some occasions he has to borrow the money until his own remittances arrive.

Less than three months before his untimely death Shelley wrote to Horace Smith on the subject of Lord Byron and his religion. The date is Pisa, April 11, 1822. Moore had warned Byron against Shelley's influence in religious matters. Shelley took it in good part, for the sweetness of his nature was not easily soured, and with a strange humility he fancied that Moore's penny whistle was a superior musical instrument to his own organ. This is what he said on the subject:—

> "I think you know more. Pray assure him that I have not the smallest influence over Lord Byron in this particular, and if I had, I certainly should employ it to eradicate from his great mind the delusions of Christianity, which, in spite of his reason, seem perpetually to recur, and to lay in ambush for the hours of sickness and distress. *Cain* was *conceived* many years ago, and begun before I saw him last year at Ravenna. How happy should I not be to attribute to myself, however indirectly, any participation in that immortal work! I differ from Moore in thinking Christianity useful to the world; no man of sense can think it true; and the alliance of the monstrous superstitions of the popular worship with the doctrines of the Theism of such a man as Moore turns to the profit of the former, and makes the latter the fountain of its own pollution."

Note the calm and modest courage of the writer, with what absolute sincerity he expresses himself, and how keenly he probes to the very bottom of the problem. Shelley never wavered in his rejection of Christianity, any more than in his lofty indifference to public opinion; and the words we have just quoted—so trenchant, yet so dignified—being written at the close of his last year of life, may stand as his final judgment on Christianity, and on those who countenance while disbelieving it.

Shelley's Letters also evince his warm love for political freedom. His "Declaration of Rights," based upon the American and the French, is still worth reading for its concentration and point. Of his Address to the Irish People only two extracts are given in Mr. Rhys's volume, but even if reprinted now, although it was the work of a mere lad, it would compare favorably with much that is written by politicians on the same subject. No doubt it was the political and social as well as the religious revolt that attracted Shelley in d'Holbach's *Système de la Nature*. He appears to have contemplated translating this work in 1813, and in a letter to Hookham he hints that he is "about" it; but probably he went no further than the passages in the notes to *Queen Mab*. When Leigh Hunt and Henry Hunt were imprisoned, in 1818, for the terrible crime of styling the Prince Regent a fat Adonis of fifty, Shelley burst into a passion of indignation. "Surely," he wrote, "the seal of abjectness and slavery is indelibly stamped upon the character of England." But, practical in his sympathy as ever, Shelley proposed a public subscription, offering twenty pounds himself. The Hunts, however, refused to accept any subscription, and paid the fine entirely out of their own pockets. Shelley befriended Leigh Hunt to the end, and it was owing to his exertions that the *Liberal* was started, and to Byron's slipperiness that it came to an untimely close.

When the Peterloo massacre occurred in 1819 Shelley wrote to Ollier: "The same day that your letter came, came the news of the Manchester work, and the torrent of my indignation has not yet done boiling in my veins. I wait anxiously to hear how the country will express its sense of this bloody, murderous oppression of its destroyers 'Something must be done. What, yet I know not.'" The something was the *Masque of Anarchy*, which Hunt

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shrank from printing till years afterwards, and in which Shelley shot another fiery arrow at old Lord Eldon, whose order in Chancery had deprived him of his two children.

A few of the Letters are addressed to Henry Reveley. Poets are considered to be entirely unpractical, yet it was Shelley who introduced steam navigation in the Mediterranean. Without any idea of profit, but simply to expedite communication, he conceived the idea of building a steamboat to ply between Marseilles, Genoa, and Leghorn. Reveley was the engineer, the poet advancing him the necessary funds without security for the sake of so laudable an object.

From the Letters it is obvious that several things written by Shelley were never printed and are lost. For instance, the late Archdeacon Hare, in 1820, while admiring Shelley's genius, hoped he would in time humble his soul and "receive the spirit into him." Thereupon Shelley, writing to Ollier, said: "If you know him personally, pray ask him from me what he means by receiving the *spirit into me*; and (if really it is any good) how one is to get at it. I was immeasurably amused by the quotation from Schlegel about the way in which the popular faith is destroyed—first the Devil, then the Holy Ghost, then God the Father. I had written a Lucianic essay to prove the same thing." What a pity that Lucianic essay was destroyed. Shelley was not deficient in a certain refined wit, and such a document would probably have been a valued possession by the true Shelleyans, who are all Freethinkers.

G. W. FOOTE.

## THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

(By the late J. M. Wheeler.)

Three hundred and twenty-six years ago August 24 fell on a Sunday. Consecrated both to the Lord and his faithful apostle and martyr, Saint Bartholomew, the leading Catholics in France determined the day should have a triple sacredness by witnessing the extermination of God's enemies. That the deed was premeditated there is abundant evidence. Michelet, indeed, tells us that the bishops Sorbin and Vigor had preached it for a dozen years. We need not consider the various proportions of guilt to be assigned to Catherine de Medici, Charles IX., the Duke de Guise, Tavannes, Cardinal Lorraine, and the Jesuits. The spirit of Christian bigotry, the Christian doctrine that misbelievers were accursed of God, was at the bottom of this, as of so many other crimes of Christianity.

With consummate hypocrisy the Huguenot chiefs were lured to Paris to celebrate the nuptials of their leader, Henry of Navarre, with Margaret de Valois, the king's sister. Hopes arose that this union would end the religious feuds which had spilled much of the best blood of France. Coligny was invited to become leader of an expedition against Flanders, and, ready to show himself a Frenchman first and a Huguenot afterwards, the aged warrior was willing to join arms with the Catholics against the foreign foe.

At the dawn of this eventful Sabbath the streets of Paris were filled with armed men. All wore white crosses on their garments. Many had images of the Virgin around their necks; for theirs was a work of religion. They first went to the house of Coligny, dragged him from bed, stabbed him, and threw him still alive into the street. Then the massacre began in earnest, similar scenes taking place at the marked houses of every Huguenot. Men and women were indiscriminately murdered; children were torn from their mothers, and tossed on the points of spears. A contemporary historian, De Serres, gives the following account of these Sabbath devotions:—

> "Behold, then, this great city, in which there were nearly sixty thousand men, armed with pistols, cutlasses, pikes, poignards, and other weapons, perambulating the streets, and sacking houses, in which they cruelly massacred all they met, without respect to age, sex, or condition. The streets were strewn with fragments of corpses, and the doors of the houses, palaces, and public edifices were stained with gore. A horrible tempest raged of yells, mingled with the report of pistols, arquebuses, and the pitiable shrieks of the victims. The bodies of the dead were hurled from the windows of their abodes, and dragged along the gutters, amid hissings and shrieks. The windows were smashed in with hatchets and stones, the houses rifled. Carts traversed the streets, sometimes filled with rich booty, at others laden with mutilated bodies, which were flung into the Seine."

Blood inundated the streets, and flowed even within the royal palace of the Louvre, where the guards and friends of Henry de Navarre were massacred by the Swiss, drawn from the Catholic cantons where Protestants were executed. "Mass or massacre" were the terms offered to Henry and the Prince de Condé.* The king amused himself by standing at his window shooting the flying Huguenots. For the two succeeding days the slaughter continued in Paris, and for above a week it was followed in the provinces by the imprisonment, massacre, and pillage of the Huguenots. The number murdered has been variously estimated from twenty to one hundred thousand. De Thou, who puts the number of slain at thirty thousand, is probably the safest authority.

The news of this atrocity was received at Rome with unrestrained delight. A universal jubilee was proclaimed by the Pope; the guns of St. Angelo were fired, and bonfires lighted in the street. Gregory XIII. and his cardinals went in procession from sanctuary to sanctuary to give God thanks for this crowning mercy. In the Bodleian library may be seen a copy of the prayers used at this solemn thanksgiving. Over the entrance of the Church of St. Louis was placed an inscription:—

> "To the most auspicious Pope Gregory XIII., to the sacred college of illustrious Cardinals, to the Senate and Roman people. Charles IX., the most Christian king, fired with zeal for the God of armies, like an exterminating angel divinely sent, having by a certain opportunity exterminated nearly all the heretical enemies in his state, in perpetual memory of this great blessing..... and foreseeing that this auspicious event.....portends and signifies a re-establishment of ecclesiastical matters .....renders grateful thanks to God in the Church of St. Louis....."

The subject was ordered to be painted as frescoes in the hall in which the Pope gave audience to ambassadors, and medals were struck at the papal mint to celebrate the pious deed. These were very rare, but the original dies have fallen into the possession of the Italian government, and fresh impressions have been taken.† On the one side is represented a head of the Pope, on the other an angel with a cross in one hand and a sword in the other, pursuing and slaying a band of flying heretics.

An attempt has been made to exonerate the head of Christendom on the ground that he was misled by report; but the medal must have taken sufficient time in preparing to enable Gregory to inquire into the matter. It remains a standing proof of the horrible and treacherous enormities to which Christian bigotry will resort.

## ACID DROPS.

Mr. Harold Frederic, the novelist, who died under the hands of the Christian Scientists, must have been far gone when he gave himself up to such impostors. No doubt his brain was affected by his malady. Judging from his most powerful novel, *Illumination*, he was one of the last men to succumb to this nonsense, unless his mental powers were enfeebled by disease.

The Christian Scientists who attended Mr. Harold Frederic, and settled him, had a deal of method in their madness. They took his money and prayed for him, and meanwhile allowed him to drink and smoke as much as he liked, which were the very things he ought to have avoided. But no doubt these indulgences kept him quiet and contented, and probably that was what the Christian Scientists desired.

We invite the *South London Mail* and the North London "infidel-slayer" called Woffendale to consider the case of the vicar of Ruyton and his precious wife, who are now spending a well-earned four months' holiday in gaol. The Rev. W. B. Gowan had a brother who died, leaving him £650 and the care of two little girls. The man of God and his pious helpmeet half starved these helpless orphans, so that they

* "*La masse ou la morte!*" are the words attributed to Charles IX.

† The medal, I believe, may be seen upon application to Mr. March, keeper of the French Protestant Church, St. Martin's le Grand.

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actually robbed the pigs of potatoes. They were kept dirty, so that their clothes swarmed with vermin. They were beaten with all sorts of things, including walking-sticks, boots, and plates. Fortunately the intervention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children put an end to this horrible state of things, and the poor young victims are now free for ever from the cruelty of their parson-uncle and demoness-aunt.

Nothing could be worse than this case of cold-blooded, deliberate, persistent cruelty. The crime is not negative, but positive; it did not spring from mere weakness, but from a settled malignity. Many a man has swung from the gallows for a smaller crime in the eyes of reason and justice. And the worst of cruelty is that it is hopeless. You cannot reform a man or woman who delights in the sufferings of others. Their natures are devilish, and woe to any being who falls under their power!

We thank the unknown friend who sent us the *Shrewsbury Advertiser* containing a full report of the trial of the Gowans. From this journal we are happy to reproduce the statement that when the precious pair were sentenced to four months' hard labor each "the result was received with cheering by great crowds outside."

Rev. William A. Woods, of 7 Thanet-place, Strand, London, has been found guilty of immoral practices by an Ecclesiastical Court held at Coventry. Having a wife living, he consorted with another lady in a disreputable manner. The Bishop has to pronounce sentence. This is another present for Woffendale and the *South London Mail*.

When Mr. Foote was lecturing at Birmingham on "The Meaning of Death" someone handed him a letter signed by J. W. Mahony. This gentleman wrote that he had seen the announcement of Mr. Foote's lecture; he could not come to hear it, but he supposed Mr. Foote would say so and so; and, as a Spiritualist, he invited Mr. Foote to a public discussion on the subject. In the circumstances the letter was grotesque, and Mr. Foote paid it no attention. As a matter of fact, he receives dozens of such epistles every year. Of course he is not surprised to read in *Light* that he has declined to discuss Spiritualism with Mr. Mahony; indeed, that he dare not cross swords with this representative of Spiritualism.

Mr. Foote has not yet seen the man he is afraid of. Certainly he does not know of any reason why he should dread Mr. Mahony. But this is by the way. What is really important is this. How can an Atheist and a Spiritualist discuss when the one alleges as facts what the other regards as delusions? The alleged facts have got to be established as actual facts before their meaning can be profitably debated. Mr. Mahony should therefore satisfy a committee of investigators, including Atheists, that the phenomena of Spiritualism are objective realities, and not subjective impressions, or even the results of imposture. If he is willing to do this, Mr. Foote will be glad to assist in the formation of such a committee.

Canny John Kensit has been orating at Cheltenham, the platform being crowded with ministers and army officers. The orator announced that a letter just handed to him contained a five-pound note for his "God-given work." This was doubtless mentioned *pour encourager les autres*. Letters of that kind cheer canny John on the dreary road to—wherever he is going.

Some pious idiot spends a penny in attempting to save us from the wrath to come. Here is an exact copy of the elegant epistle he sends us: "Eternity!—Where will you spend it?—God is Love." Well, if God is Love, we don't see that there is any particular reason to be alarmed. Anyhow, we hope the boss will find us a seat a good way off the pious idiots who pestered us on earth.

"I have sinned against the Holy Ghost and am lost for ever!" This was the exclamation of Mary Jane Kirkham, a schoolmistress at Birdbrook, when brought round by the doctor after attempting suicide. So much for the religion of consolation.

We have always said that the dear, good Nonconformists only air their peace principles when England has nothing to gain by fighting. Mr. Leonard Courtney, M.P., addressing his constituents at Bodmin, drew attention to a recent aspect of this phenomenon. We quote from the *Daily News* report: "He never saw a more terrible revelation of the lengths to which the national temper could be betrayed than the words of a dominican priest a few months ago, when, in awarding the prizes at a military school, he glorified war as the highest virtue of a nation. He read those words with horror. But since then they had had revelations on this side of the Channel of Christian ministers unconscious of the inconsistency of their position when they received with joy the invitation of the Czar, and coupled with it a clenching of the fists against France, as did Dr. Goodrich and Dr. Guinness Rogers and others who, at the Congregational Union, were led into much the same declaration as the French priest."

"Heavy Gales at Sea—Many Wrecks—Great Loss of Life." Such are the headlines in the newspapers of late. Does it not prove, in the words of the late Mr. Gladstone, how beautifully Providence has fitted the world for man's habitation?

"Providence" has visited Malta with a terrific storm, accompanied with hailstones weighing a quarter of a pound, inflicting enormous damage on property. Malta is a pious island, and we daresay its inhabitants are duly grateful for this divine favor.

Disastrous floods have occurred at Fiume. Large numbers of animals have perished, and the damage is estimated at over two million florins. More mercies!

The story is going the round of a Welsh minister who preached a taking sermon on "Go to the ant, thou sluggard." Returning home, he suffered from a plague of ants in the train. They settled in his trousers, and a station-master had to supply him with another pair before he could emerge from his compartment with a presentable appearance. One newspaper, in a leaderette on the subject, says that his congregation ought to present him with a Breeches Bible.

We thought the Passmore Edwards Settlement in Tavistock-place, London, was to be absolutely unsectarian—which, if it means anything at all, must mean secular. It seems, however, that we were mistaken. We notice the announcement of a "Jowett Lecture" by the Rev. R. H. Charles on "The Rise and Development of the Doctrine of a Future Life among the Jews."

There was a great outburst of ecclesiastical passion at the recent Lincoln Diocesan Conference. Dr. Foster, a clergyman, introduced a motion in favor of a more conciliatory attitude towards Nonconformists. Thereupon the fat was soon in the fire. One man of God declared that Nonconformists were simply full of abuse; another even asserted that all Protestantism was unscriptural; while a third affirmed that "the proper treatment for Nonconformists was that which God instructed his Prophet to adopt towards Jeroboam, who 'made Israel to sin!'" This reverend gentleman "deprecated human expedients and charity." Evidently he is in favor of root-and-branch extirpation. How they love one another!

We regret to see that Frederick Browne, artist and Anarchist, of Ashingdon, Essex, has got into trouble again through his postcard mania. This time he is sentenced to nine months' hard labor. His mind appears to be unhinged, and recovery is rather hopeless while he remains in that locality.

Dr. Martineau is so old a man that the unveiling of his statue at Manchester New College, Oxford, is almost an historical celebration. No one can deny that he is a towering figure in the religious world. From the Freethought point of view, there is considerable value in his criticism of what is rather facetiously called Christian Evidences. The *Daily News* remarks that he "accepts in their fullest extent the results of modern criticism upon the date and authenticity of the Gospels," nevertheless he has "always maintained that the moral system they embody was, and must remain, unimpaired by the process"—which, by the way, is remarkably like a platitude. But the best thing in the *Daily News* article is this. The "imperishable portion" of Dr. Martineau's theology, it tells us, is that "religion is shown to be true by acting as though it were so." What is this at bottom but saying that any fixed idea will find plenty of corroboration?

The title of an address delivered by Professor J. Estlen Carpenter in connection with the unveiling of Dr. Martineau's statue is curiously significant—"The Education of the Religious Imagination." It would be a pity to spoil this with any comment.

Dean Lefroy, of Norwich—the gentleman who got up a Self-Denial Week for the whole diocese and realised the sum of £30—has been improving the occasion of the Conference of the National Union of Women Workers. Preaching a special sermon in the Cathedral, he attributed all the modern progress of women to the influence of Jesus Christ. This is wild enough, but it was nothing to what the preacher said about the condition of women before the birth of Christ. "Before that era," he said, "they lived for merely animal purposes, and when the vilest uses had been served the despised creatures were cast aside like a sucked lemon skin."

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Such lies as these can only be told in the coward's castle of the pulpit, where no falsehood can be contradicted, and no imbecility can be exposed. Homer's Andromache and the Mother of the Gracchi, to go no farther, are a sufficient refutation of Dean Lefroy's "Christian" history.

And what of Portia, the wife of Brutus, whose speech to her husband, soliciting his confidence, is recorded by Plutarch, and beautifully rendered into immortal verse by Shakespeare? Does she not tell him that if she only shares his bed and board, and does not share the secrets of his mind, she is his harlot, not his wife? And does not Brutus reply like the "noblest Roman of them all":—

> You are my true and honorable wife,
> As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
> That visit this sad heart.

Sucked lemon skin! Really, it is too ridiculous. The story is not even *ben trovato*.

Going down to Portsmouth, a *Westminster Gazette* man got into talk about possible war with various sailors and soldiers. One old pensioner put the following view of the matter. "For myself," he said, "I don't want no wars; I've had enough of them. Still, I suppose God Almighty has ordered them, and if they does nothing else they helps to get rid of the surplus population, and that lets somebody else eat the bread and cheese of them as is dead." This is very good theology, though very bad humanity. Besides, those who get killed in war are not generally the most useless. They are not the cripples and the diseased, but the physical flower of the young male population.

W. H. Smith and Son continue their boycott of books that do not satisfy the press censor they keep somewhere in their Strand establishment They are now boycotting Mr. T. M. Ellis's novel, entitled *God is Love*. A long letter of protest from the author is printed in the *Newsagents' Chronicle*. The Smith firm control a huge monopoly, and it is simply intolerable that they should dictate what books the British public should be allowed to buy at railway bookstalls, for instance, which should be open to every class of decent literature. We should hardly include the Bible in that category, though Smith's people think it the Word of God.

The Very Rev. Principal Story regrets that Glasgow University has no chapel of its own, and no connection with any place of worship. "In the great institution," he says, "which seeks to train and teach in all departments of human knowledge, the voice of religious instruction and exhortation is silent." How sad! Some men of God are defrauded of well-paid jobs.

There are naturally a good many Freethinkers in the medical profession, but of course the great majority of its members cannot afford to quarrel with the clergy. We are not astonished, therefore, to learn that a thousand doctors recently attended at St. Paul's Cathedral to hear a special sermon by the Bishop of London, under the auspices of the Guild of St. Luke the Physician. The Bishop's sermon displayed what Dr. Johnson called the intrepidity of ignorance. His lordship said that science, which once mocked at the resurrection of the body, was now in favor of that doctrine. We believe this will be fresh news to the great majority of scientists. We do not, of course, deny that a "great biologist" said that if there was a resurrection it must be the resurrection of the body; for he probably meant that there was nothing else to be resurrected.

Mr. W. Hardaker, a veteran Freethinker, writes to us as follows: "I was summoned to attend a Coroner's inquest at Saint Bartholomew's Hospital this morning, and, on stating to the Coroner that I preferred to affirm, he began to dictate words of affirmation until he came to words which he used, 'truly observe the oath.' When I objected that those words were not in the prescribed form, I was told not to dictate to him, and to take a seat at the back. At the end of the inquest I requested respectfully that the Coroner should refer to the Evidence Amendment Act for the form, and upon that I was insulted, and he directed the constable to summon 'this man' on the next inquest."

It is very clear that Mr. Hardaker was treated illegally as well as insolently. The coroner could not order him to remain in court after the jury was sworn; at least Mr. Hardaker was under no obligation to obey the order, unless he was wanted as a witness. It was also dead against the law for the coroner to single out any person to serve on the "next jury." We strongly advise Mr. Hardaker to write to the London County Council.

Two Roman Catholic parents, announcing the death of their daughter in the *Liverpool Echo*, beg all who read it to say one "Hail Mary" for the repose of her soul. It is a touching appeal, and perhaps, after all, the belief that underlies it is better than the hard Protestant doctrine of everlasting hell (if you miss heaven) directly you are dead. Purgatory gives another chance. But, alas, on this chance the Catholic Church has erected the most profitable branch of its business.

We have received the annual balance-sheet of the Bristol Public Hall Company, which owns and controls St. James's Hall, in Cumberland-street. It is a melancholy document. The loss on the year is £116 4s. 9d., and this sort of thing has been going on for many years. We have said before, and we repeat it now, that if the Directors must lose money they may as well lose it on principle. Most of those who took shares in this scheme believed that the Hall would be used for Freethought propaganda and organisation; and it seems to us that some good at least would be done if the Bristol Secularists were allowed to utilise the building, if only for a twelvemonth, to see what would come of the experiment.

Anything to *bring* them in, now it is impossible to *compel* them to come in. The Rev. F. C. Kilner, vicar of Bingley, has started an Athletic Club in connection with the parish church Sunday-school. The members of the Club flocked there on Sunday last, and spent the rainy day in playing cards and bagatelle, swinging Indian clubs, and practising jumping. This is all very well in its way. But would the vicar of Bingley vote for the opening of public libraries, museums, and art galleries on Sundays? Would he not feel that there is more danger to the Church in that direction?

Our readers will remember the case of the famous pianist, Martinus Sieveking, who was lately arrested in Austria for "insulting" a priest by not taking off his hat to that worthy. Perhaps it was fortunate that the pianist did not strike the man of God, for he might have sent him to kingdom-come. It appears that he is one of Sandow's most boasted pupils. He was very weak physically when Sandow took him in hand, but within a year he became "the most redoubtable amateur I have ever met." Thus writes Sandow himself in his book on *Strength, and How to Obtain It*.

St. Michael's Church, Burton Wood, Liverpool, which has lately been the centre of Ritualistic squabbles, has had its Thanksgiving Sunday. On the back of the program for this great occasion is printed a list of things which the parson would like to have given him—such as an alabaster pulpit, a carved oak lectern, and an alms box. It is not stated whether the last article should be strong or flimsy. At the bottom of this list is the following notice:—"A New Church is now imperative. The present Church has been condemned." We suppose this refers to the building, but it will apply to the whole Establishment. Yes, the Church *is* condemned, but we *don't* want a new one.

The Lord Chief Justice of England, in responding to the toast of the guests at the dinner to Sir A. MacDonald, told an anecdote which is worthy of a permanent record, related to him by Mr. Russell Lowell. A friend, in paying Mr. Russell Lowell a visit, expressed himself in terms of unqualified condemnation of the Irish in America, who gave a solid vote against his candidature for the United States Presidency. The conversation then took a more general turn, and on Mr. Russell Lowell asking this gentleman where he intended to spend his holidays he immediately said in Ireland. "In Ireland!" said Mr. Russell Lowell, in astonishment; "in Ireland, whose people you have been so lavishly abusing!" "Yes," was the cool reply; "I wish to see Ireland, for it is the only English-speaking country on the face of the earth which is not ruled by Irishmen."

In *Collections and Recollections*, by Mr. W. E. Russell, M.P., the Master of Balliol, Jowett, comes in for a share of notice. Here is an extract: "At dinner at Balliol the Master's guests were discussing the careers of two Balliol men, the one of whom had just been made a judge and the other a bishop. 'Oh,' said Henry Smith, 'I think the bishop is the greater man. A judge at the most can only say, "You be hanged," but a bishop can say, "You be d——d."' 'Yes,' characteristically twittered the Master, 'but if the Judge says, "You be hanged," you are hanged.'"

"What weapon did Samson use in slaying the Philistines?" asked the Sunday-school superintendent during the general exercises. "He—he didn't use none," sputtered a little red-headed urchin on the back row of seats. "He didn't git inter de scrap till dey was all sunk."

"Papa, what does that mean about that man being gathered to his fathers?" "Why, my son, that means that he went to heaven." "And are his mothers all in the other place?"

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, October 30, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, at 7.30, "What is the Matter with France? A Freethinker's View of Her Malady and its Only Cure."

November 6, Manchester. 13, Chester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 6, Wigan; 13, Camberwell; 20, Hall of Science, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

A. HURCUM.—Your indignation is natural, but the man of God referred to does not deserve to occupy any more of our space at present.

H. W. JONES.—Thanks. A good many more South Lancashire friends ought to join the Secular Society, Limited.

R. LAWSON.—We are obliged to you for your good wishes, which you help to realise by your subscription. It would be a good thing if *all* our well-wishers were to translate their sentiments in the same fashion.

HORACE W. PARSONS.—There are no *shares* in the Secular Society, Limited. Membership, with full voting power, is financially covered by the entrance fee of 10s. and subsequent annual subscription of 5s. The liability of members is strictly limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up, and the assets are insufficient to meet liabilities.

J. ROBINSON, joining the Secular Society, Limited, hopes it "will be as it deserves, a huge success."

RAMSGATE FRIEND.—Thanks for your letter and enclosure.

A. MILLAR, subscribing to Shilling Month, says: "If all your readers do likewise, the fund will assume formidable dimensions." Why, yes.

JOSEPH SEDDON.—Mr. Foote has not written, though he has lectured, on the Religion of Shakespeare. You may find something useful to your purpose in his article on "Hamlet's Last Words" in the *Secular Almanack* for 1897.

G. W. BLYTHE.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. PERCY WARD has changed his address, which is now 5 Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham. Branch secretaries and others interested will please note.

J. K. MAAGAARD.—Kindly send us your present address, as you will need to see a proof of the article you have just sent us.

H. BARRATT.—Miss Vance has handed us your application (with 10s.) for membership in the Secular Society, Limited.

J. FISH.—Subjects forwarded.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Our thanks to the Birmingham friends. Glad to hear that your Branch has just enrolled seven new members. Mr. Foote hopes to offer you another date very shortly.

P. SABINE.—See "Sugar Plums."

JOHN SANDERSON.—Thanks. It is useful.

OLD FREETHINKER.—We have pressed the matter sufficiently. Those who do not care to help must keep their money in their pockets. That is all. We shall continue to do our best.

SHAKESPEARE STUDENT.—The best edition of the so-called "Doubtful Plays" of Shakespeare is the one by Henry Tyrrell. Some of them are very decidedly *not* doubtful. Shakespeare wrote just as much of them as we did.

C. HEATON.—The publications you inquire after are not now procurable; at least not openly. The judges held that it was "obscene" to print samples in English from Catholic manuals of Confession.

JAMES LONDON.—We must agree to differ, at least at present. All the same, we quite appreciate the trouble you have taken to persuade us.

H. THORP.—M. Jules Bailly, 32 Store-street, Bedford-square, London, W., will be pleased to give you good lessons in French at a moderate charge. Glad to hear you so enjoyed Mr. Foote's lecture on Sunday evening. Subscriptions for the Circulation Fund should be sent direct to us, at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

H. C. LONG.—Never mind him; our party has won all along the line, and we can afford to smile at his antics.

W. G. ALLAN.—Possibly we overlooked it. The matter shall be seen to, and yourself advised.

F. TERRY hopes that hundreds, like himself, will send their mite to our Circulation Fund.

R. CHAPMAN.—Thanks. See acknowledgments. Kindly let us know when there is a prospect of obtaining a hall for lectures at South Shields.

TIN GEE-GEE.—Have completed address on envelope for you. We intend to introduce some new features in the *Freethinker* when the next volume begins in January.

WILL our American exchanges please note that our address is, and long has been, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.? Some of them still direct to an old address of ours, and the post office naturally kicks against constant re-addressing.

RECEIVED.—Cheltenham Free Press—Ethical World—Liberator—Book Reviews—Torch of Reason—Secular Thought—Isle of Man Times—People's Newspaper—Sydney Bulletin—Cork Constitution—Free Society—Newsagents' Chronicle—Shrewsbury Advertiser—Southern Echo—New Century.

W. GIBB.—We will deal with Father King next week.

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

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 is due.

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.

*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.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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. FOOTE'S lecture on "Emperor William at Jerusalem" drew a crowded audience to the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. There was much applause and more laughter. Mr. Thurlow occupied the chair. This evening (Oct. 30) Mr. Foote delivers his third—and, for the present, last—lecture from the Athenæum Hall platform. He will take for his subject, "What is the Matter with France? A Freethinker's View of Her Malady and its Only Cure." This is a vastly important subject, and no doubt the audience will fill the hall to overflowing.

The first General Members' Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, had to be postponed on account of the hot weather and other causes. It is now fixed to take place on Friday, November 18, at the Manchester Hotel, Aldersgate-street, London, E.C. Formal notices will be sent out to all members in due course. Meanwhile, they can make a note of the place and date. We hope every member in London, and even some in the provinces, will make a point of attending.

The *Secular Almanack* is nearing completion, and will be fully advertised in our next issue. Orders should be forwarded to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The writer of "Our Handbook" in last week's *Referee* alludes to Jesus Christ as "having only a narrow outlook in a remote corner of the Roman Empire," and as therefore "failing to promulgate a system of ethics capable of universal application." The writer says that "to call upon the Churches to revert to the strict principles of the New Testament would be to ask them to put up the shutters." This has been said times out of number in Freethought journals. We are glad to see it conveyed through the *Referee* to a larger circle of readers.

The *Lincoln Leader* prints a strong letter by "G. F." against the setting of a class of young girls to write an essay on the battle of Omdurman. The letter concludes as follows:—"So far our educational affairs have been chiefly managed by the clergy and their supporters; and they professedly base their moral teaching on the Bible. If this apotheosis of the hired fighter be a sample of their method, we may fairly assume that the evolution of the virago is the desired end. We shall hear next of the canonisation of Jael, and that her day is held as chief festival in the school calendar."

The Birmingham Branch sends us its annual report and balance-sheet, the latter being a healthy document showing a considerable sum in hand, chiefly due to a present from Miss Alice M. Baker, in memory of her father, the late Daniel Baker. According to the report, the Sunday lectures in the Bristol-street Board-school have carried the propaganda of Secularism more widely than hitherto. Note is also made of the large and gratifying sale of Freethought literature.

Mr. J. M. Robertson lectured to a large audience at Camberwell on Sunday evening. In the afternoon Mr. Stanley Jones addressed a large gathering on Peckham Rye. So far from being driven off the Rye by the bigots, the Camberwell Branch intends to prolong the season and continue the Rye meetings until the end of November, if the weather is at all favourable.

One result of the opposition to Secularism at Peckham Rye will probably be the formation of a strong Peckham

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Branch of the National Secular Society. A meeting for this purpose will be held at Winchester Hall, 33, Peckham-road, on Wednesday, November 2, at eight o'clock. Local Freethinkers who may be unable to attend this meeting, and yet willing to join, should communicate with Mr. P. Sabine, 38 Waveney-avenue, Peckham Rye. Mr. Foote will be happy to start the new Branch with a free indoor lecture.

## THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED.

*(Company Limited by Guarantee.)*

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION.

1.—The name of the Company is The Secular Society, Limited.

2.—The registered office of the Company will be situated in England.

3.—The objects for which the Company is formed are:—

(*a*) To promote, in such ways as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action.

(*b*) To promote the utmost freedom of inquiry and the publication of its discoveries.

(*c*) To promote the secularisation of the State, so that religious tests and observances may be banished from the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary.

(*d*) To promote the abolition of all support, patronage, or favor by the State of any particular form or forms of religion.

(*e*) To promote universal Secular Education, without any religious teaching, in public schools maintained in any way by municipal rates or imperial taxation.

(*f*) To promote an alteration in the laws concerning religion, so that all forms of opinion may have the same legal rights of propaganda and endowment.

(*g*) To promote the recognition by the State of marriage as a purely civil contract, leaving its religious sanctions to the judgment and determination of individual citizens.

(*h*) To promote the recognition of Sunday by the State as a purely civil institution for the benefit of the people, and the repeal of all Sabbatarian laws devised and operating in the interest of religious sects, religious observances, or religious ideas.

(*i*) To purchase, lease, rent, or build halls or other premises for the promotion of the above objects.

(*j*) To employ lecturers, writers, organisers, or other servants for the same end.

(*k*) To publish books, pamphlets, or periodicals.

(*l*) To assist, by votes of money or otherwise, other Societies or associated persons or individuals who are specially promoting any of the above objects

(*m*) To have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

(*n*) To co-operate or communicate with any kindred society in any part of the world.

(*o*) To do all such other lawful things as are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the above objects.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets are insufficient to cover liabilities.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

## SHILLING MONTH.

FOR THE "FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.

[*Where no figure accompanies the name the amount acknowledged is one shilling.*]

P. Cassidy, W. Cromach 2s., H. W. Jones 2s. 6d., R. Lawson 2s., L. C. Zeitter 2s., A. Hurcum 2s. 6d., Horace W. Parsons 10s., J. Robinson 2s., J. L. K. and Wife 2s., A Friend 2s., W. J. Thompson, A. Millar, W. Fleming 2s. 6d., H. Barratt 10s., J. Baker, W. 2s., J. T. Ives, R. M. Brownlow, J. Terry 2s, A. G. Lye, J. P. 2s., F. Terry, G. White, S. M. Peacock, B. Eglintine, J. Fothergill, Tin Gee Gee 2s. 6d., R. Richards 5s., A. E. Elderkin 2s.

## THE FOES OF FREEDOM.

"If any one say: Let us serve other gods, *Thou shalt surely kill him.*"—OLD TESTAMENT.

"If any one preach any other Gospel, *let him be accursed.*"—NEW TESTAMENT.

THE Christians oppose,
While feigning to teach,
What everyone knows
As "Freedom of Speech."

Their "Freedom of Speech"
Means: free to say "Yea!"
To all that they teach,
But not to say "Nay!"

When weak, they advise;
When strong, they compel
With jails, and with lies
Of heaven and of hell.

Of speaking, beware;
Unless they allow
The "when" and the "where,"
The "what" and the "how."

You're free to uphold
No more, and no less,
Than what you are told
By them to express.

They're free as the sea
To roar and to scum,
While *thinkers* are free
To think—*and be dumb.*

The noodle who "knows"
That God is his light
Will always oppose
The heretic's right.

Jehovah declared
That sceptics he'd slay;
His friends, if they dared,
Would do it to-day.

Whom God will destroy
The Christian detests,
And makes it his joy
To treat them as pests.

The sceptics are fair
To those they oppose;
But Christians *must ne'er*
Be fair to their foes.

Of non-Christian rites
The Christians make sport;
But woe to the wights
That dare to retort!

The right to *agree*
In slavery rose;
Men never are free
Till free to *oppose.*

Jehovah and son—
Who've fought Freedom most—
Say: "Think all as one,
Or, damn you! you'll roast!"

We *cannot*—not *won't*—
And, though it be true
We're damned if we *don't*,
We're damned if we *do!*

Who claims unfettered right to speak,
Nor grants to all the same,
Proclaims himself a knave and sneak—
*The Christian makes this claim.*

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## Obituary.

I REGRET to announce the death of Captain Charles G. Cross, who died somewhat suddenly on Friday, October 21, from peritonitis. Deceased, who was particularly well-known to the frequenters of Hyde Park, was buried at Finchley Cemetery on Monday last, a number of his Freethought friends being present. Mr. G. W. Foote attended out of compliment to the family, and Mr. Charles Watts read the Secular Burial Service.—E. M. VANCE.

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## ORTHODOX HYMNOLOGY.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, in his *Literature and Dogma*, writes in just reprobation of what he calls the "doggrel" so frequently sung in Christian churches. He says that God is displeased and dissevered by it—which is not at all unlikely if he is a God of any taste, or if he is impressed in any way at all by anything that can be said or sung about him. Mr. Arnold indicates the kind of "doggrel" he has in his mind by such examples as :—

Sing glory, glory, glory to the great God Triune.

Out of my stoney griefs Bethels I'll raise.

My Jesus to know *and feel his blood flow*,
'Tis life everlasting; 'tis Heaven below.

These specimens, it is true, are not indicative of the highest and purest spiritual feeling, or of much refinement, on the part of those who wrote or those who sing them. Yet, as we know, they are but mildly offensive to the cultured human taste in comparison with many examples that Mr. Arnold might easily have found. One's earliest recollections are associated with a number of charming compositions of the kind, full of sanguinary and cannibal-like sentiments. In later years Revivalists and Salvationists have added largely to the store.

As regards the earlier productions, who does not remember being hymnally told in his Sunday-school days of a remarkable "fountain filled with blood" drawn from somebody's veins; the juvenile attention being further arrested by the singular fact that people who plunged beneath that flood came out without any stains Another hymn calmly assured the wondering juvenile that this bath of blood would wash him "white as snow," which seemed difficult of comprehension when he went on a week-day and looked at the butcher's shop round the corner. The lambs exhibited there displayed no such extraordinary powers as the one sung of in the Sunday school, and the blood didn't look like washing him clean.

These poems of the shambles—these lyrics of "raw-head-and-bloody-bones" theology, sad though it be, seem as much in vogue now as ever they were, and naturally they constitute one of the many causes of repulsion to the Christian faith.

Looking over the hymns used at the late Church Congress—which hymns may be supposed to have been carefully selected—it does not appear that there has been any advance in the direction of refined and rational sentiment. One or two might be used at an Obeah incantation. The captive King of Benin—who, as we have learned, is now a Presbyterian—could sing them with infinite gusto and glee. If, in the unregenerate days before he "found Christ," his taste did not exactly tend towards the consumption of his own human sacrificial lambs, he would still be glad to know from Congress Hymn No. 5 that the Christian Church he has joined "partakes one Holy food." It is euphemistically put in this particular hymn. Fully and unreservedly explained in accordance with the naked and orthodox doctrine, the sentiment would naturally commend itself—apparently it has—to that new and distinguished convert. This, and the gloating allusion to the "blood" wherewith Christ bought the Church, should also ensure respectful consideration from any of the ex-King's followers that can be found.

Leaving this repulsive aspect of orthodox hymnology, we may note that the Congress hymns contain not a few touches of unconscious humor. For instance, at the very commencement of the collection—in the first verse of hymn one, there is a comical apostrophe which really looks as if the Congress proposed to treat Christ as an "illiterate." He is asked to bless the day, and

Lest it prove a time of loss
*Mark it, Savior, with Thy cross.*

A most absurd line, whatever the meaning was intended to be. It might be suggested by some that, after all, it would not be unscriptural to regard Christ as illiterate, seeing that, though he came with a Gospel, there is no suggestion that he ever wrote a line. Against this we have the record that on one occasion he did write something on the ground, presumably, perhaps prophetically, in sand.

The rude importunity of the first line of the last verse of this hymn must be to Freethinkers amazing, and to thoughtful Christians not a little displeasing :—

Hear us, Lord, *and that right soon*,
Hear and grant the choicest boon.

"And that right soon"!—which is as much as to imperatively say : "Hurry up, Lord, we can't wait"—as if the Governor of the Universe had nothing else to do but to listen to a comparative handful of mites collected on an almost imperceptible spot which they called Bradford, and where they seemed pressed for time.

An impertinent kind of condescension pervades the line in Hymn 18 : "Then let us adore, *and give him his right.*" How very kind and good of these Christians to thus recognise, voluntarily and without reserve, the claims of their Maker. With a noble magnanimity, which is beyond admiration, they propose to give him his right as they give the Devil his due. There is no grudging spirit about this hymn. It proposes to deal fairly with the Deity, and even a god cannot expect more.

In Hymn 13 there is a supplication : "Scatter sin and unbelief"—a mendacious conjunction, which Freethinkers should note.

However, not to waste more time on these inane and often absurd compositions, we may briefly add that the major part of the hymns are devoted to the praise and glory of God—the same string being harped upon with wearisome monotony—as if God wanted all this adulation, and longed for it, and would be unhappy or angry if he didn't get it.

Turning to orthodox hymnology generally, it does seem really wonderful that intelligent persons can be induced to stand up and sing such nonsense rhymes—mere unmeaning jingles when not conveying something which is absurd or painfully repulsive. The real explanation is that scarcely anybody *thinks* whilst he sings in church or chapel. If he does think, it is not about the words, which are of no consequence, but about his own vocal performances—good, bad, or indifferent; or about the lady with whom he thumbs the same hymn-book. With the feminine section, it is mostly a question of "Mary Jane's Top Note," or a variety of other matters in which the observation of surrounding millinery is not the least. There is, of course, real devotional feeling wasted by many misguided people on these inane outpourings. As to the extent to which that real devotional feeling exists, the clergy may be permitted to offer their own estimates. They complain bitterly enough about its absence.

FRANCIS NEALE.

## STEPHEN GIRARD.

STEPHEN GIRARD, the founder of Girard University, was a lover of children, and gave his wealth to his country. Very few men in history have united so many apparently contradictory qualities. He loved children passionately, and the sight of a crippled or miserable-looking urchin would bring tears to his eyes. His devotion to the United States never once faltered, and at every reverse during the war of 1812-15 he ground his teeth and, it is said, swore in his native French. At length he offered to dedicate his entire fortune to the war, lent the Government $5,000,000, and asked no interest till the war closed. A rich man who loves children, and is willing to give all his wealth to his country, must have a great deal of good in him.

His bravery was of the morally sublime order. When the yellow fever scourged Philadelphia, and had driven away most of the nurses, he and Peter Helm worked two months in the hospital at the most menial offices and shamed the faint-hearted into bravery. An affliction in early childhood destroyed his right eye and distorted that side of his face, so the boys nicknamed him by a French word that might be translated "wall eye." He lost his mother when he was quite young and his father was harsh. In short, he was a miserable, lonely child, and fled from home to be a cabin boy at the age of ten.

The romance of his life came to him in Philadelphia, where he opened his first store. He loved and was beloved again. She was singularly beautiful and vivacious; he taciturn, disfigured, and eleven years her senior. For a few years they were happy; then she suddenly lost her health, soon became violently insane, and lived in that condition thirty years in the State asylum. Their only child died in infancy, and the sad old man finished his journey alone. His magnificent charities have preserved his name for all time. He was a Deist in religion, and named his ships after infidel authors.

—*Secular Thought.*

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## SUPERSTITION IN GERMANY.

EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF FRAUD.

A TRIAL which has just taken place at the Bavarian country town of Kempten, the centre of an almost purely Roman Catholic population, reveals the existence of such extraordinary ignorance and superstition that the details are worth noticing. A married couple at Kaufbeuern, Alois and Rosine Wohlfahrt, lived in extreme poverty, shared by the illegitimate daughter of the wife, a girl of eighteen, named Agnes, who suffered from an incurable disease. The family had lived for years on alms obtained by touching letters written by the invalid. In 1893 an old schoolfellow of the girl, Cecilia Kottrich, began to visit her; and, moved to pity by the poverty of the sick girl, prevailed upon her own parents, who are well-to-do farmers, to give their assistance. She was thenceforth allowed to take Agnes her dinner every day, and a mark or two every week for little extras. After some time Agnes confided to her young friend Cecilia that the Virgin Mary often appeared to her, and that she was in correspondence with her, and also with Crescence, Cecilia's sister, who had died a year previously, and who had also been their schoolfellow. Agnes whispered the secret that Crescence was not in heaven, but in purgatory.

These mystic communications affected Cecilia's health, and she began to suffer from hysterical attacks. Agnes, no doubt inspired by her needy mother always on the look-out for crooked ways by which she could obtain money, proposed that, when the Virgin Mary next appeared to her, she would ask her to let her take Cecilia's sufferings upon herself. By the time Cecilia came again the Virgin had consented, but Cecilia's parents must make a sacrifice and pay two hundred marks. They did this willingly, and from that time forward during three years the "messages from Heaven" never ceased. The Virgin herself proposed that Crescence should be *delivered* from purgatory. Three hundred marks were all that was needed. Farmer Kottrich paid the sum. A little later the news came from heaven that Crescence had married an angel—she wished to have her dowry sent, and 1,000 marks for furnishing her new home. Then after a time came the news that Crescence, who was very happy, had given birth to a child. Would they send money for the wants of the baby? By this time Cecilia had no more attacks, and farmer Kottrich and his wife firmly believed it was "all right." Their youngest daughter, four year old Josepha, now also declared she could see the Virgin Mary on fine days when she was in the woods by herself. Agnes, or her mother for her, made more preposterous demands every day—the Kottrichs had to borrow loans and pay high interest for them. One day the Virgin Mary herself asked for the loan of 2,500 marks, promising to pay good interest, to decorate the heavenly rooms, erect new altars, etc.

At the trial the Kottriches produced fifty-two letters which Agnes had transmitted from heaven, and these were not all, some being lost. The letters which came from the Virgin Mary direct were written in Latin letters, those from Sister Crescence in German letters; every sheet of letter paper had the picture of a saint upon it. Those from the Virgin Mary had a gilt edge. Imagine the sensation in court when the Public Prosecutor read a receipt "from the Mother of Christ" for 150 marks; a request for a higher amount signed: "In heavenly glory. Joseph and Mary"; a letter expressing thanks for money received and for excellent potatoes; another announcing the receipt of 2,500 marks, signed "Daughter, son-in-law, and little baby," with the remark added, that when the money arrived "all the angels in heaven blew their trumpets." One letter expressed thanks for very good cheesecakes, and yet another for money and bed-linen. In one of the latest letters the Virgin Mary said that she would soon take away the old grandmother (who still had property of her own). When Agnes asked for 300 marks for those in heaven, and Cecilia doubted whether her parents had any more money to give, Agnes's mother, Rosine Wohlfahrt, who is the chief accused in this trial, said: "It is not so difficult to get money. They need only give the old grandmother wine, and put something in it." After this Farmer Kottrich's wife offered five pounds of wax candles as a sacrifice in church for the speedy death of the grandmother. The sums of 1,000, 1,600, and 2,500 marks were given into the hands of Agnes by the farmer and his wife, and numberless smaller sums by Cecilia and her brothers or little sister. Perhaps the most remarkable fact of all is that "Our Lady" and "Sister Crescence" sent their dear ones some things from Heaven, from "the heavenly hall"—a sofa, a large milk loaf, pieces of clothing, a silver watch, and a gold ring; but this last had to be returned after a short time. Frau Kottrich herself baked a fine tart for the Virgin Mary. When Agnes died in 1896 relations with the Kottriches ceased, and when the affair was talked about throughout the district the farmer, who sighed under the load of the debts he had incurred, declared he would have the sick girl's mother and step-father punished for having cheated him so long. The mother denied all knowledge of the affair, but she was found guilty, and was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Her husband, who is too stupid to have helped in the deceit, was sentenced to two months' imprisonment for receiving stolen goods.

—*Daily News.*

## BIBLE-READING IN SCHOOLS.

THE Bible-Reading in Schools Committee wish to introduce the Scripture Lesson-Book as used in the national education of Ireland. Just so. But what effect has it on those who use it? Let us see:—

NEW ZEALAND STATISTICS, PAGES 280–282, 1896.

| Percentage in Colony of | | Percentage of Criminals |
|---|---|---|
| Church of England... | 40.27 | 41.74 |
| Catholic ... ... | 14.07 | 32.95 |
| Presbyterian ... | 23.78 | 17.15 |
| Wesleyan ... ... | 10.44 | 3.00 |
| Others... ... ... | 11.44 | 5.16 |
| | 100·0 | 100·0 |

Analyse for yourselves; if I do, it will not be printed.

| Percentage of people born in | | Produce per cent. of crime |
|---|---|---|
| England and Wales... | 16.89 | 28 05 |
| Ireland ... ... ... | 6.55 | 20.61 |
| Scotland... ... ... | 7.18 | 12.76 |
| New Zealand ... ... | 62.85 | 24.43 |
| Australia ... ... | 3.10 | 4.70 |
| British Possessions... | 0 53 | 1.44 |
| China ... ... ... | 0.53 | 0.52 |
| Foreign ... ... ... | 2.37 | 7.49 |
| | 100·0 | 100·0 |

The users of that book do not come out very well.
It affects the New Zealand born to some extent.
Work out the percentages according to numbers.
I have, but cannot print them.

INDIVIDUALS CONVICTED.

| Born in | | Belonging to | |
|---|---|---|---|
| England, Wales ... | 543 | Church of England... | 808 |
| Ireland ... ... | 399 | Catholic ... ... | 638 |
| Scotland ... ... | 247 | Presbyterian... ... | 330 |
| New Zealand ... | 473 | Wesleyan ... ... | 55 |
| Australia ... ... | 91 | Others ... ... | 100 |
| China ... ... ... | 10 | Jews ... ... ... | 5 |
| British Possessions ... | 28 | | |
| Others... ... ... | 145 | | |
| | 1,936 | | 1,936 |

The Chinese percentage is very low. They do not use that book.

TOTAL TIMES CONVICTED.

| Born in | | Belonging to | |
|---|---|---|---|
| England, Wales ... | 914 | Church of England | 1,501 |
| Ireland ... ... | 714 | Catholic ... ... | 1,061 |
| Scotland ... ... | 356 | Presbyterian ... | 506 |
| European descent ... | 801 | Wesleyan ... ... | 108 |
| Maoris... ... ... | 160 | Protestant ... ... | 141 |
| Sundry ... ... | 222 | Jews ... ... ... | 5 |
| Foreign ... ... | 211 | Pagans ... ... | 11 |
| China ... ... ... | 14 | Sundry ... ... | 17 |
| | | No Religion ... ... | 42 |
| | 3,392 | | 3,392 |

According to above results, that Irish Scripture Lesson-Book will not suit our schools. Get the Chinese Book.

COLONIAL BORN.

According to above, Catholics produce 32·95 per cent. of the criminals, three times as many as average of other superstitions. Considering their numbers in colony, if they were as moral as average of the rest, their number should have been 10·92. If as moral as Chinese, 6·42. *Therefore criminals seem produced by superstitions, not secular education.* Ireland produces 20·61 per cent. of the criminals. If the Irish were as moral as the others, considering their numbers, they would be 5·62 per cent. About one-fourth, say 6 12, of New Zealand born criminals must be added, according to above tables, as of Irish extraction, making 26 73 per cent. *Not a good result from the land that uses that book in the schools.*

—*New Zealand Times.*

The largest Bible in the world is the Buddhist Tripikata, or "three baskets," which comprises 325 volumes and weighs 1,625 pounds.

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## BOOK CHAT.

*The Agnostic Annual* for 1899 (London: Watts & Co.) is certainly a good sixpennyworth. Mr. F. J. Gould opens with an impassioned article on "Agnostics Yet Englishmen," in which he sings the praises of Dissent and claims that Agnostics are now the true Dissenters. Mr. G. J. Holyoake follows with a personal article on the late Mr. Gladstone, in whom, strange to say, he sees much resemblance to Voltaire. To us they are as like as Monmouth is to Macedon. Mr. Joseph McCabe writes well on "The Revival of Ritualism," and Mr. Charles Watts on "The Bible: Past, Present, and Future," which is a larger order than it is possible to execute in one article. Major Forlong contributes an interesting paper on "The Heaven Idea." Mr. Herbert Flowerdew asks, "What is the Harm of Christianity?" He finds a great deal of harm in it, especially in its hindrance to the growth of a sound and rational morality. Mr. C. T. Gorham writes on "Christian Infidelity," and Mr. Geoffrey Mortimer on "The Peril of Apathy," seeking to show that liberty of thought and speech is still in peril. Not the least suggestive article is the one by Mr. Furneaux Jordan on "The Evolution of the Direct Man." Other contributions by Mr. Thomas Whittaker, Mr. Amos Waters, and Mr. C. K. Tuckerman make up a capital number of this publication.

* * *

Most of these Agnostic writers are in a militant mood. Does this mean that the absurd superciliousness which used to characterise Agnosticism is disappearing under the pressure of experience?

* * *

Mr. Holyoake quotes from a book by "an unknown author," published by the Tonsons in 1756—from which Mr. Dobell lately printed some extracts. Perhaps our veteran friend will not mind our telling him that the unknown author was F. Greville. Mr. Holyoake likens him to Montaigne, but his resemblance is rather to the later French moralists, such as La Bruyère and La Rochefoucauld, whom he almost equals on their own ground. There are even suggestions in him of Vauvenargues.

* * *

Mr. John Morley is to write the Life of Mr. Gladstone. Even the religious part, it is said, will be written by the distinguished Positivist. We do not envy Mr. Morley that section of his task. He must have a pretty decided opinion, we should think, of the intellectual value of Mr. Gladstone's contributions to religious controversy.

* * *

The *Open Court* for October contains a good portrait of Pascal, and devotes much space to his religious philosophy and scientific achievements. Rev. George F. Candlin, a Christian missionary in Northern China, contributes a very interesting paper on Chinese Fiction. There is also a portrait and an appreciation of the late Professor John Caird, the latter written by Professor Wenley, of Michigan University.

* * *

Mr. Charles T. Gorham publishes, through Watts & Co., (1s.), a little volume on *Ethics of the Great Religions*. "The moral element," he says, "is that which gives religion its immense hold on the human heart." We are not quite so sure of this. However, the author is entitled to his opinion; and, acting upon it, he proceeds to give a careful, though necessarily brief, statement of the special ethics of Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taouism, and Mohammedanism. Readers who have not time to study the subject in detail for themselves will derive much profit from this book, which is written throughout in a candid, impartial spirit, and with adequate information.

* * *

Mrs. Ritchie continues to print interesting letters from Thackeray in the introduction to the new issue of his writings. One letter to his daughter, written in 1852, before he sailed for America, contains the following passage: "When I was of your age, I was accustomed to hear and read a great deal of the Evangelical (so-called) doctrine, and got an extreme distaste for that sort of composition—for Newton, for Scott, for the preachers I heard, and the prayer-meetings I attended. I have not looked into half-a-dozen books of the French modern reformed churchmen, but those I have seen are odious to me. D'Aubigné, I believe, is the best man of the modern French reformers; and a worse guide to historical truth (for one who has a reputation) I don't know. If M. Cossaint argues that because our Lord quoted the Hebrew Scriptures therefore the Scriptures are of direct Divine composition, you may make yourself quite easy: and the works of a reasoner who would maintain an argument so monstrous need not, I should think, occupy a great portion of your time. Our Lord not only quoted the Hebrew writings (drawing illustrations from everything familiar to the people among whom He taught, from their books, poetic and historic, from the landscape round about, from the flowers, the children, and the beautiful works of God), but he contradicted the old Scriptures flatly; told the people that He brought them a new commandment—and that new commandment was not a complement, but a contradiction of the old—a repeal of a bad, unjust law in their statute books, which He would suffer to remain there no more."

## ADVERTISING IN CHURCH.

Joe and Henry Bruton, the snuff men, were two of the best story tellers that ever lived, and many of their stories are yet told in Nashville and elsewhere, with due credit to their originators. One of the best I ever heard of in the nature of a personal experience of either was the narrative of the part Joe Bruton took in an experience once. In a town which he "made" he went to church, and the meeting was for the relation of personal experiences. Several spoke concerning their personal faults and the sorrow they felt, and finally someone called on "Brother Bruton" to give his "experience." Bruton rose, and began with a dissertation on the various forms taken by sin with different people. Some, he said, were affected with the sin of betting on horses, which was a great evil, and one which they should not indulge. Then there were others whose besetting sin was whisky, a most grievous sin. So he went on until he came to tobacco. He said that the besetting sin of using tobacco took many forms, of which the commonest and worst was chewing. This was not only unclean, but unhealthy, and should never be indulged in. Then there were some who smoked—another very bad habit. "In fact," he said, "if you are going to use tobacco at all, you should use it in the form of snuff, and when you do use snuff you should never use any but the —— snuff" (naming the brand which he travelled for). And with this conclusion he took out a handful of circulars concerning the snuff and threw them up in the air, letting them fall all over the church.

—*Nashville (Tenn.) Banner.*

## Herbert Spencer on Life.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, from his peaceful retirement at Brighton, has emerged into the arena of lofty speculation which was started by Professor Japp in his presidential address at the British Association on the nature of "Vitalism." We can hardly go into the abstruse problems of stereo-chemistry raised by this discussion, or argue the question between Pasteur and Professor Japp, whether the fact that living nature can produce single, asymmetric, optically active compounds, which are always double, symmetric, and optically inactive when produced in laboratories, has any bearing on the origin of life. Mr. Spencer says that the interpretations of life based on this question are wrong in either way. In the new enlarged edition of *Principles of Biology* he has added a chapter on "The Dynamical Element in Life," in which he contends that the theory of a "vital principle" fails, and that the theory of a "physico-chemical" origin also fails, the corollary being that in its ultimate nature life is incomprehensible. That Mr. Spencer should recognise a fixed limit to knowledge will strike many people as curious.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

## Lead, Kindly Light.

There were some curious coincidences at various places of worship on Sunday night in connection with the darkness which came over the district owing to the sudden failure of the gas. As already mentioned in the *Echo*, at St. Peter's Church the anthem was "Send out Thy light"; but the choir could not see the music or words, so they did not sing it. At St. Katherine's at Southborne, just before the extinction of the light, the congregation were singing, "Darkness now is drawing nigh." At the Primitive Methodist Church in Commercial-road the people had just sung the hymn, commencing "I'd rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in the light," when out went the gas, and darkness prevailed until a neighbor sent in a packet of candles. At Pokesdown Methodist Chapel the preacher was discoursing on "Now we see as through a glass darkly." He finished his sermon by candle-light. As the light died away in the Springbourne Wesleyan Chapel the preacher, touching on the prophecies of Isaiah, halted at the words "we want——," when a voice replied, "We want light." This considerably tickled the risibility of those present, and the laughter was brought up with a request by the preacher that brethren would remember they were in God's house.—*Southern Echo* (Bournemouth).

A paper in Alabama states that a murderer of that State addressed the following note to the Governor: "I wish you would give me a respite for thirty days. I am short in religion. I intended to get it last week, but was too busy."

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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, "What is the Matter with France?"

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Pagan Sources of Christian Belief."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, G. H. Perris, "Despotism by Newspaper."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Stanton Coit, "Bismarck."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "Peter the Great."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (20 Edgware-road): November 3, at 8.15, A. Milne, "Theosophy." To be followed by discussion.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "A Stroll through the British Museum"; Peckham Rye: 8.15, R. P. Edwards, "Secularism and Christianity."

HAMMERSMITH (near Lyric Theatre): 7.15, Mr. Hunter.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Davis.

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Mile End Waste): 11.30, R. P. Edwards; 7, R. P. Edwards.

LIMEHOUSE (The Triangle, Salmon-lane): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): E. J. Sale—11, "The Futility of Prayer"; 7, "The Children of Christian England."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, Vocal and Instrumental Concert.

DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, C. Turner (a Christian), "Is there a God?"

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, Impromptu Speeches; 6.30, Social meeting.

GATESHEAD (Town Hall): Harry Snell—3, "What Freethought Teaches"; 7, "Emile Zola and the Dignity of Doubt."

HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall): 7, G. Smith, "The Acceptation of the Principle of Evolution by the Catholic Church."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): C. Cohen—11, "The Political Ethics of Herbert Spencer"; 6.30, "The Jewish Testimony to Christ."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): J. M. Robertson—11, "Patriotism and the Militarist Ideal"; 8, "The Ethics of an Intellectual Life"; 7, "The Evolution of the God Idea."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, C. Pegg, "A Trip to Paris." Lantern views.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant evening in Musical and other recitals, etc.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—October 30, Leicester; November 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London; 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester. November 30 and December 1, Failsworth. December 4, Manchester.

H. PERCY WARD, 5, Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—November 27, Liverpool. December 4, Leicester. 18, Birmingham.

## POSITIVISM.

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THE BEDBOROUGH PROSECUTION.

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*An Unconventional Journal.* Edited by HENRY SEYMOUR.

CONTENTS FOR NOVEMBER:—"Our Conventional Virtue," by the Editor; "In Defence of Free Discussion," by William Platt; "Free Love and Sex Relations," by G. D. L.; "Chinese Opium Dens in London," by James Platt; "An Immigration Bureau Outrage," by E. C. Walker; "The Maybrick Case," by Victor Martell; "At Low St. Fleece Court," by the Court Jester; "The Question of Children," by A. Martin; "Love and Hypnotism," by Medicus; "The Recrudescence of the Anarchist," by Verax; "A Love Tale of Old Sardinia," by Henry Seymour. Price 8d., post free 4d.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## EMPEROR WILLIAM AT JERUSALEM.

II.—CONCLUSION.

EMPEROR WILLIAM had a "high old time" at Constantinople, and he and the Sultan made a good impression upon each other. Semi-official Turkish journals sang the Kaiser's praises lustily. Barring their own Padishah, he was certainly the greatest man in the world—strong, brave, and manly, highly accomplished and universally informed, a mighty ruler of men by genius and cultivation; indeed, a perfect miracle of statesmanship. Semi-official German papers have said much the same of the Sultan, in whom they detect surprising resemblances to the Kaiser—a compliment which we hope the latter appreciates at its full value.

Leaving the Sultan's capital with the Empress, who was loaded with costly presents—paid for, God knows how!—Emperor William set sail in his gigantic yacht for the Holy Land. This part of the world has had more lies told about it than any other, and the Kaiser is bound to be somewhat disillusioned after seeing it for himself. It is, as Gibbon sneered, of about the size and fertility of Wales; yet it once supported at least three million Jews, and seven other nations mightier than they—that is to say, between twenty-four and thirty millions of people, at the very lowest estimate. Its inhabitants, too, were wonderful warriors. They thought nothing of killing a hundred thousand of the enemy before breakfast. In one battle they killed as many as six hundred thousand—more than twice as many as the whole military force of Great Britain in every part of her empire. When a census was taken, if we may judge by the story of Christ's birth in Luke, all the Jews took to tramping, and the roads of the Holy Land swarmed with men, women, and children, all making tracks for their native towns and villages. This was the very perfection of clumsiness, but the Jews were naturally awkward at that particular business. They never quite got over their national fright on the occasion of the first census in their history, when Jehovah slew seventy thousand of them to commemorate the event. Such a divine visitation was enough to addle their wits in this direction. The shrewdest of them turned imbeciles when they heard the fatal word "census."

Railways and other modern innovations have considerably revolutionised the Holy Land. It would startle Jesus Christ and the twelve apostles—even including Judas, who was fairly fly—if they were to come to life again and hear the train guards shouting "Through for Jerusalem" or "Change here for Jericho." But we understand that the country still retains its old character for the opposite of cleanliness. Jerusalem itself is no exception to the general rule. Mark Twain searched in vain for the pool of Bethesda, and finally concluded that it was all over the Holy City, for the mud was two feet deep everywhere. And who does not remember the story of the man who declined to believe the story of Noah's menagerie, which contained eight antediluvians—to say nothing of six dogs, cats, and monkeys—and only two fleas? Now without wishing to insult the Jews, of whom there are now a good many in Palestine, we are bound to say that they enjoy the reputation of being rather hospitable to these parasites. Was it not Thackeray who, describing the scene on board a ship in a storm in the Levant, the said ship's deck being the sleeping place of several poor rabbis—was it not Thackeray, we say, who wrote—

> Then all the fleas in Jewry
> Jumped up and bit like fury?

And from all we have been able to ascertain, the holier the city the more numerous and aggressive the fleas. Palestine swarms with them; it is their classic country. Kinglake felt this, and gave the world warning in his delightful *Eothen*:—

> "Never think of attempting to sleep in a 'holy city.' Old Jews from all parts of the world go to lay their bones upon the sacred soil, and as these people never return to their homes, it follows that any domestic vermin which they may bring with them are likely to become permanently resident, so that the population is continually increasing. No recent census had been taken when I was at Tiberias, but I know that the congregation of fleas which attended at my church alone must have been something enormous. It was a carnal, self-seeking congregation, wholly inattentive to the service which was going on, and devoted to the one object of having my blood. The fleas of all nations were there. The smug, steady, importunate flea from Holywell-street—the pert, jumping 'puce' from hungry France—the wary, watchful 'pulce' with his poisoned stiletto—the vengeful 'pulga' of Castile with his ugly knife—the German 'floh' with his knife and fork—insatiate—not rising from the table—whole swarms from all the Russias, and Asiatic hordes unnumbered—all these were there, and all rejoiced in one great international feast."

Well, if nothing else can drive Emperor William home again from the Holy Land, the fleas will do it.

The Kaiser has visited Nazareth, the home of Jesus Christ's childhood; a place, however, absolutely unknown to the Old Testament, to Josephus, or to any other ancient writer; the name of it being probably manufactured by fictionists who thought it was the place where the Nazarites lived—although the Nazarites were only teetotallers with a craze for shaving their heads. Bethlehem, where Jesus Christ was born, has also been visited; but the Kaiser was unable to catch a glimpse of the Star of Bethlehem—which really ought to have been lighted up for this great occasion—or of the chimney over which it anchored. William has also been to Jericho, and perhaps a good many Germans would not have worn mourning if he had stayed there. He has seen Jerusalem, about which the Jews bragged so in their sacred scriptures. There was no city like it—which was probably true. It was really what the Americans call a one-horse town, containing fifty or sixty thousand inhabitants at the outside; and its boasted temple must have been of very moderate dimensions and no very grand architecture. Unfortunately its greatest curiosity is no longer visible. We refer to the famous Jerusalem Ghost. All that William could do was to go to bed and dream, and see Jesus in a vision, as Paul did. The flight of the Jerusalem Ghost had occurred; it had left earth for heaven, and occupied a side seat close to the throne; but Paul was not to be done, he was not going to be inferior to any other captain of the first Salvation Army, so he had his vision, which nobody could dispute, and he went about saying, "I also have seen Jesus"—which William may do likewise if he only rises to the occasion.

Many of the places of interest in and about Jerusalem are in duplicates; that is to say, there are two of each, and both authentic. There are two holy sepulchres where Christ was buried, and no doubt he slept in both if he



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slept in either. The famous Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built round one of these spots, is used by the Greek and Latin Christians; one lot on one side, the other lot on the other—and a row of Turkish soldiers between them to keep the peace! That spectacle alone ought to set Emperor William thinking, unless he is in too much of a hurry for such a useful exercise. Christianity is the most quarrelsome religion on earth, and Christendom is always full of war or rumors of war. Christ came to bring peace, but he must have forgot it and left it behind. Perhaps he ascended to fetch it, but he never returned. He was to have come again shortly, but he has not arrived yet; and peace is nearly as far off as ever, in spite of the Czar's manifesto. Yes, if Emperor William has any head worth speaking of, his visit to the Holy Land may do him good. It may set him thinking over many things, and make him less a Christian and more a man.

G. W FOOTE.

## CHRISTIANITY AND DEATH.

(*Concluded from page 691.*)

As we pointed out in our article last week, the Christian theory of death is based upon the supposition, as recorded in the Bible, that man fell from his original state through committing an act of sin in the Garden of Eden. In refutation of this assumption we showed that, even if the narrative in Genesis were true, no sin had taken place, and we mentioned the fact that death was in the world for ages previous to the time of Adam's alleged fall. This story of the "Fall" rests upon the mistake that the human race has morally and physically degenerated. History proclaims what our experience corroborates—namely, that the career of man has been one of progression, not of retrogression; an ascent to a higher ethical standard, not a descent to a ower.

Dr. David Page writes: "Whatever his origin, man's first condition, as well as that of his immediate descendants, must have been of a lonely and primitive nature, with everything to acquire and no accumulated experience to assist. Even the source from which those who hold a contrary opinion profess to derive their beliefs refers in the plainest language to men covering themselves with leaves and skins, subsisting on fruits and flocks, sheltering themselves in caves and tents, prone to disobedience, guilty of fratricide, and in no way differing in condition, physically or mentally, from the rudest races of the present day. If we admit progression, we must of necessity consent to the lower state from which the progress has been effected" (*Man: Whence and How*, p. 82). Sir John Lubbock, in his famous speech at Dundee at the annual meeting of the British Association, arrived at the following conclusions after an elaborate review of the whole argument:—1. That existing savages are not the descendants of civilised ancestors. 2. That the primitive condition of man was one of utter barbarism; and 3. That from this condition several races have independently raised themselves. "These views," he went on to say, "follow, I think, from strictly scientific considerations. We shall not, however, be the less inclined to adopt them on account of the cheering prospects which they hold out for the future. If the past history of man has been one of deterioration, we have but a groundless hope of future improvement; but, on the other hand, if the past has been one of progress, we may fairly hope that the future will be so too; that the blessings of civilisation will not only be extended to other countries and other nations, but that even in our own land they will be rendered more general and more equable, so that we shall not see before us always, as now, multitudes of our own fellow-countrymen living the life of savages in our very midst, neither possessing the rough advantages and real, though coarse, pleasures of savage life, nor yet availing themselves of the far higher and more noble opportunities which lie within the reach of civilised man."

It is an encouraging sign of the times that in the discussion recently carried on in the columns of the *Church Gazette* upon the question, "Is the 'Fall' a historical fact?" most of the Christian contributors regarded the Bible story as allegorical, and not as a literal record of a fact. The main conclusions arrived at by the principal debaters were: That the remains of prehistoric man are universal, and *prove* his vast antiquity even back into pre-glacial times; that the inductive evidence *proves* his descent from the quadrupedal mammalia; that embryology *proves* him to be descended from fishes, at least; that the curse on the serpent is an imaginary cause to account for its creeping habit, but serpents of like structure existed in Eocene times ages before man's appearance on earth, and serpents do not lick the dust; that, according to the Bible account, God did not prophesy aright, and the serpent spoke the truth, because Adam and Eve did *not* surely die on the day on which they ate the forbidden fruit, and their eyes *were* opened to see the difference between good and evil; that if the Fall were a historic event where is the historic proof?—where is even the plausible testimony concerning it?; that the accounts furnished in Genesis are acknowledged to be vague versions of two traditions borrowed by the Hebrews from the mythic allegories of an earlier race or races—probably the Chaldaic; and that the trend of human development has been upward from animalism to intellectuality, not downward from perfection to brutishness and blank ignorance. A host of high-class authorities may be quoted to prove that the notion of the fall of man from his primitive condition obtained long prior to what is termed the Mosaic period.

The views expressed in the discussion referred to are similar to those held by Jewish writers and some of the Christian Fathers. Philo, who is said to have been contemporary with Jesus, accepted the story of the Fall in an allegorical sense. St. Augustine did the same, and Origen wrote: "What man is found such an idiot as to suppose that God planted trees in Paradise like an husbandman? I believe that every man must hold these things for images under which a hidden sense is concealed." We note that these writers did not state the nature of the "hidden sense" which they alleged was concealed. Most of the leading representatives of the "Higher Criticism" to-day regard the Bible story of the Fall as an allegorical narrative. Dean Farrar, in his work, *The Bible: Its Meaning and Supremacy*, writes: "Christians are not called upon to believe that there was an actual garden, an actual talking serpent, actual trees of which one bestowed the knowledge of good and evil, and the other an immortality of life. Such an interpretation was rejected two thousand years ago by Philo, and it has been rejected by many Christian interpreters since—and even by English bishops like Warburton and Horsley. The Bible is a book of Eastern origin, and can only be understood by the methods of Eastern literature. Now, there is no other Eastern book in the world which we should have dreamed of understanding literally if it introduced speaking serpents and magic trees. Even the Rabbis, stupidly literal as were their frequent methods, were perfectly aware that the story of the Fall was a philosopheme—a vivid pictorial representation of the origin and growth of sin in the human heart" (p. 226). Professor Jowett termed the entire story "a Hebrew poem."

Now, without disputing that this is the more rational view to take, the question arises, How does this allegorical theory affect the very foundations of Christianity? Dr. Ingleby, in his book *On Law and Religion*, says: "The Christian religion, without the Fall of Man, has no *locus standi*. It requires, as its very foundation, that man should have been created in the image of God, a perfect and even divine being, and that he should, of his own free will, have thrown off his allegiance to his Creator by some act of disobedience." This, we submit, is the only logical position to take from a Christian standpoint. For, if there were no literal fall, what becomes of the doctrines of "original sin" and the Atonement? As the Rev. Dr. Giles fairly puts it: "All that gives to Christianity the character of a divine revelation becomes destitute of meaning, until they are explained by the antecedents of the Jewish scriptures, concerning the temptations of Eve, the fall of Adam, and his rejection from Paradise." If the alleged cause for redemption be given up, the effect, salvation through Christ, disappears at once. The truth is, both theories—that of the Fall and the Atonement—as propounded by Christianity, are but figments copied from ancient myths, neither of them having any solid foundation in fact. They originated through man's ignorance of his own nature and his lack of faith in his power of self-regeneration. The priests seized upon this human weakness, and upon it they have based the Christian notions of sin and salvation, which comprise the most humiliating

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forms of superstition that were ever invented by man's perverted imagination.

That man has fallen we admit; but not as recorded in Genesis. His fall has been in listening to the jargon of priests, and giving himself up to their pernicious influence. The salvation needed is the redemption of the human race from the snares and errors of theology, and the emancipation of the human mind from the machinations of the exponents of a faith which is destitute alike of truth, dignity, and the force of practical moral elevation.

CHARLES WATTS.

## MR. BUTTON'S JUSTIFIABLE PRIDE.

BOTH in his *Descent of Man* and in his *Journal of Researches* Darwin makes reference to his savage acquaintances in the island of Tierra del Fuego. The Fuegians are reputed to be a very degraded race; but this is rather the result of unhappy environment than of natural incapacity. Darwin was struck with the essential resemblance between these untutored natives and the crew of the *Beagle*. In mental and moral habits all men tend to unity. Darwin seems to have thought with Matthew Arnold that "the same heart beats in every human breast." He and Matthew Arnold were much more kind and catholic than God. God had a chosen people. A generous-minded man will not pick and choose. He will regard all men as one family, differing in civilization and in knowledge, but all entitled to respect and justice.

However, to come back to the Fuegians. One of the islanders had learned the art of wearing clothes and gloves, and of talking English. Now and then he chatted with Darwin on the subject of religion, and once, says the great naturalist, "Jemmy Button, with justifiable pride, stoutly maintained that there was no devil in his land." Now it is usual in text-books of geography to classify facts under the heads of Physical, Political, Commercial, Social, and Religious. Students of Comparative Geography should take particular note of the curious circumstance that in the department of Religion the Fuegians have made more progress than the English. While the United Kingdom still maintains a belief in the devil, Mr. Button (or his grandson) is able to assert, with justifiable pride, that there is no devil in his land. I cannot explain the absence of the devil from Tierra del Fuego. He may have been constitutionally abolished, just as monarchy was formally extinguished by the Puritan Commonwealth. Or he may have found more congenial lodging and occupation in Christendom. There is ground for suspicion that the Archbishops of Canterbury are in some considerable measure responsible for the prolonged residence of the devil in this country. If the devil were to be seized and sent to the island of St. Helena, it would be difficult to raise funds for the Church and its missions, for he is reputed to be the only obstacle between the Gospel and its universal triumph. One need not triumph too precipitately. Hence the Devil must be retained at present, if only as the fifth wheel in the ecclesiastical coach.

It is a disputable point whether people in this country really believe in the devil any more than Mr. Button did. However necessary he may be to the Church, he is seldom mentioned in the better class of pulpits. So far as I have observed, very few allusions to him ever occur in the columns of the respectable religious journals. The leader writers in the *Times* often have occasion to complain of the misconduct of foreign powers in China, or the valley of the Nile; but they are not in the habit of attributing the immorality of diplomatists to the Devil. Nor is it evident, from the debates in the Houses of Parliament, that the Devil is reckoned as a very important factor by politicians and statesmen. In very early ages the Devil at least received the oblique homage of fear. Until fairly recent times peasants in certain parts of Europe would bow at the mention of the Devil's name. Nowadays, however, he is either studiously ignored or treated with levity. Some years ago I heard Mr. Charles Russell (now the Lord Chief Justice) speak of the Devil in the course of a political address. He paused in a deferential manner, and then observed: "But I apologise to the ladies for mentioning that Personage"—at which there was a Homeric burst of laughter.

Constantly I meet people who say: "Well, of course, the educated classes do not believe in a devil, but he is useful to keep the masses in order; and many an ignorant man is held back from crime by fear of the Devil and Hell." This assertion appears striking, but it hardly bears analysis. Is it really the masses who support the doctrine of the Devil? Does the average working man or his wife care about the Devil, any more than Mr. Jemmy Button? Suppose the House of Lords were to pass a resolution declaring their disbelief in the Devil, would the "lower classes" feel a sudden sense of relief and rush over the face of the land in a flood of burglary, assault, and murder?

I am quite aware that the feelings of ignorant persons may be powerfully affected by a preacher's description of the agonies of hell; and this alarm may be supposed to act as a deterrent from crime. So it does in some cases. But the real deterrent is the indignation of the community pronounced on wrong-doing through the lips of the preacher. Suppose the preacher is listless and cool; he may state the consequences of sin, and sum up a catalogue of the pains of hell; but it will leave no impression. Yet if he raises himself to wrath against wickedness he displays a fervour and a warmth which move the hearts of his listeners to fear. It is the man and not the doctrine which supplies the real motive.

It may be said: "Very well; let us grant that the Devil is a fiction, and that the preacher is the true motive power; even then the Devil-doctrine has its social uses." In my opinion, the doctrine has in past ages had such a use; it gave a strong symbolic form to society's hatred of transgression. But, except for the convenience of archbishops, there is now no more use for the Devil. We do not need the Devil's sulphur for the purposes of moral disinfection. Nothing is gained by the employment of such old-fashioned figures of speech as "Resist the Devil."

The Devil, even though but a sawdust figure, stands in our way. He encourages laziness. When drunkenness and prostitution and poverty meet their eyes, orthodox people indolently ascribe all these evils to the Devil. It is not that they really imagine him to be the agent in these social diseases. But it saves thought. Just as people used to explain life by the existence of a "vital principle," so people explain suffering and crime by the utterly meaningless phrase of an "evil principle," or the Devil; and then they make no further inquiry. But it is time that we should all candidly say we cannot trace the world's troubles to the Devil, and therefore we must examine social conditions more closely and more keenly in order to lay bare the valid causes of our ills. Perhaps we shall learn that the only Devil is ignorance. The Devil is not in the plague, but in the people's ignorance of hygiene. The Devil is not in the rocks, but in the captain's ignorance of his course. The Devil is not in the theft, but in the thief's ignorance of the pleasures of earning an independent and honest livelihood. The Devil is not in the poverty, but in the people's want of intelligence and lack of combining power. The Devil is not in the despot, but in the unwisdom of the proletariat. There is no dragon but mental darkness, and the St. George who slays it is freedom of thought

F. J. GOULD.

## "THOU HYPOCRITE!"

**"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."—MATTHEW VII. 4.**

SOME weeks ago, in an article on "Religion and Progress," I pointed out that one result of religious beliefs was to produce a kind of lop-sided mental development, in virtue of which a believer would draw up a severe and justifiable indictment against a rival religion, without in the least perceiving its perfect applicability to his own. In the course of my reading of religious papers—a weekly penance which I inflict upon myself with the fortitude of a secular St. Dominic—I have recently come across several capital illustrations of this principle, some of which are certainly too good to be lost. What, for example, can Freethinkers find to grumble at in the following: "In the Empire there are many classes whose mode of earning a livelihood is conducive to idleness and evil—*e.g.*, fortune-tellers; but worse than these is a class whose members eat without tilling the ground, wear clothes but carry on no manufacture, and live in elegant houses. These are.....the priests, who are so

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numerous throughout the State. They profess that they help good men to obtain happiness, but in reality they teach men to worship unproductive, much-vaunted things which men of wisdom do not regard.....A new and more practical system of education must be introduced. For this purpose school buildings are needed everywhere; the temples are to be found everywhere. Therefore, let all temples be appropriated as school buildings.....If those who subscribed to build the temples feel aggrieved, let them be comforted with the thought that the buildings will now be put to nobler uses than those which they desired"! Although this reads very much like a Freethought attack on the clergy of Great Britain, it is really a quotation from the *Methodist Recorder* for October 22. It purports to be a translation of the reforming Emperor of China's address to his subjects on the evils of the current religions, and is regarded by the *Recorder* as good news for the Christian world. The approving manner in which the writer quotes these sentences, with the additional remark that as education advances Chinese religious beliefs must diminish, and without the remotest conception of how thoroughly they apply to the clergy of our own country, is simply staggering in its sublime simplicity. That the English clergy might reasonably be accused of every offence cited by the deposed Emperor is not dreamed of; *they* preach Christ and him crucified, and that is an all-important difference. So pleased is the writer with the Emperor's sentiments that he patronisingly promises him that if they are carried out he will go down to posterity *as a Chinese Henry VIII.!* Surely a questionable reward for doing such good word.

Another example of the same kind of lop-sided reasoning is furnished by Mr. Lloyd George, M.P., in a speech on "Priestism," delivered before a recent meeting of the Halifax Congregational Union. Mr. George is one of the leaders of Welsh Nonconformity, and, in common with Mr. Kensit, his soul is much stirred at the growing influence of the priest. Personally, I am not in fear of any national disaster following the burning of particular lights, the chanting of certain prayers, or the wearing of unauthorised vestments in the English Church. None of these things are very powerful to-day, either in converting people to Christianity or preventing them leaving it. The converts that Ritualism makes are from the other Christian bodies, and, so long as we can feel assured that we are steadily making more Freethinkers, we are opposing a far stronger barrier to the advance of Rome than can ever be offered by evangelical fanaticism. After all, whether a man is making a buffoon of himself in a manner ritualistic, parading the streets with a big drum and a brass band, or indulging in the hysterical nonsense of a revivalist meeting, is a matter of almost absolute indifference from the standpoint of national progress. Pretty much the same order of mind does for each, and it is the *kind* of mind engaged on a problem which, after all, determines its satisfactory solution. It is a purely domestic quarrel, and our only interest in the matter is to hope that both parties will keep at it, and thus open the public eye to the absurdity of the whole thing.

Still, it is interesting to find Mr. George, in his anxiety to kill Ritualism, telling "a wildly enthusiastic meeting": "It is with the deepest apprehension that I contemplate the prospect of seeing in our country the conscience handed over to any order of men. What does it mean? Every art is practised which the skill, ingenuity, and experience of man can suggest or perfect for obtaining the complete control of the human mind by the priesthood. Every emotion is raised to a pitch that overpowers the intelligence. The intellect is bound hand and foot to the throne of the priest.....The mind is intoxicated with a spirit of devotion, but thought is banned. I know of no greater danger to human progress than to forbid research and reason on the very topic which constitutes the staple of a nation's thought."

Now, while the truthfulness of these statements is undeniable, the curious thing is that Mr. George does not see that the indictment is substantially true against any order of professional religious teachers under the sun. And the indictment is specially true of religious teachers, because, whereas in science the aim is to find theories that will explain facts, in religion the object is to find facts to fit in with theories. In science a belief has no value apart from the facts, and must ultimately appeal to them for support. In science a theory is surrendered as soon as a fallacy is detected; in religion the whole energies of the priesthood are given to perpetuating stereotyped doctrines that have nothing better in their favor than the bare circumstance that former generations have entertained them. Every religious teacher aims at cultivating the feelings to a particular point, and then bringing the intellect into line, instead of the reverse order; and Mr. George's reasoning is simply an apology for the feelings he entertains, instead of his feelings being the expression of his intellectual convictions. In brief, the distinction between religious order is not a difference of aim, but a difference of achievements due largely to political circumstances. The Catholic clergy dominate thought most, because they have most power over their flocks; the Church of England comes next, because it is supported by the State; the Dissenting bodies have least power, simply because a political accident has placed them in a minority. The Nonconformist clergyman is merely an undeveloped specimen of a species of which the Roman Catholic priest is a full and complete expression. But suppose the conditions to be reversed; imagine the Nonconformists to be in the majority, would they refuse the assistance of the State, or would they be one whit more tolerant towards antagonistic bodies? To my mind, there is small room for doubt in the matter. My reading of history tells me that wherever any form of Christianity has existed unchecked by a strong secular spirit, or free from the attacks of rival sectarian interests, the results have always been the same—intolerance and persecution have been the order of the day; and I venture to predict the same result as long as there are two Christians in existence to quarrel over their creed.

Mr. George waxes tearfully eloquent over "the descendants of the men who won the battle of religious freedom at Marston Moor and Naseby, and who are now lying prostrate before the priest." If the facts of history were studied impartially, instead of being viewed through the medium of religious prejudice, it would be discovered that these men fought for nothing of the kind. So far as the issue was a religious one, they simply fought for the liberty to worship in their own fashion; and their conception of the matter, as experience proved, involved the power of preventing others worshipping in theirs. Of all the cant in connection with Protestantism that of regarding it as fighting for freedom of inquiry is the most contemptible. Protestantism never once in the whole of its history, or in any of its phases, stood for freedom of thought in any real sense of the term. True the phrase was often on the lips of Protestant leaders, but freedom of thought, which with Luther would not tolerate "anyone denying the common principles of the Christian faith," and which would "shut up Jews as madmen"; with Knox would suppress Catholicism with the sword; with Locke refused to tolerate Atheists, as "the bonds of society could have no hold on such as denied the existence of God"; with the Pilgrim Fathers crushed old men of eighty to death between blocks of stone for belonging to the Society of Friends, and even with John Milton could not "tolerate popery and open superstition, which, as it extirpates all true religion, must itself be extirpated," and which has never ceased to elaborate penal and social restrictions upon thought and speech, differs nothing in kind from the freedom granted by the Roman Catholic Church. The area under Protestantism became slightly enlarged, but the penalties for such as dared to travel outside the line continued the same as ever. Surely Mr. George is not ignorant of the fact that, while "the men of Marston Moor and Naseby" and their immediate descendants ruled, religious freedom was practically non-existent. Puritanism was as fond of using force in the interests of religion as Catholicism; new presbyter, as Milton said, was only old priest writ large; while the barbarities under Cromwell in Ireland, or under James in Scotland, quite equalled the brutalities of the older Church, with scarcely as much justification for their perpetration.

Of course Mr. George might reply that all these evils resulted from the alliance of Christianity with the State; to which I reply that no Christian body has ever refused such alliance, and that Nonconformists are at bottom as much in favor of it as Episcopalians. All they object to is the State patronising somebody else's religion, and sooner than that should happen some of them are inclined to forego State aid altogether. But Nonconformists are in favor of the Christian religion being taught in State-supported schools; as a body they support the suppression of Atheistical opinions either by force or by enactments which rob Freethought bodies of endowments, and prevent the propaganda being carried on under fair conditions;

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and they also advocate the closing of museums, libraries, etc., on Sunday. If this is not using the State to perpetuate Christianity, in the name of all that is reasonable what is it? I can quite agree with Mr. George that there is no greater danger to human progress than to prohibit inquiry on important subjects, and that the only remedy is the attainment of religious equality; only I am afraid that our agreement is one of words rather than of meaning. Mr. George belongs to a body of people who boycott non-religious literature, who threaten newsagents who provide it, who refuse to allow Freethinkers the use of halls, over which they have control, for lecturing purposes; and my experience has shown me that the stronger Dissent is, the more bigoted and intolerant one is apt to find the people. Certainly there are few parts of the British Isles where Christianity assumes narrower forms than in Nonconformist Wales. All that Nonconformity appears to understand by religious equality is the destruction of Roman Catholicism or Episcopalianism as a part of the machinery of State. What I understand by the term is that the State shall stand absolutely aloof from such opinions, neither condemning nor endorsing, but shall extend to every form of opinion, religious, non-religious, or irreligious, theistical or atheistical, the same rights and privileges before the tribunal of governmental regulations. If Nonconformity really stood for that, I should respect the position, even while I detested the special opinions held. It is when I find the mouths of those who show, in their dealings with Freethought, that they are as much opposed to real freedom of inquiry as the most intolerant papist, filled with professions of freedom—when I find them prostituting the language of liberty in the interests of religious fanaticism and tyranny, that I turn with something like a feeling of loathing to look with more equable feelings upon the straightforward bigot, who has at least the compensating features of honesty of speech and sincerity of character to atone somewhat for his intolerant folly and savage fanaticism. C. COHEN.

## SCANDINAVIA'S IDOL.

### SOME PERSONAL REMINISCENCES.

FEW great men have been wronged by the English people like the great idol of Scandinavia, the idealistic and free-thinking poet and novelist, Björnstjerne Björnson. I have seen a paragraph about him in a London evening newspaper but once during the six years I have been in that city. His illustrious colleague, the great realistic poet and dramatist, Ibsen, also a Freethinker, is taken more notice of in this country. On and anon we hear his name mentioned, and his plays are criticised and announced, like Zola's works. I do not know whether the English are such a reality-loving people, or what it is that causes them to push Björnson in the background in deference to Henrik Ibsen. I have asked several Norwegians whom of the two they esteemed the more, and they invariably declined to prefer either, but placed both on the same footing. Be that as it may, in Denmark Ibsen's name, though not set aside, is far from being as popular as that of Björnson. Every child of seven has heard the latter's name; when it is ten it has read his *Arne*, his *Synnöve Solbakken*, and his short stories. At twenty the young man is digesting *Det flager* and others. Björnson's name is on the children's tongues, his great spirit is living in the people's hearts. He is loved by all sections of the community, at least from the advanced Christians and upwards. Only the pietists hate him; but when they rebuke their more advanced brethren for "coquetting" with the great "infidel," they retort that they forgive him for his unbelief, love him for the good he is doing for the cause of freedom and the emancipation of woman, and that "gold is gold, even in a burglar's hand."

I shall always look back with pride and satisfaction upon the only time in my life that I had the privilege of seeing that great personage. It was in the winter of 1887-8, when the writer was staying at Askov High School for a six months' course, that the great Norwegian author sent us a message that he, on his way home from Paris, would call at our door, and would stay a few days. At the same time he sent a march, which our composer, Mr. Nutzhorn, was to set tune to, adapt it to Danish conditions, teach his musical class to sing it, and to sing it to him at his arrival.

There was at once a tremendous stir in the camp. The school was instantly transformed into a talking-shop. A mumbling whisper went from mouth to mouth: "Björnson is coming." It was like a hornet's nest, on which had been poured cold water. Björnson, the name with the mighty sound, which had hummed in our ears from childhood, was on everybody's lips. Björnson, upon whose novels on Norwegian life our imagination had so fondly dwelt, and whose patriotic songs had filled our breasts with enthusiasm as we had sung them day by day, we were now to have the privilege of seeing with our physical eyes. He was no more to be a dream, an invisible phantom, but a reality; and when we were to go home, or out into the world, how it would swell our hearts with pride to be able to announce as we went along: "I have seen Björnson." The days came and went; the enthusiasm gave way to a breathless silence with an impatient yearning raging within us. In the meantime the choir were practising the march which afterwards was used in all the gymnasiums throughout the country.

At last the great day arrived. The school had holiday. A man was sent up on the watch tower to look out with an opera glass, and when he sighted the equipage, in which Hr. Skröder, the proprietor of the High School and Björnson's old fellow-student, had gone out to Kolding to fetch the author, he came down like a stormwind and passed the word around. The students were hurried down into the square by the ringing of the bell, the choir being placed on the left, and the rest of us to the right. Another five minutes we had to wait with nervous excitement and bated breath, and then the carriage stopped at the inlet to the square, D'Hrr. Skröder and Björnson stepped down and walked up to where we stood, and the choir struck up its four-voiced tune of the march. Hr. Björnson is of a splendid physique—tall, broad-shouldered, and stout, and he walked with a light measured step between the two groups of scholars, not appearing to notice that he more and more left Skröder behind. He stepped jauntily up the steps, bowed, and shook hands with members of Skröder's family, who stood in the door, turned round, and then viewed the situation like a general on a battlefield.

In the evening, in Skröder's private rooms, our author entertained as many of us as could be crammed in. He told us short stories, and his mode of telling is more like acting, and is such that nobody, unless he is close to him, can get hold of what he says. Now he roars out like a lion, then he bends forward and whispers; now he speaks quickly, and then slowly. Later on we were told to be as quiet as we could in the evening, for "it was Björnson's habit—and he never broke it—to go to bed at ten and rise at five."

Then we were to have the great speech in our drill hall. There were to be introductory speeches by various men. and one of them was to be made by one of the students, That was the trouble. Our chief speaker, an enthusiastic admirer of Björnson, was suggested, but he positively refused. He said he would speak to any other mortal on the face of the earth, but not to Björnson: he was a too deep admirer of him. A D.D. declined on the ground that Björnson would think, and people would say, that Askov was so short of genius that it had to select a theological candidate to bid Björnson welcome. Then a third man, who had, with others, visited the novelist in his home in Norway, was proposed. He also declined, and only consented when we had divided three times, and each time elected him, on the condition that we would take the blame and not criticise him if he made a *fiasco* of it. Then the great occasion arrived. People came by rail from half the country; people tramped for miles around through snow and mud; the huge hall was crowded, every inch of standing room being occupied; people climbed upon every object and piece of utensil in the drill hall, right up to the ceiling. Window-sills, stairs, leaping-box, wooden horse, drill bars, doors, approaching passages, ante-room, dressing-room, all were packed. All the tickets were sold; the house was surrounded by people peeping through the windows, so anxious were they to catch a glimpse of the famous poet, and hundreds returned home disappointed.

The great moment—the greatest in the lives of many—approached. A road was cleared through the crowd to the platform, and an immovable wall of bodies stood up at both sides, reminding one of the road that was made through the Red Sea to enable the Israelites to pass over. As the hero of the occasion entered, the mighty assembly rose to a man in his honor; while the voices of the choir thun-

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dered and thrilled, rolled and rang forth from the gallery. Then some of our hero's songs were sung, and each time the poet wanted to know whom it was by, meaning the air. After a certain song had been sung to him he inquired whom it was by, and remarked: "It seems quite new to me." To which Mr. Skröder replied: "Well, you see, *we* haven't forgotten it."

When the gigantic figure of the renowned author was seen upon the platform, a death-like silence reigned throughout. One could have heard a pin drop. The stupendous stature and majestic attitude of the man; the lion-like mane, glitteringly silver-grey, standing, one would think, twelve inches straight upwards, then gracefully parting at the top and in the middle, pointing down to both sides; each hair by itself, soft as silk, fine as flax; the splendid forehead; the two wrinkles just above the Norwegian hawk nose; the bushy eyebrows and the piercing eyes, inspired each of the audience with a solemnity and a reverence and respect that made him cower and shrink beneath the weight of the consciousness of his own littleness. The first that Björnson said was this: "I hope you will believe me when I tell you that I had not at all expected, and am totally unprepared for, all this, and I hope you will bear with me and take what I have to say as it comes, as I have not prepared myself for it. When I came here I had hoped to be able to stay here for a few days' rest with my wife before entering upon my lecturing tour." Later on he referred to the Danish peasantry as the most enlightened peasants in the world. A little further on he came to mention the love and devotion which the Norwegian people had shown him, despite the fact that he no longer could follow them in religious matters; and, as he dilated upon this, his mighty intellect gave way, and his Herculean frame quivered with emotion; the proud head inclined, tears flowed down his noble visage, and his world-famed voice was for a moment stifled.

Fru Björnson is a little, back-bent, insignificant-looking woman, with grey, half short, loose hair. One feature of her character came to the fore during her brief stay at Askov with her husband: she is very fond of children. During the whole of Hr. Björnson's lecture on woman's emancipation she had Skröder's five-year-old girl on her lap, and, in fact, I never saw her without her. Although one cannot be a good soldier without being a good Christian—in which I heartily concur, the Bible and Christian history alike being continual records of unmitigated butchery, which a soldier is expected to be able to imitate if required (the great Emperor spoke the truth for once; truer, no doubt, than he meant it)—nevertheless, it appears that one can be a kind husband and father, and a loving wife and mother, without being a Christian. Mrs. Björnson, like her husband, is a Freethinker, but of a different type. She is said to have no regret, no tears; nor, in fact, any thoughts for the bygone days of faith in Christianity. She has done with it, and done with it entirely. Mr. Björnson has done with it, too, to the extent that he very rarely follows the denunciatory track. His policy is constructive rather than destructive. His favorite themes are the equal rights of woman with man in every sphere of life, the education of children to fall rather from ten till seventeen than from seven till fourteen, as it is now, and early engagements as an incentive to purity and aspiration. While at table I noticed that he bowed his head and clasped hands, like everybody else, while Skröder said grace. When we "showed up" at the station to bid him farewell, the guard could not make out why the platform of the little country station all at once was full of people. He asked us repeatedly, but in vain, to "step in." He must have thought to himself, rather defiantly: "Well, if you won't make a move, stay behind." But what must have been his surprise, when the train started, to hear nine powerful Hurrahs from the crowd rise above the noise from the engine!

And thus ended one of the most charming periods of my life.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

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Baptist Clergyman—"I don't see how you Methodist ministers can ever be contented in heaven." Methodist Clergyman—"Well, I'd like to know why not?" Baptist Clergyman—"You aren't used to staying over three years in one place."—*New York Journal.*

# ACID DROPS.

THE Bedborough case has ended in a perfect collapse. Without any sort of consultation with the Free Press Defence Committee, which had done all the agitation and raised a considerable sum of money, that has gone to no purpose into the pockets of the solicitor and other legal gentlemen, Mr. Bedborough made a compromise with the prosecution, under which he pleaded guilty to the first three counts in the indictment, which included Dr. Havelock Ellis's book, and was let off lightly, being, in fact, only bound over to come up for judgment if called upon. He gave an undertaking not to meddle with such things again, and for all public purposes we suppose it may be said, "Exit Mr. Bedborough."

We do not feel disposed to denounce Mr. Bedborough. It is really no use throwing stones at a man who is five feet six high because he is not six feet two. Heroes are born, not made; they cannot be manufactured even by influential committees. Mr. Bedborough quailed at the near prospect of imprisonment, and doubtless a great many other persons would do the same if they were tested. Moreover, he had lost his employment, and been obliged to break up his home and live upon his furniture. Nor can we help saying that he was very unfairly treated. He did sell two copies of Dr. Havelock Ellis's book to two detectives—quite above board; but he was not the real publisher. The author and the printer, whose names were on the book, were not molested. He alone was singled out to bear the whole brunt of the attack; and, although he spoke very bravely, his strength was not equal to the battle.

Without indulging in vain denunciation, however, we are bound to express our profound regret at the unfortunate end of this prosecution. Had it been foreseen, there would have been no Free Press Committee, no appeal to the public, and no collection of funds. All the efforts made on behalf of free discussion have been rendered abortive; and, should another struggle occur, the man who fights to a finish will be placed at a very serious disadvantage.

The Free Press Defence Committee, on learning of Mr. Bedborough's arrangement with the prosecution, had no alternative but to dissociate itself from the case, and to refuse to pay another penny to the solicitor, who, in our judgment, had received too much money already. This was done before the case was heard at the Old Bailey. Another meeting will be held after we go to press, and no doubt a manifesto will be issued to the public with the least possible delay.

Before the prosecution was commenced, when some of the Free Lovers were talking like Bobadils, and sneering at the leaders of Secularism for their presumed cowardice, we told Mr. Bedborough that if he were ever attacked he would probably find that those who were *not* Free Lovers would be the most active in defending the right of free discussion on sexual as on other questions. And our prediction has been verified. The Free Lovers have made a despicably poor show. The heat of the battle has been borne by others. Mr. Seymour, who has carried on the *Adult*, and given his services gratuitously as secretary to the Defence Committee, had opposed the Free Lovers by pen and tongue. Mr. Foote's attitude towards them was the subject of much reproach, but he has given a great deal of time and labor to the vindication of their right to be heard, however much he dissented from their anarchical principles. A few others also have been very zealous, although it is only just to say that many more displayed a curious luke-warmness. The Secular party has been more than adequately represented in the circumstances, and that at least is one subject of congratulation.

"General" Booth says that the Salvation Army, by its prayers, is able to move the arm of God. This is a safe generality. When the Peculiar People reduce it to practice they are liable to prosecution, and "General" Booth doesn't stand up in their defence.

St. Paul's Cathedral sticks to the gold communion plate given it by Mr. Hooley, whose pious generosity has recently been imitated by a lady. She has presented the Cathedral with what is called a processional cross—a thing, we suppose, which is to be carried round during a certain part of the performance on high occasions. Its total height is nine feet four inches, and the figure of "Our Lord" in enamel is fourteen inches long. Silver, onyx, and carbuncles are the principal materials. That is how they honor *poor* Jesus Christ.

President Kruger's piety seems rather ahead of that of other public men in the Transvaal. A warm debate took place lately in the Volksraad on a suggestion that the house should open and close daily with prayer. The gentleman

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who introduced the motion wanted to know how they could expect divine guidance unless they prayed for it. He was unable, however, to persuade his legislative colleagues, and the motion was rejected.

The New York *Evening Sun* prints a skit on Hall Caine's *Christian*—the dramatised version of his selling-like-wildfire novel. The great Caine himself figures amongst the characters of this skit as "Hale Coon, the original elevator boy of literature," and John Storm as "Stormy John, a Ker-ristian and a young fellow of infinite talk." Stormy John is perpetually giving the heroine "a Ker-ristian kiss." This is how Hale Coon addresses the house from his box :—

Kind Ker-ri-tian friends, attention I would claim ;
This is my play, because I wrote the same ;
O'er the typewriter's bucking keys I urged it,
First as a novel, then I drama turged it.
For I'm the very roughest of rough writers,
The champion heavyweight of goose-quill fighters.
*(Cantabile.)*
Oh, I rap, rap, rap
With my little clap-trap,
And I introduce a prayer
With a sanctimonious air
As a little pinch of spice ;
Next I show a scene of vice,
And I play upon the piquant sins.
So, since laughter's growing cheap,
And the public loves to weep,
I'm the little Hale Coon that wins,'
Ha ! ha !
The little Hale Coon that wins !
*(Recitativo.)*
I wear a sacred expression and queer collars,
And deal out platitudes and rake in dollars.
And if you doubt the wisdom of my plan,
Observe yon castle in the Isle of Man !

The new Roman Catholic Cathedral at Westminster will not rival the grand old Abbey, but we hear it is to eclipse everything else built in London since Wren finished St. Paul's. No less than £55,000 was paid for the site, and the cost of the structure will be quite £250,000 more. Towards this amount one donor has given £20,000, and several others from £1,000 to £5,000. The cathedral, internally, is to be 100 feet high, 350 feet long, and 170 feet wide. It will seat 8,000 people. There is also to be a lecture hall seating 2,000, and a monastery to accommodate thirty Benedictines and forty-five lay brothers. Altogether it is a very big affair, and we can well understand that Cardinal Vaughan is immensely proud of it.

There has been another farce at the Old Bailey. James and Grace Cook, two members of the Peculiar People, have just been tried there on a charge of manslaughter, for allowing their baby to die without medical assistance. With perfect consistency they declined the help of counsel, which is no more recommended than medicine, in the New Testament. They logically left the whole matter to the Lord. Of course the jury found them guilty, and Mr. Justice Bigham read them a severe lesson on the enormity of their offence. But the sermon was all he inflicted upon them. He dared not add imprisonment. They were simply bound over to come up for judgment when called upon, and warned not to do it again, which of course they *will* do whenever the occasion arises ; and the judge knows it quite as well as we do.

The fact is that everybody knows that these Peculiar People are real Christians. They do not eulogise Jesus Christ as "the greatest," etc., that ever lived. They *obey* him—which is about the very last thing that an ordinary Christian ever thinks of doing. They pray over the sick, and anoint them with oil, because Jesus Christ told them to do so. Prosecuting them is the thin end of the wedge, but no one has the courage to drive home the thick end by sending them to prison. To do that would be too flagrant an exposure of Christian hypocrisy. This is the motive which animates the judges. They would like to strike these real Christians, but they dare not ; so they talk about "consideration" and other nonsense in order to hide the fact that they are bringing the law into contempt, in order not to bring the Christian religion into contempt.

Thomas George Senior, one of the Peculiar People, who was tried not long ago at the Old Bailey, has lost another child under the prayer-and-oil treatment, and the coroner's jury have returned another verdict of "Manslaughter." At the previous trial Senior was told that if he "did it again" he would certainly be sent to prison. We shall therefore watch this case closely, and make it the occasion for publishing our intended pamphlet on the whole question.

The *Daily News* admits that the treatment of these Peculiar People cases by the judges "has become simply a sorry jest." That is what we say. But does not our contemporary also indulge in a sorry jest when it refers to the Peculiar People's "homicidal reading of a text of James"? The most important text is a text of Christ. It occurs in the last chapter of Mark.

President McKinley has issued the usual proclamation, appointing November 24 as Thanksgiving Day. This time he begs his subjects—no, no, his fellow citizens, we mean—to get properly inspired with "gratitude and praise to the Lord of Hosts." The Yankees have got Porto Rico absolutely, and a protectorate over Cuba ; they are also bargaining for the possession of all the Philippines ; so they have something to be thankful for this time—that is to say, if the Lord gave them these properties, instead of their winning them for themselves. But how about the poor Spaniards who are biting their thumbs in disgust? It would really be funny if they "chucked" the Lord of Hosts and left him entirely to President McKinley.

"Taking the devil to Wheatsheaf Farm, 1s. 6d.," was an item in an account presented to the Beaconsfield Urban Council. But let the clergy be reassured. Old Nick is not bottled up in a Buckinghamshire farmhouse. The devil in this case was only an instrument used in the disposal of sewage.

"My only son—with whom I am well satisfied." That is the blasphemous way in which John Kensit introduced his son of seventeen as a speaker at the recent Exeter Hall meeting. The said meeting was a very lively affair, and showed how Christians would love each other if they had a free opportunity. The "chuckers-out" were kept in active exercise all the time. One of the victims appealed to a magistrate, who asked him why he was such a fool as to go there.

Mrs. Mills, the Christian Scientist, who with her husband attended the late Harold Frederic, could not tell under examination how much a year she made out of the business. She was unable to say whether it was £100, or £500, or £1,000, or £2,000. She left it all to the Lord—apparently including the accounts.

Canon Scott Holland has been girding at Emperor William from a Perth pulpit. He declared that the Kaiser, instead of dining with the great assassin of his co-religionists, should have appeared in Constantinople dressed in sackcloth peppered with ashes, and a hair shirt, scourging himself. This is rather far-fetched. We think the objection to the Kaiser's doings was better stated in Mr. Foote's article in last week's *Freethinker*.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling, who is a great admirer of Mr. Cecil Rhodes, has been giving his opinions on the South African colossus to a *Liverpool Post* interviewer. Pressed on the subject of the "rules of religion," Mr. Kipling declared plainly that "religion has no influence on conduct." Something like this has been frequently said in our columns.

Dean Pigou, in his newly-published *Phases of My Life*, tells some neat stories. Here is an adventure that happened to one of his curates : "One of them, a new one, paid his first visit to an old lady, who at once said in broad Yorkshire : 'Eh ! you're the new curate, ain't you ? 'Yes,' he said. 'Well, now, I'll tell you what yer does when yer comes to see me.....You take that stool, d'ye see ? You sits down, reads me a *short*—mind, a *short*—Psalm. You gives me a shilling, and then ye can go."

The Dean himself had a still better experience : "There was an old crony who was constantly asking to see him. His curates thought some spiritual trouble was affecting the poor soul. He went. 'Well,' said he sympathetically, 'how can I help you ? My curates have been ?' 'Oh, yes. They're nice young gentlemen, but t'aint vicar.' Then of a sudden she threw herself back, and, suiting the action to the word, she planted her hand on her stomach, and exclaimed : '*It is a great piece of beef in a bowl of gravy as I wants.*'"

In a case brought before the Douglas magistrates on Saturday last it was proved that a young man, meeting a girl acquaintance on the road, whom he had already been back-biting, made use of filthy language to her, which it is impossible even to hint at in print. The Bench fined this travesty of a man £3 and costs as a warning to others.—Mr. Goldie-Taubman expressed the opinion that the use of foul language is too common in this country. We believe this statement is unfortunately true. Side by side with a good deal of religious profession and chapel-going there is a constant bandying about of foul epithets in the country roads and hamlets of the island. If some of these spiritual pastors and masters who display such solicitude about the morals of Douglas would turn their attention to some of the rural districts, and begin, say, at Lonan, the Isle of Man might become a little more cleanly and reputable.—*Isle of Man Times.*

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St. John's Day School, Battersea, is a "Voluntary" institution. Its income last year amounted to £1,410. The voluntary subscriptions towards the maintenance of the school were represented by £19. For this paltry sum the subscribers secure the sectarian control of all the big balance. Of course there is plenty of "prayer book" and "catechism" in the curriculum.

Priest Frankhausen, of Frauenberg, Alsace, used his holy-water sprinkler too partially. When he came to Frau Ister, the wife of the parish schoolmaster, with whom he had a quarrel, he deluged her with the sanctifying fluid. But as the lady did not want too much sanctification, but only sanctification enough, she brought the priestly sprinkler before the Sheriff, who condemned him to pay a fine of one hundred marks or to go to prison for ten days. It is to be presumed that he will henceforth use the holy water more economically.

Mr. John Morley regretted that he was unable to attend the Exeter Hall meeting—convened by the Arbitration Alliance, the Peace Society, and the Friends of Peace Committee—in support of the Czar's appeal to Europe on the question of armaments. Mr. Morley's name was received with cheers. But what on earth had he to do with such a gathering? The first resolution began with the words, "That this meeting of the Christian Churches of the metropolis"; while the second resolution referred to the whole meeting as being "composed of the servants and subjects of the Prince of Peace." Mr. Morley does not belong to any Christian Church, and is not a servant of any Prince.

Last Sunday was what is called Citizen Sunday—that is to say, a number of London men of God sermonised their congregations on the duties of citizenship, which they probably understand at least as well as the exhorters. The Bishop of Stepney, preaching at St. Paul's, devoted most of his sermon to the threadbare theme of the East London water supply. His exordium, so to speak, dealt with a different matter. He congratulated the English people on being, by a God-given instinct, united on the question of Fashoda. Trust the parsons to beat the drum when their countrymen are in a warlike mood. This is naturally to be expected of the ministers of the personage who is facetiously called the Prince of Peace.

The Rev. Silas K. Hocking says he has "no sympathy whatever with the bastard and Atheistic Socialism that is so loudly proclaimed to-day." Who said he had? And what does it matter, anyhow?

Mr. Herbert Spencer, in his old age, appears to be getting quite too fond of the Unknowable. His latest contention is that "the theory of a vital principle fails, and that the physico-chemical theory also fails; the corollary being that, in its ultimate nature, Life is incomprehensible." But who has the right to say that what we do not understand now will never be understood? Let us wait. After all, though Mr. Spencer is a great thinker, the world will not end with him, and science is probably destined to make many new discoveries. Again we say, let us wait, and avoid dogmatising with the use of capital letters.

The *Wellington Journal* gives a long report of the trial of a man of God at the local police-court, which resulted in his being fined £2 and costs for a savage assault on Mr. John Maddison, a laborer. The Rev. Alexander Smith, rector of Rodington, entered this man's cottage, called him the biggest blackguard in the parish—for no apparent reason, except that he felt inclined to talk that way—and attacked him, although he had his child in his arms. The reverend disciple of the Prince of Peace simply "played hell" in the place, smashing up various things, and even emptying the dinner from the table into a drawer containing the laborer's Sunday clothes. Mrs. Maddison was knocked down in trying to help her husband. Even the baby was considerably damaged. Finally, however, they got the man of God outside, and he departed shouting: "I'll give you as much again." But perhaps the fine and costs will keep his muscular Christianity under restraint.

Rev. Daniel C. Potter's church has had to be cut off from the New York Baptist Association. The reverend gentleman himself appears to be a fine old Bible character born two or three thousand years too late in an unfavorable environment. He is charged with adultery, lying, dishonesty, intemperance, and several minor offences hardly worth cataloguing.

Parson Alexander Smith is just the man to suit the *South London Mail*. Our contemporary ought to engage him during the summer months for Peckham Rye.

"Providence" seems to be supplying a rush of cases for the *South London Mail*. Here is Samuel Tucker, a traveller, of Warlingham-road, East Dulwich, sentenced to a month's hard labor for embezzling money belonging to his employer, Edward Hyde. It was urged in defence that prisoner had a large family, and had for twenty-five years been a local preacher and Band of Hope superintendent.

Mrs. Ormiston Chant, lecturing for the Forward Association at Lynn, certainly helped in one sense to justify the Society's name. She declared that "there was not so much blatant Atheism as there had been," and then she said that "English Christianity owed far more to Charles Bradlaugh for the reality of it than it did to many inside the church." Charles Bradlaugh would not have thanked her for this "compliment," which is nothing but insolence. He had no desire whatever to make Christianity "real." He desired its destruction. Mrs. Chant and her kind may talk "nicely" about him now he is dead; but such people called him a blatant Atheist when he was the chief figure upon the Freethought platform. Mrs. Chant should work her "purity" business for what it is worth, and leave the name of Charles Bradlaugh alone.

Chaplain McIntyre, of the battleship *Oregon*, who charged Captain Evans with cowardice and Admiral Sampson with dishonorable conduct, has been found guilty of behavior unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, and dismissed from the naval service by the court-martial which tried him at Denver, Col. He acknowledged his offence, alleging that he was out of condition through taking too much quinine and brandy.—*New York "Truthseeker."*

Some Anti-Semites at Olmutz, Bavaria, resolved to outdo the performances of M. Drumont and his gang at Paris, so they placed a dynamite bomb, with a fuse attached, in the Jews' synagogue, hoping to send some hundreds of the chosen people to Abraham's bosom. But the plot was spoiled by a discovery, and the good Christians are gnashing their teeth at the thought of all the fun they missed.

All Hallows' Church, Southwark, goes in strongly for confession. Four places are set apart for it, and cards are hung up containing this very Protestant form: "I confess to God, to Blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to Blessed Michael the Archangel, to Blessed John the Baptist," and so on to the end of the blessed chapter! Why on earth don't these High Church clergy go honestly over to Rome?

Emperor William could not leave Jerusalem without a pious peroration. From the top of Mount Zion—where, by the way, the German and Turkish flags floated in brotherly union—he cried as follows: "From Jerusalem there came the light, in the splendor of which the German nation has become great and glorious, and what the Germanic peoples have become they became under the banner of the Cross, the emblem of self-sacrificing Christian charity. As nearly two thousand years ago, so there shall to-day ring out from Jerusalem the cry voicing the ardent hope of all: 'Peace on earth.'"

¶ Emperor William is a bit mistaken. No such cry rang out from Jerusalem nearly two thousand years ago, unless shepherds were watching their flocks on Mount Zion. Nor is William quite on a level with the parties who are said to have made that farcical announcement. But the real joke of the Kaiser's speech lies in his references to German history. Some of us fail to detect the "self-sacrificing Christian charity" in Germany's ascension to the state of great and glorious. War with Denmark, war with Austria, and war with France, all in a single generation, are the actual facts; and William's pious speech is only the froth of an imperial bagman.

## SHILLING MONTH.

FOR THE "FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.

[*Where no figure accompanies the name the amount acknowledged is one shilling.*]

A. G. W. 3s., E. T. B. 5s., J. H. Hallows 2s. 6d., S. Burgon 5s., G. Brady 10s., R. V. 2s., Mr. and Mrs. Pegg 5s., Scotus 5s., T. Bradshaw 2s. 6d., W. O. 2s. 6d., T. Hibbott, T. Warwick, R. Axleby 2s., J. Kimberley 2s., F. Simons, E. L. G. £5, John Dennis 4s., R. W. 2s., N. Richardson 2s.

*Per C. Cohen.*—John Garven 5s., William Tait 5s.

*Per Miss Vance.*—R. Radford 2s., H. Radford, J. Radford, J. Oram 2s. 6d., C. Shepherd.

*Per R. Forder.*—J. May £1 1s., A. Hindle 2s., J. M. W. 3s., W. D., A. Pope.

*Liverpool List.*—Ross, Hammond, Rhodes, Allan, Degnan, Cox, Foster, Howard, Seddon, Norris, No Name, Roleffs 2s. 6d.

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, November 6, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester: 11, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 3, "Confession in the Church"; 7, "The Meaning of Death."

November 13, Chester. 20, Camberwell.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 6, Wigan; 13, Camberwell; 20, Hall of Science, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

J. BRIERLY, joining the Secular Society, Limited, writes: "I am delighted at its establishment, and I hope to leave it two or three hundred pounds." This correspondent asks whether we think there is something in Wesleyanism that makes people selfish and untruthful. He confesses that in business he prefers dealing with Church people. We reply as follows:—There is always likely to be less religion in an Established Church, and more in a Voluntary Church. One is safe in any circumstances; the other is obliged to work up enthusiasm by perpetual stimulants, which are morally unwholesome. Where there is most religion there is sure to be least morality. This is proved by history, and proved by present statistics.

H. ALEXANDER.—Your postcard is too thin. Persons who are anxious about the truth, or have even any sense of decency, don't write in that way. We have nothing to retract. It *was* a "filthy lie." The two persons you refer to were found fully dressed, the man with his overcoat on, overcome by an escape of inodorous gas in a room where a gas-light from another tap was burning. There was no "debauch." The whole affair was so simple that the authorities did not require an inquest, and the medical testimony proved that nothing illicit could possibly have occurred. Christians, and particularly professional Christians, have always been ready to lie about Freethinkers, and we suppose they will always be so. The "charity" they boast of in church is only one of the hypocrisies of the most hypocritical faith on earth.

N. S. S. CHILDREN'S EXCURSION.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Collected by B. M. Munton, £1 6s. 5d. Holders of collecting-cards, who have not yet returned them to Miss Vance, are requested to do so at once.

EDWIN PAINTER.—Will you kindly send us your full address? The matter shall then be settled as you wish. There was evidently some misunderstanding.

T. O. NEWTON.—Pleased to hear the Derby Branch is progressing so favorably, and that Mr. Cohen's recent visit has contributed to this happy result.

T. WILMOT.—Date booked. Subject shall follow. See paragraph.

CHATHAM FRIEND.—Too late for this week. The case of the Rev. G. S. Hitchcock shall be dealt with in our next.

WE note from one of our American exchanges that Dr. George Sexton died suddenly the other day in Canada, where he had long been residing. The older members of the Secular party in England will no doubt remember him. Twenty-five years ago, or more, he left the Freethought platform and became a Spiritualist; afterwards he left the Spiritualists and preached and lectured as an orthodox Christian. We should be sorry to say that he was insincere, but he always seemed to us to speak on the Christian side more as an advocate than as an earnest apostle.

SCOTUS.—We quite understand your desire for anonymity. Thanks.

WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.—J. Brierley, 5s.

W. J. MARSHALL.—We confess we do not quite understand the matter, which perhaps we should have done if the reverend gentleman's address had been more fully reported.

ESS JAY BEE.—Received with thanks.

F. SMITH.—Mr. Foote's pamphlet on *Noah's Flood*, price twopence, would probably supply what you seek. Order of R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

JOHN DENNIS.—Thanks for your good wishes.

W. O.—We presume you want your initials only printed. Your name shall be proposed for membership. We hope, with you, that the Incorporated Society will be a strong one, but it will need time to grow.

T. HIBBOTT.—We have acted on your suggestion.

R. AXLEBY.—Mr. Forder, we believe, could supply you with Dr. Giles's *Hebrew and Christian Records*. Canon Driver's book on the Old Testament is full and trustworthy, but expensive. Perhaps you could get access to it in your Free Library, if you have one.

W. P. BALL.—We are indebted to you for your weekly batch of valuable cuttings.

W. COX (Liverpool).—Please send us Mr. Gustav Roleff's address. It is necessary before he can be formally proposed for membership in the Secular Society, Limited. Mr. Foote will write you on the other matter when this week's *Freethinker* is off his hands. Thanks for the list for Shilling Month.

G. W. B.—Sorry we have not space for such a controversy.

M. LOAFER.—We hope the East London Branch's open-air platform will be well supported on this special occasion.

S. BURGON.—Thanks for your interesting and encouraging letter and enclosures.

LOUIS ORGAN.—Newspaper paragraphs are the most valuable, as the source of information can be mentioned if necessary.

JAMES NEATE.—Thanks. See paragraph.

G. BRADY.—Received with thanks. We are obliged to you for your good wishes.

E. ELDERKIN.—You do not say where the St. Alban's Debating Society meets. Perhaps you will send us a note upon the discussion itself. Thanks for the newspaper references.

E. GOULT.—Colonel Ingersoll is responsible for his own views. We reproduced his remarks on the war and its consequences because he always commands and repays attention. No one was asked to agree with him.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Torch of Reason—Commercial Intelligence—Two Worlds—Truthseeker (Bradford)—Crescent—Progressive Thinker—Der Arme Teufel—Freidenker—New York Evening Sun—Barnet Times—New Century—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Liberator—New York Truthseeker—Wellington Journal—Isle of Man Times—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Lynn News—Chatham Observer—Public Opinion.

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

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

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THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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. FOOTE lectures at Manchester to-day after a longish absence. His subjects are attractive, and there will doubtless be a good gathering of South Lancashire friends in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints.

In spite of the stormy weather, there was a capital audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, that gave the most appreciative attention to Mr. Foote's lecture on "What is the Matter with France?" The peroration on the value of the French spirit to Europe in particular, and to the world in general, was applauded with great enthusiasm. Mr. Harry Brown occupied the chair.

Mr. C. Cohen lectures at the Athenæum Hall this evening (Nov. 6) and the following Sunday. We hope he will be welcomed by large meetings.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures to-day, Sunday, November 6, afternoon and evening, in the Town Hall, Wigan. It is many years since Mr. Watts visited the Wigan friends; we hope, therefore, he will have large audiences. The Freethinkers of the surrounding districts should muster in full force.

All who are interested should note that the first General Members' Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, will be held at the Manchester Hotel, Aldersgate-street, London, on Friday evening, November 18. This is an informal notice. Formal notices are being posted to the members.

The *Secular Almanack*, issued by the National Secular Society, and edited this time by Mr. Foote without the valuable assistance of J. M. Wheeler, will be on sale next week. There are several interesting items in the list of contents, and there ought to be a large sale of the publication, especially as all profits upon it accrue to the Society.

Mr. Cohen is back in London after a month's lecturing tour in the provinces. He reports good meetings at Dundee, Preston, and Derby, and a crowded meeting on Sunday evening in the Secular Hall, Leicester. Mr. Cohen will probably give a fuller account of his tour himself in our columns.

"Blasphemy and the Peculiar People" is the heading of a characteristic letter from Mr. G. B. Shaw to the *Daily Chronicle*. Referring to a juror's remark, that a lady Christian scientist at the Frederic inquest had been talking nonsense for an hour, Mr. Shaw says: "As the lady had been simply declaring the supreme authority of the Bible and the sovereign efficacy of faith in the healing of diseases, that juryman may think himself fortunate if he escapes the sentence of imprisonment suffered not so very long ago by Mr. G. W. Foote for his outspokenness on the same point."

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Mr. Shaw takes the view which we have taken in our articles and paragraphs on the prosecution of the Peculiar People. First of all, they are obeying the Bible, which seems the proper thing to do in a Christian country. Secondly, doctorcraft is becoming as bad as priestcraft. Infallibility is nonsense on either side, and people should be left to choose for themselves.

Mr. Joseph Symes's ability and courage deserve to meet with greater success. He has had very trying times of late years, and, although he bears up cheerfully, it is easy to see that the prospect before him is far from encouraging. In the last number of the *Liberator* to hand from Melbourne he appeals as follows under the heading of "Help Needed": "I am compelled to ask our friends, who are able to do so, to give us financial assistance. I am far behind with the rent of the Hall. If the owner could afford the strain, that would not much matter; but he is far from being rich enough to bear such a burden. There are many of our friends who are well enough able to help, and I beg them to do so. Melbourne Secularists cannot afford another disaster. I am not only giving my labor free, but paying money out of pocket every week. If general trade were good, we should fare as well as ever, and have no occasion to ask for a penny. We are not to blame for the general want of trade, work, and money. If prosperity comes to Melbourne, we shall get our share. At present we suffer with our suffering neighbors—friends and foes. Those who can help are hereby invited to do so as soon as possible."

We hope to hear shortly that the position of affairs has improved at Melbourne, and that our gallant old friend and colleague is going forward on a flood tide.

The trustees of the National Galleries in London have kept open their institutions on Sunday afternoon until the end of October. Evidently they do not accept as true the statement of that notoriously truthful person, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, that the Sunday visitors at such places are only loafers and hobbledehoys. Mr. Mark Judge has published the number of visitors last Sunday afternoon, and, considering the stormy weather, it is very gratifying. Here is the list: "British Museum, 750; Natural History Museum, 888; South Kensington Museum, 1,684; Bethnal Green Museum, 692; Geological Museum, 210; National Gallery, 904; Tate Gallery of British Art, 643; National Portrait Gallery, 252; total, 6,023."

The *People's Newspaper* (Rockhampton, Queensland) reprints a portion of what it is pleased to call "a most ably written article" by Mr. Foote in the *Freethinker*—the article entitled "Death the Democrat." We note from our Rockhampton contemporary, which is one of our always welcome exchanges, that Mr. Wallace Nelson, who is now an active politician on the Labor side, has been addressing large and enthusiastic meetings. Mr. Wallace Nelson left England many years ago, when our party was just beginning to value his services. He was thought to be consumptive, and the doctors said that going away was the only chance of saving his life. Happily he found a propitious climate at the antipodes, and as Australia gained what England lost, and Australia is as much a part of the world as England, we may say that all's well that ends well. So here's long life and happiness and usefulness to you, Wallace Nelson.

The East London Branch intended to close its open-air work at the Triangle, opposite Limehouse Church, last Sunday, but owing to the rowdy behavior of the Christians another (special) gathering will take place to-day (Nov. 6), and Mr. Cohen will probably be one of the speakers. If the Christians call for a further lesson, the meetings will be continued.

Mr. Harry Snell lectures to-day (November 6) in the Town Hall, Gateshead. No doubt the Tyneside friends will give him good meetings and a hearty welcome.

Mr. Hess's paper, the *Critic*, under the heading of "Chadband in Leeds," prints a scathing article on Mr. M. C. Hitchen, the Liberal candidate for the Central Ward, who invited people to drink coffee with himself and wife and talk over Sunday closing and other matters as "good soldiers of Jesus Christ." The *Critic* draws the natural inference that all who vote against this gentleman "will be children of Beezlebub."

The Camberwell Branch holds its Annual Members' Meeting to-day (Nov. 6) at 11 in the morning. All members are desired to attend if possible.

The American Secular Union will hold its Annual Congress at Chicago on November 18, 19, and 20. Secretary Reichwald writes asking Mr. Foote to attend, but that is impossible. Mr. Foote will, however, be glad to comply with the alternative request, and write a brisk letter to be read at the Congress. A similar invitation has been sent to Mr. Watts.

## CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.

(By the late J. M. Wheeler.)

Jesus Christ is extolled, even by some who do not admit his claims to divinity, as being a perfect example to mankind. We think the one notion as much a superstition as the other. To speak of any person being a complete pattern of excellence to humanity is folly. No one person can stand in all the complex relations in which human beings stand to each other. No man can be a perfect example to women. Daughters, wives, mothers, and widows have duties peculiar to their sex and situations.

Jesus, according to the Gospels, did not even sustain all the relations which men bear towards their fellows. He never stood in the important position of a lover, a husband, or a father, and could not, therefore, be an example of the peculiar virtues required by men in these relations. The child who should copy his behavior when his sorrowing parents sought him in the temple would be pronounced disobedient and impertinent. For the important period of from twelve years of age to thirty—the whole time when the character is matured and the career made or marred for life—there is no record of any example left for our guidance. Suppose a young man entering on business: what example can he take from Jesus? Will he not encourage the dishonest if he gives to every one that asketh, or debase his character by following the contradictory advice to make to himself friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness? Shall he offer his cloak to whoever steals his coat, or shall he sell his garment and buy a sword? Shall he pay those who serve him one hour as much as those who serve the whole day? Shall he take to himself a mate, or ought he not rather to be of those who are commended as making themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matthew xix. 12)? Should he not give up, not only houses and lands, but also friends and relations, for the sake of the kingdom of heaven? How many millions have resigned all secular duties, thinking that thereby they could more surely imitate their Savior? Suppose, as is usual, nature is too strong, and he decides for love, courtship, and matrimony, what example can he find in Jesus? He cannot expect to find wealthy women who will minister to him of their substance, or wash his feet and wipe them with their hair. Nor, should one be so enamored of him as to pour on his head ointment so precious that, if sold, it might have produced nearly ten pounds* for the benefit of the poor, would he avoid a charge of vanity if he remarked: "Ye have the poor with you always, but me ye have not always."

Say he marries, what example in regard to that most important step can he find in Jesus? Shall he "increase and multiply," or regulate his progeny according to his means of subsistence? If the union is unhappy, must the married be ever united, or must one commit adultery, since Jesus only permits divorce for this cause? To have lived with a Xantippe, like Socrates, would have been a far more profitable example and trying discipline than going through the farce of being tempted by the Devil.

Jesus is never represented to us in any of those positions in which his example could meet our difficulties. He does not appear as a master or servant, a debtor or creditor, a capitalist or laborer, a landlord or tenant. As a guest, who would venture to imitate his conduct? When invited to the house of a Pharisee he sat down to eat with unwashed hands, and, upon the host naturally marvelling at this breach of salutary Oriental custom, he burst into a torrent of abusive invective. Dare we, like him, denounce our opponents as a generation of vipers, whited sepulchres, and children of hell? If they refuse to accept our teaching, shall we shake off the dust from our feet—that is, express our anger and contempt, and metaphorically consign them to divine vengeance? Have we a right to compare the people of other nations to dogs, and may we pluck ears of corn, or take donkeys that do not belong to us, or curse fruit trees if they happen not to bear fruit when we require it? If we set up as teachers, shall we speak in parables that our auditors may hear and not understand? May we promise our disciples that they shall sit on thrones? If a modern teacher said "A greater than Solomon is here," if he spoke of all who came before him as thieves and robbers,

* Three hundred pence (Mark xiv. 4). The Roman penny was worth at least sevenpence-halfpenny.

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if he dogmatically declared himself the way, the truth, and the life, saying, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven," he would be deemed most absurdly arrogant, if not insane.

I do not suppose that all these sayings ascribed to Jesus were really uttered by him. On the contrary, these last seem to bear the impress of a later age, when the dogma of his divinity was already growing. Nor do I deny that some of the teachings ascribed to him were of an elevated character and calculated to improve the people of his time. But here again we can be by no means assured that the sayings attributed to him were ever uttered by him.

The effect of attempting to follow Jesus is seen at its very best in that beautiful book of a superior nature, *The Imitation of Christ*, ascribed to Thomas à Kempis. We have in that work not the lip service of a ceremonialist, but the heart's yearnings of a devotee. Yet the charm of the book remains to us Freethinkers, not only on account of its sincerity, but of its pathos. It depicts the struggles of a strong swimmer who has been wrecked on a false ideal. Home, family, country, humanity, are nothing. Christ is all. Human learning and secular progress are but worldly vanities. The soul's salvation is to be worked out in solitary retirement with anguish of heart and with meditation upon death, not with manful grappling of life's problems in the light of day. And this, upon the whole, is the highest result of taking Christ as an example. Christianity has held up, as a universal model, a gory figure suffering on a cross—a fit emblem of its creed of gloom. Secularism would rather revert to the strenuous labors of a Hercules, the glad beauty and art of an Apollo.

## PREHISTORIC PEEPS.

### IV.—The First Policeman.

Ah! take one consideration with another,
The policeman's lot is not a happy one.
—W. S. Gilbert.

The *Dublin Daily Express* points out that Irishmen are descended from the 'Ebrew Jews, Maccabees being now represented by the Irish McCabes, Hibernia being connected with Heber, the papa of the Hebrews, and Shamus being a distant relation of Shem. Now, in common with the Chosen People and the inhabitants of the Emerald Isle, we are all children of Mr. J. Hovah, although some of us have apparently been born on the wrong side of the orthodox blanket. Mr. J. Hovah started business as a private detective in the Garden of Eden. He first distinguished himself by kicking up a four-cornered row about the loss of a paltry apple. Bow-street wasn't built in those days, so he treated the unfortunate delinquents in the same way as his son did the stockbrokers in the Temple some centuries later. I have never been quite able to understand Our Heavenly Father. His treatment of his offspring, Eve and Adam, really deserved the attention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Maybe, like many another reckless cuss, he was short of sufficient postage stamps to raise his family. To quote the pathetic lines of Halfred Haustin—

Perhaps he was right in dissembling his love,
But why did he kick them downstairs?

Moly Moses! If Adam and Eve had swallowed not only the halfpenny apple, but the tree, the serpent, the angel with the flaming sword, and the voice of the Lord God as it walked in the garden in the cool of the day, Mr. J. Hovah couldn't have made a bigger dust-up. The row he did make so frightened the poor snake that, whereas he used to travel upright, he crawled on his—er– er—waistcoat for the remainder of his natural.

Now, to show that police-constable J. Hovah's concern was not really law and order may be instanced the great murder case in which he was implicated. He certainly erred on the side of severity in his first case of petty larceny, but right here his reputation becomes fly-blown. Cain, it will be remembered, killed a certain Mr. Abel. The assassin was never brought to justice. Rumor has it that police-constable J. Hovah put a trade-mark on the fugitive's forehead, so that the other boys in the force could see that he had already squared the executive.

Promotion followed as a matter of course, and Inspector J. Sweeney Hovah next achieved fame in a new direction. It seems that the sons of God had seen the daughters of men that they were fair, and had acted accordingly. This was too much for our prehistoric moralist. He could act harshly when necessary, he could overlook—for a consideration; but this was not toeing the line anywhere. So he sent for Mr. Noah, the secretary of the *Euphrates Valley Vigilance Society*, and asked him why in the name of snakes he hadn't reported this matter earlier. Noah's reply has been lost with some of the twelve tribes; but Inspector J. Hovah earned immortal fame by taking these wicked sons of God and the still more wicked daughters of men, and drowning them all in one big drown, like kittens in a pail. For this feat he became superintendent. He had nobly acted on Tennyson's advice:—

If in this world you wish to win
And rise above the common chump,
Take off your halo and pitch right in;
Don't wait, lay hold, hang on and thump.
Don't wait until the iron's hot,
But make it hot by muscle;
Don't wait for wealth your papa's got,
Take off your halo and bustle.

He was drawing up the bye-laws for Jerusalem-the-Golden with Boswell Moses on Mount Sinai, when a report reached them about some dancing scandal at the sign of *The Golden Calf*. Mister Moses does not tell us whether our prehistoric relatives danced waltzes, polkas, the highland reel, or the can-can; but anyhow they danced to a pretty tune. Superintendent J. Hovah was shocked at such flagrant immortality. In his rage he told his subordinate to grind up with a pestle and mortar the golden calf into a fine powder and to mix it with water, and make these terpsichorean traitors drink his golden syrup.

Not content with this, Moses made it still more lively for the heathen boys. He stewed about three thousand of them. He forgot to tell us what he did with the heathenesses; but I suspect he boiled them down for glue.

This fact of Mr. J. Hovah having been the first policeman is frequently overlooked. It throws a search-light on many dark places in Holy Writ. A certain worm of the dust, called Hugh Miller, laid himself out to trace the footprints of the Creator. Knowing that most policemen have feet of the size of a pair of bellows, it must be reluctantly admitted that dear old Miller was not strictly attending to business all the time, or else that he was near-sighted or boss-eyed. I have no patience with those wicked "hinfiddles" who insist that the Christian religion resembles a highland plaid in being all stuff and very full of crosses. Nothing could be truer to life and to everyday experience than the delightful picture of P.C. J. Hovah eating veal-pie in Abraham's kitchen with the old man's elderly and ugly cook. Then, when he makes that very little slip about hares chewing the cud, one must remember that he had only been acquainted with rabbits when they were elegantly dressed up into pies, and then was probably distracted by the bright-eyed slavey who was serving him. We cannot leave the first policeman without remembering that his career is only half finished. He is now Commissioner of Police for the Eastern and Western Hemispheres; some day he will be the Judge of the whole Earth. Let us hope that he won't be so bad as Judge Jefferies, or that ironical old toff, Sir John Pontoon, of Bow-and-Arrow-street. In all seriousness, we may be permitted to devoutly speculate as to whether he will wear a horse-hair wig, with a white necktie like the cap-strings of a nurse-girl, and a long black or red nightgown. This latter article is to hide as much of his honor as possible; for the less one sees of a judge the better. One word more. The editor of this respectable journal has suffered at the hands of the judges. I wonder if the verdict will be reversed in Judge J. Hovah's final Court of Appeal. This question I asked myself, and the still, small voice which I keep on the premises answered: "What oh!"

Mimnermus.

[We do not recognise the above Tennysonian quotation, but it is probably an early rendering of the famous passage, "that men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things."—Editor,]

An Irish car driver was wrapping himself up carefully before starting on a journey on a cold winter's day. "You seem to be taking very good care of yourself," said the impatient fare. "To be shure I am, sur," replied the driver. "What's all the wurld to a man when his wife's a widow?"

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## BOOK CHAT.

Mr. Joseph McCabe contributes the front article to the November number of the *Literary Guide*. Its subject is "The Dread of Materialism." Mr. McCabe derides the notion that the ideal dies out of life under this philosophy. He declares it is one of the tricks of the Spiritualists to create a prejudice against their opponents. The article is written with candor and ability. We have not room to mention the other contents of this periodical. Suffice it to say that they are up to its usual high level.

* * *

The *Ethical World* Publishing Co. sends us six new pamphlets by Dr. Stanton Coit, on the Ethical Movement, the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, What Think Ye of Christ?, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the Lord's Prayer. We have read all these addresses carefully, and marked many passages for criticism; but not having time to write upon them at much length at present, we must rest content with a brief notice. Dr. Coit is a born preacher, and would have been quite at home in a pulpit, if he had been able to accept the dogmas of Christianity. It is impossible to deny that he is eloquent, that he speaks under a high sense of the supreme importance of morality, and that he is animated by a most sincere desire to promote the vital brotherhood of men. But he appears to us to labor under two great defects. In the first place—perhaps from an anxiety to conciliate Christians—he disregards the whole theory of evolution, and reads all the most advanced nineteenth-century ideas into the words which are ascribed to Moses and Jesus Christ. Sometimes, indeed, this is carried to a grotesque length. Dr. Coit occasionally paraphrases the language of Bible characters, and then proceeds upon the assumption that this was what they actually said. And the general result, from a philosophical point of view, reminds us of a Chinese picture, which is painted without perspective.

* * *

In the second place, Dr. Coit makes too light of the claims of intellect. He ignores the fact that society is, in the long run, governed by its ideas. Dogmas are essential to a religious system for this very reason. It is really idle to suppose that those who believe, and those who do not believe, such doctrines as the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and future rewards and punishments, can be organised together into a new Church. Acceptance or rejection of such doctrines affects our whole view of life, and involves endless differences in practice. Nor is it true that character is independent of intellect. Great character without great intellect is an impossibility. Of course, the intellect may not take a literary or prelectical form, but it is there all the same. Character, in short, seems to us a far more comprehensive thing than Dr. Coit imagines. It is not one side of a man's nature, but his whole nature. You hear it in his speech, you read it in his writings, just as you behold it in his movements and actions.

* * *

Dr. Coit says that the Ethicists "affirm that the doing of duty is religion." Now there was a strenuous opponent of Christianity, who was always hostile to sentimental compromises. His name was Thomas Paine. This great man said: "To do good is my religion." We prefer that to Dr. Coit's formula, for "good" is wider than "duty."

* * *

Secularists can afford to smile at Dr. Coit's statement that Ethicists differ from Secularists in their estimate of the importance of "good character and right conduct." Secularists value them quite as highly as Dr. Coit does. To think the contrary savors of Pharisaism. It is possible to believe that soap, for instance, has contributed more towards civilisation than the greatest preacher who ever lived, without being indifferent to the "higher morality." When a man has had a wash he says "I feel clean." Yes, he *feels it*. The cleanliness has gone deeper than the skin. But how many men ever said "I feel clean" after sitting for an hour in a shower-bath of moral exhortation. Anyhow, it isn't safe to despise soap.

* * *

We have every wish that Dr. Coit's addresses should be read. The Ethical movement is not an unimportant one, and he is its chief spokesman in England.

* * *

Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein announce a new book by Mr. Edward Carpenter, with the poetic title of *Angels' Wings*. The book deals with art and its relations to life.

* * *

Mr. Joseph McCabe, once the Very Rev. Father Antony, of the Order of St. Francis, has written a most interesting volume, *Life in a Modern Monastery* (Grant Richards; 6s.). Mr. McCabe is that *rara avis*, an intellectual monk, and he has written frankly and well. We feel that we can trust him when he discourses on his former associates. The rabid writer who gloats over the *Maria Monk* style of writing, as produced by "escaped nuns" and "renegade monks," or by other authors who write with imaginations entirely untrammelled with the least acquaintance with their subject, will learn that much of his hatred is unreasonable.

* * *

With regard to the countries in which the monks undertake parochial duties, such as England, Holland, the United States, and some others, the monk's duties are much of the same character as that of the average sky-pilot. In fact, the monk is more industrious than the clerical "guinea-pig," who works one day a week, and who now and again presides over the harmless necessary tea-fight. The modern monk seems to regard St. Francis with what Carlyle calls "high sniffing contempt," and the saint's rules are more honored in the breach than the observance.

* * *

Mr. McCabe has given us a familiar account of the social and domestic life of the present-day monastery. His book is not so much an impeachment of monasticism as a series of pen pictures of the routine work in such institutions. The book will offend the Catholics and Kensitites, but the Freethinker will find much worthy of his earnest attention.

* * *

Shelley is once more to the front in the book world. The long-sought-for volume, *Poems by Victor and Cazire*, has been reprinted by Mr. John Lane; and Mr. Fisher Unwin announces a new book on Shelley's last days from contemporary Italian sources.

### Undaunted.

Out of the night that covers me
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.
In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.
Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.
It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll.
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

—*From "Poems."* W. E. Henley.

### PROFANE JOKES.

Mary had a little hen
With feathers white as snow;
The preacher paid a visit, then
The chicken had to go.

Little Nephew—"Uncle Simeon, what is profanity?" Old Uncle—"It is er—er—what do you hear when a man sits down on a chair that isn't there?"

Jones—"Our minister is apt to take an original view of any subject. He is to preach next Sunday on the parable of the prodigal son." Smith—"I don't see how he is going to say anything new about that." Jones—"You can't tell. He may make his sermon an expression of sympathy for the fatted calf."

Yeast—"This discussion about the size of a whale's throat, I notice, is still going on." Crimsonbeak—"Yes, it's too bad Jonah didn't leave some report on the subject. He must have had some inside information."—*Yonkers Statesman.*

Badger—"So you think Simbal is a very religious man. What makes you think that?" Cadger—"Why, he talks at the prayer-meeting every night, and the way he brags about his past wickedness is enough to make your hair stand on end."—*Boston Transcript.*

### A New Method.

"So," said the famous manager, "you would like to go on the stage, would you? Well, what are your qualifications? Have you ever had a divorce?"

"No," replied the beautiful applicant, "but I have been asked to christen a boat, and I think I can stir up quite a fight over the question of using wine or water."—*Chicago Daily News.*

Colonel Smith, of the First California, tells a story of one of the recruits at the Presidio. This is an Irishman, and he was doing guard duty. "Do you know your orders, sentry?" asked the colonel. "Yis, sor." "If you face the rising sun, your left hand would be on the north of you and your right hand to the south of you. What would be behind you?" "Me canteen, sor.'

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## MR. SAVE-HIS-SOUL-ALIVE, O!

*(Dedicated, without permission, to the Rev. Ebenezer Grimes, and the Rev. Habakuk Sinfulman, of Little Bethel.)*

Once he was wicked, and jolly, and stout,
Now he is pious, and gloomy, and thin;
And he wanders restlessly, moaning out—
"I am lost, I am dead in sin."

And he calls this "conversion"—the infinite ass!
Converted! yes, since so he desires;
As a tree from its growing life in the grass,
Into fuel to feed church fires.

He is one of "God's vessels" now that he is *cracked*;
For he pleadeth well that his spirit depraved,
Eternally lost ere it knew the sweet fact,
By knowing it now may be saved!

So the world in its self-complacent way
Concludes: "If this driveller be as he paints,
We, who are hearty in work and in play,
Are surely unconscious saints."

If this bathos of lunatic selfishness,
Solely concerned for its own precious soul,
Be sanctified virtue, the Devil us bless!
We would rather serve him, on the whole!

Through this mighty ocean, which heaves and raves,
We carry, as well as we can, our life;
Holding it up from the hungry waves
Only by sleepless strife.

The wind howls loud, and the billows run high,
Our little skiff strains, and quivers, and reels;
This fool doth nothing but croak and cry,
Quaking from head to heels.

The timbers, in fact, are not too sound;
The shore's far off, and the chart-marks dim;
And this coward shrieking his "Oh! I am drowned!"
Will upset us all with him.

Nay, already his Bedlamite antics and fits,
With the storms confusioning deaf and blind,
Have frightened out of their feminine wits
The half of our womankind.

He is drunk from some damned illicit still
Of mental blue-ruin long scores above proof;
A dastard must drown his sense in a swill
When Hope goes a little aloof.

Would Hope, with her frank, bright smile, embrace
Such a maudlin, whimpering wretch, do you think?
She turns, with disgust in her blooming face,
From his thick breath, hot with drink.

Can he fancy that Providence placed him here
To drivel out measures of lachrymal brine,
When it rains hard half the days in the year,
"And the sea's too deep for our line"?

Or are sighs and groanings needed to swell
This great dead wind, whose pitiless blasts,
With enormous swoop and savage yell,
Come clutching our poor slim masts?

To think that a fellow should launch to fight,
In the name of Heaven, against Hell and Sin,
Croaking in such a delirious fright,
As if the Devil must win.

— James Thomson.

## Warrior Preachers.

With a chaplain in every regiment, it would seem that our military chieftains might forbear to preach; but they appear to be as willing as the politicians to work the handle of the religious pump, or as the preachers are to turn the political crank. The other day General Nelson A. Miles, commander of the army, was the principal speaker at a gospel meeting in Baltimore. It was an occasion for spiritual awakening, and General Miles added to the mystification of the audience by attributing the courage and patriotism of the soldiers, as well as the progress in civilisation, to the influence of Christianity. He may have derived this notion from a study of the occasional speeches of Emperor William of Germany, and, like him, forgot that there were good patriots and brave soldiers before pagan superstitions were ever known under the name of Christianity, and that there was a higher civilisation prior to the introduction of Christianity than was permitted to exist for fifteen hundred years thereafter. If religion is the inspiration of soldiers, and if God bestows the victory where he listeth, we might as well send our women and Sunday-school children out to fight our battles.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

## THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

Report of monthly Executive meeting, held at the Society's office, Thursday, October 27; the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were present: Messrs. E. Bater, R. Forder, W. Heaford, M. Loafer, P. Sabine, W. Leat, J. Neate, B. Munton, H. Brown, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. Monthly cash statement received and adopted.

The Secretary placed a cash statement of the Children's Fund before the meeting, which showed the receipts would now exceed the expenditure by a few shillings.

The President reported his attendances at the Free Press Defence meetings, and the Secretary was instructed to make arrangements at the Holborn Restaurant for the Society's annual dinner early in January.

Some discussion then arose in regard to new members of Branches, and also lapsed members who may renew. The President ruled that no person was a member of this Society until the Executive was made aware of the fact, and by the receipt of the Executive's share of the subscription. The Secretary reported seven new members from the Birmingham Branch, and one from Finsbury. The meeting then adjourned. Edith M. Vance, *Secretary*.

N.B.—Branch secretaries are requested to kindly note the above-mentioned ruling, and to assist the secretary by forwarding at their earliest convenience the declaration forms of all new members, and to notify all lapsed members who renew subscriptions. Secretaries are also reminded that the rule for payment of Branch fees is quarterly, or at least half-yearly.

## JOSEPH SYMES'S WINDOWS BROKEN.

The following appeared in the Melbourne *Age*, Sept. 21: "A muscular member of the church militant created some consternation at the east-end of Burke-street on Monday afternoon. He smashed the shop window of Mr. Joseph Symes, the well-known Freethought advocate, and 'seized' thirty-three pamphlets, being incited thereto probably by the irreverent titles which some of the pamphlets bore. The man gave the name of Edward Stokes, and his age as twenty-five years. He stated that he was a miner, and bore all the outward signs of respectability. From certain rather incoherent assertions which he made to the police, it seems that he has lately been making a careful search for religious light, and that, in pursuance of his investigations, he purchased a copy of one of the pamphlets. A perusal of it appeared so to disturb his mind that he walked up to the shop, smashed the window, and grabbed as many of the offending pamphlets as were within reach. Having done this, he came to a dead stop, and stood on the footpath, in statuesque firmness, 'waiting,' he explained, 'for a policeman to come up and protect him.' In further elucidation of his conduct he said to Constable Crimmins, after his mentioning his prior perusal of one of the pamphlets: 'I tried to keep away, but found I could not. I had to do something.' The constable took him to the Little Burke-street watch-house, where he was locked up on charges of breaking a window, valued at £1 5s., and stealing certain pamphlets. He was brought before the City Court bench yesterday, and was fined 5s., with 20s. damages."

Mr. Symes adds to this in his *Liberator*: "The young man is not so bad as appeared. He came in on Wednesday about noon, and told my wife he had come to apologise, and paid her £1 to cover the damages. This shows that he has more conscience than most people, and I can but honor him for doing his best to repair the wrong he did. I sent a brief note to the *Age* reporting that he had apologised and paid."

## 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.

Little Tommy (sliding down the roof)—"Oh, Lord save me! Don't let me slide off the—never mind, Lord; I kotched on a nail."

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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. Cohen, "Christianity and the Jews."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 11, Annual general meeting of members; 7, Entertainment and dance.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Dr. Coit and others, "What can Ethics Do for Us?"

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, J. M. Robertson, "Education as a Right."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "Can Virtue be Taught?"

WEST LONDON BRANCH (20 Edgware-road): November 8, at 9, Committee meeting. November 10, at 8.15, "Freethought and its Relation to the Social Problems." Discussion.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Peckham Rye): 8.15, E. Parker, "Lecky's *European Morals*."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "The Unknown God."

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Embankment): 11.30, Debate between Messrs. White and Sandover, "The Triumph of Secularism."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): J. McCabe—11, "A New View of Life"; 7, "Life in Other Planets." November 7, at 8, "From Rome to Rationalism."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. Sanders: "Francis Place: A Forgotten Chartist."

DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, H. McGuinness, "Christian Missions."

GATESHEAD (Town Hall): Harry Snell—3, "Religion and the Science of the Century"; 7, "Brutus: Philosopher and Republican."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, T. Robertson, "The Conquest of Mexico"; 6.30, A lecture.

HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall): 7, Conrad Naewiger, "The Freethought Platform."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. and Mrs. John Glendining, Dramatic Recitations.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Smith, "Theology the Enemy."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): G. W. Foote—11, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 3, "Confession in the Church"; 7, "The Meaning of Death." Tea at 5.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): W. Haford—11, "Theological Epithets: Their Use and Abuse"; 3, "The Conflict between Miracles and Medicine"; 7, "The Unrealities of Religion." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, A. Reading.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—November 6 and 13, Athenæum Hall, London; 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester. November 30 and December 1, Failsworth. December 4, Manchester.

H. PERCY WARD, 5, Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—November 27, Liverpool. December 4, Leicester. 18, Birmingham.

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EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

ISSUED BY THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

VOL. XVIII.—NO. 46. SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1898. PRICE TWOPENCE.


## GIORDANO BRUNO.

WERE not the insular tastes and prejudices of English literature well known, it would be perfectly astonishing that no Life of Bruno has appeared in our language until recently. The Italians, the Germans, and the French have diligently worked in this field. Berti's great biographical work appeared in 1876, Bartholmèss's *Jordano Bruno* in 1847, and Wagner's edition of Bruno's Italian writings as far back as 1830. But, until lately, all *we* have had is a few scattered magazine articles, a few pages in Maurice, and a chapter in Lewes's *Biographical History of Philosophy*. Fortunately, we no longer suffer under the reproach of neglecting one of the most fascinating figures in the history of thought. Bruno was a knight errant of philosophy; his life was an Odyssey, and his death a martyrdom. From amidst the storm and stress of the sixteenth century, where so many champions, named and unnamed, affronted the terrible power of the Church and engaged the wild beast of Superstition, Bruno stands out vividly by reason of his fervid poetical temperament, his exuberant wealth of ideas, his continued sufferings, and his untameable courage. How he appears to a later genius somewhat akin to his own may be seen in Mr. Swinburne's two noble sonnets. To our mind he is the supreme martyr of all time. There is about his whole life, and the whole character of his mind, an air of sovereign greatness. He worked out no system of philosophy like Spinoza; he produced no immortal masterpiece of literature, although he had the endowments of a fine poet; but he devoted his life to truth, finally offering it on the altar of Progress with the superbest heroism. While valor is accounted man's highest virtue (and when it ceases to be so, man will cease to be man) Bruno's will always be a resplendent name in history. Some day or other a man of genius will give us a final study of his life. Meanwhile we may be thankful for the tentative *Life of Giordano Bruno* by I. Frith, who is, we believe, a lady. It is assuredly not, as the *Athenæum* said, worthy to match with Mr. Christie's monumental life of Etienne Dolet. Yet it has conspicuous merits which we cheerfully recognise. The quotations from Bruno's works are made with excellent taste, the translations are skilful, there is much illustrative historical matter gathered from many sources, and a capital bibliography, though, unfortunately, there is no index.

Our praise, however, must now be qualified. First of all we complain of the portrait of Bruno in this volume. The shadows are too deep, spoiling the Apollonian beauty which makes the Wagner portrait a haunting vision of glorious manhood. Next, the style of the book is too grave, and sometimes even dull. It is never enthusiastic, and even in describing the supreme hour of martyrdom it is never for a moment hurried out of its decorous repose. Lastly, we object to the writer's trick of saddling Bruno with her own views. She does this while censuring the partiality of others. After remarking that every man puts something of himself into his hero, as a Jewish painter gives a hook to his hero's nose, she complacently adds: "In works upon Bruno and his philosophy he will be found to appear as a Materialist, an Atheist, a Pantheist, and sometimes in his *real character* as an Idealist." (The italics are ours.) What delicious *naïveté!* We should say it is unmistakably feminine.

George Meredith, in one of those fine epigrams of which he has the secret, says that "Barriers are for those who cannot fly." A similar idea is expressed by Bruno. "Difficulty," he says, "is ordained to deter mean spirits; rare, heroic, and divine men pass over the road of difficulty, and compel necessity to yield them the palm of immortality." We doubt whether Bruno believed in any other kind of immortality than this, the immortality of fame, a life in the memory of posterity. For the "mob," or rather for their opinion, he had a most profound contempt. But he looked forward to joining "the choir invisible, whose music is the gladness of the world." To realise this, he courted no temporary applause of the multitude; he labored for the future, and made his life a part of the upward life of his age. He was not to be caught by the cheap baits that capture meaner spirits. There was, indeed, something fiery, splendid, and unique about him. Schwegler well said that Bruno, Campanella, and Vanini were "precursors and prophets." Hegel remarked of Bruno, "He is a comet." Bunsen wrote in his Memoirs: "The works of Bartholmèss of Strasburg gave me occasion to become more nearly acquainted with that strange, erratic, comet-like spirit, a genius, but a Neapolitan, whose life was but a fiery fragment." Hallam calls him "the meteor of science," and Cousin speaks of the "traces of blood and fire" that marked his path. Tracking the course of such a spirit is surely a grateful task.

Bruno, it is now nearly certain, was born at Nola, near Naples, in 1548, eight years after the death of Copernicus, and thirteen years before the birth of Bacon. He always loved the place of his birth, paying it many high-flown compliments; but his love was not a prejudice, for writing in a foreign land he said that "The true philosopher makes every country his home."

At fifteen Bruno became a novitiate in a Dominican monastery. In his eighteenth year he was sceptical as to the Trinity, and he detested the monks whom he afterwards referred to as "personages very ready to give away places in the kingdom of heaven, but incapable of earning an inch of ground for themselves." One of his accusers at his trial charged him with saying "Let friars live on a scanty portion of broth."

The young monk studied deeply, as his later writings testify. "What vast reading and what varied study," says Bartholmèss, "appear on every page! How many authors are praised, blamed, and quoted!" Turning from the ignorance and hypocrisy of those around him, he found solace and delight in the society of the Muses. While in the convent he wrote many sonnets and two pieces called *The Candle Bearer* and *Noah's Ark*. In the latter he celebrates the ass, who is symbolic of stupidity, ignorance, and false piety. In the former work he opens with an invocation of the ass. "I have seen," he says, "the monks of Castello in Genoa hold up the tail of an ass, veiled, for the people to kiss, crying 'Do not handle it; kiss it. This is the sacred relic of that blessed ass which was found worthy to convey our God from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem. Worship it, kiss it, and make your offerings to it.'" Years later, in his most daring work, *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, by which he means Superstition, Bruno wrote: "I dare add nothing to the spotless majesty of those two asses which shine in the space of Cancer, because chiefly *of these* (both by justice and reason) *is the kingdom of heaven*, as I shall invincibly demonstrate by most powerful reasons some other time, for I dare not now speak of such an important matter."

No wonder that Bruno was twice threatened with trial for heresy. One hundred and thirty counts being drawn



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up against him, he fled from Naples in 1575. He cast off his religious habit, and let his hair grow to hide the tonsure. Noli, Rome, and Genoa were his three first halting places. In 1579 he was at Geneva, and frightfully poor. Some Italians gave him a citizen's dress, minus the trunk hose, which he made for himself out of his old garments. He found work in a printing-house as a corrector of proofs, but his peace was soon broken. Although Calvin was dead, his intolerant spirit still lived. Bruno was given to understand that unless he embraced the Calvinistic doctrines he would not be allowed to remain in the city. He was arrested, but liberated after due admonition; and shaking off the dust of his feet against Calvin's castle, he went to Lyons, whence, after a month's stay, he repaired to Toulouse. This city was a stronghold of the Inquisition. Vanini was burnt there in 1619. Its reputation for *auto-da-fe* was so great that Rabelais made Pantagruel decline to visit a place where men were grilled like red herrings. Bruno, however, remained at Toulouse for more than a year, lecturing on Philosophy at the University. He was at Paris in 1581. Henry III. was a profligate like our Charles II., but he also resembled the Merry Monarch in preferring science to theology. He appointed Bruno to the post of lecturer extraordinary at the Sorbonne, which did not involve the necessity of attending Mass. The orthodox pundits, however, were soon scandalised by the new lecturer's heresies. Bruno consequently had to quit Paris. He was at the court of Queen Elizabeth from 1583 to 1585, his home being the French ambassador's house, and his chief society being men like Sir Philip Sidney, Fulke Greville, Dyer, and Hervey. This was the brightest spot in Bruno's life; a peaceful oasis in the midst of a stormy wilderness. Greater mental freedom prevailed than on the Continent; yet when these choice spirits assembled the doors were locked before they began their conversation. The heresies of such men were of a deeper dye than Protestantism itself could tolerate. G. W. FOOTE.

*(To be continued.)*

## CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

THE First Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. J. G. Goschen, recently stated that "the Church has risen to its duties," and we presume that the recent "Citizens' Sunday" will be cited by a certain class of professed Christians as a proof, to use Mr. Goschen's language again, that "the Church in these later years had taken a new departure, and had seen a new duty which it would be competent and eager to perform. It wished to take, and had taken, a larger share in what he might call social work." But two questions here arise:—(1) Why has the Church been so long, not merely indifferent, but positively opposed to the social wants of the people? (2) In the Middle Ages, when the Church professed its anxiety to do something for the welfare of the masses, what did it accomplish? Simply nothing that raised the poor from the slavish and degraded condition into which they had fallen through obeying the teachings of the clergy. Moreover, the feeble efforts which the Church for a brief period did make were not actuated so much by a desire to elevate the "lower classes" socially, as to make them "contented in that sphere of life in which it had pleased God to place them." Mr. Goschen really admits this, for in assigning a cause for the interest the Church took in the poor he says: "All this was rather with a view to developing the spiritual side of human nature. It was the spiritual improvement of the masses in which the Church was almost exclusively engaged." While we admit that it may "never be too late to mend," we object to attribute to Christian influence the present concern which the various Churches are manifesting for the sons of toil. That improvement, such as it is, has been brought about through Christians becoming conscious that the poorer classes have "found them out," and that, in consequence, the popular faith is losing its hold upon the public mind. To-day it is the schoolmaster, not the priest, who "rules the roast."

The Church has risen to a sense of its duties because it hopes that, in so doing, its existence will be prolonged. If this is denied, let it be explained why, during the many past centuries, Christians of all denominations have ignored the secular requirements of the community. Their present action in joining the ranks of social reformers is humanitarian, not Christian. Hitherto they have tried to follow the example of Jesus, and have based their conduct upon what they term the "spirituality of man"; but, finding that a failure, they turn to the "humanity of man," where alone are to be found the agencies for, and the inspiration to, all real mundane reform. The remedies prescribed in the New Testament for the evils of the world are:—Love for Christ, poverty of spirit, disregard of the things of the world, taking no anxious thought for the morrow, working principally for the supposed advantages of some unknown life, and an absolute dependence upon an alleged supernatural power. On the other hand, reason and experience teach that the true panaceas for the wrongs which so terribly afflict society are love between man and man, a firm and determined spirit, persistent attention to the needs of the world, an anxious desire to provide for the necessities of the morrow, a striving above aught else to realise the highest advantages of our present existence, and an undivided reliance upon nature and her many and varied potencies. Herein lies the difference between the Secular and the Christian methods of endeavoring to regenerate society. It is not difficult to decide which of the two has proved the better in promoting the social status of the people. When the Christian plan was in force, little or no social progress was achieved; but, in proportion as the secular remedy has been tried, advancement to a more just regulation of affairs has been the result. Practical experience is our great monitor, and that teaches that human evils can only be effectually cured by human means, and that obedience to natural laws is more efficacious as a regenerating force than all the theological nostrums ever administered to self-deluded victims.

The very fact of a "Citizens' Sunday" being necessary at the present time is in itself an impeachment of Christianity as a social factor. It has had nearly two thousand years' trial under (for it) most favorable circumstances, and it is now admitted by many of its warmest adherents to have been a decided failure as a proper and useful social force. What is the logical meaning of such Christian impotency? Why this: either that Christ failed to supply the requirements of social justice, or that his followers have not obeyed his instructions. Whichever position is taken, Christianity stands condemned as a practical remedy for the drawbacks of the community. Personally we believe that there are great defects in both cases. As John Stuart Mill, the late Bishop of Peterborough, and other prominent writers, have stated, other agencies than those found in Christianity are necessary to advance the civilisation of the world. And it would be a novelty indeed to find any nation attempting to regulate its affairs by the teachings of the New Testament. The Kaiser is reported as having recently proclaimed from Mount Zion "Peace on earth," and yet the world was never more warlike than it is at present. Emperor William proceeded to say: "From Jerusalem there came the light in the splendor of which the German nation has become great and glorious; and what the Germanic peoples have become, they became under the banner of the Cross, the emblem of self-sacrificing Christian charity." If this be true, so much the worse for the Cross; for it is evident that in Germany Christianity has done nothing to raise the social condition of the masses, while the worst parts of the faith have influenced "the powers that be" to keep the people in abject submission, and to make them the victims of Christian bigotry and pious persecution.

On "Citizens' Sunday" various preachers dilated upon the present wretched social conditions of the people, but they omitted to show how any effectual improvement could be obtained through complying with the injunctions of the New Testament. The Rev. W. J. Dawson said: "The whole atmosphere of the ancient world was cleansed when Christianity uttered the two magic words, 'Brotherhood' and 'Humanity.' These words needed to be re-uttered with new emphasis and fuller meaning." But those "magic words" had been "uttered" long before the advent of Christianity, which has certainly not been remarkable for enforcing their application. Very little "brotherhood" exists to-day, even within the Churches, as recent events amply prove. And as to "humanity," let the "Citizen" preachers speak for themselves. The Rev. Herbert H. Henson remarked: "Consider how out of the vastness of the scale of modern life, the innumerable multitude of the population, the inextricable complexity of the relationships,

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the ubiquitous influence of commerce, there has grown up for us all a rigid despotism of social custom, an iron sway of class conventions, which hem us round on every side, which restrain our liberty, which control our thought, which dull our moral sense, which blur the clear-cut outlines of our duty, and merge, by an unconscious and almost irresistible compulsion, ourselves in our class." The Rev. Monro Gibson, in alluding to the prophet Amos's mission to the rulers of Israel, said: "Amos wrote 750 B.C., and yet at the end of the nineteenth century there was the same shameful extravagance on the one side and the same pinching poverty on the other." The Rev. C. E. Walters pointed out "that at present London was anything but an ideal city. Side by side with the rich and luxurious lived those whose incomes were barely sufficient to keep soul and body together, while in the streets of that neighborhood vice nightly flaunted itself in utter disregard of all the laws of God and man." The Rev. Dr. Lawrence confessed that "Christians have failed in their duty to apply the precepts of the Gospel to international affairs." According to the latest returns, there are at present in London 37,000 people living five in one room; 17,000 living six in one room; 6,000 living seven in one room; 1,800 living eight in one room; 32,000 living eight in two rooms; and 14,000 living nine in two rooms.

Add to this picture of horror and shame the following statement of the Secretary of the London Reform Union, which appeared in the *Church Gazette* of the 29th of last month: "The problems presented by London's huge aggregation of poverty and degradation—the overcrowded and insanitary condition of the dwellings of so many of the working population, the demoralising irregularity of their employment, the horrors of the sweating system, the drawbacks arising from the segregation of the rich and the poor, the lack of healthful recreation, beauty, or rest, in the 'cities of the poor'; the ravages of drink, vice, and crime among the poorly-fed, badly housed, and casually employed denizens of the slums; the special difficulties connected with the transformation of the wife and mother into a wage-earner, and the home into a workshop; above all, the squalor, coarseness, and neglect which are destroying the character and intelligence of so many thousands of London's children—all these, it is felt, are subjects which no religiously-minded citizen dare ignore, but which, amid the pressure of private duties, are apt to be overlooked." Well might the Rev. W. J. Hocking, on reading this, exclaim: "Great God, what problems!"

Yes, they *are* problems, and for their existence the rev. gentleman's Church must share much of the responsibility. Until recently the clergy had the principal management of societarian affairs; they had under their control the training of the young, and the supplying or withholding the materials for ennobling character among adults. And the present degraded social state of the toiling classes is the result. The Rev. Mr. Dawson tells us that at the inception of Christianity "the whole atmosphere of the ancient world was cleansed." In that case the followers of Christ started with clean surroundings. The question is, How then did the social atmosphere become corrupted side by side with the influence of the Church? The answer is: The Church is destitute of progressive agencies, its clergy are not secular reformers, and its teachings lack the power to initiate and perpetuate social justice.

CHARLES WATTS.

## SKY-PILOTS AT SEA.

OUR dear, dull old friend, the *Record*—always in tears over something: the aggressions of Popery, the defection of Protestant bishops, the indifferentism of the world, the spread of unbelief, or what not—has just discovered a new incitement to lamentation. It has found out, with the friendly aid of a northern shipping paper, that there are at the present time "no fewer than 20,000 British merchant ships in which the crews are never assembled for divine worship, at sea or in port, on week days or on Sundays."

No wonder there are so many wrecks. No wonder the papers teem from time to time with accounts of storm-stricken, rock-shattered, ice-bound vessels; of collisions in fogs, of fires, and explosions on board; of maimed, starved, drowning crews; of engulphed cargoes, and other tragedies and disasters of the deep. What we have to explain is not how it is that some of these 20,000 merchant ships come to grief, but how it is that any of them reach their havens in safety.

Somehow the majority manage to accomplish their voyages with a fair amount of immunity. The *Record* would doubtless ascribe that happy circumstance to the exercise of divine mercy. As to the crews that go down—well, the divine mercy has not been extended to them, or perhaps, in their case, it is divine mercy of another kind. Anyhow, we cannot expect that it will be strained to the extent of covering all and everyone of the 20,000 ships manned by crews who never assemble for divine worship on Sundays, and who—at any rate collectively—pray not, neither do they sing hymns.

The difficulty is to discover the principle on which the selection is made. It is not to be supposed that the crews that are lost are worse than those that are saved. All that we may assume is that it is necessary to make an example of some of the 20,000 for the benefit of the others. How they are picked out must ever be a mystery to the believer, though Freethinkers—without going to first causes—might satisfy themselves with some such natural explanation as bad seamanship, defective construction, mechanical disablement, or such untoward conditions as hurricanes, fogs, or unsuspected rocks.

On our great naval vessels and palatial liners religious services are held not only regularly, but decently and in order. True, they are liable to abrupt termination by sudden squalls or other unexpected disturbances, when officers and men immediately find that they have something better to do. Nevertheless, it is edifying to read the familiar description of a "Sunday Service at Sea." You see in your mind's eye the crew, old and young, drawn up in lines or crowding the rigging, grave and reverent in demeanor, the passengers (if it is a liner) picturesquely posed in their Sunday attire, the Union Jack displaying itself as an altar cloth, the captain with one eye on his hymn-book and the other cast up aloft or roaming round the vessel. Then you take in the "blue infinite expanse of ocean," and the "vast, o'erhanging vault of heaven," and listen to the lapping waves as they beat rhythmic time to the strains of "Aurelia" or the "Old 44th"—all directing one's thoughts on this holy day to so-and-so and so-and-so.

Then it is that you pity, from the bottom of your soul, the 20,000 merchant ships that never have—apparently never think of having, and perhaps don't want—anything of the sort. Their benighted crews do in a measure endeavor to make up for the loss. They have merry jigs on the forecastle to the stirring strains of fiddles; they sing nautical ballads with roaring choruses, and tell "tall" and wonder-exciting yarns about as true as—certainly not more untrue than—those read from the Scriptures to the solemn crowd on H.M.S. *Octopus* or the great *Palace of Athens*. They also do a little useful tailoring, which adds to the comfort of their bodies, if it does not tend to the salvation of their souls.

All the same, they are without the sanctifying presence and instruction of accredited sky-pilots. And sadder still to say, the heavenly guides, with their ancient charts, seem never to be missed.

Apart from the religious aspect of the matter, the *Record* suggests that the assembling for Sunday services would induce a feeling of "harmony" amongst all on board. The word is unfortunate. It may be a matter of regret or one of indifference, but the "harmonic meeting" which would most commend itself to these toilers of the sea is not exactly that of which the *Record* would approve. If we know anything of Jack Tar, we should say he would infinitely prefer a hornpipe to a hymn, and would sooner fetch up a banjo than the Bible he has carefully stowed away at the very bottom of his locker.

The sky-pilots may think that fixed religious services, conducted by the master-mariners on these small vessels with their heterogeneous crews of all nationalities, of all creeds, and of no creed at all, would tend to general harmony. Other people might think that they would be a perpetual source of discord and discontent. If any of the crew refrained from regarding their skipper as a "psalm-singing, canting hypocrite," it is very likely they would be tempted to become hypocrites themselves. When the preacher is the skipper, who would dare to remain aloof or below? Promotion would be sought by

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competitive piety, with ten marks for seamanship and twenty for Scriptural knowledge.

In any case, we may take it that very few of the twenty thousand skippers would willingly add to their duties the herculean task of sky-piloting their crews. More readily could we imagine these rough, bluff old salts thrusting the proposal aside with frowning perturbation, or with an indignant "Belay there!" or maybe with a resounding, hair-lifting oath. Not every crew could find a captain so amiably accommodating as he of the *Bab Ballads*:—

> If ever they were dull or sad,
> Their captain danced to them like mad,
> Or told, to make the time pass by,
> Droll legends of his infancy.

And who thus addressed his men:—

> "By any reasonable plan
> I'll make you happy if I can;
> My own convenience count as *nil*,
> It is my duty—and I will."

Looking at the nature of the Sunday services proposed, and the log-book that would be brought out, it does not seem that the crews would be rendered any easier or happier in their minds by the pious innovation. Sailors have superstitions enough already. There is no need to urge skippers to enforce upon them a number of others, to which, indeed, they may at the present time give a nominal assent, but with only the vaguest idea of their character or evidential foundation. In no sense have these Christian superstitions become, in the minds of the vast majority of the men, deep-rooted or intelligent beliefs. Interrogate Jack Tar, and it will be found that he is much more willing to swear to the existence of the "Great Sea Serpent" than to tie himself down to any belief in Jonah's whale. He may anticipate the direst consequences from setting sail on a Friday, but is prepared to fearlessly, and even cheerfully, violate the sanctity of the Lord's Day.

Whatever may have been the practice in the sixteenth century, when the commercial voyagers, adventurers, and discoverers of the Tudor reigns assembled their crews to "erve God twice a daie with the ordinaire service usuall ins the Church of England," it would be very surprising in deed if the crews of merchant vessels nowadays would not kick at such an infliction, however mercifully modified to suit the spirit of the age.

The writer in the *Record* refers to the narrow confines of the forecastles of many of the smaller merchant vessels. Therein he says the seaman can find "no provision for kneeling in prayer"—which is very sad indeed—from the *Record's* point of view, and is a difficulty not to be easily overcome. The only suggestion that immediately presents itself is that the captain should give up his cabin for the purpose. A pious skipper, or an indulgent commander like the captain of Mr. Gilbert's creation, ought not to display any hesitation in according the use of his cabin to an A.B. who desired to pray in privacy, say for favorable winds, a prosperous voyage, or a pot of money. We know that many ships have been saved, many lives preserved, after prayers in the midst of the perils of the sea. We also know that a great many ships have gone down in spite of piteous appeals to Providence from men, women, and children; from husbands and wives locked in each other's arms; from frantic mothers with helpless infants clinging to their breasts. Who can read unmoved Miranda's pathetic description of the wreck in the *Tempest*, and her exclamation:—

> O I have suffer'd
> With those that I saw suffer! A brave vessel
> Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
> Dash'd all to pieces. O the cry did knock
> Against my very heart! Poor souls! they perish'd.
> Had I been any God of power, I would
> Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e'er
> It should the good ship so have swallow'd and
> The fraughting souls within her.

In such hours of peril a man at the pumps is worth a dozen sky-pilots at prayers. A ship-load of parsons is no more likely, indeed is less likely, to be saved than a ship-load of pirates; notwithstanding the prayers of the former, and the imprecations of the latter. In emergencies such as these there is revealed at once, as by the flash of a search-light, the heroism of Jack Tar, the helplessness of the sky-pilot, and, over all, the absolute indifference of Heaven.

FRANCIS NEALE.

## THE SOUL OF A PEOPLE.

*The Crowd.* By G. Le Bon. (Fisher Unwin.) 3s. 6d.
*The Psychology of Peoples.* By the same. 6s.

TWENTY years have passed since George Henry Lewes pointed out that "the distinguishing mark of human psychology is that to the three great factors—organism, external medium, and heredity—which it has in common with animal psychology, it adds a fourth—namely, relation to a social medium, with its product, the general mind." Since the above sentence was written, although a number of writers, both in England and on the continent, have shown more or less recognition of the truth of the principle there laid down, psychological studies are still mainly conducted on individualistic lines. The individual is still studied too much apart from his fellows, is too sharply differentiated from that social medium which has so largely fashioned his moral and intellectual nature, and, as a result, is continually being either half understood or misunderstood altogether. Society, though made up of individuals, yet exerts so powerful an influence upon each of its members that to neglect this factor in the study of an individual is like neglecting to notice the atmosphere in discussing the structure of birds. Indeed, just as the structure of the lower animals is moulded to the conditions of their physical environment, so man's nature is in turn moulded to the conditions of the social medium that surrounds him. The individual as he exists to-day is the result of countless generations of social effort and evolution. Each new generation is born into a network of customs, habits, and beliefs, and adapts itself, to some extent, to the social environment as a condition of existence; and consequently our ultimate explanation of man's nature must be a reference to the social structure of which the individual is so largely an expression.

The study of what may be called, for want of a better term, social psychology is, therefore, essential to a right understanding of human nature as at present constituted; and in this direction one of the most suggestive writers with whom I am acquainted is M. Gustave Le Bon, author of a number of books dealing with this aspect of human evolution, two of which, *The Crowd* and *The Psychology of Peoples*, are now in their English dress before the public. In these two works M. Le Bon discusses the characteristics of crowds, of races of people, and the effect of their racial traits on their evolution and destiny; and although both works are marred by certain economic prepossessions, still one is apt to get more good out of a disagreement with him than comes from full agreement with a writer of only average ability.

The conception of collective action as laid down in these volumes differs widely from that entertained by Mr. Herbert Spencer. According to the latter, collective action is only the summing up of individual instincts and desires; you add them together, and in the result obtain nothing but the addition. M. Le Bon holds, on the contrary, that just as in chemistry certain elements, when brought into combination, form a new body which is not the simple summing up of the properties of its component parts, so a crowd of people acting together may, under certain circumstances, exhibit characteristics either higher or lower than those of its individual members. To give one illustration from our author: "Taken separately, the men of the Convention were enlightened citizens of peaceful habits. United in a crowd, they did not hesitate to give their adhesion to the most savage proposals, to guillotine individuals most clearly innocent, and, contrary to their interests, to renounce their inviolability, and decimate themselves." And, on the other hand, the actions of a crowd may be superior to the conduct of any individual taken singly. "The renunciation of all its privileges which the nobility voted in a moment of enthusiasm during the celebrated night of August 4, 1789, would certainly never have been consented to by any of its members taken singly. The howling, swarming, ragged crowd which invaded the Tuileries during the revolution of 1848 did not lay hands on any of the objects that excited its astonishment, any one of which would have meant bread for many days." The history of trade unionism in our own country would doubtless furnish many instances of a similar nature.

In dealing with the psychological characteristics of different races of people, M. Le Bon lays down certain principles or laws which are doubtless true enough as far as

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they go, but which, to my mind, require a more careful appraisement of their respective values than he is inclined to give. According to M. Le Bon, there are three factors which determine the nature of the individual and direct his conduct. First, and by far the most powerful in our author's opinion, is the influence of one's ancestors. It is the past that speaks most clearly and most powerfully in the present. "The dead, besides being infinitely more numerous than the living, are infinitely more powerful. They reign over the vast domain of the unconscious, that invisible domain which exerts its sway over all the manifestations of the intelligence and of character. A people is guided far more by its dead than by its living members. Century after century our departed ancestors have fashioned our ideas and sentiments, and, in consequence, all the motives of our conduct. The generations that have passed away do not bequeath us their physical constitution merely; they also bequeath us their thoughts. The dead are the only undisputed masters of the living. We bear the burdens of their mistakes, we reap the reward of their virtues."

Second in order of importance comes the influence of our immediate parents; and, third, "commonly supposed to be the most powerful, but nevertheless the weakest," is the influence of environment, including in its scope moral and educational influences. Of these three influences it is the first that is responsible for the production of racial or national characteristics. It is the possession in common of a few mental and moral characteristics, induced by generations of social life under substantially similar conditions, which constitute a racial or national character. "A thousand Frenchmen, Englishmen, or Chinamen chosen at hazard offer notable differences; but nevertheless, owing to racial heredity, they possess common characteristics which allow of the determining of an ideal type of the Frenchman, Englishman, or Chinaman analogous to the ideal type which the naturalist presents when he describes in a general manner the dog or the horse." And because the destiny of a people is decided by the character accompanying an inherited physical structure, which admits but of gradual modification, progress is necessarily a plant of slow growth. Educational influences only become really effective as they are assimilated to the character of a nation; endless reiteration is required before this is effected, and even then the idea frequently becomes profoundly modified before it is an active force with the mass of the people.

With this view of the case we can all, I think, agree. Indeed, it is only the principle laid down by Mr. Spencer in 1850 in his *Social Statics*.* But, like Mr. Spencer, M. Le Bon has fallen into the same neglect of the all-important circumstance that, while the principles governing the modification of a nation's character remain always the same, the *rate* at which that modification may be effected varies with man's own knowledge of the nature of the forces governing such modifications. We may quite agree that, "however intelligent and gifted a people be supposed to be, its capacity for absorbing a new element of civilisation is always very restricted. The brain cells do not assimilate in a day what it has taken centuries to create," and yet question very strongly a forecast as to the rate of progress based upon a supposed identity of conditions in the past and the future. For the important consideration is, that the present—and it will be still more true of the future—differs from the past in the fact that man grows steadily more conscious of the nature of the forces that hasten or retard his development, and takes steps to counteract or intensify their action. The conscious recognition and manipulation of natural forces by man in the interests of man plays a larger part in the life of each generation, and, therefore, when M. Le Bon points to "the dead weight of the entire past" as rendering transformation more difficult, the counterbalancing force of human intelligence is completely lost sight of. It appears to me to be a proposition easy to establish, that the rate of a people's progress increases in proportion to the momentum it receives from preceding generations in the shape of literature, scientific generalisations, and the like. Our own century is a striking illustration of this much; while in savage races the power of heredity certainly is much stronger than it is with civilised mankind. So that, if heredity gives us, the longer the race exists, a greater burden to bear, it is not all a drag; we inherit the wisdom of our ancestors along with their follies, and one may well serve as an antidote to the other.

In brief, the power of the past over the present, while necessarily always great, yet becomes relatively weaker as increasing knowledge places in man's hands means and instruments enabling him to negative the operation of forces here, as he has negatived them elsewhere. Evolution, unconscious in the past, is becoming conscious in the present, and the introduction of this new factor must produce profound and far-reaching results in the growth of humanity. Indeed, the author under review is an argument in favor of this position; for what is *The Psychology of Peoples* but a recognition of the forces ruling social life and, by implication, the possibility of their control? And this much would simply be on all fours with evolution in general, and particularly with the rise of cultivated species of plants and animals. It is the control of natural forces by human intelligence that has produced a Ribstone Pippin from a crab apple, a greyhound from the wild dog, or the hundreds of varieties of roses from the wild plant. In each of these cases the same principles of growth are constantly at work; man simply by his knowledge intensifies the power of certain forces and minimises the power of others, and thus produces in the course of a few generations changes that in the non-human condition of affairs would have required enormous periods of time to accomplish. Why, then, should man not do for his own species what he has already done for other species of animals? The problem is the same, although the factors may be more complex. Still, the complexity of a problem is no reason for dismissing it as insoluble—it should simply act as a spur for further investigation; while experience would suggest, as I have said, that a more complete knowledge of the forces governing the development of society may enable us to materially modify the course of human evolution in a required direction. In which case the final formula would read, not that the destiny of a people is decided by its character, as M. Le Bon has it, but "the destiny of a people is ultimately determined by its knowledge of the forces moulding character, and its ability to control such forces in the interest of society at large."

But M. Le Bon's work raises a wider question still—namely, whether progress is effected principally by conscious or unconscious agencies? and that is a question into which, at present, I have neither time nor space to enter. As I have already said, the author's statement as to the nature of the forces governing the destiny of a people is sound; it is a more careful estimate of their value that is required. Above all, one must never lose sight of the fact that forces of great value at one stage of evolution are of little value at another, and *vice versâ*. It is always true that life can exist only in virtue of adaptation to its environment; but it is also true that the environment of man is with each generation more and more composed of the art, literature, and science—in a word, the conscious productions—of preceding generations. It is the neglect of this principle that forms the principal blot on two books which I can heartily recommend to all my readers as containing most suggestive and valuable information on a most important and fascinating subject. C. COHEN.

* "The social state at any time existing is the resultant of all the ambitions, self-interests, fears, reverences, etc., of ancestral citizens or existing citizens. The ideas current in this social state must, on the average, be congruous with the feelings of citizens, and therefore, on the average, with the social state these feelings have produced. Ideas wholly foreign to this state cannot be evolved, and if introduced from without cannot get accepted, or if accepted die out when the temporary phase of feeling which caused their acceptance ends. Hence, though advanced ideas, when once accepted, act upon society and aid its further advance, yet the establishment of such ideas depends upon the fitness of society for receiving them. Practically the popular character and the social state determine what ideas shall be current, instead of *vice versâ*."

## POPE JOAN.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

MOST readers are more or less familiar with the tale of a female Pope; but of the many who, sitting at the card-table, can tell of the origin of the name "Pope Joan," few indeed have any idea of the grounds for believing or disbelieving the story.

It is said that, towards the middle of the ninth century, a young woman, of English extraction, but born at Mayence,

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fell in love with a young Benedictine monk. She assumed the dress of his order, and entered the convent, of which he was a member, in Fulda. Thence they travelled together to Athens (Boccacio, with more *vraisemblance*, says England), where she had made great progress in the sciences. She found her way in the same attire to Rome, where she obtained high celebrity for her learning and talents. Her success was such that, upon the death of Leo IV. (July 11 or 17, 853 or 855), she was chosen his successor. But her discretion did not equal her theology, for, after a short reign, while going in procession from the Vatican to the Lateran, she was delivered of a child, and expired between the Colosseum and the Church of St. Clement. It is further said that a statue was erected on the spot, which from that time the Papal processions would not pass, and that, to avoid a like mischance for the future, it was decreed that none should be consecrated Pope without being first examined in the *sella stercoraria*, or perforated chair.

Many would at once reject such a story as in itself incredible. Not so Gibbon, whose knowledge of the circumstances of the time has never been surpassed. In Jortin's *Remarks on Ecclesiastical History* is found, under the very date assigned to Pope Joan, a narrative of a scandalous affair which took place at Constantinople, which, intrinsically, is almost as incredible. There are many historic instances of women having passed in the guise of men. Eugenie, the daughter of Philip, Governor of Alexandria, under the Emperor Gallien, disguised herself as a monk, and, by her acquirements and close application, became abbot of the monastery she had entered. The story, into the particulars of which it is well not to enter, is narrated by Alcemis Avitus, Archbishop of Vienna, in the sixth century. Theodora of Alexandria, who lived near the time of the Emperor Leo I., having in her youth committed a grave fault, took the dress of a man, and became renowned for piety and learning. In the twelfth century St. Hildegund assumed the attire of a man, took the name of Joseph, and passed her life in the odor of sanctity in a monastery of Cistercian monks.

The story claims to rest on written authority and monuments of art. Of the numerous chronicles in which Joan is mentioned, the most important one is that of Anastasius, the librarian of the Vatican, who was contemporary with the alleged events. But the passage is termed by Gibbon "a most palpable forgery, foisted into some MSS. and editions." In the only edition I have seen, that of Mayence,* the reference at the end of the life of Leo IV. has all the appearance of being a note by another hand. The question, however, remains, Why were such passages inserted by Roman Catholic editors?

Professor Kist, of Leyden, has pointed out that, in two Milan Codices of the Liber Pontificalis, the texts of the lives of Leo IV., Benedict XI., and Nicholas differ very much from the printed text, and that "the design of preventing the possibility of making a female Pope appears to have had an influence in part on the printed text of these lives."†

The next in importance, though much later in date, is Marianus Scotus, a monk of Fulda, who died at Mayence, 1086. He was a strong partisan of the Papacy, in the time of Hildebrand, and his place and education make his testimony of value. But it also is challenged as a forgery by Catholics; and Dr. Dollinger, while allowing the tale to have been current in the thirteenth century, even doubts if it existed in the genuine writings of Martin Polaccus, the confessor to Pope John XXII. and Nicholas III., whose lives of the Popes was long considered the standard work, although it appears in all known editions; and Pope John XX. is allowed to have styled himself John XXI., on account of his alleged predecessor being styled Johannes.

There is also alleged, in favor of the story, the existence of a statue at Rome, with an enigmatic inscription; the perforated porphyry chair, used only at the Pope's installation; and a statue of Joan at Bologna, alleged to have been that of Pope Nicholas, but asserted by Dr. Brunet, who saw it, to have been distinctly that of a woman. Gibbon says: "Till the Reformation the tale was repeated and believed without offence; and Joan's female statue long occupied her place among the popes in the cathedral of Sienna."

Dr. Dollinger adds:—

> "The Church of Sienna, in the time that followed, gave three Popes to the Roman see—Pius II., Pius III., and Marcellus II. Not one of them ever thought of having the scandal removed. It was not till two centuries later that, at the pressing demand of Pope Clement VIII., Joan was metamorphosed into Pope Zacharias. When Huss, at the Council of Constance, supported his doctrine by appealing to the case of Agnes, who became Pope Joan, he met with no contradiction from either side. Even the Chancellor Gerson himself availed himself of the circumstances of the woman Pope as a proof that the Church could err in matters of fact."

Fully as astonishing, the story was related in the *Mirabilia urbis Romæ*, a sort of guide-book for pilgrims visiting Rome, editions of which were constantly reprinted for a period of eighty years down to 1550.

*(To be concluded.)*

* *Historiæ de Vitis Romanorum Pontificum. Moguntiæ*, 1602, p. 293 (see note, p. 306, margin).

† Gieseler, *Text-book of Christian History*, vol. ii., p. 30, note.

## ACID DROPS.

Gun metal has been used for various purposes. The lamp-posts on London Bridge are made of the metal of French guns taken in the Peninsular war. Captured French cannon also supplied the material for the Achilles statue in Hyde Park, the Wellington statue at Aldershot, and the Wellington Memorial in Phœnix Park, Dublin. But it was reserved to Emperor William to put gun metal to the most pious uses. He has sanctioned the casting of captured French guns into church bells. Every time these bells ring out they will probably be understood to mean, "Damn, damn, damn, damn, damn, damn the French."

Emperor William's absence from Germany in the Holy Land does not prevent his reputation from being carefully guarded at home. A young female clerk named Dyk has just been sentenced to two months' imprisonment for *lese-majesté* at Breslau. Her actual crime was a disrespectful remark about a photograph of the Emperor in a shop window. Any man alive, whether prince or peasant, ought to be ashamed of sending a girl to prison for not being in love with his picture. But there appears to be no limit to the vanity of kings—particularly of pious kings like William of Germany.

Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, speaking at Bolton, declared that the Methodists were now a happy family. They were all united to fight the Devil! And a lot, we dare say, he cares for them! If God Almighty can't settle the Devil, it isn't likely that the Methodists will do the business.

One thing that Mr. Price Hughes said was quite true—namely, that the majority of the people of England were outside all the Churches; and that they are so proves the absurdity of Christian pretensions.

A writer on Sharks in the *National Review* puts in an incidental plea for the story of Jonah and the whale. He says that the cachalot, or sperm whale, could easily swallow Jonah and all his companions on that ship which had such a bad passage to Tarshish. But how about Jonah's three days' retreat in the monster's intestines? Could he breathe where there was no air, except perhaps the gases of indigestion? Could he resist the gastric juice of his hospitable entertainer? Really, when you are in for a miracle, it is just as well to go the whole hog. If the prophet *lived* inside the whale by a series of miracles, he might also have been *got* inside by a miracle. And the narrower the gullet the better the story.

There is a public service at half-past one in the North-West Chapel of St. Paul's Cathedral. The seats are on either side in two ranges, one labelled "men" and the other "women." It appears that the poor shy men generally keep to their own side, but the women sit just where they please, and quite right too. Of course the men of God are supposed to stand between the males and females, so that all the three sexes are in their proper places—men, women, and clergymen.

Lord Chief Justice Russell administered a much-needed rebuke to the magistrates who are interpreting the new Vaccination Act. He tells them that *their* opinions and *their* consciences have nothing to do with the matter. The conscientiousness of the applicant's objection is all they are concerned with.

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According to the *Aberystwyth Observer*, there has been a dreadful rumpus at the Alexandra Hall of Residence, which is the Welsh University counterpart of Girton or Newnham. One of the "fair girl graduates," with or without golden curls, was actually seen speaking to a young man from her window. She was also charged with having walked out with a young man, and even to have sung a comic song at one of the College meetings. For these horrid offences she was practically expelled, her mother being sent for to fetch her away immediately. Our contemporary says that the chairman of the official meeting which punished the poor girl in this rigorous way was Professor Augus, the son of a famous Baptist minister. Perhaps he thinks that he acted in the spirit of Paul's great panegyric on charity, but few other persons will share his opinion.

There is a goody-goody paper called *On and Off Duty*, conducted for the spiritual welfare of policemen, in a recent number of which we notice what is doubtless a cock-and-bull story of Mr. Frank Smith, the London County Councillor, going up to "a stand of infidel orators" in Hyde Park, and inducing the meeting to give three cheers for Jesus Christ. Perhaps some of our Hyde Park friends will tell us whether the oldest inhabitant, so to speak, has any recollection of Mr. Frank Smith's having spoken under any circumstances from the Freethought platform there.

Here is a sample of the "poetry" this precious journal ladles out for policemen :—

All unseen, the Master walketh
By the toiling servant's side ;
Comfortable words He talketh,
While His hands uphold and guide.

Why does the policeman, when on duty, require the Master's hands to uphold him? Is it because of whiskey or four-half?

Talmage has been working a fresh vein. "Jesus," he said, "had a gentle face ; Jesus had an expressive face ; Jesus had a pleading face ; Jesus had a sympathetic face ; Jesus had a suffering face." And now for the thrilling climax : "Jesus had a tremendous face." Talmage must have been thinking of his own photograph. He has face enough for anything.

We clip the following from *Secular Thought* (Toronto) : "Lyons, Oct. 3.—The Rev. Charles R. Hamblin, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Butler Centre, has been committed to Willard Asylum because of insanity. He imagines that he is Samson ; has pursued his wife, believing her to be Delilah, and alleges that she has made various onslaughts on him with a pair of shears to rob him of his locks. Again, he has seized his brother, calling him a lion, and has endeavored to pry his jaws open. The unfortunate man is thirty-two years of age, and is a son of the Rev. Mr. Hamblin, deceased, former Methodist Episcopal minister." Evidently the poor fellow has been over-studying the Bible.

*Roughs and Religion* is the title of a pamphlet issued by the Church Printing Company, comprising a series of articles that have appeared in *Truth* and the *Sun*. The writer professes to have interviewed some of the "Gideonites," who are enrolled for the protection of the Kensitite Protestants on public occasions. Here is a pretty little confession by one of these soldiers of Christ : "We have had some delightful goes at the 'Cawtholics.' One night, at a hall in High-street, Kensington, I pinned a fellow's arms behind his back while my brother gave him about twenty or thirty blows over the heart. I then let go his arms, and, getting his head under my left arm, gave him about thirty more in the mug. When I let go he dropped senseless to the floor."

This is a lovely exhibition of Christian brotherhood. It recalls the good old times when the Roman historian said that the Christians loved each other like wild beasts.

Mr. Hall Caine, the author of that flashy novel entitled *The Christian*, which has brought him in more money than Jesus Christ and the twelve Apostles ever saw in their lives, is now in America, where he is piloting the stage version of his book. Mr. William Winter, the famous critic, did not see anything to admire in the play, and he said so ; adding that "a religious enthusiast who has not got beyond carnal temptation has not travelled very far." Thereupon the novelist said that this was an attack on the morality of his drama, and called his critic a liar. Mr. Winter replied with caustic irony, referring to "Mr. Hall Caine's exquisite felicity in the choice of language—a felicity which seems to be associated with great sweetness of temper, lovely refinement of style, and a most urbane and benevolent tolerance."

The Rev. H. Wright, vicar of St. Silas, Sheffield, was found dead at the foot of Scarborough Castle Hill, which is three hundred feet high. He is reported to have fallen off accidentally, but it is also stated that he had been suffering from mental depression.

Rev. Samuel Walton Kay, vicar of Butler's Marston, Warwickshire, has been arrested on a charge of feloniously putting off, knowing the same to be forged, a promissory note for the payment of £500, with intent to defraud the Metropolitan Bank of England and Wales.

"If I were really to obey the teaching of Jesus Christ," said the late Laurence Oliphant, "I should take my coat off before I had gone a few steps along Piccadilly, and give it to the first poor fellow who wanted it." Of course the Bishops know that as well as he did, and perhaps that is the reason why they are seldom seen in the streets.

The Christian Scientist who left everything to the Lord brought along a legal assistant at the inquest in order that she might have "fair play."

The minister of a certain parish in Kincardineshire has caused a dreadful scandal in the Kirk. At a meeting of the Church Committee he pleaded guilty to having written a number of ungodly letters to a lady, in which he spoke of tasting nectar from "his Minnie's" lips, besides using a number of other expressions, suggested, perhaps, by the Song of Solomon. The man of God threw himself on the mercy of the Committee, but they resolved that the matter must go before the Presbytery ; and we suppose he will be cut off as an unprofitable member.

The Aberdeen *Free Press* breaks through the reserve of other journals and gives a long report of this case. The man of God's name is the Rev. John Reith, and he is parish minister of Rickarton, near Stonehaven. The young lady has got married since the most effusive letters were written, and her husband is naturally interested in the minister's correspondence with his wife. In addition to the "nectar of your lips" we note that the reverend gentleman anticipated "a warm thrilling embrace." Whether he had it or not does not appear.

Rev. Dr. Parkhurst, the famous New York purity crusader, seems to have come to the conclusion that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not calculated to save the world. The following is an extract from a sermon he preached on October 9 : "Read the gospels as admiringly as you please, eulogise their blessed contents as glowingly as you will, it is not in them unaidedly to save the world, or even to move the world. For three years and a half the disciples had gospel, and only gospel, in the person of Jesus Christ ; yet at the end of that period they were only as so many wooden images and limp rags so far as ability to stir the world was concerned. There never was a finer lot of poltroons than the eleven disciples on the day of their Lord's death, and yet they had been fed on gospel, its beauty and truth, for forty-two months."

Freethinkers in England should bear in mind that the leading Catholic journals in France have been the worst enemies of justice to Dreyfus, and the most reckless insulters of every man who stood up for fair play. Drumont, the Anti-Semite leader, is not a priest, but he is a devout Catholic. M. Brunetière, who has kept out all articles setting forth the case for Dreyfus from the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, is the man who invented the phrase of "the bankruptcy of science." Zola and Clemenceau, on the other side, are Atheists ; and we hear that the heroic Colonel Picquart is a Freethinker.

According to the *Chronicle*, a diabolical plot exists in Paris to assassinate some of the most distinguished Frenchmen who have opposed the intrigues of the Army chiefs. "The people who head the list," our contemporary says, "include an ex-Minister of Justice, a widely-respected journalist, a well-known advanced politician, several leading French men of letters, journalists, and ex-politicians." They have all been warned by the police, and advised not to go about unarmed.

The editor of the *South London Mail* thinks any lie good enough to print about Freethinkers. He permits a pseudonymous scoundrel, signing himself "Enquirer," to ask whether Mr. Foote will return any money collected for the defence of George Bedborough. Mr. Foote has not collected any money for this purpose. All he did was to state that subscriptions could be sent to the honorary secretary or treasurer of the Free Press Defence Committee, whose names and addresses were always given. Any question by a *subscriber* will doubtless be answered by those officials. Questions by non-subscribing busybodies will probably be treated with silent contempt.

What is the matter with the staid and sober *Westminster Gazette*? A few days ago it printed the following brief paragraph :—"The new Mayor of Jarrow is a Salvationist.

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Hallelujah!" Such profanity is quite shocking. People might just as well read the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Joseph N. Good, London City Missionary, has issued a pamphlet entitled "Is there a Dearth of Conversions!" He admits that there is, and he attributes it to the fact that religion has entered into competition with other agencies for the public amusement. But what is poor old religion to do? It must keep pace with the times somehow. If it doesn't, it will die out all the sooner.

The Medway Guardians have had to consider the question of the chaplaincy of their Union. The Rev. G. S. Hitchcock, having given up the doctrine of the Atonement, was inhibited by the Bishop of Rochester from officiating as a Church clergyman in any part of the diocese. This inhibition was printed in the newspapers before it was sent to Mr. Hitchcock, who was very naturally offended. In a strongly-worded letter to the Bishop he said: "Permit me to point out that your lordship did not inhibit a clergyman who was intemperate.....I have known a clergyman who ruined a young woman, clergymen notorious for drunkenness, clergymen who made lying a fine art; and these were not inhibited by their bishops." Moral: the only real sin is heresy.

The *Britishman*, which is apparently an organ of empire and religion, falls foul of *Humanity*, the organ of the Humanitarian League, principally because of its objection to the torture of geese for the sake of their deceased livers. The *Britishman* says it is not at all interested in the sufferings of geese—which is rather peculiar; moreover, it loathes and despises Humanitarians, and would like to grant a divorce to every woman who is married to one. The editor, however, had better look after his own womenkind first. They may want it.

The Rev. Dr. A. J. Harrison, lecturing on "Scepticism and Faith" at Sheffield, is reported in the local *Daily Telegraph* to have spoken as follows: "It seemed to be the case in Sheffield, as he had found in other parts of England, that the Secularists were under an admonition to keep away from his lectures. He was told in Portsmouth that that was literally the case. They might gather how much Freethinking there was in obedience to the order. (Laughter.) He would say to them, as he did in Newcastle, that if a man came who called them scoundrels, and abused them like pickpockets, they would come in hundreds; but if he treated them like gentlemen they stayed away. In adopting that course, he said they were morally encouraging and putting a premium on the very worst form of controversy."

We have always respected Dr. Harrison as a gentleman, and we are sorry to hear him talking in this way. Will he kindly explain *by whom* the Secularists are "told" not to attend his lectures? For our part, we have again and again begged Secularists not to help make meetings for scurrilous scoundrels on the Christian Evidence side, such as the fellow who is now in gaol for abusing girls, and another fellow who shall be nameless. Dr. Harrison has been lecturing for a great many years, and it may be that Secularists do not find much novelty in his discourses, however interesting they might be to those who have not heard him before.

Mr. J. A. Fleming, of Middlesborough, used to be a zealous Secularist. Some time ago, however, he was placed in a lunatic asylum. When he was released he came to London and tried to convince us that he was perfectly sane, but the more he talked the greater were our suspicions. We now see from the local *Evening Telegraph* that he offers to prove that he is Shiloh, prophesied of in the Old Testament, and the Son of Man, prophesied of in the New.

Judge French, at the Shoreditch County Court, was told by the plaintiff in a certain case that the defendant was a Scripture reader and told lies. "He's a what?" asked his honor. "He reads the Holy Bible and tells lies like that," said the defendant. Whereupon his honor remarked: "If he is telling lies and reads the Holy Bible as well, he is not the only one, I'm sure."

At the annual conference of the British section of the Evangelical Alliance, held at Brighton, the Rev. Dr. Gritton had to make a painful confession as to the persecuting spirit of the Protestants in Germany. We quote from the *Daily News*: "In Bavaria the singing of hymns in public, or the distribution of tracts, was forbidden, unless specially permitted by the police. In Finland it was the Protestant element, the Lutheran Church, which persecuted and oppressed all who dissented from the State Church. In Saxony, so far as he knew, Roman Catholics did not persecute; but, oh! the untold persecution by the Lutheran Church there towards those fellow Christians who differed from it. The friends of the Evangelical Alliance must in kindness offer some strong words of remonstrance and counsel to Protestant, as well as Catholic, persecutors on the Continent. After referring to the official oppression of the Baptists in the kingdom of Saxony, he said that, in a recent letter proclaiming the liberties there enjoyed, the Lutheran Minister of Worship at Dresden wrote: 'The worship of the Baptists is not the worship of Almighty God, their meetings are not for pious purposes, and therefore no clause as to liberty in Saxony has anything to do with them.' The fact was that in Saxony the Baptists had no legal rights. Dr. Baedeker had himself taken part recently in two meetings of the same congregations, and the fines for these two meetings amounted to no less than 18,000 marks, furniture being seized for the payment of that sum. The Lutheran Brethren held the truth in the main, but they held it imperfectly in the matter of granting liberty to fellow-believers of other denominations."

A conference of representative clergy and laity held at the Guildhall, Worcester, has solemnly condemned the Rev. Mr. Beeby's book, *Creed and Life*, as containing "deadly error." Mr. Beeby declares it is a logical absurdity to say that Jesus is God, and a contradiction to say that he was born, and also born of a virgin. He also says that the grounds commonly set forth for the belief in Christ's resurrection are "absolutely worthless." We do not know whether Mr. Beeby will be turned out of the Church or not. His book is a sign of the spread of Freethought even in clerical circles.

Four hundred years ago Spain conquered America, which has returned the compliment by conquering Spain. Many results follow this victory, but perhaps the most curious is the extension of missionary enterprise. Red-hot missionary meetings have been held in New York, at which many thousands of pounds have been raised, presumably to Protestantise Porto Rico, Cuba, and perhaps the Philippines. The men of God rush in wherever they see a chance of business; and the poor laymen are bled twice, first to pay for the soldiers who fight for territory, and secondly for sky-pilots who go and fight the devil there.

The Philippines, in especial, ought to yield a rich harvest to the Yankee missionary societies. From seven to ten millions of mere half Catholics are going to hell there as fast as they can gallop. Uncle Sam will gladly shell out a mountain of dollars to save their souls from destruction. And the missionaries will spend the dollars.

## The Last Twilight.

Nor shall we murmur at, nor much regret,
The years that gently bend us to the ground,
And gradually incline our face; that we
Leisurely stooping, and with each slow step,
May curiously inspect our lasting home.
But we shall sit with luminous holy smiles,
Endeared by many griefs, by many a jest,
And custom sweet of living side by side;
And full of memories not unkindly glance
Upon each other. Last, we shall descend
Into the natural ground—not without tears—
One must go first, ah God! one must go first;
After so long one blow for both were good;
Still like old friends, glad to have met, and leave
Behind a wholesome memory on the earth.

—*From "Marpessa."* STEPHEN PHILLIPS.

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

Rough work, Iconoclasm—but the only way to get at truth.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Camels and Christians receive their burdens kneeling.—*Ambrose Bierce.*

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, November 13, Corn Exchange, Chester: 10.45, "What is the Bible?"; 2.45, "The Czar's Appeal to Europe"; 7.30, "The Meaning of Death."

November 20, Camberwell.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 13, Camberwell Hall, S.E.; 20, Hall of Science, Sheffield; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

W. FRENCH.—The *Zoophilist* is the monthly organ (3d.) of the National Anti-Vivisection Society, 20 Victoria-street, London, S.W. Mr. Stephen Coleridge appears to be the editor.

SOUTH LONDONER.—Thanks for copy of the *Mail*. Woffendale is really amusing. We do not ask him to follow his own advice about "trying to be a gentleman." He is too old to achieve any success in that direction.

FAIRPLAY.—Thanks for a copy of the correspondence in your local press. Your letters are sure to do good. We wish Freethinkers all over the country would try to ventilate Freethought questions in the newspapers.

J. FISH.—It was an awkward blunder: we hope it has been corrected.

WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.—Unknown, 10s.; Dr. Laing, £1.

W. A. FINCKEN.—Many thanks. Too many do nothing and give nothing.

X RAYS.—Would have been better if more satirical and less savage. The second verse spoils the effect of the other two.

W. COX.—Thanks for the address. Mr. Foote will write you on the other matter.

T. WILMOT.—We wish the Camberwell Branch all success in its gallant fight.

R. EDWARDS.—Go ahead. The Christians must not be allowed to break up Secular meetings on Peckham Rye, or elsewhere.

J. GRAHAM.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Watts's visit to Wigan was so successful. We note that the next Branch meeting will be held this evening (November 13) at 6, at the Dog and Partridge Hotel.

MINNIE MANN.—We thank you both. There might (as you say) have well been a larger list of subscriptions. What we have received, however, will be used to the best advantage.

E. R. WOODWARD.—We are obliged for the extracts.

THEOMACHOS and M. LOAFER.—See "Sugar Plums."

WILLIE DYSON.—Thanks; see paragraph.

B. STEVENS.—Will look through it and decide.

JAMES NEATE.—Always glad to receive such cuttings.

A READER OF "REYNOLDS'."—The Free Press Defence Committee is issuing a manifesto, giving a detailed statement of the Bedborough fiasco, of its own action before the trial, and of the money subscribed and its disposition. The last item will be rather unpleasant for some persons.

C. COHEN advises us that the 5s. each acknowledged from Messrs. Garven and Tait as for Shilling Month should have been for the Treasurer's Scheme. There is nothing further to rectify, as the money was paid by Mr. Cohen to Miss Vance, the N. S. S. secretary.

W. H. DEAKIN.—We are obliged. See paragraph.

H. LEES SUMNER, subscribing to our Circulation Fund, praises the *Freethinker* as a weekly tonic, and expresses his wonder that some wealthy Freethinker does not invest enough money in it to double its circulation, which might be done easily.

H. THORP.—No doubt such lectures as the one you so appreciated are a very agreeable change.

J. UNSWORTH.—You will be proposed in due course as a member of the Secular Society, Limited.

T. LANGFORD.—Thanks.

S. HUDSON.—Thanks for your good wishes and the practical token of them.

W. W.—Your cuttings are welcome.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—A. and F. Webster (per Miss Vance), 6s.; Unknown, 10s; Dr. Laing, 10s.; W. W., 2s.; L. A., 2s.; A. F., 2s.; W. F., 2s.; R. F., 1s.; H. B., 1s.; W. Mann, 2s. 6d.; Minnie Mann, 2s. 6d.; H. Lees Sumner, 4s.; H. Thorp, 2s.; S. Hudson, 10s.; J. Payne, 3s.; A. S. Vickers, 1s.

RECEIVED.—New Century—Christian Million—Two Worlds—On and Off Duty—Ethical World—Progressive Thinker—Secular Thought—Zoophilist—Boston Investigator—Public Opinion—Sydney Bulletin—Isle of Man Times—Liberator—The Witness—Aberdeen Free Press—New York Truthseeker—New Orleans Times-Democrat—Torch of Reason—South London Mail—Free Society—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Freidenker—Awakener of India—Hackney Gazette—Manchester Evening News.

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.

*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.

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 is due.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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. FOOTE delivered three lectures in the Secular Hall, Manchester, on Sunday. The morning and afternoon audiences were good, and the hall was crowded almost to suffocation in the evening. During the day a record collection was made for the N. S. S. General Fund. The Branch committee express themselves as delighted with the day's proceedings. They say it was "like old times."

Mr. Foote started a Branch of the N. S. S. at Chester some years ago, when the Bishop of that city publicly libelled Secularists as ill-users of little children. Mr. Cohen and other lecturers have visited Chester since, and now Mr. Foote is going to deliver three Sunday lectures there, by way of starting a vigorous winter campaign on the part of the Branch. His lectures to-day (Nov. 13) will be delivered in the Corn Exchange.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts delivered two lectures in the Public Hall at Wigan. The audiences were exceedingly good at both meetings, about four hundred attentive listeners being present on each occasion. There was very little opposition, but a number of questions were put. Friends from the surrounding districts mustered in good force, and gave Mr. Watts a hearty reception. He had many pressing invitations to again visit Wigan, where there are many Freethinkers, who should at once organise for practical Secular work.

This evening, Sunday, November 13, Mr. Watts lectures in the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell, taking for his subject "The Doom of the Churches."

Mr. Cohen had a capital audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, and his lecture on "Christianity and the Jews" was highly appreciated. He occupies the same platform again this evening (Nov. 13).

The Camberwell Branch held its annual meeting on Sunday morning, and a most encouraging report was presented to the members. We regret to hear that Mr. S. Hartmann had to resign the presidency in consequence of age and ill health. He has served the Branch with great devotion, and his loss will be much felt. Fortunately, the new president, Mr. Victor Roger, is in the prime of life, and his zeal in the cause of Freethought is as well known as his ability—at least, in South London. Mr. Sabine, another good worker, is vice-president, Mr. Wilmot secretary, and Mr. Martin financial secretary. The new committee is a strong one.

The East London Branch's special open-air meeting at Salmon's-lane, Limehouse, on Sunday, was a great success. Messrs. Cohen, Pack, and Ramsey addressed a large audience, and although the Christian Evidence Brigade made an ugly rush for the platform they were driven back disastrously, and the meeting broke up in good order after a collection realising £1 for the Poplar Hospital. Another meeting will be held to-day (Nov. 13), several prominent Freethinkers will speak, and we hope local "saints" will attend in force to support the platform.

We are pleased to hear that Mr. Joseph McCabe had fine audiences on Sunday at Birmingham, and an enthusiastic reception. Perhaps we shall receive further particulars from the Branch secretary.

Members of the Secular Society, Limited, who have been duly proposed, seconded, and admitted at the last Directors' Meeting, have had formal notices sent to them of the First General (Members') Meeting to be held at the Manchester Hotel, Aldersgate-street, on Friday, November 18, at eight o'clock in the evening. Of course there are some applicants who have not been admitted in time for this meeting. Proxy forms are sent out with the notices to members. Those who wish Mr. Foote, or anyone else, to vote for them if necessary on any disputed matter, will please fill in

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their proxy forms and forward them to London at once. A penny postage stamp is necessary to make the form valid, and the space is marked for it under the signature, which must be attested by a witness.

Mr. Cohen's article on "The Responsibilities of Unbelief" is reproduced from our columns in the *Boston Investigator*.

The last number of Mr. Joseph Symes's *Liberator* to hand from Melbourne reproduces one of Mr. Mackenzie's poems and several paragraphs from the *Freethinker*. Mr. Symes's own pen is as bright and lively as ever.

The *Freethinker* is not a political journal; that is to say, it does not concern itself with the game of party politics. Nevertheless there are political questions *and* political questions, and some of them are so big and far-reaching that whoever has no interest in them is not a citizen of the world. One of these is what may be briefly called the Fashoda question. Ever since the Sirdar found Major Marchand at Fashoda, and treated him (by the way) with consummate tact and politeness, a certain section of journalists, self-appointed and irresponsible, have done their best to fan this trumpery dispute into an open rupture between France and England. War is always a bad business, but a war between France and England, especially over such a petty affair as that of Fashoda, would be a scandal to statesmanship and civilisation. We are heartily glad that the French fever has passed its crisis here in England, and we hope the two most Liberal nations of Europe will soon settle down to an amicable understanding with each other.

France has passed through a very bad time lately, but it is good to see how that great nation is, after all, righting herself in the eyes of the world. She was grossly misled and abused over the Dreyfus affair, but now she is learning the truth she is coming round slowly but surely to the side of reason and justice. Yes, the head and heart of France are still sound. Those who called her decadent mistook a passing aberration for a chronic perversion. The France of Montaigne, of Rabelais, of Voltaire, of Courier, of Hugo, still pulses with a grand vitality.

Zola must feel his heart swelling with a proud joy. He appealed to the real France—not the France of the sabre and the cassock—and he said that he knew he should not appeal in vain. "Justice marches!" he cried, as he left France after his second trial. Since then it *has* marched, and Zola is vindicated. He will return to Paris with a heightened reputation. Frenchmen will see in him something more than the writer; they will see the brave man, the hero—one who fought a gallant battle for his country's self-respect.

Rev. Hugh Miller, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Oregon, has resigned his pastorate. He declares that he no longer believes in the Creation story except as an allegory; or in the special inspiration of the Bible, which is in some respects inferior to the Koran; or in the doctrine of the Trinity—Jesus Christ being only a great religious reformer; or in miracles or the external efficacy of prayer; or in vicarious atonement or a literal hell of fire and brimstone. Baptist churches demand that these doctrines shall be preached, and as Mr. Miller cannot do that honestly he comes out of his church like a man, and tells the public the reasons for his resignation.

Mr. Stephen H. Allison, presumably the gentleman who used to lecture occasionally on the Freethought platform in England, has been elected President for the year of the Stenographers' Association, New Orleans. The local *Times-Democrat* describes him as "a young gentleman of considerable literary ability," and says that "under his capable leadership the coming year promises to be the most successful the circle has ever had."

The Holy Hooligans on Peckham Rye were taught a stern lesson, and for a time they were quiet; but on Sunday afternoon they made another rush for the Secular platform, and created a scene of considerable disorder. Freethinkers in the locality should rally round the platform strongly this afternoon (Nov. 13). We hear that several members of the West London Branch are going to Limehouse first and to Peckham Rye afterwards, in order to assist any policemen who may happen to turn up in keeping the peace.

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Is it not true that Truth gets well if she is run over by a locomotive, while Error dies of lockjaw if she scratches her finger? I never heard of a mathematician being alarmed for the safety of a demonstrated proposition, and I think that the dread of discussion generally implies feebleness of inward conviction.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Every philosopher is cousin to an Atheist.—*A. de Musset.*

## SUPERSTITION.

EXTRACTS FROM COLONEL INGERSOLL'S NEW LECTURE.

IN nearly every brain is found some cloud of superstition.

A woman drops a cloth with which she is washing dishes, and she exclaims: "That means company."

Most people will admit that there is no possible connection between dropping the cloth and the coming of visitors. The falling cloth could not have put the visit desire in the minds of people not present, and how could the cloth produce the desire to visit the particular person who dropped it? There is no possible connection between the dropping of the cloth and the anticipated effects.

A man catches a glimpse of the new moon over his left shoulder, and he says: "This is bad luck."

To see the moon over the right or left shoulder, or not to see it, could not by any possibility affect the moon; neither could it change the effect or influence of the moon on any earthly thing. Certainly the left-shoulder glance could in no way affect the nature of things. All the facts in nature would remain the same as though the glance had been over the right shoulder. We see no connection between the left-shoulder glance and any possible evil effects upon the one who saw the moon in this way.

A girl counts the leaves of a flower, and she says: "One, he comes; two, he tarries; three, he courts; four, he marries; five, he goes away."

Of course the flower did not grow, and the number of its leaves was not determined, with reference to the courtship or marriage of this girl, neither could there have been any intelligence that guided her hand when she selected that particular flower. So, counting seeds in an apple cannot in any way determine whether the future of an individual is to be happy or miserable.

### UNLUCKY NUMBERS, TIMES, AND SIGNS.

Thousands of persons believe in lucky and unlucky days, numbers, signs, and jewels.

Many people regard Friday as an unlucky day—as a bad day to commence a journey, to marry, to make any investment. The only reason given is that Friday is an unlucky day.

Starting across the sea on Friday could have no possible effect upon the winds, or waves, or tides, any more than starting on any other day; and the only possible reason for thinking Friday unlucky is the assertion that it is so.

So it is thought by many that it is dangerous for thirteen people to dine together. Now, if thirteen is a dangerous number, twenty-six ought to be twice as dangerous, and fifty-two four times as terrible.

It is said that one of the thirteen will die in a year. Now there is no possible relation between the number and digestion of each, between the number and the individual diseases. If fourteen dine together, there is greater probability, if we take into account only the number, of a death within the year than there would be if only thirteen were at the table.

### IDIOTIC SUPERSTITIONS.

Overturning the salt is very unlucky, but spilling the vinegar makes no difference.

Why salt should be revengeful and vinegar forgiving has never been told.

If the first person who enters a theatre is cross-eyed, the audience will be small, and the "run" a failure.

How the peculiarity of the eyes of the first one who enters changes the intention of a community, or how the intentions of a community cause the cross-eyed man to go early, has never been satisfactorily explained. Between this so-called cause and the so-called effect there is, so far as we can see, no possible relation.

To wear an opal is bad luck, but rubies bring health. How these stones affect the future, how they destroy causes and defeat effects, no one pretends to know.

So there are thousands of lucky and unlucky things, warnings, omens, and prophecies; but all sensible, sane, and reasoning human beings know that every one is an absurd and idiotic superstition.

### NATURAL PHENOMENA.

Let us take another step.

For many centuries it was believed that eclipses of the sun and moon were prophetic of pestilence or famine, and that comets foretold the death of kings, or the destruction

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of nations, the coming of war, or plague. All strange appearances in the heavens—the Northern Lights, circles about the moon, sun-dogs, falling stars—filled our intelligent ancestors with terror. They fell upon their knees—did their best with sacrifice and prayer to avoid the threatened disaster. Their faces were ashen with fear as they closed their eyes and cried to the heavens for help. The clergy, who were as familiar with God then as the orthodox preachers are now, knew exactly the meaning of eclipses and sun-dogs and Northern Lights; knew that God's patience was nearly exhausted, that he was then whetting the sword of his wrath, and that the people could save themselves only by obeying the priests, by counting their beads and doubling their subscriptions.

Earthquakes and cyclones filled the coffers of the Church. In the midst of disasters the miser, with trembling hands, opened his purse. In the gloom of eclipses thieves and robbers divided their booty with God, and poor, honest, ignorant girls, remembering that they had forgotten to say a prayer, gave their little earnings to soften the heart of God.

Now we know that all these signs and wonders in the heavens have nothing to do with the fate of kings, nations, or individuals; that they had no more reference to human beings than to colonies of ants, hives of bees, or the eggs of insects. We now know that the signs and eclipses, the comets, and the falling stars would have been just the same if not a human being had been upon the earth. We know now that eclipses come at certain times, and that their coming can be exactly foretold.

### Relics of Saints.

A little while ago the belief was general that there were certain healing virtues in inanimate things, in the bones of holy men and women, in the rags that had been torn from the foul clothing of still fouler saints, in hairs from martyrs, in bits of wood and rusty nails from the true Cross, in the teeth and finger nails of pious men, and in a thousand other sacred things.

The diseased were cured by kissing a box in which was kept some bone, or rag, or bit of wood, some holy hairs, provided the kiss was preceded or followed by a gift—a something for the Church.

In some mysterious way the virtue in the bone, or rag, or piece of wood, crept or flowed from the box, took possession of the sick who had the necessary faith, and in the name of God drove out the devils who were the real disease.

Intelligent people now know that the bone of a saint has in it no greater virtue than the bone of any animal; that a rag from a wandering beggar is just as good as one from a saint, and that the hair of a horse will cure disease just as quickly and surely as the hair of a martyr. We now know that all the sacred relics are religious rubbish; that those who use them are for the most part dishonest, and that those who rely on them are almost idiotic.

In our ancestors' days the priests were fishers for money, and they used these relics for bait.

### Miracles.

What is a miracle? An act performed by a master of nature without reference to the facts in nature. This is the only honest definition of a miracle.

If a man could make a perfect circle, the diameter of which was exactly one-half the circumference, that would be a miracle in geometry. If a man could make twice four nine, that would be a miracle in mathematics. If a man could make a stone, falling in the air, pass through a space of ten feet the first second, twenty-five feet the second second, and five feet the third second, that would be a miracle in physics. If a man could put together hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen, and produce pure gold, that would be a miracle in chemistry. If a minister were to prove his creed, that would be a theological miracle.

Miracles are not simply impossible, but they are unthinkable by any man capable of thinking.

Now, an intelligent man cannot believe that a miracle ever was, or ever will be, performed.

Ignorance is the soil in which belief in miracles grows.

### Good and Evil Spirits.

Let us take another step.

While our ancestors filled the darkness with evil spirits, enemies of mankind, they also believed in the existence of good spirits. These good spirits sustained the same relation to God that the evil ones did to the Devil. These good spirits protected the faithful from the temptations and snares of the Evil One.

These angels watched over infants who had been baptized, over persons who had made holy vows, over priests and nuns and wandering beggars who believed.

These spirits were of various kinds. Some had once been men or women, some had never lived in this world, and some had been angels from the commencement. Nobody pretended to know exactly what they were, or exactly how they looked, or in what way they went from place to place, or how they affected or controlled the minds of men.

Our fathers believed that they could by prayer, by sacrifice, by fasting, by performing certain ceremonies, gain the assistance of this God and of these good spirits. They were not quite logical. They did not believe that the Devil was the author of all evil.

The man of sense knows the history of this belief, and he knows also that for many centuries its truth was established by the Holy Bible. He knows that the Old Testament is filled with allusions to the Devil, to evil spirits, and that the New Testament is the same. He knows that Christ himself was a believer in the Devil, in evil spirits, and that his principal business was casting out devils from the bodies of men and women. He knows that Christ himself, according to the New Testament, was not only tempted by the Devil, but was carried by his Satanic Highness to the top of the temple. If the New Testament is the inspired word of God, then I admit that these devils, these imps, do actually exist, and that they do take possession of human beings.

*(To be continued.)*

## GOD—WITH DISCUSSION.

There is something very suggestive about the title of an article by Dr. Paul Carus in the current number of the *Monist*: "God—With Discussion." God, without discussion, would be a distinct anomaly. There is probably no other human conception that has been productive of so much dispute as the God idea. Many of us have fondly hoped that all this worry was at an end, that the God-idea had found its natural way to the limbo of exploded error, and that, to the rational mind at least, theological discussion was a thing of the past.

Unfortunately, we are altogether mistaken. From the midst of the philosophers of science, from the very heart of our own camp, there has arisen a prophet who is proclaiming aloud the existence of God—not the God of Revelation, not the God of the Argument from Design, and not the God of Conscience, but the God of Science, the God that can be demonstrated to exist as easily and surely as we demonstrate the law of gravitation. We can imagine the jubilation of the apologists when they hear their arch-enemy science announcing that Atheism is a mistake, and Agnosticism a creed of intellectual laziness. Dr. Carus is a Prodigal Son of science; he has, during his intellectual career, tasted the miseries of a Godless existence, and eaten of the husks of science; now he returns within the Theistic fold, and will be welcomed with open arms by the Fathers of the Church. Nevertheless, his God is a God—with discussion.

The Atheist rises from a perusal of Dr. Carus's article with a feeling of bewilderment. There is much in the article with which he is inclined to agree, much that he doubts to be true, and a great deal upon which he would be glad to have fuller and more definite information. Dr. Carus's position, however, may be stated in a few words. He claims that his God-idea is the natural descendant of the God-ideas of the past, purified, exalted, and rendered acceptable to the scientific mind. Regarding the universe as "one consistent body of uniformities" revealed to us by scientific study, he conceives God as the source of these uniformities, their "formative omnipresence." To use his own words:—

> "All the attributes which have, and rightly, been predicated of God are here combined in the Divinity that shapes the ends of the cosmos as a whole as well as in its details, where we are confronted with immuta-

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bility, omnipresence, eternality, universality, omnipotence, omniscience, justice, omnibeneficence, and an all-embracing love, long-suffering, and mercy."

Now, the whole difference between Dr. Carus and the Atheist lies in the fact that, while both recognise that "things act on account of the inherent qualities which constitute them," and that "things consist of motor impulses, shaped by previous conditions, and, according to present conditions, taking a definite course," the Atheist leaves his world-conception so; but Dr. Carus wants us to regard the unity and universality of these intrinsically necessary uniformities as direct evidence of the existence of God.

This omnipresent and eternal "Allhood of existence" is Dr. Carus's God. Now for the discussion.

First of all, it is curious to note how near Dr. Carus has come to the God-idea of those Agnostics of the Spencerian school, against whom he directs some rather undignified criticism. Spencer goes further than Dr. Carus; he defines God, while Dr. Carus does little more than describe his characteristics. Spencer says: "There exists a Power to which no limit in time or space is conceivable, of which all phenomena, as presented in consciousness, are manifestations, but which we can know only through these manifestations." Dr. Carus differs from the Spencerian in proceeding to catalogue the attributes of Deity, which the Spencerian considers as unknowable. The Atheist is likely to find both conceptions untenable.

Dr. Carus's God-idea may be criticised from three points of view: 1. That the word *God* is not justly employed; 2. That his "God" does not satisfy the human longings which the orthodox God satisfies; and 3. That the characteristics of his God are not implied in the world-conception which he accepts.

In the April number of the *Monist* Dr. Carus defends himself upon the first point. He asks why we should "regard the definition of a word as unalterable in the face of the fact that all our fundamental notions, such terms as life, matter, force, have all undergone similar changes." But Dr. Carus forgets that such conceptions as those of life, matter, and force belong to quite a different category from the conception of God. They belong to the category of phenomena. Men continue to talk of life as life, whatever theory of vitalism they may hold, simply because the phenomena of life can be observed and described apart from any theory of their nature. God cannot be studied in the same way, not being an obvious natural phenomenon. It may be that, as Dr. Carus thinks, the idea of God "will not lose by being freed of its materialistic accretions"; but it is nevertheless true that these accretions are typical of the God-idea of the great mass of the civilised world. If philosophers like Dr. Carus insist upon retaining the word God as representing their idea of the formative unity of the universe, they must be prepared to be constantly misinterpreted by both friends and opponents.

Regarding Dr. Carus's God-idea from the second critical point of view, we may recall Guyau's remark, that man looks to God as his surety for immortality in Heaven, and that he has really no other use for Him. There is a great deal of truth in this, and it prompts the reflection that Dr. Carus's God fulfils *not a single one* of the pious hopes of the modern Christian. Heaven and Hell vanish; immortality becomes a figure of speech, representing merely the immortality of personal influence; prayer becomes useless, at least from the objective point of view; sacrifice nor supplication can alter one hair's-breadth the course of inexorable necessity; the moral law has no Creator's sanction; the Bible has no more sanctity than the Vedas; Christ takes rank along with Buddha and the other religious sages of the world; everything disappears but the consciousness of the existence of a super-personal, super-real, eternal, etc., etc., guarantee of the inevitability and orderliness of the course of nature.

We are not at all surprised to hear from Dr. Carus that several clergymen have accepted his views, and have yet seen fit to remain in their clerical positions. The elasticity of Christian dogma has been convincingly shown in the changes which followed the establishment of the doctrine of evolution. It is easy enough to emasculate or attenuate the old familiar terms so as to adjust them to the advance of science. But it is equally difficult to prevent people from reverting, consciously or unconsciously, to the older meaning of the terms retained. Thus Dr. Carus and his followers, in their endeavors to preserve the continuity of thought by retaining the old expressions, may prove to be reactionaries of a very insidious and dangerous type.

The third point of criticism can hardly be dealt with cursorily. But it may be noted that many scientific men have come to a world-conception similar to Dr. Carus's, but which they regard as quite complete and satisfactory without the Deistic implications which Dr. Carus regards as necessary. In fact, they would be strongly inclined to combat several of these implications—particularly those which have to do with ethical and emotional matters. When Dr. Carus talks of the "all-embracing love, long-suffering, and mercy" of the Divinity, he raises against him the host of arguments which have been used to disprove the validity of the idea of God as the God of Love. If everything in the world occurs according to intrinsic necessity, where lies the province of "all-embracing love, long-suffering, and mercy"? Mercy from an inexorable Fate? Long-suffering from the Spirit of Necessity? All-embracing love from He who inspires disease, disaster, and deeds of cruelty, as well as health, prosperity, and kindness? Here we seem to lose Dr. Carus the philosopher in Dr. Carus the theologian.

Incidentally, we may remark that Dr. Carus's God, although super-personal and super-real, is still a "he." Speaking of the Fatherhood of God, he says that it would be difficult to give a more beautiful and more impressive simile for God's intimate relation to every one of us. We recommend him to alter the sex of this super-personal and super-real Divinity, and, according to the suggestion of Mr. F. J. Gould, preach the allegory of the Motherhood of God.

Finally, we take the melancholy pleasure of flatly contradicting one of Dr. Carus's statements. At the conclusion of his article he says: "Unless we feel his [God's] presence, we shall find no peace in the restlessness of the world. Unless we sanctify our lives by the purport which his existence imparts to all life, we can find no comfort in our afflictions. Unless we recognise that our soul is an actualisation of his eternal thoughts, we shall not learn to fight the right way in the struggle for existence. Unless we listen to the still small voice that teaches us our duties, we shall not obtain that blissful assurance which the childship of God alone can afford." This is as verbose and as absurd as the ordinary orthodox sermon. It jars on the ear of the reader who is accustomed to Dr. Carus's more rational efforts, and encourages us in the conviction that every man who gets under the spell of the God-idea loses a little of his mental stability.

Dr. Carus hints that his idea of God is not likely to impress the multitude, as they are not sufficiently trained in exact thinking to appreciate the significance of abstract ideas. This may be so, and it suggests the unpleasant inference that our lack of agreement with Dr. Carus is due to some intellectual deficiency on our part. We devoutly hope not, and we are supported in the hope by the recollection of the feelings which were produced in us when, in early youth, we were condemned to listen to the orthodox sermons of a very non-scientific clergyman. We heartily agreed with the earnest old gentleman so long as he kept to the discussion of right and wrong; but as soon as he became theological, we gave him up and suspended our judgment until we could dare to think for ourselves. When we did so, we found that our lack of appreciation was fully justified. We have much the same feelings now towards the God homily of Dr. Carus as we had then to the Jehovah homily of the orthodox minister. And we have more than a lurking suspicion that increase of knowledge and brain power on our part would not be productive of any very different final result. Dr. Carus, as a philosopher, holds a very eminent place in the estimation of many clear-headed men; but as an apologist *pro Deo* we fear that he has failed to prove convincing.

A. G. W.

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A laborer out of employment applied for outdoor relief for himself and his wife at the North Dublin Union. "Well, my good fellow, we must have evidence that you are legally married," said the chairman of the Relief Committee. "Begor, sir, I've the best proof in the wurld," said the applicant, and, bending his head, he displayed a scar on his skull. "Does yer honner, think," he added, "I'd be after takin' that abuse from anywan but a wife?"

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## PREHISTORIC PEEPS.

V.—THE YARN OF AN ANCIENT MARINER.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Water, water everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink ;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

—COLERIDGE.

NOAH had greatness thrust upon him after he had celebrated his six hundredth birthday. Most men have a marble sarcophagus thrust upon them long before that age. Our prehistoric Nelson was, however, in the prime of life. Mrs. Noah had shortly before presented him with the infants Shem, Ham, and Japhet. To have triplets in one's household at so advanced a period of life was trying enough to have upset our old friend Job, that pragmatical paragon of patience.

Owing to a very sound constitution, Noah survived this unkind blow from Providence. Acting. on information received from the divine meteorological office, Noah commenced business as a shipbuilder. The first intimation the outside world had of this proceeding was an advertisement from Messrs. Noah and Sons in the daily papers inviting tenders for gopher wood and pitch. This excited the curiosity of Noah's neighbors. They knew Noah as "a just man and perfect"; one who was used to—

drinking homilies and gin,
And chewing pork and adulation,
And looking backwards upon sin,
And looking forwards to Salvation.

But Noah was unused to business. He had, it was well known, "walked with God," but that merely intimated that he was a man about town ; and, in addition, he had a weakness for "vilest, vitriol gin."

All this, his neighbors argued, must spell ruin. So they laughed, and waited for the time when Noah should be compelled to accept the hospitality of the ratepayers. Some advised Noah to treat the prehistoric Baxter with contempt. Others felt indignant, and like Lord Byron's Cain, wished to—

punch the Almighty tyrant on
His everlasting nose, and tell him that
His evil was not good.

But the one thing Noah would not take was his neighbors' advice, and the shipbuilding and the animal collecting went on apace.

The vessel was not handsome. It was shaped like a pantechnicon, was three stories high, and had only one door and one window.

Our old friend, Mr. J. Hovah, was in constant attendance. Regular visitors to the shipbuilding yards might have seen him, day after day, superintending the labors of Noah and his three sons.

As the vessel approached completion his pleasure was manifest, and he was frequently seen to resort to a peculiar habit of washing his hands with invisible soap and in imperceptible water.

The excitement was tremendous when the long-expected animals commenced to arrive. Crowds assembled at every coign of vantage. The scene near the vessel was very brilliant, amongst the crowd being a large sprinkling of ladies.

A space was reserved close to the landing stage, and here were assembled Mr. J. Hovah, Mr. J. Christ, and Mr. H. Ghost, all resplendent in new gilt halos. The band, composed of Messrs. Ham and Japhet, played popular airs on the harp and cornet. Fine clear weather favored the event.

The circus arrived punctually at 2.35. As the first pair of ostriches crossed the gangway there was an almost deafening outburst. Hats were flung into the air, sticks and umbrellas were waved, and scenes of the greatest enthusiasm prevailed. Unfortunately, the barriers broke under the strain, and swept the police aside as if they were children. The unfortunate animals had not proceeded far when the rush took place and carried them off their feet. The horrified police dashed forward to protect the Trinity. They were too late. The blue blanket worn by Mr. J. Christ was torn off, and his halo knocked over his eyes. Mr. J. Hovah was also sadly mauled, and carried off his feet. At last Noah and his family rushed to the rescue, and amidst blows, shouts, screams, and fainting women, and swearing men, the three partners were conveyed safely to the vessel.

A few hours later Mr. J. Hovah shut the door with a bang like a railway guard, and blew his almighty whistle, and the *Ark* started on her memorable and never-to-be-forgotten voyage.

MIMNERMUS.

*(To be continued.)*

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### FLAGELLOMANIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is a fact well known to pathologists, and deserving of more general attention, that the "flogging craze," of which so much has lately been heard in the press, is part of a morbid sentiment which, in its grosser forms, finds expression in certain most disreputable practices. I would recommend those who believe in the efficacy of the rod as the salvation of society to study two recent cases. One is the discovery lately made at Kovno, in Russian Poland, that priests had actually stripped naked and flogged several women in a vault of the church, where the police found various instruments of flagellation, such as rods and birches. The other is the "massage" scandal exposed in the Marylebone Police-court on October 15 last. Note the following sentence from the cross-examination of one of the "nurses": "What do you know about massage?—Nothing. What is the 'discipline' you give?—Well, it is a treatment. Yes, but what is it? Is it the birch?—Yes, it is flagellation, of course. (Sensation.)" It is thus placed beyond dispute that a disease exists which may be truly termed "flagellomania"; and I submit that the advocates of an extenuation of the flogging system would do well to consider whether it is not their own condition rather than that of their humanitarian opponents that is a sickly and morbid one.

JOSEPH COLLINSON.

## PROFANE JOKES.

MUDGE—"Did you ever get back that umbrella you lent to Tompkins?" Budge—"You bet." Mudge—"How did you manage it?" Budge—"That's easy I saw him leave it in the church porch, and got out first."

Mrs. Pious—"I'm afraid your poor husband suffers very greatly from the heat?" Mrs. True—"I am afraid he does, but I cannot help him now." Mrs. Pious—"Why don't you take him to a cooler place?" Mrs. True—"I can't reach him. He died a month ago."

Rev. Thirdly—"My boy, do you know if you go fishing on Sunday you will lose your immortal soul?" Mugsey McGuire—"Say, mister, does yer know dat if yer stan' dere a talkin' at me, you'll scare away de only bite I've had to-day?"

"Lawd! Lawd!" exclaimed a pious colored brother, "but ain't de Bible comin' true ev'y day! Ain't we got a Sampson fightin' fer us! En ain't de word come clear 'cross de ocean dat de Nunited States flag waves over de Philistines?"—*Atlanta Constitution.*

"I have been requested," said the good pastor, beaming over the pulpit, "to offer prayers for rain, but the superintendent informs me that the Sunday-school picnic is arranged for Tuesday."—*Rockland Tribune.*

Little John (after casting his penny into the fund for the Bamalan Islanders)—"I wish I was a heathen." Sabbath School Teacher—"Oh, Johnny! Why do you wish such an awful thing as that?" Little John—"The heathen don't never have to give nothin'—they are always gettin' somethin'."—*Harper's Bazaar.*

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."—*Harper Bazaar.*

Remarking upon the equalising nature of death, a clergyman lately observed in his sermon that "when we die we all come to a lead devil." His congregation knew that he meant a dead level.

A Cleveland preacher was bemoaning to the Rev. Dr. Sprecher, of Cleveland, the other day, the indifference of the people to the Church, complaining bitterly of lack of attendance at nearly all the churches in the city. "I venture to say," he concluded, "if I were to advertise that two monkeys would perform in my pulpit next Sunday evening, the church would be crowded." "Yes," replied Dr. Sprecher, reflectively, "two would be better than one."—*Argonaut.*

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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. Cohen, "The Search for God."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (86 Newington Green-road. Ball's Pond): 8.30, The Bohemian Comedy Co. in "The Arabian Nights."

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Watts, "The Doom of the Churches."

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road): 8, W. C. Lyons.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Dr. Coit, "Bismarck."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, J. M. Robertson, "The Two-fold Basis of Morals."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "The Influence of Good and Bad Example."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (20 Edgware-road): November 17, at 8.30, Mr. Claremont, "Our Railways: What they Are, and what they Might Be."

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Arms, Page-street): 7.30, E. White, "Are the Teachings of Jesus Practical, Moral, and Elevating?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Peckham Rye): 8.15, R. P. Edwards, "What must I Do to be Saved?"

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Davis.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner—11, "Providence and Progress"; 7, "Parliament: As it has been, is, and should be."

BLACKBURN (Venetian Hall, Darwen-street): November 15, at 7.30, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, "Parliament: As it has been, is, and ought to be." November 16, at 7.30, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, "Providence and Progress."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, G. Ives, "The Treatment of Crime." November 17, at 8, Stanton Coit, "Evolution and Effort."

DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, W. Whitney, "Three Philanthropists."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall. 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, D Black; 6.30, A Holm, "Individual Freedom and State Interference."

HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall): 7, Seth Ackroyd, "An Hour with Nansen in the Polar Seas."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "Life in Other Planets."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, A. Crompton, "Positivism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, Mark L. Sykes, "Pond Life: Fauna." Illustrated by specimens and lantern views.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Willie Dyson, "Christian *Want* of Evidence. A Reply to A. J. Harrison, B.D."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, A. Reading.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

O COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—November 13, The Athenæum Hall, London; 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester. November 30 and December 1, Failsworth. December 4, Manchester.

H. PERCY WARD, 5, Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—November 27, Liverpool. December 4, Leicester. 18, Birmingham.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## THE ASCENT OF FRANCE.

FRANCE was in the depths of dishonor when Zola issued his famous manifesto in the form of an open letter to the President of the Republic. The refrain of that letter was "J'accuse." Zola aimed his shafts at all the leading men who were implicated in the Dreyfus outrage. He spared nobody from President Faure and Premier Brisson down to Paty du Clam and Esterhazy. No doubt his language was bold and startling; some would call it more than impolite. But it was not a time for the niceties of etiquette. Zola's letter was precisely what it was meant to be—an open slap in the face. Something was necessary to compel attention, something absolutely beyond the possibility of being ignored, something that would make a reply inevitable. And the reply came. Zola was prosecuted, not indeed upon the main substance of his letter, but upon a small picked passage which was treated as an "insult to the Army." This was a cowardly method of dealing with him; nevertheless, it was a beginning. From that moment the Dreyfus affair took a fresh turn. It began to emerge from the crypts of secrecy into the honest daylight. And the truth is that France began to ascend with it.

It would be a great mistake to regard the Dreyfus affair as merely a personal one. More was involved than the fate of one man. Zola pointed out clearly enough, in his subsequent open letters to France, and to the Youth of France, that behind the outrage on Dreyfus was a fever of religious bigotry, and behind the insolence of the Army chiefs the cunning of Jesuitism. France was in the hands of reactionists in politics and religion, and the very life of the Republic was endangered. The clank of the sabre and the chaunts of the priests were like a death-knell. It was time for all who loved liberty and justice to rally to the defence of the national honor. Zola's was indeed a noble appeal, and it was not made in vain. The conscience of France was touched. Men of light and leading—mostly Freethinkers, by the way—gathered around the flag of defiance thus gallantly planted in the sight of the world.

"Justice marches!" exclaimed Zola as he left Paris, partly to rest from unaccustomed labour and excitement, and partly to avoid a malignant form of imprisonment, or the still more sinister danger of assassination. Yes, justice was marching, and it has marched to some purpose. The Dreyfus affair was at last extricated from the hands of the Army chiefs, who had befouled it with low intrigue, unscrupulous forgery, and apparently with murder. It was even removed from the grasp of politicians, who had grown so timid in presence of Church and Army that they dared not call their souls their own. It was placed where it should be, in the hands of judges who could defy every hostility to justice but downright brute force, which no one dared to use against them, seeing that the whole civilised world was watching the spectacle. Swashbucklers like Deroulède and De Cassagnac, and demagogues like Rochefort, have called upon the government to override the Court of Cassation, the highest tribunal in France. But these scribes are no longer taken seriously. To follow their advice would be to hand France over to anarchy, which would soon require the sharp treatment of a new Savior of Society.

The judges' decision to revise the Dreyfus case in secret is perhaps a wise one from their point of view. But for general reasons it is to be regretted. It is really too late for compromises. The whole truth should now be known. France is entitled to be made aware of all the infamies that have been perpetrated in her name. Moreover, the wretches who have lied and cheated and forged, and apparently murdered, should receive condign punishment. At least, they should be made marks for the finger of scorn. Short of this, however, it is a matter of congratulation that the judges are obviously determined to sift the case to the bottom, and to rectify whatever wrong has been committed. They have just decided that Dreyfus shall be informed by telegram that his trial is now the subject of revision. What the Government dared not do for fear of the Army and the Church the judges have done. This act of humanity will reassure many honest people who dreaded that justice might arrive too late and find a corpse instead of a man.

The Revision of the Dreyfus case, and the release of the martyr, which seems inevitable, will be a terrible blow to reaction in France. The Napoleons of the boulevards, the Alexanders of the autumn manœuvres, who give themselves such tremendous airs without having won a battle, will have to walk a little more humbly. At any rate they will be less ready to martyrise a soldier because he is a Jew and presumably has no friends; less ready to bully a poor woman for the crime of devotion to her husband's honor. And the Jesuits will sneak back for a while to their old burrows. They have gone too far, and played their game too extravagantly. The eyes of France are now open. She recognises the tricks of these treacherous vermin. Failing in their attack upon the public schools, they have intrigued, with great cunning and patience, to gain the mastery of the Army. Jews, Protestants, and Freethinkers have been weeded out from the higher military posts. Colonel Picquart, the hero, a soldier of whom France should, and will, be proud, a Bayard without fear or reproach—is reported to be a Freethinker; the books he obtained to read in his prison cell being the works of Mill, Darwin, and Spencer. The Catholic generals on the Staff have tried to get him out of the way more than once. Their consciences are easy, however, for the Church is always behind them, promising immunity on earth and felicity in heaven to her faithful sons, whatever sins they commit in furthering her interests. But, happily, this Jesuit plot is spoiled by exposure. France is getting wide-eyed and angry; in other words, she is recovering her reason, and with it her honour and dignity.

G. W. FOOTE.



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## CHRIST AND SOCIAL REFORM.

LAST week we pointed out some of the evils of our present social conditions as admitted by the clergy and ministers who took part in the services held at the various churches on the recent "Citizens' Sunday." It was further shown that Christianity had failed to successfully grapple with these evils. We will now examine the defective remedies which the Churches are putting forward to remove the consequences of their past neglect. That the evils of which we complain, and which it is so desirable should be eradicated, are not merely imaginary is proved by the statement of the Rev. W. J. Hocking, vicar of All Saints, Tufnell-park, London. He says: "The great problem that is demanding attention is the tremendous inequalities that exist; the awful line of distinction between the dweller in the palace and the dweller in the slum; between the owner of millions and the owner of nothing but rags and dirt; between Belgravia and Wapping; between Piccadilly and Petticoat-lane. I know that the differences are appalling, the inequalities heartrending. No words can express the sorrows, the pains, the woes, the heart-breaking disappointments that abound in the homes and haunts of the poor. Then there are the terrible evils that have been unearthed in the sweater's den, where men and women work under inhuman conditions, and for starvation wages; where mothers are compelled to forget their motherhood, and become the wage-earner for the whole family; where English labor is crowded out by the indigent misery of foreign competitors. Add to these the terrible fact that poverty cannot get itself decently housed in London; that the class who earn low wages are driven into one-roomed dwellings, where decency is impossible; that men and women of all ages herd together in rooms called 'lodgings,' without even the semblance of shame; that children are born into the world in these haunts of filth, fed from infancy with gin, taught to thieve, to lie, to cheat; the witnesses of every conceivable abomination; the victims of the grossest inhumanity. Remember, too, that these classes are not the few, the exception; that you have not to search for them in isolated cases, but that they abound, that they exist in teeming thousands, that every part of London is crowded with them. What can be done? How can we change this terrible condition of things? That it ought to be changed is certain" (*Church Gazette*, Oct. 29, 1898).

Of course such disgraceful, unnecessary, and deplorable injustice and cruelty ought to be changed, but how is it to be done? That is *the* problem to be solved. The Church has not evinced its capability in the past to transform society from what it *is* to what it *should be*; and, judging from the recent utterances of the clergy upon the subject, there is no hope that it will be more successful in the future. For instance, the Rev. W. J. Hocking puts it that the "change" can only be produced "by making men disciples of Jesus." "Support your Church more," says he; "she is the mightiest fulcrum on earth for uplifting human lives.....help her in her mission work, help her in her schools, and thus you will become true reformers." This is but the repetition of the theological nonsense which has been preached for ages, and that has wrecked social life and made it what it is. The Church, with her schools, her mission, and her so-called reformers, has been at work long enough to show that such agencies have been powerless either to prevent or to remove the social calamities under which society groans. The Church has had more than sufficient time to prove if it possessed either preventive or remedial qualities for social wrongs, and the verdict of time is that it is destitute of both. No, we must leave the Church to its alleged spiritual functions, and seek more practical means if social improvement be our object. Equally futile is the remedy prescribed by Dr. Clifford, and many other leading "lights" of the different Churches, which is, "To follow Christ," who, the Doctor says, if he (Christ) were a citizen of London, would strive to get the social rottenness of things altered.

Now what do all these Church "remedies" amount to? Simply an endeavor to emulate Christ and to obey his teachings. But who will try the experiment? Not those who give the advice, for their conduct is the very opposite to that ascribed to Christ. Would not men be deemed insane who would attempt to emulate Jesus in his conduct to his mother; in his driving the merchants out of the temple with "a scourge of small cords"; in his riding into Jerusalem upon an ass and a colt which had been unjustly taken from their owner; in his cursing the fig-tree because it did not bear fruit out of season; in his extracting devils from mental cripples, and permitting the said devils to enter into "about two thousand" swine, which caused them to be "choked in the sea" (Mark v. 13); or in his refusing help to the woman of Canaan before she confessed her faith in him, telling her: "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs"? Here Christ granted to the profession of belief what he denied to the wants of humanity. Let professed Christians attempt to imitate their Master in the instances here given, and they would be looked upon as suitable inmates for a lunatic asylum. Surely it will not be claimed that in performing such actions as these Christ rendered any aid to social reform.

Then take his teachings. What social improvement could be derived from obeying the following: "Resist not evil"; if you are smitten once, invite a second blow; the command to practise self-mutilation; "let the dead bury the dead"; "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, but unto God the things that are God's"; to hate one's own flesh and blood; to "lend, hoping for nothing again"; to "give to every man that asketh of thee"; to regard this world as of secondary importance; to forgive your brother seventy-times-seven; to "labor not for the meat which perisheth"; to break up the peace and harmony of the domestic circle; to "shake off the dust of your feet" at those who did not accept the one particular faith, for whom it is said in the day of judgment it shall be less tolerable than for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, where, we are told, the people were hopelessly corrupt; to "lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," but "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things [food, clothes, etc.] shall be added unto you"; and finally, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor"? Where, we ask, are the factors of social reform to be found in such teachings as these? Nowhere; and the followers of Christ know it; therefore they never attempt to put them into practice. Yet, with reprehensible hypocrisy, the clergy delude their victims by urging that Christ was a great social reformer.

Poverty and idleness were essential to Christ's idea of a social state. No wealthy man could possibly carry out the notions which Jesus had of social duties, and if the poor adopted his advice not to labor for meat, they would get less of it even than they do at present. An American writer has well said: "The greatest question of our age is that of poverty. Yet, according to Jesus Christ, the things of this world are of little importance when compared to the glories of that which is to come. While Christ lived and preached, someone must have fed him. That food must have been the product of energy. Thus, while teaching the doctrine of idleness, he was nourished by the toilers; and, while God looked after the 'fowls of the air,' the 'Son of Man' depended upon the brethren 'in the flesh' for his existence. Had his advice been promptly followed by all men, he would have died of starvation instead of crucifixion. No need to provide against sickness; no need to consider that a day might come when work is scarce and children are hungry. If the doctrine of Christ were put in practice, the world would be made up wholly of beggars and solicitors for alms. It should be remembered that somebody must accumulate, somebody must lay something aside, and that the unfortunate must be fed. If all should distribute their property, and take no thought for the morrow, famine and pestilence would depopulate the earth."

We have thus endeavored to show that neither Christ nor the Church can supply the true remedy for the social evils by which we are surrounded. In fact, in our opinion, it is the influence of the teachings of both that have caused things to be as they are. What is now really required is a thorough intellectual revolution—a departure from mere matter of form—belief in a religion that has no practical hold upon the human mind. Our social perplexities originated, and have been perpetuated, by human causes, and the remedy to readjust the relations between man and man must also be human. Social redemption has been left to the priests of all denominations too long, and now what those "false guides" have not done must be accomplished by the united efforts of men unfettered by the machinations of the Church and the retarding influence of its

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teachings. Men need to rely upon themselves; all monopolies have to be swept away; an equitable relationship between all classes of society must be instituted; wealth should be fairly distributed; excessive labor ought not to be imposed upon one section of the community whilst others live in idleness; and, above all, poverty should not be allowed to blight the existence of so many of our race while others live in extreme luxury. These are some of the factors that will serve as a means of ridding society of the social inequalities of which we experience the most appalling consequences in a so-called "Christian country."

It may be Utopian to expect such a radical change in our time, but that need not cause us to despair, or prevent us from doing our best to work for its achievement. "Rome was not built in a day," and the evils engendered during centuries of misrule will not readily be eradicated. Our duty is to be true to ourselves, to act justly to others, to persistently study what is the right thing to do, and to do it with all our might; and, finally, to cultivate the intellect of the rising generation, so that they may be enabled to usefully carry on the work of amelioration.

CHARLES WATTS.

## CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

FOR some time past the daily and weekly press has furnished numerous instances of members of the "Peculiar People" and "Christian Science" sects who have been charged with causing the deaths of children and adults under their care. The culminating point in these cases has been reached in the recent death of that brilliant novelist, Mr. Harold Frederic, and the commitment of two of his attendants on a charge of manslaughter. That such a condition of things should exist nowadays is bad enough, but that these people should be denounced by Christian believers, and that these denunciations should be supported by Christian writers in the public press, only adds the factor of hypocrisy to the matter.

What is "Christian Science"? Essentially it is the fashionable form of the unfashionable doctrine of the Peculiar People. One preaches to the indigent east, the other to the fashionable west. One finds its clients among the uneducated poor, the other among that portion of the well-to-do who are always in search of some new form of mental dissipation. One calls in the elder of the Church and prays over the sick, the other "realises" Jesus into the patient's mind, and realises a comfortable income out of his pocket. At bottom they are identical. Both make use of the same jargon, both appeal to the same element—faith.

This west-end recrudescence of primitive Christian superstition appears to be an importation from America. There it claims to have two hundred thousand followers and between two and three hundred places of worship. In England it is in its infancy, but hopes for big results in the future; and doubtless the police-court proceedings will not injure it to any appreciable extent. The class of people to whom it appeals will probably regard Mrs. Mills as a martyr to truth, and persecution may convert a passive belief into an active propaganda. At present, however, its devotees are principally women, who introduce patients to the Lord—in more senses than one—for a more or less modest remuneration.

From a perusal of its confession of faith, combined with the evidence given before the coroner, there is one distinct advantage about the new "science." Any fool can practise it. All that is required is plenty of confidence in yourself and the healing power of Jesus, a copy of *Science and Health*, the Bible of the sect, a knowledge of a few biblical texts, and all else is simple. All that has to be done is to secure a patient, assure him that "God is mind and mind is the only reality.....All disease is imaginary.....Consumption is an error.....Belief alone can cure," etc., etc., turn the doctor out of doors, let the patient eat what he likes, act as he likes, and leave the rest to Providence—and the undertakers. If the patient recovers—and some people's constitution will survive anything—you add one more case to your list of cures; if he does not, there is a ready explanation at hand—he failed to "realise" Christ with sufficient intensity. Heads I win, tails you lose.

All this is, as I have said, only a more refined form of the doctrine of the Peculiar People; and, of the two, my sympathies are with the latter. Their training, or want of it, their illiterate habits and childlike faith in the Bible, are more deserving of pity than condemnation. What is to be condemned in their case, and that in the strongest possible manner, is the hypocritical religious system which holds up the Bible as a revelation from God to man, and then threatens with imprisonment such as follow out its clearest teaching.

Look at the position of the Bible in Great Britain. It has been declared on high legal authority that it is part and parcel of the English constitution. Not to believe in it, and say so, is an offence society will hardly tolerate. It figures in our State schools, in law-courts, and in Parliament. Protestants of the type of Dr. Horton assure us that it is because we possess the Bible that we are where we are in the ranks of nations. To champion its claims thousands of men are withdrawn from productive pursuits, and millions of pounds wrung annually from labor for their support. And yet, when there are found a few people honest enough and foolish enough to carry out its teachings, the clergy and Christian laity look on in cowardly silence or hypocritical approval. Of all the thorough-paced hypocrisies that the world has ever known, commend me to modern Christianity. I say hypocrisy deliberately; for, however much we may account for the conduct of the Christian world as being due to carelessness, stupidity, or mental blindness, there is no shirking the conclusion that among the thousands of educated Christian men and women there must be a very large number who cannot fail to recognise that the "Peculiars" and "Christian Scientists" are only carrying out in practice what they profess to believe in. It is this widespread hypocrisy, this trailing of the mind in the mire of barbaric superstitions, that is a far more distressing sight than even the loss to the community of a man like Mr. Harold Frederic.

The coroner who committed Mrs. Mills for trial was very emphatic in his condemnation of faith-healing. "No words of mine," he said, in his summing-up, "can adequately convey to Mrs. Mills my utter abhorrence of her so-called treatment. It is difficult to realise that in the enlightened nineteenth century sensible and intelligent people should lend themselves to such an absurd course of procedure"—a declaration that did far more credit to his common sense than to his Christianity. It says something for the growth of Freethought that a public official should denounce, amid cheers, the conduct of those who believe God Almighty to be more powerful than a blue pill, or Jesus Christ greater than a local doctor. And yet, I doubt not, the coroner would call himself a Christian without in the least realising the absurdity of his so doing. It is, indeed, a surprising fact that people should pin their faith to such absurd beliefs in these days of widespread education; but it is certainly not less surprising that the very people who condemn the "Faith-healers" should profess belief in a book which is simply full of advice advocating "such an absurd method of procedure."

For, when all is said and done, Mrs. Mills and George Senior are occupying, in the main, an essentially Christian position, and they are well advised in hurling scriptural texts at their judges, and thus driving them either to condemn the law they are paid to administer, or to denounce the religion they profess to believe in. There is, too, something pathetic and unanswerable, from the Christian point of view, in their plea that "drugs and hygiene are not necessary for human use, else would Jesus have recommended them in his healing. We never read that Jesus made a diagnosis of a disease in order to discover some method of healing. He never asked if it were acute or chronic. He never recommended attention to the laws of health, never gave drugs, never prayed to know if God was willing a man should die." They may quite safely defy Christians to point out where Jesus did any of the things they themselves are punished for not doing.

From Genesis to Revelation the Bible treats disease as being supernaturally induced, and that it is to be removed by supernatural methods. "God gives and God takes away" may well serve as the Biblical theory of disease. Jesus is called by his disciples "The Great Physician." Well, how did he deal with disease? The New Testament assures us that he went about "healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness." How? To the woman who suffered from an issue of blood of twelve years' standing he said: "Thy faith hath made thee whole." The two lepers were

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cured with exactly the same formula. To the blind he said: "Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee." If this is not "Christian Science," as practised by Jesus Christ himself, what is it? His first instruction to his disciple was to "heal all manner of diseases and all manner of sickness." And by what method? "In my name"! By precisely the method that Mrs. Mills and George Senior stand charged with manslaughter for adopting. He gave his disciples a medicine-chest filled with one ingredient—faith; and Mrs. Mills is the last step of a series in which Jesus Christ stands as the first. "In my name," says Jesus, "ye shall heal all manner of diseases"; try it on, say his modern followers, and we will give you six months' imprisonment. To such a pass has Christianity come that the only people who try to practise its teachings are denounced on all sides as rogues or lunatics.

And what, after all, is the offence these faith-healers are charged with committing? Practically it is with preferring Christian beliefs to secular science, revelation to experience, Jesus Christ to the College of Surgeons. This is the head and front of their offence. It is for this they are being denounced as fools or threatened with imprisonment as rogues. It is a strange reversal of the time when medical science was branded as sorcery, its votaries imprisoned or slain, and its teachings suppressed. It is a far cry from Vesalius, driven to his death by the Church for his study of anatomy, to the police-court at Kenley, where a public official, nominally a Christian, professes publicly his "utter abhorrence" of the methods of healing laid down by Jesus Christ and practised by Mrs. Mills. And yet in that step there is contained an epitome of the world's past struggle for truth and enlightenment. Then it was newborn knowledge struggling against a superstition strong to blight and destroy. Now it is a superstition in its dotage charged before the tribunal of reason with obstructing the progress of the race. The priest has been replaced by the physician, prayer by physic, and the world is the gainer by the change. And if these "Christian Scientists" were being charged by non-Christians, there would be nothing strange about the matter. But they are not. Their accusers are professing believers in the same religion, in the same book. That is the satire of the situation. It is the Christian cranks who possess the logic, the sensible Christians who are acting in an unreasonable manner. One daily paper complains that by their conduct these people are making Christian beliefs a byword and a jest. Quite so; and when to carry out teachings honestly brings them to that condition, the sooner they are laughed out of existence the better. What they are really doing is laying bare to the world what a hollow and artificial thing Christianity actually is. They may go to prison for doing this; but as the prison doors close behind them they will have demonstrated that professing Christians no more believe in "the lie of religion" than do I, or any other member of the Secular Society. Honor, then, to the poor Peculiars! For while they exist we shall never lack evidence of what Christianity once was, and what a poor, pitiful thing it has now become: living still, but lacking both the courage of acknowledging its real beliefs and the honesty of carrying out its professions.

C. COHEN.

## POPE JOAN.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

*(Concluded from page 726.)*

THE first author to reject the tradition was Aventinus (1534), though Platina, librarian at the Vatican, who relates it in his *Lives of the Popes*, published in 1479 by order of Pope Sextus IV., seems to have had some little doubt; and Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pius II. (1464–71), when challenged with it, while not venturing to deny the tale, declared it uncertain. It was a Protestant, David Blondel (he who exposed the Sybilline forgeries), who, early in the seventeenth century, first gave good reasons for doubting the existence of Pope Joan; and his co-religionists, to their shame be it said, were so annoyed at a favorite weapon being pronounced untrustworthy by one of their own faith that it was made the occasion of the basest insinuations against him. The philosopher Bayle followed on the same side, while the younger Spanheim defended the story, and his arguments and authorities were ably put into French by Jas. Lenfant. In the last century, when the story was generally discredited, chiefly through the efforts of Blondel and Bayle, the careful Church historian, Mosheim, declared: "Something must necessarily have taken place at Rome to give rise to this most uniform report of so many ages; but even yet it is not clear what that something was."*

In the present century the learned Professor, C. A. Hase, in his *History of the Christian Church*, after mentioning that the story has been generally abandoned, reserves the statement: "It is, however, possible that the Church, which has often made realities out of what never existed, may also possess magic enough to annihilate what has really taken place, whenever the knowledge of it may seem injurious to the papacy."†

Others have expressed themselves with less reserve. At Leyden Professor Kist follows his great predecessor, Spanheim, in considering the main point of the story sufficiently established. In Germany two works advocating its truth have been published within the last thirty years.‡ In America Dr. J. H. Hopkins, the Protestant bishop of Vermont, in a work entitled *The End of Controversy Controverted*, employs a chapter to prove the existence of Pope Joan, and concludes: "I am very confident that any candid mind accustomed to the weighing of evidence will concur in the result, and consider the proof amply sufficient to establish any fact in history."§ Professor Ippolito, of Turin, circulates the tale in his *Storia Populare dei Papi*, and *La Papesse Jeanne* finds her place between Popes Leo IV. and Benedict III. in the popular *Histoire des Papes* by Maurice La Chatre, published at Paris in 1883. Still more, La Rousse's *Grand Dictionnaire Universelle du XIXe Siècle*, a work to be compared with our own *Encyclopædia Britannica*, evidently leans to the belief in the story, and concludes with the words: "*Si Jeanne n'as pas existé, sa legende est un fait, nous ne dirons pas inexplicable, mais au moins inexpliqué.*"¶ (If Joan did not exist, the legend is a fact which, if not inexplicable, is at least unexplained.)

And, in truth, the explanations have been very various. Recognising that the world in general considers that where there is much smoke there must have been some fire, even the Catholics have been at some trouble to clear up the matter. Cardinal Baronius considered it a satire on the effeminacy of Pope John VIII. in the matter of Photius. The Jesuit Secchi declares it to have been an invention of the schismatic Greeks, and particularly of that vile heretic Photius!—although a great argument against its truth is the fact that it is not mentioned by Photius, nor by the schismatic Greeks until at least the fourteenth century. Others have called it a calumny of the Waldenses, while the fact is it was first put forward by their adversaries, the Dominican friars. Leibnitz thought the tale might have arisen from some female bishop having given birth to a child in a procession; Blocas, that Joan of England was the forger of the false Isidore decretals; and Gfrörer that it was a satire on these decretals, a theory endorsed by the *Christian Examiner*, although the story was current before the decretals were doubted. S. Baring-Gould links the story with the fable of Antichrist, and considers it connected with the whore of Babylon. Dr. Dollinger, with more judgment, says:—

> "Four circumstances have contributed to the production and elaboration of the fable: 1. The use of a pierced seat at the institution of a newly-elected pope. 2. A stone with an inscription on it, which people supposed to be a tombstone. 3. A statue found on the same spot in long robes, which were supposed to be those of a woman. 4. The custom of making a circuit in processions whereby a street which was directly in the way was avoided."

The pierced seat is explained as having been originally taken from a Roman bath, but Dr. Dollinger's remark, that "it was therefore a mere matter of accident that these stone seats were pierced," will hardly satisfy anyone who has read the ceremony of installation as given in *Notes and Queries*, March 9, 1861. The explanation which is given in Wetzer's great dictionary of Catholic theology—"It was a

* *Ecclesiastical History*, cent. ix., chap. ii., sec. 4.
† Section 174.
‡ *Die Papstinn Johanna Keine Fabel*, von George Kleine, Embeck, 1855. *Ein Weib auf dem Stuhle Petri*, von O. Andreae, Gutersloh, 1866
§ Vol. ii., p. 22; New York, 1854.
¶ Section 174.

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symbolic ceremony recalling words of Ps. cxii. 7—'*Suscitans a terra inopem et de stercore erigens pauperam*'" (Raising up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill—Douay version), is also rather far-fetched. The true explanation of the *sella stercoraria* is probably connected with the fact that the canons excluded eunuchs from the papal throne, and the seat was contrived to prove that the person elected fulfilled the requirements of the canons. The seat is known to have existed in the time of Pascal II., A.D. 1099, and it lasted till the sixteenth century. The statue and inscription, Dr. Dollinger thinks, may have been that of a priest of Mithras, "and probably the name of the priest of Mithras was Papirius." Surely a strained conjecture. For the custom of making a circuit in procession, Dr. Dollinger alleges, "the reason was the narrowness of the street." But at least one of the old chroniclers challenges this by saying that, instead of going down the street, they went down bye-lanes and streets.*

Without altogether dismissing Dr. Dollinger's explanations of the rise of the story, for there is no doubt that myths will cluster round unexplained objects, we think Gibbon's also plausible. There was a time when a female virtually ruled over the papal chair. Gibbon says, alluding to the beginning of the tenth century:—

> "The influence of two sister prostitutes, Marozia and Theodora, was founded on their wealth and beauty, their political and amorous intrigues; the most strenuous of their lovers were rewarded with the Roman mitre, and their reign may have suggested to the darker ages the fable of a female pope."

For the story *is* a fable, despite all the authorities in its favor; and herein lies its instructiveness. That it is mythical is proved by the way in which it grew, even more than by the testimonies which have been brought to show that the reigns of Leo IV. and Benedict III. cannot be sundered. These are so *apropos* that an hypercritic may be tempted to think they were made to fit.†

Its falsity will scarcely be questioned by any who read the analysis of the evidence in Bianchi Giovinni, Philomneste (P. G. Brunet), and Dr. Dollinger. The story as first found in unimpeached testimony, towards the middle of the thirteenth century, is not the story as we have it now. Neither names nor dates are given, and it has all the appearance of a traditional scandal without what a modern world would consider evidence or authority. The evidence for it in later authors is weak where it should be strong, and strong only to show its weakness. What avail the ponderous authorities of Lenfant from the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, or Alexander Cooke, with his thousand references, against the simple footnote of Gibbon:—

> "They bear testimony against themselves and the legend, by multiplying the proof that so curious a story *must* have been repeated by writers of every description to whom it was known. On those of the ninth and tenth centuries the recent event would have flashed with a double force. Would Photius have spared such a reproach? Could Liutprand have missed such scandal?'

In Rome there were several writers at the time—for instance, the four succeeding popes, all of whom must have concurred in suppressing the story, although the Church was unable to suppress it later on.

At the present day the investigation into such an ancient scandal would not repay the time spent in consulting the necessary authorities, were there not some instruction outside the story itself. And what is its lesson? Surely the extreme caution with which historic traditions must be received, and the care with which each item of evidence must be weighed. For here is a tradition which was apparently put forth and was for ages credited by persons whose prejudices, interests, and feelings would lead them to wish to suppress it, and which is supported by a variety of circumstances apparently tending to establish its truth, although those very circumstances probably gave shape to the story; and yet that universally accepted story has passed from general belief into general discredit. Those who remember that documents once ascribed to Moses are now referred to a period of from eight hundred to a thousand years after his time, and that the Jews have quite a different version of the time and history of the founder of Christianity from that given in the gospels, may perceive that the fable of Pope Joan is not without its moral in regard to the historic evidences of established orthodoxy.

* See *History of Pope Joan*, by H. Shuttleworth, vicar of Preston, p. 12; 1785.

† For instance, Hincmar of Rheims says that a deputation sent to Leo IV. were received by Benedict III., Leo having died while they were on the journey. Against this it has been contended that a deputation might be kept waiting even for years at Rome before being received at the papal court.

## GIORDANO BRUNO.

(*Continued from page 722.*)

BEFORE leaving England, he held a public deputation with the doctors at Oxford, greatly to the fluttering of the theological dovecots. Returning to Paris with the ambassador, he held another disputation at the Sorbonne. Thence he travelled through Germany, teaching, writing, lecturing, and disputing; sometimes entertained, sometimes repelled, and once openly excommunicated by Boëthius. At Frankfort he applied for permission to live in the house of Wechel the printer. This was peremptorily refused. "His request shall be refused," said the Burgomaster, "and he required to go and earn his bread elsewhere." The Carmelite convent, however, gave him a refuge, and he spent about seven months in Wechel's service.

Bruno was lured from Frankfort by Zuane Mocenigo, a patrician of Venice. With a weak taste for the marvellous, this nobleman appears to have thought that Bruno could reveal him the secrets of the Black Art. Finding himself deceived, his malicious nature turned against the philosopher who was staying in his house. Acting on his confessor's advice, Mocenigo denounced Bruno to the Inquisition. The denunciations are dated May 23, 25, and 29, 1592. Among this worthy's charges are some which show that Bruno had been very unguarded in his conversation. Mocenigo represents himself as having heard the heretic declare that

> "to say bread is made flesh is a great reproach to Catholics; that he is the enemy of the Mass; that no religion pleases him; that Christ was a wicked man; that since he worked evil to lead away the people, he might very well foretell that he would be hanged..... that Christ worked miracles in appearance, and that he was a magician and the Apostles also, and that he (Bruno) could do as much and more; that Christ was unwilling to die, and fled from death as long as he could. .....He said that the Virgin could not have borne a child, and that our Catholic faith is full of blasphemy against God; that the friars should not be permitted to dispute, nor to enjoy their revenues because they defile the face of the earth; that they are all asses, and that our opinions are the doctrines of asses; that we have no proof that our faith is approved by God; and that not to do to others that which we desire them not to do to us suffices for good living; and that he laughs to scorn all other sins."

Bruno was arrested in Mocenigo's house, to the eternal infamy of the wretch who thus violated the laws of hospitality. The philosopher was lodged in the prison of the Holy Office, and his trial begun forthwith. On May 29, 1592, Bruno appeared in person before the dreaded Tribunal.

Before the tribunal of the Venice Inquisition Bruno was first sworn on the Scriptures to speak the truth. "I will speak the truth," he exclaime; "many times have I been threatened with this Holy Office, and I have always taken the threat for a jest, for I am one ready to give account of myself." Being interrogated by the judges, he repeats the story of his life. Asked whether he has, publicly or privately, taught anything contrary to the Catholic faith, he replies: "I have taught nothing directly against the Christian Catholic religion, although I have done so indirectly." Bruno's contention was that philosophy and theology were distinct studies, each with its own rules and prerogatives; and what a man said as a philosopher was no prejudice to his orthodoxy as a theologian. The plea was characteristic of his subtle mind, but it availed him nothing. His judges wer no philosophers, but theologians, and they were resolved to tolerate no license of thought outside the limit of their dogmas.

Bruno was several times interrogated. The last occasion was on July 30, 1592. What h then said to his judges has been called a recantation, bnt it seems to us an hone

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man's plea for life. He did not withdraw any specific teaching; he merely promised that if he had given scandal he would atone for it. It was a pardonable concession to the authority of the tribunal. Bruno was in the full vigor of manhood, life was dear, and the future had many charms. Why should he fling everything away when a judicious flexibility, that involved no recantation, might save him? That he did anything more than this is absolutely irreconcilable with the proceedings of his subsequent trial at Rome.

On September 17, 1592, application was made by Cardinal di San Severina, in the name of the supreme tribunal of the Holy Office at Rome, for the delivery of Giordano Bruno to the Governor of Ancona. Venice declined at first, but afterwards, wishing to be friendly with Rome, it consented. Ferigo Contarini, a procurator, was invited to give a legal view of the matter, and, on his finding, Bruno was delivered up by the Doge's decree, dated January 7, 1593. The Pope returned his hearty thanks for this dutiful act, and on February 27, 1593, Bruno entered the prison of the Inquisition at Rome.

Ferigo Contarini, the procurator, said of Bruno: "His errors in heresy are very grave, though for the rest he possesses a most excellent rare mind, with exquisite learning and wisdom." Alas, that excellent rare mind, with its exquisite learning and wisdom, was doomed to earthly perdition, if not to heavenly, for the crime of heresy, which meant no more then, and has never at any time meant more, than happening to differ from the customary opinion. The noble life of the man, his chivalry, his poetry, and his wit were to be quenched by the bloody Inquisition. Such qualities were not necessary in a world dominated by the Church, which recognised no other grace than passive submission to its dicta.

Every trace of information fails from the beginning of 1593 to the beginning of 1599. All we know is that Bruno spent those six weary years in prison, deprived of all society, and probably of all companionship of books. Torture was systematically practised in the Inquisition prisons. Even the venerable and illustrious Galileo did not escape this "discipline." Campanella, who was imprisoned for thirty-eight years, wrote thus in his *Atheismus Triumphatus*: "I have been shut in fifty prisons; seven times I was examined under the most cruel torture. Forty hours I lay lately under torment. I was bound with cords which cut to my bones, and, with my hands tied to my back, I hung upon the sharp edge of a log, which stripped me of a pound and a half of flesh, while the earth swallowed ten pounds of my blood." That Bruno was subjected to similar treatment is not proved, but there is no reason for supposing that he was exempted from the usual mercies of the Inquisition, and we may conclude that his life from 1593 to 1599 was a worse hell than the fiery anquish of the stake.

Bruno's name is first on a list of twenty prisoners for trial, made on Monday, April 5, 1599. He was more than once brought before the tribunal, but he appears to have been stiff-necked throughout. No "persuasion," which probably meant torture, could induce him to abjure his heresies. A last effort to subdue him was made on Sept. 21, 1599, but with unbroken spirit he answered "that he ought not to recant, and he will not recant; that he had nothing to recant, nor any reason to recant, or knew what he should recant."

On February 8 Bruno was condemned and sentenced as an obstinate heretic, being forced on his knees to hear the tedious document. After setting forth that he had been frequently admonished without effect, and that he had been allowed ample time for reflection, it proceeded:—

> "We.....by this conclusive sentence which we issue in this writ, *Pronounce*, *adjudge*, *determine*, and *declare* that you have been a heretic, one who confided in heretics, and who was their abettor and entertainer severally, and that you have consequently become amenable to the decisions, censures, and penalties, legal and ecclesiastical, imposed upon such-like offenders by the sacred canons, laws, and ordinances, general as well as special. And having regard to obstinate resistance to the acknowledgment of the truth, and the obduracy manifested by you in numerous instances, and your established continuance in errors, and intercourse with heretics, and your hopeless depravity, you have not improved nor reformed; and persuaded that for these reasons the Holy Office can place no further confidence in you, nor have any assurance that you have really and unfeignedly repented, nor expect the slightest amendment in you. On this account we accordingly declare and adjudge that you are an impenitent heretic, a dissembling convert, and debased; and that by the very law you are deprived (and, so far as it is necessary, we deprive you anew) of every rank, privilege, and eminent position, and of your preferments, emoluments, and occupations, spiritual and secular, whatever they may be, and howsoever designated; and that they have ceased to be enjoyed by you from the date of your heresies, and that thenceforward you were incapable of obtaining them. And we condemn you to the forfeiture of all your property, personal and real, and of all consequent rights and claims agreeable to the appointment of the sacred canons, to be applied, as we do apply it, to the purpose to which it should be justly assigned. And, as one irreclaimable, without remorse, we in like manner pronounce and ordain that you ought to be degraded, as we direct that you be actually degraded from the orders to which you have attained. And as a person so henceforward, as well as from the previous time, we expel you as an unprofitable branch from our ecclesiastical court, and from the safeguard of our Holy Church; and we surrender and deliver you up to the secular court, that is, to your lordship the Governor of Rome, that you may take him under your jurisdiction, and that he may be subject to your decision, so as to be punished with due chastisement; beseeching you, however, as we do earnestly beseech you, so to mitigate the severity of your sentence with respect to his body that there may be no danger either of death or of shedding of blood. So we Cardinals, Inquisitors General, whose names are written beneath, decree."

Considering that Bruno was never possessed of more than the probably threadbare suit he stood in, and perhaps half a dozen books, the forfeiture of all his "property, personal and real," would have been a capital joke if it had not served as an introduction to the infamous sentence of death, veiled under the hypocritical formula "without shedding of blood." Bruno heard his death-warrant without trembling. Long imprisonment and suffering may have weakened his body, but his lofty spirit never flamed more gloriously than in that supreme moment. Rising and facing his judges, he said, "with a menacing aspect," rather like the victor than the vanquished: "It may be you fear more to deliver judgment upon me than I fear judgment." How proudly the words ring across the chasm of centuries! They were an appeal and a prophecy; an appeal to posterity, and a prophecy that it would vindicate him. The one has been answered, and the other realised. His judges are swept into the wreckage of the past, and covered with the dust of oblivion; the Church they represented wields no weapons but harmless anathemas, and sees its own doom written on the walls of destiny; while Bruno has ascended as a fixed star in the firmament of fame.

G. W. FOOTE.

*(To be concluded.)*

## RELIGIOUS APES.

More than one traveller has stated that apes show something like a religious sensibility. A very curious corroboration of this appears in the volume just published, called *Wild Animals in Captivity*, and written by the late A. D. Bartlett, who was for many years the superintendent of the Zoological Gardens. The following story refers to the famous chimpanzee "Sally," whose intelligence and docility were so remarkable: "The female, Sarah, had resided in the gardens many months, and in all probability had not seen one of her species for a very long time. A male having been purchased, it was thought desirable to introduce him at once to Sarah. Upon seeing each other they both uttered short sounds, and, protruding their thin lips as far as possible, until they formed a pointed appearance, they leaned forward towards each other until their lips touched, as if gently kissing; this occurred while the male was outside the wire-work. The door of the large cage in which was the female was then opened, and the two animals rushed into each other's arms, and, squatting on the floor of the den, hugged each other in the most affectionate embrace, at the same time uttering sounds of gratification and satisfaction. In a few seconds they rose up on their legs, and, standing as erect as their forms would allow, with their arms raised above their heads, they grasped each other's front paws and gave vent to loud yells and howling, screaming barks, at the same time looking upwards as if returning thanks to some invisible friend."

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## ACID DROPS.

EMPEROR WILLIAM poses as guardian of the Holy Places in Palestine, and France is annoyed at his impudence, for she has long regarded herself as the guardian of those hallowed spots. Even the ground Jesus Christ trod upon is a subject of discord amongst his followers. They can't agree about anything.

Emperor William has manifested one bit of humility in Palestine by recognising the personal superiority of Jesus Christ. But then Jesus Christ is dead.

Satirical stories are floating about in England at the expense of pious Emperor William. According to one of them, Prince Henry, before sailing for the East, being banqueted at Hamburg, made an after-dinner speech, in which he observed: "As the Divine William (Shakespeare) has said, 'There's a divinity doth shape our ends, rough hew them as we will.'" Upon which the Emperor leaned forward and said, "Did I really say that, Henry?"

Another story is somewhat more profane. It is said that the Emperor went out for a walk on the Lake of Galilee and got wet—and that's why he's coming home so soon.

A number of religionists, including the Bishop of St. Albans and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, have opposed the granting of a license to the new Euston Theatre of Varieties, although some place of public entertainment is much wanted in the neighborhood. These sour and melancholy Puritans, who look upon all recreation but church and chapel-going as sinful, should really take a turn at minding their own business. Probably it will take them all their time to save their own souls alive-o.

We should like to know how many working-men members there are in the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association, which has been opposing the Queen's Hall license on account of the Sunday League's concerts. Meanwhile we note with pleasure that the opposition was unsuccessful.

The Sabbatarians are getting subtle. The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, for instance, holding forth at St. James's Hall last "Lord's Day" on the Sunday Concert question, took the new ground that the Sunday League's concerts might be tolerated because they were not carried on for a profit, while Mr. Newman's concerts were quite intolerable because he pocketed any surplus of receipts over expenditure. This fine distinction is of course insincere. The Sabbatarians see that the old game of open obstruction is played out; they therefore change their tactics, and frown upon some Sunday recreations, while pretending to smile upon others. But this is too thin. Anyone with the smallest common sense can easily see through it.

Perhaps the Wesleyan President will tell us what is the difference in the matter of "private gain" between the manager of the Alhambra letting his hall to the Sunday League for £40, and making £40 by running a concert himself. It seems to us that the difference is entirely one of machinery—not at all of principle, or even of practical result.

Mr. Hughes wound up his discourse with the regulation reference to "the Continental Sunday" and its "disgraceful consequences." This appeal was good enough at one time, when insular Englishmen looked upon everything "Continental" as devilish. But it is not good enough nowadays. Too many Englishmen have been abroad on business or pleasure, and have learnt that the "Continental Sunday" is a paradise in comparison with the deadly dulness of our good old "Puritan Sunday."

The *New Age*, which was started by Mr. Fletcher, formerly editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, has passed into other hands, but its piety has rather increased than diminished. Its last week's "Art Notes" contained the statement that "Scepticism cannot produce fine art." Well, it all depends on what is meant. If it means that sceptics cannot be great artists, we say it is utter nonsense. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, for instance, was a Freethinker; and what was Turner's religion, and what was Haydon's? Shelley and Keats were both Freethinkers; so were Beethoven and Wagner. We advise our contemporary to drop this cant. Art is art, and religion is religion. The two may be associated, but they have no necessary connection.

It is well to note, in this connection, that the Queen provides military music on the East Terrace at Windsor Castle on Sunday afternoon, and allows access to the public. What do the Puritans say to this? They really ought to memorialise the Queen against this gratuitous desecration of the blessed Sabbath.

Luccheni, who assassinated the Empress of Austria, has been sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for life. His crime was a terrible one, and so is his punishment. The scaffold is a kind of glorification, but there is no romance about daily suffering in the obscurity of a prison cell. It remains to be seen, however, if this new method of treatment will deter the most violent and reckless Anarchists from what they call "propaganda by deed." For our part, we have never been able to see that legal penalties have very much deterrent effect. Given a certain unsoundness of head or heart, or of both, and there must be a certain expression of it in folly and wickedness. The only real remedy is to develop true education, and to deal with the most pressing social problems. Nothing else will avail; certainly not preaching and denunciation.

The Italian government appears to have been impressed by the representations made, not only at home but also abroad, as to the treatment of the political prisoners who were "implicated" in the Milan riots last May. They are treated as common criminals, and even worse. This is a scandal to Italy. It was for something quite different that Mazzini wrote and Garibaldi fought. And the worst of it is that a brutal government naturally breeds a brutal anarchism.

What an infinitely pathetic letter was that last one of Captain Dreyfus to his wife—a letter which she was not permitted to read herself, but which she had, as usual, read out to her at the Colonial Office. The poor prisoner is in absolute despair. "My strength," he says, "is exhausted. I am dying. I leave to the generosity of France the care of rehabilitating my memory." Madame Dreyfus asked that a telegram might be sent to him, informing him that his trial was being revised, but she was met with a refusal. M. Dupuy, the Premier, was approached, but his reply was the same as that of the Minister of the Colonies. As M. Reinach put it, a man is dying of thirst, and they will not give him a cup of water. Oh, it is infamous! This is what Jesuitical intrigues in the interest of the Catholic Church have brought France to—France the proud, the chivalrous. Statesmen cower and tremble when they should smite Jesuitism in the face.

More freedom in "king-deluded Germany." Dr. Adolphus Braun, sub-editor of the Social Democratic *Vorwärts*, has been expelled by the police as a "nuisance"—which is probably the vaguest crime that ever was alleged against anybody. Dr. Braun is technically a foreigner, as he is an Austrian. He is a brother-in-law of Dr. Victor Adler, the famous Socialist leader at Vienna. Of course his expulsion from Germany will have no effect upon the *Vorwärts*, and the police are therefore acting like jackasses.

"I have written so much," Mr. Ruskin has said, "that I can't quite make out what I am myself, nor what it all comes to." Jesus Christ, on the other hand, wrote nothing, and the world has been wondering what he meant ever since. So easy is it to be unintelligible. Nevertheless it may be asserted that no man was ever unintelligible who understood himself.

"Materialism stifles the soul," says G. Stoffers in the *Daily Chronicle*. This is *apropos* of the shrine of the Holy Virgin at Kevelaer, where German pilgrims kneel and pray to be cured of their diseases, and sometimes feel a little benefit—while the enthusiasm lasts. Even if this is all unscientific and nonsensical, the German gentleman who occupies a column and a half of the *Chronicle* asks why those poor kneeling men and women should be robbed of their faith. Let them kneel and pray! Yes, and let the priests stand up and prey upon them.

Here is a good sample of the Irish bull from the lips of a "holy father." "The very children," said the priest of Ballymalocbeg, "who are not old enough to speak or walk, are running about the streets cursing and blaspheming like fiends."

"Why," asks Dean Pigou, "are Ritualists the most irritating of human beings?" "Because they are always crossing themselves and incensing others."

Notwithstanding the battle of Omdurman, and the glorious reception at home of the Sirdar, all is not for the best in the best of all possible worlds. After the big ninth of November feast at the Guildhall the cold viands that remained were carved up and distributed to the poor. One hundred and forty-four families got a fag-end taste of something really eatable. A long line of others waited for hours in the hope of getting something, and they were disappointed. They were hungry all the time, and they went away hungry. Very likely most of them are hungry now. And this is civilisation! Well, let us hope for a better ordering of such matters in the days to come.

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O wretched state of things (exclaimed an old divine) when one half the world lacks appetite and the other half lacks meat! He didn't stop to exclaim, O the wretched failure of Providence in the government of the world!

"He died suddenly, by a fall from a platform in the City, while listening to a religious service." That was the neat way in which a prisoner told Chaplain Horsley that his father had been hung at Newgate.

The supply of curates is decreasing. According to figures published in the *Mail*, on the authority of the Rev. Paul Petit, secretary of the Additional Curates' Society, there were 814 of these budding men of God ordained in 1886, and the number decreased annually until it fell to 652 in 1897. Mr. Petit attributes this decrease to the fall in tithe. In other words, the loaves and fishes have become smaller, and the "call from the Lord" is not heard so clearly as it used to be. This supports our contention that, for the most part, the clergy work in the Church, as doctors visit patients and lawyers practise in courts, for a living.

"Professor" G. H. Fourl is the high priest of the latest American religion. His speciality is the receipt of written messages "direct from Heaven," some of which are in English, while others are in a "mysterious character." This gentleman goes one better than the Theosophists. Letters from Heaven eclipse letters from Tibet. What we should like to see is the celestial postmark on the envelope.

One page of the *Christian Globe* begins with a list of eulogies on Christianity—by Christians. The rest of the page is mostly occupied with what are usually called "quack" advertisements. The juxtaposition of paragraphs and advertisements is suggestive. Perhaps it resulted from unconscious cerebration or instinct on the part of the printer.

Sarah Stokes, a gipsy, has been sentenced to six months' hard labor at Taunton Assizes. She obtained cash from two flats, Phœbe Maria and William George Needs, on the pretence of being able to give them a chance of getting money out of Chancery. She had a globe which worked on parchment and left a name or letter, which guided her. No doubt she is a swindler, but she is really no worse than thousands of black-coated impostors called men of God, who live entirely on false promises and flash prophecies.

It is amusing to read the press comments on this Christian Science business. Some newspapers call for the severe punishment of Mrs. Mills, who took a pound a week from Mr. Harold Frederic and prayed for him in return for the money. But if Mrs. Mills is to be punished for this, what about the Catholic priests who take money for praying souls out of purgatory? With regard to Mrs. Mills taking money, it is clear that she must live somehow. She cannot go on praying for nothing, unless the Lord feeds, clothes, and houses her by a perpetual miracle. "Jesus Christ had to live," the lady says, "and so have we." She might even have told the smart legal gentleman who cross-examined her that Jesus Christ did *not* do his miracles for nothing. Rich women ministered unto him of their substance, and he kept a cashier called Judas.

The only real question at issue is this: Is prayer beneficial or is it not? If it *is* beneficial, then the Christian Scientist gives value for the fee. If it is *not* beneficial, then all the "divine service" in Christian churches and chapels is humbug and hypocrisy.

*Apropos* of this Christian Science case, the *Daily News* tells the story of "the excellent Bishop who always got into the middle compartment of the middle carriage in a train, and left the rest to Providence." Our contemporary well asks why those whose pious resignation to the divine will begins a little sooner are to be regarded as felons?

Even the Peculiar People's case has taken a new turn. Under the direction of Mr. Justice Hawkins, an Essex jury has returned a verdict of "Not guilty" on the indictment of two Peculiar parents for manslaughter in not calling in medical assistance to their dying child. Mr. Justice Hawkins laid it down that there was no criminal negligence in the case; the parents did all that they could for the child's recovery, and any omission on their part was due to ignorance or error, for which they could not be punished. This seems to us a common-sense view of the matter. But what a farce "justice" is when a certain course is felony in one county and no crime at all in another, or felony under one judge and perfect innocence under another! Such is the mess we get into when we ignore principles.

The Rev. Samuel Walton Kay, vicar of Butlers Marston, who was arrested on the charge of forging a promissory [illegible] for £500, has been committed for trial at the Warwick [illegible]s.

There has been a regular war between whites and blacks at Wilmington. The office of the *Record*, edited by a negro named Manly, has been burnt to the ground. According to a Reuter telegram, ministers of religion took part in the attack upon the *Record* office.

According to Christian theory, Atheists ought all to commit suicide. But they don't. About 99,999 out of every 100,000 suicides are Christians. The latest instance is that of Emily Westley, who drowned herself in Virginia Water, leaving a letter for her grandmother, in which she said, "God will forgive me."

"The three great agents of British expansion nowadays," the *Daily News* observes, "are the Missionary, the Maxim, and the Merchant." Note the order of this arrangement. The Missionary comes first as an advance agent; he gets up a row in order to introduce the Maxim, which makes way in turn for the Merchant, who makes virtual slaves of the surviving natives. Let us pray.

More "Providence" in China. The Yellow River has left its bed near Tsi-Nan-Fu, and two thousand square miles are flooded. Crops are ruined, hundreds of villages are destroyed, and a million people are thrown into destitution.

There has been trouble at Wellington, in Shropshire. A man named Glissan had to appear at the police-court, where he was summoned by Mary Ann Freeman, the mother of four of his children. Some years ago he went through an illegal form of marriage with her, but they had quarrelled, and hence these proceedings. Glissan was ordered to pay the lady five shillings a week for each child. As he left the court she shouted, "May God forgive you, but I never shall." Probably she meant the second half of the exclamation, and the first was only a fashion of speech. When a Christian leaves you to God, the meaning is a hope that you may be damned—and perhaps Glissan deserves it.

Dr. Clifford, the eminent Congregational preacher, has published a volume of addresses on *Typical Christian Leaders*. He includes Carlyle, who disbelieved all the miracles of the New Testament; and Browning, who occupied very much the same position. What is worse, he includes Darwin, who has left on record that he ceased to be a Christian before he was forty—Darwin, who had no belief in a future life or a personal God. Such is clerical honesty at the close of the nineteenth century! Early in the next century, perhaps, Bradlaugh himself will figure in the list of typical Christian leaders. You never know your luck!

Catholic Bishop Lyster has been preaching at Leith on the evils of purely secular knowledge. The Holy Catholic Church, he said, claims the right to "fashion and form, and bend and mould, the minds and hearts of the little ones." Precisely so. That is how every Church lives. Not a single Church on earth can afford to take its chance with unprejudiced adults. Children must be dosed with its physic until they are so used to it that they can never do without it. Habit becomes second nature, and artificial tastes are always the most tyrannical when they are once acquired.

General Bryant, of Madison, tells a story of a sailor on board an American ironclad, who prayed as follows on the eve of a battle:—"O Lord, shield us from the shells and other projectiles of the enemy, but if shells and solid shot do come to our vessel, I pray thee that they may be distributed as prize money is distributed, mostly among the officers."

"Some of the saddest visits I have ever paid," says a writer in the pious policeman's paper, *On and Off Duty*, "have been to the death-beds of Christians who have never come into the promised land. Not a ray of triumph, not a note of victory."

How man is at the mercy of the paltriest accidents in this queerly-regulated world! Two women quarrelled at Dawson City, and one flung a lighted lamp at the other. The result was the destruction of four blocks, comprising forty buildings, one of which was the post-office.

According to the *Outlook*, there is a man at Horncastle who possesses a snuff-box, which he says belonged to Robert Burns, and for which he also says he has refused an offer of £200. But how far this gentleman really appreciates Robert Burns may be inferred from the fact that he treasures quite as much an autograph of Marie Corelli. By the way, what an epigram Robert Burns might write on Marie Corelli! But perhaps it would be unprintable except for private circulation.

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, November 20, Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road : 7.30, "The Meaning of Death."

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 20, Hall of Science, Sheffield ; 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow ; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

SYDNEY A. GIMSON.—We could not possibly improve what you wrote, so we have let it stand as the obituary notice of Mrs. Slater. We are glad that we had a last opportunity of shaking hands with her a few weeks ago at Leicester. On the whole, we imagine, her death was a release ; but these separations are felt all the same by the survivors.

R. LAWSON.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

T. J. CONWAY.—Inserted according to fresh copy.

HARRY ORGAN.—Apply to Miss Vance direct for the Tracts, and you will doubtless get them. A postcard will suffice. We note that Mr, Green, newsagent, St. Ebbe's, Oxford, supplies the *Freethinker*. Thanks for the kind expressions in your letter.

LOUIS LEVINE.—Pleased to hear from you. Mr. Foote keeps well, but the strain is very heavy, and must tell before long, if there is no alteration. Thanks for the references.

C. GRIGGS.—Received. See insertion.

T. SHORE.—Will go through it as soon as possible. We are obliged.

W. COX.—Address noted. The Liverpool Branch will find that collections do not realise as much as a charge for admission. The matter requires very serious consideration before deciding.

VINCENT C. MARTIN.—We will look it up.

W. P. BALL.—Your batches of cuttings are always very welcome.

W. W. (Newcastle)—We are obliged ; no doubt they will prove useful.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—In our next. No room this week.

G. PROUT.—It is an aspect of the matter which cannot be discussed in our columns.

J. H. S.—Thanks. See acknowledgments.

R. MELLOR.—We believe the Geisha was not necessarily a prostitute, but she was perhaps generally so in pre-revolutionary Japan—where, by the way, men and women used to bathe together in public without any sense of impropriety.

W. RICHARDSON.—See paragraph.

C. H. CATTELL.—See paragraph. Mr. Foote has not forgotten the matter of another date for Birmingham. Pleased to hear you are "doing grandly this season."

W. D. ROLLEY.—Good enough to show that you might do better.

R. CHAPMAN.—Thanks for your letter. We hope the difficulty of the South Shields Branch in the matter of halls will disappear when Thornton's is rebuilt.

A. E. ELDERKIN.—Thanks for the references and cuttings.

F. NEWTON.—Read the *Sociology* of Herbert Spencer, Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, Lubbock's *Origin of Civilisation*, Grant Allen's *Evolution of the Idea of God*, and the great second chapter in Darwin's *Descent of Man*. We refer you to the best works, which are expensive ; but most of them should be found in your Free Library.

J. M. (Manchester).—We are unable to advise you. It is a matter which everyone must decide for himself. The only way to determine whether anyone could earn enough on the Freethought platform is to make the experiment. Not that we recommend you to do so. The road to even moderate success is hard and thorny.

A. W. MARKS.—We could not enclose such a slip in the *Freethinker*, as it would involve a good deal of expense ; but we might print the application form where it could be cut out.

G. W. BLYTHE.—Thanks for the cutting from *Light*. We note that Mr. Mahony, while wishing for a discussion, does not court an investigation.

R. EDWARDS.—We cannot insert letters that reach our office on Tuesday afternoon. You must therefore wait until next week.

OLD N. S. S. MEMBER.—Of course we agree with you that it is the duty of everyone who can afford it to purchase a copy of the *Secular Almanack*. The editor and the contributors give their services gratuitously, and any profit from the sale accrues to the National Secular Society. And it is by no means a dear threepennyworth.

T. JOHNSON.—We have not heard from Colonel Ingersoll lately, but we have no doubt that he will redeem his promise to visit England next year, unless unforeseen circumstances should compel his remaining in America. Colonel Ingersoll wishes to visit England, and his family are looking forward to the trip. They know very well that a royal welcome awaits them.

W. RENNIE.—Mr. Foote has a great deal of the matter ready for the second volume of *Crimes of Christianity*, and hopes to bring it out in the new year.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—E. Jones, 2s. 6d.; Cayford, 1s.; S. Newson, 2s. 6d.; W. C., 1s.; W. Snooke, £1 1s.; Harry Organ, 2s.; E. W., 1s.; T. S., 1s.; A. R., 1s.; R. P., 1s.; J. H. S., 1s.

RECEIVED.—New Time—Sydney Bulletin—Isle of Man Times—People's Newspaper—New Age—Public Opinion—New York Truthseeker—Liberator—Catholic News—Malthusian—Crescent—Progressive Thinker—Open Court—Torch of Reason—Brann's Iconoclast—Globe—Two Worlds—Boston Investigator—Ethical World—On and Off Duty—Glasgow Weekly Citizen.

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.

*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.

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 is due.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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. FOOTE lectures this evening (Nov. 20) at the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell-road, London, on "The Meaning of Death." This is a new lecture, which has attracted large meetings wherever it has been delivered. Prior to the lecture, or after it, Mr. Foote will have something to say about the infamous and persistent attack upon the Secularists' right of free speech in South London, with special reference to the *Mail*, its editor, and its most pious contributors.

Chester is an old cathedral town, and its inhabitants are very religious, at least by profession, and very bigoted. Naturally the Secularists there have a very uphill battle to fight. They are only a few, and most of them are poor. Still, they fight on with energy, enthusiasm, and harmony ; and their members' list is slowly but surely lengthening. The N. S. S. Branch at Chester deserves the warmest sympathy of the whole Freethought party in England.

Mr. Foote visited Chester last Sunday and delivered three lectures for the Branch in the Corn Exchange. The room is long and rather barn-like, but it is the only one available, and poor heterodox beggars cannot very well be choosers. Of course the audiences were not as large as Mr. Foote is in the habit of addressing in most other places, but they might be called good in the circumstances. Certainly they were most appreciative and even enthusiastic ; and, according to the committee, the latter characteristic is something novel in Chester. The Branch expresses itself as highly pleased with Mr. Foote's visit, which has already led to the enrolment of some new members.

Last Sunday evening Mr. Charles Watts lectured in the Secular Hall, Camberwell, to a large and very enthusiastic audience. The applause was frequent and hearty throughout the lecture, and at the close it was repeated again and again. Mr. Victor Roger made an excellent chairman. Mr. A. B. Moss occupied a seat on the platform.

Mr. Watts lectures three times to-day, Sunday (Nov. 20), in Science Hall, Rockingham-street, Sheffield. His subjects are new and attractive, and should command large audiences.

Mr. A. B. Moss occupies the Athenæum Hall platform this evening (Nov. 20), taking for his subject "The Creed of a Rationalist." Secularists have seldom an opportunity of hearing Mr. Moss indoors in West London, and we dare say they will take advantage of this occasion.

The Glasgow *Weekly Citizen* devotes nearly three columns to a fairly appreciative notice of James Thomson ("B. V.") with reference to the new and cheaper edition of the poet's Life by Mr. H. S. Salt. The writer appears to think that Thomson is not destined to literary immortality. For our part, we do not believe he will ever be forgotten by the real students of English literature.

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Watson Heston's last cartoon in the New York *Truthseeker* is called the "The Old Pirate in Dangerous Waters." The ship of faith, with Christ on the cross for figurehead, and the skull and cross-bones on its flag, is sailing in a narrow passage between the cliffs of Evolution and Geology, with the big rock of Rationalism right in the way. The inference is that the ship is doomed, and that her black pirate crew will all be drowned.

"Our friends in England," Joseph Symes says in the *Liberator*, "meet with much more rowdy opposition at their open-air meetings than they formerly did, which is a good sign as well as a bad one. It shows that the Secularist propaganda is making itself felt, that bigots are roused to wrath and fury, and that, like the Devil in Revelation, they are all the more infuriated because their 'time is short.'"

Mr. M. Loafer reports that the Secular open-air meeting last Sunday at Limehouse was a success in spite of the religionists, who brought out a choir in a van to drown the speakers. A collection of £1 was taken for the Sandwich Men's Christmas Dinner Fund. To-day (Nov. 20) the collection will be for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.

Three attempts were made by the Holy Hooligans to break up the Secular meeting on Peckham Rye last Sunday, but the Secularists held their ground to the finish. A large crowd of bigots followed the party of twenty or so Secularists who went to a refreshment house for tea, and blows were struck, but no particular damage was done. The *Mail's* lambs can't possibly win; they can only make a row.

Mark Twain (it is not generally known that he is a Freethinker), writing to Mr. Allen Simpson, of Adelaide, said this: "The war has brought England and America closer together, and, to my mind, that is the biggest dividend that any war in this world has ever paid. If this feeling is ever to grow cold again, I do not wish to live to see it."

The Free Press Defence Committee has issued an important manifesto on the Bedborough trial, copies of which can be obtained on application to the honorary secretary, Mr. Henry Seymour, 51 Arundel-square, Islington, N.

Mr. S. Hartmann, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents and its treasurer, appears in a new *rôle* to-day (Nov. 20). He is to open a discussion at 11.15 in the Brixton Discussion Forum, at the Progressive Club, 8 Mayall-road, S.W., on the subject of "Paganism and Christianity Contrasted." No doubt some of the local Freethinkers will drop in and support him, if necessary, in the debate.

Mr. C. H. Cattell writes to us from Birmingham: "Mr. J. McCabe's visit was eminently successful in every way. The members of the Branch and the public seemed deeply impressed by the scholarly manner in which his addresses had been prepared and were delivered. At his lecture on the subject of his journey from Rome to Rationalism, some discussion ensued, which enabled him to show the audience that he is smart in debate and well able to defend his position. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner also had large audiences. The morning meeting was presided over by a lady member, Miss Goyne; the lecture on 'Parliament as it Was, Is, and should Be' proving a good, useful address, thoroughly enjoyed by all present. There was a large quantity of literature sold at all the meetings, an extra supply of the *Freethinker* being cleared right out."

## Obituary.

I AM very sorry to have to record the death of Mrs. Slater, widow of the late Mr. Thomas Slater, who was a vice-president of the N. S. S. She died last Thursday (November 10), at the age of seventy-five, and was buried on Monday at Bury, where she and her husband spent the greater part of their married life, and where his ashes are buried. Mr. Joseph McCabe represented our Society, and conducted a Secular funeral service. I need say little of her fine characteristics. She was a singularly upright, shrewd, and honorable woman, with the sturdy, downright, but kindly character which we associate with the best of our north-country people. She was a devoted believer in the principles that our societies exist to inculcate, and throughout her life had, with her husband, made many and great sacrifices for Secularism and Freethought. She came with her husband to Leicester about fourteen years ago, and since then has lived at our Secular Hall, regularly attending all our lectures whenever her health would allow. We all mourn a friend lost, but rejoice to think that she had fairly completed her life's work, and has left the memory of an honest, true woman as an example to all who knew her.—SYDNEY A. GIMSON.

## SUPERSTITION.

EXTRACTS FROM COLONEL INGERSOLL'S NEW LECTURE.

*(Continued from page 731.)*

To deny the existence of these evil spirits, to deny the existence of the Devil, is to deny the truth of the New Testament. To deny the existence of these imps of darkness is to contradict the words of Jesus Christ. If these devils do not exist, if they do not cause disease, if they do not tempt and mislead their victims, then Christ was an ignorant, superstitious man, insane, an impostor, or the New Testament is not a true record of what he said and what he pretended to do. If we give up the belief in devils, we must give up the inspiration of the Old and New Testament. We must give up the divinity of Christ. To deny the existence of evil spirits is to utterly destroy the foundation of Christianity. There is no half-way ground. Compromise is impossible. If all the accounts in the New Testament of casting out devils are false, what part of the blessed book is true?

As a matter of fact, the success of the Devil in the Garden of Eden made the coming of Christ a necessity, laid the foundation for the atonement, crucified the savior, and gave us the trinity.

If the Devil does not exist, the Christian creeds all crumble, and the superstructure known as "Christianity," built by the fathers, by popes, by priests, and theologians—built with mistakes and falsehoods, with miracles and wonders, with blood and flame, with lies and legends borrowed from the savage world, becomes a shapeless ruin.

### JEHOVAH, JOHN WESLEY, AND WITCHES.

If we give up the belief in devils and evil spirits, we are compelled to say that a witch never lived. No sensible human being now believes in witchcraft. We know that it was a delusion. We now know that thousands and thousands of innocent men, women, and children were tortured and burned for having been found guilty of an impossible crime, and we also know, if our minds have not been deformed by faith, that all the books in which the existence of witches is taught were written by ignorant and superstitious men. We also know that the Old Testament asserted the existence of witches. According to that holy book, Jehovah was a believer in witchcraft, and said to his chosen people: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

This one commandment, this simple line, demonstrates that Jehovah was not only not God, but that he was a poor, ignorant, superstitious savage. This one line proves beyond all possible doubt that the Old Testament was written by men, by barbarians.

John Wesley was right when he said that to give up a belief in witchcraft was to give up the Bible.

Give up the Devil, and what can you do with the Book of Job? How will you account for the lying spirits that Jehovah sent to mislead Ahab?

Ministers, who admit that witchcraft is a superstition, will read the story of the witch of Endor—will read it in a solemn, reverential voice, with a theological voice—and will have the impudence to say that they believe it.

### THE ADMISSION OF HONEST MEN.

The smallest seed that, wrapped in soil, has dreams of April rains and days of June, withholds its secrets from the wisest men. The wisdom of the world cannot explain one blade of grass, the faintest motion of the smallest leaf. And yet theologians, popes, priests, parsons, who, speechless, stand before the wonder of the smallest thing that is, know all about the origin of worlds, know when the beginning was, when the end will be, know all about the God who with a wish created all, know what his plan and purpose was, the means he uses, and the end he seeks. To them all mysteries have been revealed, except the mystery of things that touch the senses of a living man.

But honest men do not pretend to know; they are candid and sincere; they love the truth, they admit their ignorance, and they say, "We do not know."

After all, why should we worship our ignorance, why should we kneel to the unknown, why should we prostrate ourselves before a guess?

If God exists, how do we know that he is good, that he cares for us? The Christians say that their God has existed from eternity, that he forever has been, and forever will be,

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infinite, wise, and good. Could this God have avoided being God? Could he have avoided being good? Was he wise and good without his wish or will?

Being from eternity, he was not produced. He was back of all cause. What he is he was and will be, unchanged, unchangeable. He had nothing to do with the making or developing of his character. Nothing to do with the development of his mind. What he was he is. He has made no progress. What he is he will be; there can be no change. Why, then, I ask, should we praise him? He could not have been different from what he was and is. Why should we pray to him? He cannot change.

And yet Christians implore their God not to do wrong.

The meanest thing charged against the Devil is that he leads the children of men into temptation, and yet in the Lord's Prayer God is insultingly asked not to imitate the king of fiends.

"Lead us not into temptation."

Why should God demand praise? He is as he was. He has never learned anything; has never practised any self-denial; was never tempted, never touched by fear or hope, and never had a want. Why should he demand our praise?

### Thanking God for Good and Evil.

Does anyone know that this God exists; that he ever heard or answered any prayer? Is it known that he governs the world; that he interferes in the affairs of men; that he protects the good or punishes the wicked? Can evidence of this be found in the history of mankind? If God governs the world, why should we credit him for the good and not charge him with the evil? To justify this God we must say that good is good, and that evil is also good. If all is done by this God, we should make no distinction between his actions, between the actions of the infinitely wise, powerful, and good. If we thank him for sunshine and harvest, we should also thank him for plague and famine. If we thank him for liberty, the slave should raise his chained hands in worship and thank God that he toils unpaid, with the lash upon his naked back. If we thank him for victory, we should thank him for defeat.

Only a few days ago our president, by proclamation, thanked God for giving us the victory at Santiago. He did not thank him for sending the yellow fever. To be consistent, the president should have thanked him equally for both.

The truth is that good and evil spirits, gods and devils, are beyond the realm of experience, beyond the horizon of our senses, beyond the limits of our thoughts, beyond imagination's utmost flight.

Man should think, he should use all his senses, he should examine, he should reason. The man who cannot think is less than man; the man who will not think is traitor to himself; the man who fears to think is superstition's slave.

Superstition is, always has been, and forever will be, the enemy of liberty.

### What Superstition has Done.

Superstition created all the gods and angels, all the devils and ghosts, all the witches, demons, and goblins, gave us all the augurs, soothsayers, and prophets, filled the heavens with signs and wonders, broke the chain of cause and effect, and wrote the history of man in miracles and lies. Superstition made all the popes, cardinals, bishops, and priests, all the monks and nuns, the begging friars and filthy saints, all the preachers and exhorters, all the "called" and "set apart." Superstition made men fall upon their knees before beasts and stones, caused them to worship snakes and trees and insane phantoms of the air, beguiled them of their gold and toil, and made them shed their children's blood and give their babes to flames. Superstition built the cathedrals and temples, all the altars, mosques, and churches, filled the world with amulets and charms, with images and idols, with sacred bones and holy hairs, with martyrs' blood and rags, with bits of wood that frighten devils from the breasts of men. Superstition invented and used the instruments of torture, flayed men and women alive, loaded millions with chains, and destroyed hundreds of thousands with fire. Superstition mistook insanity for inspiration, and the ravings of maniacs for prophecy, for the wisdom of God. Superstition imprisoned the virtuous, tortured the thoughtful, killed the heroic, put chains on the body, manacles on the brain, and utterly destroyed the liberty of speech. Superstition gave us all the prayers and ceremonies, taught all the kneelings, genuflections, and prostrations; taught men to hate themselves to despise pleasure, to scar their flesh, to grovel in the dust to desert their wives and children, to shun their fellow-men, and to spend their lives in useless pain and prayer. Superstition taught that human love is degrading, low, and vile; taught that monks are purer than fathers, that nuns are holier than mothers, that faith is superior to fact, that credulity leads to heaven, that doubt is the road to hell, that belief is better than knowledge, and that to ask for evidence is to insult God. Superstition is, always has been, and forever will be, the foe of progress, the enemy of education, and the assassin of freedom. It sacrifices the known to the unknown, the present to the future, this actual world to the shadowy next. It has given us a selfish heaven and a hell of infinite revenge; it has filled the world with hatred, war, and crime, with the malice of meekness and the arrogance of humility. Superstition is the only enemy of science in all the world.

### What Faith Did for Italy.

Nations, races, have been destroyed by this monster. For nearly two thousand years the infallible agent of God has lived in Italy. That country has been covered with nunneries, monasteries, cathedrals, and temples—filled with all varieties of priests and holy men. For centuries Italy was enriched with the gold of the faithful. All roads led to Rome, and these roads were filled with pilgrims bearing gifts; and yet Italy, in spite of all the prayers, steadily pursued the downward path, died, and was buried, and would at this moment be in her grave had it not been for Cavour, Mazzini, and Garibaldi. For her poverty, her misery, she is indebted to the holy Catholic Church, to the infallible agents of God. For the life she has she is indebted to the enemies of superstition. A few years ago Italy was great enough to build a monument to Giordano Bruno—Bruno, the victim of the "Triumphant Beast"—Bruno, the sublimest of her sons.

### Spain's Debt to Priest and Creed.

Spain was at one time owner of half the earth, and held within her greedy hands the gold and silver of the world. At that time all nations were in the darkness of superstition. At that time the world was governed by priests. Spain clung to her creed. Some nations began to think, but Spain continued to believe. In some countries priests lost power, but not in Spain. The power behind her throne was the cowled monk. In some countries men began to interest themselves in science, but never in Spain. Spain told her beads and continued to pray to the Virgin. Spain was busy saving her soul. In her zeal she destroyed herself. She relied on the supernatural; not on knowledge, but superstition. Her prayers were never answered. The saints were dead. They could not help, and the Blessed Virgin did not hear. Some countries were in the dawn of a new day, but Spain gladly remained in the night. With fire and sword she exterminated the men who thought. Her greatest festival was the *Auto da fé*. Other nations grew great, while Spain grew small. Day by day her power waned, but her faith increased. One by one her colonies were lost, but she kept her creed. She gave her gold to superstition, her brain to priests, but she faithfully counted her beads. Only a few days ago, relying on her God and his priests, on charms and amulets, on holy water and pieces of the true cross, she waged war against the great Republic. Bishops blessed her armies and sprinkled holy water on her ships, and yet her armies were defeated and captured, her ships battered, beached, and burned, and in her helplessness she sued for peace. But she has her creed; her superstition is not lost. Poor Spain, wrecked by faith, the victim of religion!

Portugal, slowly dying, growing poorer every day, still clings to her faith. Her prayers are never answered, but she makes them still. Austria is nearly gone, a victim of superstition. Germany is travelling towards the night. God placed her Kaiser on the throne. The people must obey. Philosophers and scientists fall upon their knees and become the puppets of the divinely crowned.

*(To be concluded.)*

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Reason before everything.—*Spinoza.*

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## PREHISTORIC PEEPS.

### VI.—Why Noah Broke the Pledge.

"Beer, glorious beer."—Popular Hymn of Nineteenth Century.

"A man may have no vices, and have worse."—Marcus Twainus.

Clerical cuttle-fish have invariably insisted that Noah owed his salvation to the clemency of Admiral J. Hovah. This is unjust to our prehistoric navigator, for Captain Noah fully *earned* his salvation. At six hundred years, an age when most of us are living on our great-grandchildren, he constructed a vessel beside which the *Great Eastern* was as a child's paper-boat to an ironclad. In addition, this ancient naturalist collected all the known specimens of birds, beasts, reptiles, insects, and animalculæ. He fed these creatures for a considerable time, and he also navigated Admiral J. Hovah's "Black Maria" in the dampiest and stormiest weather ever experienced by mortal man. Furthermore he kept the ark clean—that is, he disposed of the filth. Try to imagine poor, dear, old Noah, with a clothes-peg on his nose, working sixteen hours daily at this contract. Ugh! Enough to make a man sweat tallow candles at the bare idea. Noah must have worked single-handed. There were only seven other human beings on the Ark, four of whom were ladies. We may be sure that Mrs. Noah insisted on his looking after the sewage department himself. His three boys, Shem, Ham, and Japhet, were but babies of one hundred years. Talk about sweating! The Chosen People have always been famed for their habits of working their employees long hours with precious little pay, but this divine example fairly takes the biscuit.

On February 17, 2349 B.C. ("the Bible tells me so"), the fountains of the Great Deep Water Co. busted, and the windows of heaven were opened. All this dampness was owing to the fact that Our Heavenly Father allowed Christ's brothers to have latchkeys, which permitted them to leave the heavenly mansions to make love to the barmaids in the Euphrates Valley. If Admiral J. Hovah had kept the doors of heaven shut earlier, there would have been no necessity for the windows of heaven to have been open on this occasion. But God's ways are not as our ways, for which let us be devoutly thankful.

The people before the Flood seem to have been a shocking lot of bounders. Maybe they were not dieted properly. From all accounts we learn that they were vegetarians and teetotallers. There is not enough nourishment in a carrot and a glass of water to make a man or woman moral. Noah tried to improve on this generous diet, and has the honor of being the first gentleman who got drunk and had roast meat for dinner. Noah deserves our pity. It would require the genius of a Sterne to do justice to such a subject. But the present scribe has no tears in his pen. If working like a galley-slave, and being subjected to some hundred thousand stenches, don't justify drunkenness, please ask me another! To be a plastic saint under such circumstances would have been a difficult task for even the Pope of Rome or the Archhumbug of Canterbury.

Noah was the first man who "saw cats"; he was also the first who had any need to. The poor navigator must have passed many sleepless nights. Dead tired as he must have been, he could never have slept through such a racket as there was every night on Admiral J. Hovah's three-decker. Thousands of sleeping creatures snored with universal nose, and ever and anon some gong-throated jackass executed a serenade to his lady-love. Outside the sea was lashed to lather, and every few moments was heard the grumbling of the lowering thunder. It was not nice, and no wonder he felt fatigued at it, and pined for some brandy-and-water. Of course, it may have been Gilbey's champagne at one-and-threepence a bottle, Kop's ale, or even "Special Scotch." I do not venture to dogmatise. A man with an experience like that of Noah's must have been *capable de tout*—even Kaola or "Communion port."

Noah's attempt, after his disembarkation, to keep his spirits up by pouring spirits down led to one unfortunate result. He became drowsy whilst dressing one Sunday, and succumbed before he had time to put on his unmentionables. Master Ham, just going to Sunday-school, came in for a clean collar, and burst—into smiles. He went and told his brothers. They, not wishing to become acquainted with papa's slipper, tried to repair the mischief. Taking the old man's best frock coat off its customary peg, they walked backwards into the room intending to cover him up. One of the boys, unfortunately, trod on the old man, and he woke with a start. Shem and Japhet hiding behind him, he saw only the round, smiling face of Master Ham in the doorway. Then he arose in his wrath and profaned, as angry male parents are wont to do when their Sunday rest is disturbed.

Noah, in his last years, was a wine-merchant; but, although he was some 350 years in this line of business, his biographer, Mr. Moses, does not tell us what else he did. We never hear of him again. He finally turned up his toes at the good old age of 950 years, thus beating Mr. Adam by a short neck. No monument was raised to mark the last resting-place of this prehistoric Columbus, one of the very few survivors of the Great Cold Water Cure. There's only a very tiny moral to this yarn of a very ancient mariner. It has been happily expressed by Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, the Laureate of Secularism, in the following lines:—

> Ne'er try to please God, lest you make Him your friend;
> Remember old Job's vivisection;
> He "chastens" his loved ones, and oft likes to send
> Some bloodthirsty proof of affection.

Mimnermus.

## MORAL WEEDS; OR, THE CHRISTIAN EXCRESCENCE.

(The more thoughtless and ignorant specimens of Christians are constantly saying to Secularists, "What will you put in place of Christianity?")

What will we put in place of Christianity?
We'll put what people put in place of fleas;
In place of dirt, and weeds, and inhumanity;
In place of toothache, locusts, and disease.

What will we put in place of Christianity?
We'll put what sweepers put in place of mud;
What doctors put in place of cured insanity,
And shamble-scourers put in place of blood.

What will we put in place of Christianity?
Are you a parson? Learn an honest trade!
A layman? Rid yourself of pious vanity,
And ghosts, and gods which you and priests have made!

What will we put in place of Christianity?
Perhaps what people put in place of rust;
Perhaps—O blind blasphemers of Humanity!—
We'll put what housewives put in place of dust.

What will we put in place of Christianity?
Why, Nothing! Fools! 'Tis breathing space you need!
We freshen drooping flow'rs of Truth and Sanity
By *weeding out* the falsehoods of your creed!

What will there be in place of Christianity?
A wholesome space, now dank with Christian weeds.
*Perennial in the garden of Humanity*
*Are all the healthful growths for human needs!*

G. L. Mackenzie.

No humorist could possibly be a Christadelphian, and, of all pious bores who ever struck Australia, lecturer Robert Roberts, whose death is reported from 'Frisco, was the most wearisome. Roberts usually faced an audience of less than a dozen—two bearded and solemn patriarchs, three withered old ladies with corkscrew curls, and several disrespectful small boys. Most of the small boys filed out in disgust when they found the entertainment to consist solely of talk; the others would fidget and scuffle in the back seats until ordered out in a hilarious bunch by the doorkeeper. But the three withered ladies and the solemn patriarchs nightly sat for two hours and listened to a rambling discourse about the Beast, and the Bull, and the Chariot, and the Armageddon, all of which, seemingly, had some bearing upon an imminent squabble between the Bear and the Turk. The present scribe was naturally pleased to learn that the inevitable Bull would have its customary horns in Armageddon.—*Sydney Bulletin.*

A member of the House of Commons, having written to make inquiry about the health of an acquaintance, received the following answer: "In reply to your letter to hand this morning, I have to inform you of the *unpleasant* news that our brother has passed from earth to heaven."

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## BOOK CHAT.

Mr. St. George Mivart has just published a new book through Mr. Murray. The title is *The Groundwork of Science*, and if the author had carefully excluded all question of religion, and appealed to nothing but human reason, it would have been well. As it is, the champion of clericalism is guilty of treason to science, and a betrayal of the cause of philosophy. The book is, however, one which our readers would do well to look into. It is a standing example of how a scientific work should not be written.

* * *

The humorists who add to the gaiety of nations deserve well of the reading public. Mr. W. W. Jacobs, the youngest of the laugh-makers, has written a new book, *Sea Urchins*, which, with its delicious absurdities and unforced humor, is simply irresistible. The author has again been inspired by the sea, and has again produced a volume brimful of merriment.

* * *

The second-hand booksellers' shops are just now full of remainder copies of the writings of a certain Mr. McCosh. We wonder if these are the productions of the gentleman whom the Rev. W. T. Lee regards as a second Solomon, and is for ever quoting from in his debates.

* * *

Dr. Havelock Ellis intends that the remaining volumes of *The Psychology of Sex* shall be issued by a continental publisher.

* * *

An attempt to explain the Bible, by means of a novel, has been made by Mr. Bernard Hamilton. *The Light: A Romance* (Hurst and Blackett; 6s.) is a bulky volume of over five hundred pages of small print. The volume must have cost the author a tremendous amount of work. Mr. Hamilton displays a close knowledge of many out-of-the-way subjects. The love passages are well written, and the descriptive passages show that the author is no 'prentice to the art of literature. Emphatically it is a book worth reading.

## A ROMAN HOSPITAL.

The discovery of a "hospital" amongst the Roman ruins at Baden, in Canton Aargau, is of considerable interest, because we possess no literary document, Greek or Roman, which throws light upon the question whether the Ancients had any institutions corresponding to our hospitals. Hippocrates, indeed, speaks of his observations upon the sick persons in the Temple of Æsculapius, but it is impossible to tell from his very meagre remarks whether there was an hospital attached to the Temple. The excavations at Baden have laid bare a building containing fourteen small rooms, together with a number of articles which evidently served for the use of Roman physicians and surgeons, as pincettes, tubes, spatulas, spoons, measures, caustics, ointment-boxes, etc. The experts conclude that these "finds" indicate the building to have served as the hospital for the Fourth and Fifth Legions, which had their standing quarters on the spot.—*Daily News*

### Not Going That Way.

"I'll never forget one of the funny experiences of my last voyage over the ocean," said a man to a Cincinnati *Enquirer* reporter. "There were an unusual number of passengers aboard that were making their first journey, and they furnished the old timers with a great deal of amusement. The coming of a heavy fog had caused the captain to shut down the engines. Scarcely had the liner come to a standstill when up dashed an elderly female to the head officer. 'Why, sir,' began she, 'are we stopped here?' The ruler of the sea gulped down his feelings. 'Don't you perceive, madam, that we are in a thick fog?' 'But it is clear enough up there,' persisted the lady, pointing overhead. 'So I see,' retorted the captain, 'but we are not going to heaven unless the boilers should burst.'"

How the clergy delight to gibe at one another. A Q. bakblox Methodist parson lately passed the tick-demarcation line without having greased his horse as specified by law. Was summoned and fined. Met Father O'Flynn next day, who thus accosted his spiritual comrade: "Well, Mr. ——, you've been dodging the devil for the last five years to my knowledge, and yet you cannot dodge a common tick-inspector."—*Sydney Bulletin.*

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### SABBATARIAN BIGOTRY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Amid the "encircling gloom" at Clerkenwell Licensing Sessions, on Friday, there was at least one bright spot. The Lord's Day bigots going in and out of the Court could hardly fail to observe it. It displayed itself openly and fearlessly on one side of the "Green" within a few hundred yards of the entrance to the Court. It was a contents-bill of the *Freethinker* outside a newsagent's door. Can there be any doubt as to the need of this journal, its claims to support, and the urgency of an active anti-theological propaganda, when such a result as that secured by the Lord's Day Rest Association is possible? Who says the battle is over, and the fight won, in the face of this latest achievement of Christian bigotry?

There were several white-chokered gentlemen hanging about the doors of the Court while Mr. Tindal Atkinson—with no apparent liking for the job—stated their case. As I looked at them, and the "common informer" who was called, I felt more than ever the need of a vigorous Anti-Clerical Crusade.

Francis Neale.

## FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other.—*Bacon.*

Humanity alone founds charitable institutions; religion only adds a chapel and a priest—that is to say, an additional expense.—*Rivarol.*

It would not be worth while to live for seventy years if all the wisdom of this world were but folly in the sight of God.—*Goethe.*

Parsons will always keep up their character, but as it is said there are some animals the ancients knew which we do not, let us hope our posterity will miss the the black badger with tri-cornered hat. Who knows but some reviewer of Buffon or Pliny may put an account of the parson in the Appendix? No one will then believe it, any more than we believe in the Phœnix. I think we may class the lawyer in the same natural history of Monsters; a green bag will hold as much as a lawn sleeve. The only difference is that one is fustian and the other flimsy.—*Keats.*

The Christian Church has left nothing untouched with its depravity; it has made a worthlessness out of every value, a lie out of every truth, a baseness of soul out of every straightforwardness. Let a person dare to speak to me of its "humanitarian" blessings. To *do away with* any state of distress whatsoever was counter to its profoundest expediency; it lived by states of distress, it *created* states of distress in order to perpetuate *itself* eternally.—*Nietzsche.*

How is it? Is man only a mistake of God? Or is God only a mistake of man?—*Nietzsche.*

The Jew is an old trunk which has produced two branches that have covered all the earth; I mean Mohammedanism and Christianity. Or rather, she is a mother who has brought two daughters into the world, who have overwhelmed her with a thousand wounds, because in matters of religion the nearest are the greatest enemies; but, however badly she has been treated, she cannot cease to boast of having given them birth.—*Montesquieu.*

Those who swallow their Deity, really and truly, in transubstantiation, can hardly find anything else otherwise than of easy digestion.—*Byron.*

I remember, in my plough-boy days, I could not conceive it possible that a noble lord could be a fool, or a godly man could be a knave. How ignorant are plough-boys! Nay, I have since discovered that a *godly woman* may be a ——!—*Robert Burns.*

"It was a pouring wet December Saturday night in barracks," says a writer in the *Nineteenth Century*, "and a late after-order had been issued altering the hours of divine service on the following day. The battalion orderly sergeant was reading the amendments by the light of a lantern to his shivering audience. 'District after-order,' he bellowed. 'Hours of divine service to-morrow. Denominations will p'rade as under: Chu'ch of England, 10.30; Kautholics, 8.15.' The rain beat down relentlessly as he turned over the page of the order book. He observed at a glance that the Presbyterians, Wesleyans, and Primitive Methodists were all to parade at the same hour, so the rest of the information he imparted in this precise form: 'Fancy religions 10 o'clock. Right Turn. Dismiss.'"

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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, A. B. Moss, "The Creed of a Rationalist."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A Concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Meaning of Death."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E): 7, G. Spiller, "Science and Superstition."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Stanton Coit, "Can Virtue be Taught?"

WEST LONDON BRANCH (15 Edgware-road): November 24, at 8.15, H. B. Samuels, "Socialism."

WEST LONDON SECULAR CLUB (15 Edgware-road): Every evening 7—10.50.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "Plato on the Love of Justice."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

CAMBERWELL (Peckham Rye): 3, Freethought Demonstration—Messrs Moss, Heaford, Ramsey, Edwards, Pack, Davies, etc.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Davis.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board school): 7, A Concert by members of the Bohemian Choir.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 11, C. Cohen, "Is there Life Beyond the Grave?" 7, C. Cohen, "The Jew as Christian Evidence."

DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, R. Wellings, "Physical Culture."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class, Mr. Chalmers; 6.30, A. G. Nostik.

HUDDERSFIELD (Friendly and Trade Societies' Club, Northumberland-street): R. Law, F.G.S.—3, "Geological History of the Earth and the Rocks which Form its Crust"; 6.45, "Volcanoes and Earthquakes: Their Origin and Distribution."

HULL (Friendly Societies' Hall): 7, R. Manton, "The Land and the People."

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, John M. Robertson, "Critical Freethought among the Hebrews, the Greeks, and the Romans."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Roberts, "Materialism."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, R. C. Phillips, "Melody." Experimental illustrations.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): C. Watts—11, "Christian Glad Tidings"; 3, "Atheism and Agnosticism: An Exposition and Defence"; 7, "The Doom of the Churches." Tea at 5.

STANLEY SECULAR SOCIETY (Co-operative Hall): 8, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, "Providence and Progress." November 21 (Board-schools): 7.30, Mrs Bradlaugh Bonner, "Parliament: As it has been, is, and ought to be."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, A Reading.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—November 20, Chatham; 27, Manchester; 28, Huddersfield. November 30 and December 1, Failsworth. December 4, Manchester; 5 and 6, Blackburn; 7, 8, and 9, Derby; 11, Stockton-on-Tees.

A. B. MOSS, 14 Jerdon-road, London, S.E.—November 20, Athenæum; 27, North Camberwell Radical Club.

H. PERCY WARD, 5, Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—November 27, Liverpool. December 4, Leicester. 18, Birmingham.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## THE CZAR'S PEACE MESSAGE.

NEARLY two thousand years ago, at the birth of the actual or legendary founder of Christianity, the old records say that angelic voices were heard singing in the sky of peace on earth and goodwill towards men. This was a beautiful and touching prophecy, but it has not been fulfilled. It may indeed be truthfully said that the pious followers of the Prince of Peace have usurped far more than their fair share of quarrelling and fighting. Most of the great battle-fields of modern times are in Christian countries. The names of great conquerors, generals, and admirals are more familiar to Christian nations than the names of great poets, scientists, and philosophers. A stream of blood runs through the whole history of Christendom. People who talk of love and charity are the foremost in dispute and aggression. It is the Christian nations that organise the colossal armies, build the terrible battleships, construct the big guns and rifles, and manufacture the awful explosives. It is the Christian nations that carry the arts of destruction to what only a few years ago was an unimagined degree of development. It is the Christian nations that wield what Mr. Gladstone most unhappily, as a Christian, called the resources of civilisation. It is the Christian nations that will not let others live at peace. It is the Christian nations that go buccaneering, slaughtering, and stealing all over the world; and the chief cause of discord amongst them is the division of the spoil.

Certainly modern Europe is in a strange and perilous condition. Less than four hundred thousand soldiers, in the palmy days of the Roman empire, sufficed to keep the peace amongst a multitude of races, nationalities, and tribes, and to protect an enormous frontier from the incursions of the outer barbarians. Now the soldiers of Europe are counted by the million. Armies that singly outnumber by several times all the legions of Rome are grasping arms and glaring at each other across the map-lines which separate their respective territories. And the cost of warlike preparations is simply appalling. Europe spends two hundred millions every year on its armies and navies, and another two hundred millions in the shape of interest on its war debts. England alone has spent nearly six thousand millions in this way during the present century. Moreover, the war-budget of every country goes on increasing. There is a swift race in prodigality. The moment one government lays out an extra pound on military or naval material, every other government sees reason for capping the expenditure. Europe is rushing on to universal bankruptcy. At the present rate the catastrophe is only a question of time. Italy is nearly ruined already, and her fate to-day will be the fate of richer nations to-morrow.

All over the continent the conscription prevails. Young men are withdrawn from industrial life at the very time when they should be settling down to their careers. They are removed from domestic influences—from the sagacious eye of the father, the loving eye of the mother, the appealing eye of the sister—at the most critical time of life, when such influences are the most precious, seeing it is then often decided whether the youth shall be a man or a beast. They are herded together in barracks, and what that means is better left to imagination. Evil always springs from the separation of the sexes. And although the French government orders the prosecution of a writer who passionately impeaches the system which is debauching and demoralising his countrymen, everybody knows that he is telling the truth, with whatever degree of exaggeration. Nor is this all. The conscription, which is a very recent thing, is chiefly responsible for the wave of reaction which has surged all over Europe. You cannot pass all your young men through the army without their catching its spirit of authority and submission. Hence we see that despotism has taken a new lease of life. Liberty is not the watchword it was fifty years ago. Even under the Republic in France it is dangerous to run counter to the new tyranny which, in the name of the national honor, has transformed the Army from a servant into an idol, and set the mob howling at the few brave advocates of freedom and justice.

Finally, it must be confessed that no two Christian nations in Europe have a spark of love for each other. There is not so much as a scintillation of honest friendship. The alliances we hear of from time to time are always based upon the most sordid self-interest. They are nothing but the alliances of thieves and burglars in face of cunning and unscrupulous rivals. Each nation hates every other nation. Their jealousy of each other is positively sickening. They could have stopped the Armenian massacres with a word, but they could not speak it, because the Turk is the sick man of Europe, and all the Christian powers were anxious to get the biggest share of his belongings. They could not so much as settle the poor little Cretan question, and for the very same reason. Indeed, that little question would not have been settled even now if the Turks had not committed the bad mistake of shooting some English soldiers and sailors, which put Admiral Noel's back up, and made him go in and play the whole game off his own bat. And good luck to him! as the man in the street says. He had a heart in his breast, and a head on his shoulders; and we may well be proud that such a man was there at the moment to speak strongly in the name of England for common sense and common humanity. Whenever such interests are to be subserved we shall always be glad to know that an English admiral is about with the resolution to stand "no damned nonsense."

Well, at this moment, when even the great American Republic is entering upon a fresh career, and is talking of doubling or trebling its army, and multiplying its battleships; at this moment, we say, it is curious that the Czar of all the Russias, the most autocratic ruler in Europe, should issue an appeal to the whole civilised world in favour of peace, or at least of retrenchment in expenditure on preparations for war.

The Czar's circular to all the foreign powers represented at the Court of St. Petersburg is a striking document. Whether its main ideas are entirely his own or not, it is probable that a more practised hand than his own is responsible for its drafting. It points out that war charges everywhere "follow an upward march" and "strike at public prosperity at its very source"; that "the intellectual and physical strength of the nations, labor and capital, are for the major part diverted from their natural application and unproductively consumed"; that "hundreds of millions are devoted to acquiring terrible engines of destruction, which, though to-day regarded as the last word of science, are destined to-morrow to lose all value in consequence of some fresh discovery in the same field"; that this armed peace is becoming "a crushing burden" to all nations, and that "if this state of things were prolonged it would inevitably lead to the very cataclysm which it is desired to avert, and the horrors



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of which make every thinking being shudder in advance."

In view of this horrid state of things, and in order if possible to effect a serious improvement, the Czar proposes a general Conference, which he presumes would have "the help of God." "It would converge," he says, "into one powerful focus the efforts of all the States which are sincerely seeking to make the great conception of universal peace triumph over the elements of trouble and discord. It would at the same time cement their agreement by a corporate consecration of the principles of equity and right, on which rest the security of States and the welfare of peoples."

Now we are altogether in favor of peace. We have written as strongly as we could against war. We were in the field long before the Czar entered it. But admirable sentiments, however finely expressed, are not everything. Every proposal on behalf of a great public object must be considered from all points of view, and especially from those of reason and practicability. And this is the task before us.

G. W. FOOTE.

*(To be continued.)*

## THE WELFARE OF OTHERS.

SAMUEL JOHNSON once said: "It matters not how a man dies, but how he lives." This is the Secular view of existence, and indicates an imperative duty that devolves upon those who desire to promote personal and general happiness. While the one object of professed orthodox Christians is to consider their manner of death, and what is to follow that event, the principal study of Secularists is to discover the best mode of living, and what will be the results of our actions upon ourselves and others on this side of the tomb. The advantage of the latter course is evident from the fact that he who has spent a useful and upright life has adopted the correct course to secure a peaceful and contented death. The Christian plan is to endeavor to "serve two masters"—God and man; but the method of Secularists is to confine their services to benefitting mankind and protecting the lower animals. The Rev. W. P. Hanks, of St. Peter's Church, Bayswater, in noticing the orthodox object of life, writes in the *Church Gazette* thus: "Our nineteenth-century Christianity is, for the most part, an elaborate attempt to serve two masters, to love the one and tolerate the other; to hold to the one, and hang on by the skirts of the other; and that is because we serve neither, but hold only to our own interests, and love only our own selves." Certain Christians, continues the rev. gentleman, "find that it pays to go to church, and to contribute something towards philanthropy. They regard the religion of Jesus Christ as a species of eternal life assurance, and think that they can have preference shares in salvation as in a joint-stock company; they care not whether they be just or unjust, so that they succeed" (August 20, 1898).

This is a severe condemnation both of Christian conduct and the motive which prompts it; and, coming as it does from a Christian source, it cannot be ascribed to "infidel misrepresentation." We have always regarded Christianity as being the very incarnation of selfishness. The work, such as it is, that many of the Christians perform is inspired by a desire to please their God, and thereby secure the salvation of their own souls. With such believers virtue has little or no charms if not evoked by "love for Christ." Nobility, generosity, and devotion to man's welfare are deemed of minor importance unless stimulated by the hope of future bliss. To the considerations of some other supposed life the interests of the present one must yield. True freedom is denied to those who are outside the Christian fold. Freethought, when exercised in opposition to Christianity, is thought to be the influence of the "evil one," and man is thereby made a slave to the teachings of a degrading theology. He is told that religion emanated from God, and to this alleged supernatural power all must bow. A knowledge of man's origin and destiny is claimed by the clergy, and they persist in informing their followers that they are responsible to the Being "who made them," and that, if they ignore such responsibility, everlasting perdition will be their fate. Such erroneous teachings as these cannot possibly enhance the welfare of the human race. How different the broad, dignified, and ennobling inculcations of Secularism are will be seen from the following words of Colonel Ingersoll: "Man has found that he must give liberty to others in order to have it himself. He has found that a master is also a slave; that a tyrant is himself a serf. He has found that governments should be founded and administered by man and for man; that the rights of all are equal; that the powers that be are not ordained by God; that woman is at least the equal of man; that men existed before books; that religion is one of the phases of thought through which the world is passing; that all creeds were made by man; that everything is natural; that we know nothing of origin and destiny; that concerning the unknown we are all equally ignorant; that the pew has the right to contradict what the pulpit asserts; that man is responsible only to himself and those he injures, and that all have a right to think."

There are two phrases, comparatively modern, which are frequently used by ethical writers—namely, Egoism and Altruism. The former means the desire to benefit oneself, and the latter the wish to benefit others. Now, accepting this signification of the terms, neither of them would fairly represent our idea of what human conduct should be. That there is too much selfishness in the world is a fact which we must all deplore, and that there are too many persons who, in seeking the gratification of their desires, have no concern as to the effect of their own conduct upon others is also a truth to be regretted. But, notwithstanding this, we see no adequate reason why self should be entirely sacrificed in working for the welfare of others. To do good by promoting the comfort and happiness of others ought not to be thought a sacrifice, but rather one of the pleasurable duties of life. Men can only be truly happy while others around them are in a similar condition. The selfish happiness, surrounded by ignorant, debased, and starving multitudes, is essentially inhuman, and must of necessity interfere with one's personal comfort and welfare. Such "happiness" is in itself ignoble, and can only be enjoyed in the absence of benevolence and brotherly love. It ignores the welfare of others, and therefore it is bound to deteriorate the conditions upon which real happiness is based. Experience has taught that one of the best means a person can adopt for self-improvement is to work for the improvement of those who need it. This we regard as the highest Altruism, for we thoroughly believe with Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, "That which is not good for the swarm, neither is it good for the bee."

We urge, therefore, that there is nothing in Egoism, properly understood, to interfere with the real happiness of the general community. By real happiness we mean such as is worthy of an intelligent and cultivated being. If a rich person, living in luxury amidst a population degraded by want, misery, and ignorance, asserts that he is quite happy, we can believe that he is so according to his nature; but we cannot consider him happy according to the true ideal of happiness. As to the motives by which men generally act, they may be shortly summed up in the desire for happiness, hence the necessity of having a clear idea of the difference between the vulgar, selfish, isolated happiness, which is essentially inhuman, and the lofty, unselfish, social happiness, which is essentially human. Believers in orthodox Christianity, impressed with the cheerful notion of the sinfulness of human nature, and that those who do not believe in Christ as the Savior of mankind are to be eternally punished, cannot enjoy a high state of happiness. Such figments do not involve "the highest good of all men," inasmuch as there are millions who cannot believe in Christ, as Christianity requires; and for those to be taught that in some future world they are to be cruelly punished for not doing what to them is an impossibility is not calculated to confer upon them much good. Punishment is here held out as a revenge, instead of being employed as a corrective. It is absurd to talk of a faith imparting happiness which teaches: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John iii. 36).

A man who thinks he believes this miserable declaration may fancy he is "happy"; but why? Because he supposes that he has made his peace with God. What, however, of the thousands around him who are degraded and sinful, and doomed to perdition? Where does their happiness come in? "Many are called, but few are chosen." No; it cannot be truthfully denied that the "happiness" of Christianity is a sham, and that the incentive to its "bliss"

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is a delusion. To be happy in its noblest sense Secularists have a stronger and better motive than Christians possess. With them (the Secularists) the love of their fellow-creatures, whom they know, is far superior, as an incentive, to the fear of God, or even the love of God, whom they do not know. This is the essential question: Shall we all work together for the mutual good of each other, or shall we work in fear and love of a supernatural being who, even if he exist, is unknown to us? This is our answer: We love those whom we see and know, and with and for them we will work; but as Secularists we cannot love and work for one whom we cannot see nor know; and if this supposed being is almighty, he requires no help from us, for the simple reason that he has the power to achieve whatever he desires. Besides, not having any knowledge of him or his desires, we might work against him, thinking we were working for him, as Christian persecutors have done when they thought, in punishing and putting to death heretics, that they were doing God's service.

The best way, in our opinion, to secure the welfare of others is to strive to secure for ourselves characters that shall be above reproach, and that shall be worthy of the emulation of others; and, at the same time, to persistently labor for the equal rights of all. By the term "equal rights of all" is here meant their equal rights to proper living, to the training of all their faculties of body and mind, and to the free exercise and development of these, in so far as such exercise does not infringe the equal rights of others.

CHARLES WATTS.

## GETTING BACK TO JESUS.

IN its somewhat lengthy career Christianity has rested its claims upon three things: the Church, the Bible, and the personality of Jesus. The first of these broke down definitely, so far as a growing proportion of the world's inhabitants are concerned, in that series of changes which culminated in the Reformation. Even the Church of Rome itself, though still claiming infallibility, has within recent years seriously modified its claims; while denunciations of what they please to call "Churchianity" nowadays come thick and fast from Protestant preachers. And, as to the second, modern criticism has so riddled the orthodox claims on behalf of the Bible that one may safely assert that there are not in England and Germany a dozen scholars, with a reputation worth losing, who would publicly champion the view of the Bible that was entertained by the generality of Christians when Paine wrote his *Age of Reason*.* Somewhere or other in the Bible, we are told, there lies hidden God's message to man, although just where the message lies hidden God only knows.

The last resource of all is the personality of Jesus, and that, to use a colloquialism, is now being played for all it is worth. Dr. Watson, Ian Maclaren of novelist fame (?), declares that the religion of Protestants rests neither in a Church nor in the Bible, nor in any part of the Bible, but in the personality of Jesus Christ, and that the thing for which our age is hungering is to have the real Jesus stripped of all the fancies of Churches and theologians, and placed before the world for its homage and guidance. That we have no reliable evidence whatever about the "real Jesus," or that such evidence as we have in the anonymous undated gospels depicts contradictions too glaringly absurd to have ever been combined in a single individual, never troubles Dr. Watson in the least. His method is simplicity itself. Anything that Watson would have said if he had been in Jesus' place is a genuine piece of autobiography; anything that Jesus is reported to have said that Watson would not have said is an interpolation by dishonest or ignorant commentators. Like the ambitious mathematician who said that Newton was fortunate in there being only one law of gravitation to discover, Dr. Watson evidently believes that Jesus was fortunate in being born before him. Had the order been reversed, the name of the world's savior might have commenced with a letter much nearer the end of the alphabet.

* Dean Farrar says that among all the German scholars there is only one, "and he a man of no name," who clings to the orthodox view (*The Bible and the Child*, p. 25).

But this cry of apologetic Christians is worthy of note, as showing the extent to which Freethought is influencing even those who profess to cast its claims on one side as worthless. To find an increasing hesitancy in championing the claims of either Church or Bible; to find even Jesus, the God incarnate, placed in a secondary position, and Jesus, the man—Jesus as a kind of glorified Keir Hardie or sublimated Lord Shaftesbury—preached in their place, is only a tacit admission that the Secular view of life is, after all, far more correct than the one hitherto held by the majority of the people. Imitation is only flattery in action, and a great deal of what is now heard from apologetic pulpits is only a faint echo of truths that have long been commonplaces on the Secular platform.

To assert that the main object of Christ was to teach men how to lead good lives here is a complete abandonment of Christianity's original and historic position. It is not even hinted in the New Testament that the main inducement of the people to listen to Jesus, or for the disciples to follow him, was the beauty of his moral precepts. The most powerful of his followers, Saul of Tarsus, was converted by a supernatural revelation while on the road to Damascus, and not by moral maxims with which he must have been familiar from boyhood. In the whole literature of primitive Christianity, whenever the moral precepts of Jesus are dwelt upon, they are treated as subsidiary, and usually only quoted to repel attacks made upon them by pagan writers. Stoicism was then too much alive for Christians to make the absurd claim of the superiority of Christian ethics that has been made by later writers. It was Jesus, the God incarnate, who could save people from the flames of hell, and secure them the eternal felicity of heaven, that was the motive which induced the people to rank themselves as Christians, not the enunciation of moral maxims that were as well known then as now. The literature of historic Christianity is full of the same lesson, and only when the progress of thought rendered it increasingly difficult for educated men and women to believe in the virgin-born, miracle-working, devil-casting Messiah of earlier generations, was the argument of the supreme *moral* importance of Christ's teaching resorted to as a method of retaining people who were grown too sceptical to accept Christianity in its orthodox form, albeit still too religious to reject it altogether. The cry of "Back to Jesus," with its wholesale rejection of historic Christianity, is only one of the many endeavors now being made to accommodate old beliefs to current thought, and, when analysed, is even more worthless than the usual run of Christian apologetics.

For what does the ordinary Christian mean by getting back to the real Jesus? and how does he propose to do it? The truth is, that every Christian necessarily starts his inquiry with a stock of prepossessions that must be fatal to his examination. He begins by believing that the teachings of Jesus contain the only cure for the world's ailment, and an inquiry conducted in that spirit usually has but one result. One of the most ridiculous sights I know of is men like the Rev. Walter Adeney, Professor Clifford, or Dr. Horton pretending to conduct an *impartial* inquiry into the character of Jesus Christ. As though anyone has the least doubt, except for occasional accidental admissions, what the general tenor of their addresses will be. They are in the position of counsel for the defence laying down the case for the prosecution. All that their "getting back to Jesus" means is that, starting with a conception of what is necessary for nineteenth-century requirements, they reject everything discordant with that conception that is recorded in the Four Gospels, gloss over difficulties, close their eyes to absurdities, read into the character of Jesus all that they wish to take out, and then hold up the result as a picture of the real Jesus. All that they have done is to fashion a figure out of their own prepossessions, prejudices, and religious training, buried a nineteenth-century reformer—of a sort—in Judæa, and then unearthed him with a loud flourish of trumpets as being of the same age as the rubbish heaps with which he is covered. And this they call getting back to Jesus!

And not only is the Christian completely unqualified to form a faithful picture of Jesus, even as recorded in the Gospels; but many professing Rationalists, while free from a great many of the prejudices that beset a Christian, are not always free from the influence of their early training or religious environment. John Stuart Mill's "excessive panegyric" of Christ, as John Morley mildly called it, was as clear a case

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of "concession to the existing theology," to quote Bain's terse criticism, as any in our language. And when we add to Mill the name of a writer like Lecky, who, in the face of his own works demonstrating that the Christian ages properly rank among the lowest in the world's civilised history, yet declares that the character of Jesus has been "not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice," it is clear that it is by no means an easy task to shake off the power of the present in order to form a faithful picture of the past.

Even the most careful student of the past will always impart something of present-day life into its doings. A man is not a mere recording machine, and necessarily his reading of the past will be more or less colored by his general temperament. Yet the conclusions of an unbeliever on the character of Jesus will generally be worth more than those of a believer. For while both start with the same general environment, and usually the same education, the opinions of one are, at best, only a development of his early prejudices, while those of the other are formed in spite of their influence. And a conclusion reached in spite of one's prepossessions is naturally of more value than one that owes its being to their existence.

And why all this anxiety to discover what Jesus really did teach, or to found our lives on some interpretation of his doctrine? While it was held that the ethical precepts current in the name of Jesus originated with him, or while it was believed that the world's welfare depended upon accepting him as "very God of very God," there was some plausibility about the desire to model our lives in accordance with his teachings. But nowadays, when the "New Theology" teaches that Jesus was only one out of many teachers who were inspired of God, and when it is admitted that the moral precepts in the Four Gospels are in no way peculiar to Jesus, but are found in various forms elsewhere, even this pretext is available no longer. And let the teachings attributed to Jesus be either good or bad, the question is quite apart from any belief in his personality. The validity of the law of gravitation, of the principle of natural selection, or of the conservation of energy, is absolutely independent of the men whose names are associated with their discovery; and even if it were demonstrated that neither Newton nor Grove nor Darwin ever existed, these principles would yet remain as valuable as ever. All truth rests squarely upon its own basis. Only when it is felt that there is nothing to commend a belief in the shape of reason is it necessary to drag in a personality to support its claims.

"What think ye of Christ?" may be an important question from a doctrinal point of view; it may be a catchy phrase for demagogic orators, hungering for popular applause; it may even be a question of life or death to the forty or fifty thousand people who constitute the "Black Army" of Great Britain; but from an ethical point of view the query is absolutely worthless.

I do not believe that the world need be tied to any one man as a pattern for its guidance. I believe there are lessons of warning or guidance to be taken from most lives; but I do not believe that it is either wise or profitable to chain the world to the waist-belt of a poor Jewish peasant, who, in all that has really contributed to the world's civilisation, showed himself to be upon pretty much the same level as the people around him.

At bottom there is only one reason why the cry of "Back to Jesus" is indulged in. He is the figure-head and foundation of a religious system, and, unless his personality is believed in and a feeling encouraged that in some manner the ethical precepts hitherto associated with Christianity are inseparable from him, the foundation upon which all our Churches and chapels are built begins to crumble to pieces. It is a parson's cry pure and simple. The anxiety of the clergy is not for the ethical teaching associated with Jesus, but for the Jesus associated with the teaching. It is the cry of a trade union asking that its occupation be not destroyed—a cry as selfish in its origin as it is ridiculous and useless in its application.

C. COHEN.

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Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation; all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue, though religion were not.—*Bacon.*

## JONAH AND JESUS.

A GREAT many jokes have been cracked about Jonah—and by Christians too. It is not easy to say why that prophet and his wonderful whale should be considered fair sport by professing Christian believers. The Book of Jonah is as much a part of the Bible as the Gospel of St. John. And its main incident is not more incredible or more comical than others that appear in the Scriptures, the New Testament being in that respect quite as remarkable as the Old.

Sometimes one is apt to feel that Jonah is being rather unfairly treated. He may himself, if he exists in the spirit, consider that he has grave cause of complaint; and not, indeed, for the first time in his life, as we learn from his story. Supposing him to be with the saints and angels in heaven, may he not be deeply annoyed at finding himself the subject of so much unseemly jocularity on earth?

No one likes to be laughed at, from Emperor William downwards. Our great statesmen affect to be indifferent to caricature and personal jest. Yet it is not to be doubted that occasionally they feel the sting. Possibly even a saint is not impervious, and Jonah may, therefore, experience now and again more than a little chagrin.

It does seem a trifle hard, after having gone through all the perils of that memorable voyage, to find the narrative of one's sufferings received with incredulous smiles, or unfeeling jesting comments.

Worst of all, the ill-treatment is so invidious. People don't make so much fun at the expense of the other prophets. No one troubles to laugh at Habakkuk, except it may be at his name. All the other prophets, major and minor, have a distinct "pull" over poor Jonah. Elisha, the bald head, for instance, may walk about the realms of bliss with inward peace and quiet satisfaction. Mortals are not eternally firing off little witticisms about him. He does not figure under the head of "Facetiæ." He had his own adventures, it is true, and they were nearly as funny as Jonah's. But he thanks God—or if he doesn't he ought to—every day of his eternal life that he never had anything to do with a whale.*

Fortunately, vulgar chaff is not permitted in heaven. We know that, because we shall have to give an account at the judgment of every idle word spoken on earth. If it were not for this assurance that there is no "chipping" in Abraham's bosom, we might imagine very bad times, sore trials of patience, indeed, for the unhappy prophet, even in his heavenly home. I mean, of course, at the hands of his celestial *confrères* who were once in the same line of business on earth.

What, in such a case, would be more irritating than to have Jeremiah, for instance, coming up, and exclaiming in his cheery way: "Jonah, do you know what they are calling you now down below? They say you are an *allegory*." Might not Jonah be justly angry at being called an allegory or a myth, and at his time of life, too?

Imagine Daniel coming up with some such question as: "Jonah, have you seen the latest wheeze about the whale in the *Carolina Cocktail*? Sad dogs those Yanks for profane jokes. Thank God my lions are not of much use to them; not worth a red cent by the side of your whale."

Could we blame poor Jonah if, in the bitterness of his spirit, he demanded to know why these sub-lunary jokers couldn't leave him alone and get on to Moses' talking serpent, or Balaam's ass, or the Apocalyptic beast with seven heads and ten horns? When, further, the old Obadiah—because he must be old by this time—observed, "Jonah, I see a lot of chestnuts still on the trot anent that fish tale of yours," would it be in diaphanous feathers to stand it and not swear?

In the flesh Jonah, as we know, was a hot-tempered man, though his name signifies a *dove*. In the matter of the gourd he said: "I do well to be angry, even unto death." The Lord, who could himself be angry enough at times, gave him a salutary lesson on his ebullition of temper; and this suggests a most important reflection in regard to the jokes referred to. May it not be that Jonah, though in heaven, is doomed to endure all this earthly *persiflage* at his expense as a further chastening of his once-rebellious spirit? I offer this hint to learned expounders of the Word and of the conditions of heavenly life.

Speaking generally, it must be frankly admitted that the

* Or shark—if commentators think that that fish afforded Jonah more comfortable lodgings.

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bulk of Christians have now ceased to believe that the Book of Jonah is historical. They regard it as a fable, and treat it as such. On what authority they, being Christians, reject it as a narrative of fact it is quite impossible to discover. It is, in every respect, as sober and as circumstantial a story as anything related in the New Testament. That a great deal of faith is necessary in order to assimilate it goes without saying; but that is equally so in regard to the bulk of the Gospel narratives. Why should people who believe in the Immaculate Conception, the raising of Lazarus, or the thousand and one marvels of the New Testament, feel any difficulty about Jonah or his whale, or his gourd, or anything that is his?

Let us take another example of this curious and most unwarrantable process of "picking and choosing" in God's Word. There is the story of Elijah being fed by the ravens. Canon Cheyne, in his *Hallowing of Criticism*, says that "few thinking men" can believe that story. But in what way, asks Bishop Blomfield, in his *Old Testament and the New Criticism*, is it more incredible than the incident of Christ feeding five thousand men, besides women and children, with a few loaves and fishes? Similarly, we ask on what ground, except that of the inherent incredibility of miracles, can we dismiss as unhistorical this biography, or autobiography, of Jonah?

Anyway, there the Book of Jonah is—bound up in the Bible, read in the Churches, distributed to the heathen. It presents in itself not the slightest indication that it was written as an allegory, or intended to be received as a fable, parable, or romance. Quite the contrary. Bishop Perowne, in his notes to the Cambridge Bible, has indisputably established that fact. He shows, first, from 2 Kings xiv. 25 that Jonah, son of Amittai and prophet, existed in the reign of Jeroboam II., King of Israel; that his despatch to the Ninevites is just what is likely to have happened; that the account of what befell him is written in a matter-of-fact style; that it contains what would be "most pertinent in true history, but which would become in an allegory a discord and an intrusion"; that, "but for the miracles with which it abounds, it may well be doubted whether anyone would ever have taken the Book of Jonah to be anything but history," and that these miracles, taken with probable explanations, "may be brought fairly within the sphere of the Gospel miracles themselves." Further, he points out the great improbability of a writer of an allegory, free to choose his characters at will, selecting a "known prophet of God as the subject of so great misconduct and reprobation."

But there is another and a still more important aspect of the matter—the endorsement by Jesus of the historical character of the Book of Jonah. Many desperate attempts have been made to wriggle out of that serious difficulty. All have failed. Jesus, it is recorded, said:—

> "For, as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the son of man be to this generation.....The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Luke xi. 29-32).
>
> "For, as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii. 40).

In other words, the resurrection of Christ is as true, and not more true, than the story of Jonah's whale. That which the superior Christians of to-day smilingly discredit was gravely accepted in its obvious matter-of-fact meaning by him whom they worship as the Son of God.

In regard to the first passage above quoted Bishop Perowne asks: "Are we to suppose Him to say that imaginary persons, who at the imaginary preaching of an imaginary prophet repented in imagination, shall rise up in that day and condemn the actually impenitent of those his actual hearers, and that the fictitious characters of a parable shall be arraigned at the same bar with the living men of that generation?" Obviously Christ, in these utterances, was wholly unconscious of referring to anything essentially incredible, or to be interpreted in other than its literal sense. If he were conscious, it was dishonest not to avow it, and he must be held responsible, by his unqualified endorsement, for a delusive belief which existed at the time—a belief which he might have corrected, but which exists to this day, largely in consequence of the absence of such correction. We are told that he was asked for a sign by those who were presumably adverse to his pretensions, and he gave them a sign, but not in such a way as to suggest that it was in the nature of a mere classical allusion or playful and ironical *argumentum ad hominem*—such, for example, as some phrases used at the commencement of this article. Those whom he addressed accepted the story as solemn, serious fact, and there is no reason to suspect that he regarded it otherwise. The first passage is a recognition of the historical existence and preaching of Jonah, and, that being admitted, the second must be placed on the same footing, for the reason that both are simply parts of one story.

There are certain reasonings—it would be more correct to call them "wrigglings"—by Christian apologists on this subject, as on Christ's awkward error with regard to the authorship of Psalm cx. The Rev. Dr. Harrison, in his work on *The Church in Relation to Sceptics*, suggests the query whether Christ was bound to avoid the use of such language as might seem to after ages to imply his own belief in an erroneous view. Surely the answer to that question should be—Yes. Dr. Harrison suggests that the pain of liability to error may have been involved in the Incarnation. That does, indeed, open up wide regions of doubt. Further, it would go to prove that the Incarnation was singularly ill-planned. Christ is represented to have come on a two-fold mission. He is said to have come as Teacher as well as Savior, and could we imagine him even incidentally teaching, or sanctioning any teaching, that was false, even though it were accepted in his time? Suppose his knowledge as man to be subject to limitation, involving liability to error—known to him, as God, to be error—how are we to ascertain when he is speaking as man and when he is speaking as God? The Evangelists do not help us to make a distinction, though that, of course, is not at all likely to prevent modern clerics drawing definite lines.

Perhaps, however, the plain, common-sense conclusion of the whole matter is, that the story of Jonah is as fabulous as that of Perseus and Andromeda; that Christ, like all his contemporaries, accepted it as fact; that such acceptance disproves his divine authority and inerrancy; and that the resurrection, with which he himself has linked it, is not less mythical and disentitled to belief.

FRANCIS NEALE.

## GIORDANO BRUNO.

(*Concluded from page 742.*)

DURING the week still given him for recantation he had need of all his philosophy. In the midst of his wanderings he had more than once contemplated the possibility of martyrdom, and assured himself that if it came he would meet it bravely. The event proved that his fancy had not outstripped his strength. Those seven days spent in confronting the pale spectre with eyes of flame, who approached nearer every moment, tried him, but did not find him wanting. The solitary cell, the ferocious sentence, and the world's hostility acted as a tonic on his heroic soul, and when he emerged from confinement to drink the last bitter cup of anguish to the dregs, he was filled with more than fortitude. *Diceva che moriva martire et volentiere* was written of him on the spot—He said that he died a martyr and willingly.

The day of his martyrdom, which better deserves to mark an epoch than the birth of the less heroic Nazarene, was February 17, 1600. It was the Jubilee year, and Rome was thronged with pilgrims. Spectators were not wanting for the exhibition of a heretic "butchered to make a Roman holiday." Christianity had abolished the gladiatorial shows; but here was a choicer morsel for the lust of cruelty, and it might be relished without misgiving—nay, rather with exultation, under the holy auspices of the Church. Bruno was led to the stake in the Campo di Flora, dressed in the *san benito*, adorned with flames and devils to point his destination. He met his fate without a murmur, dying as bravely as he had lived. He refused to listen to the priests or to receive their consolations. When a crucifix was held up to him, the renegade Scioppius says that he rejected it "with a terrible menacing countenance." His English biographer makes the frightful suggestion that the crucifix "may have been heated red-hot, as was customary, in order to convince the spectators of the sufferer's impiety." Horror of horrors! Shuddering with disgust, one blushes with shame for one's kind.

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Amid the crowd of spectators, some strong man may have ground his teeth with rage at the infamous spectacle; some tender-hearted woman may have yearned to kiss that noble brow bedewed by pain; some child may have been saddened by the anguish of those steadfast eyes. But they were unknown to the sufferer, who stood there in solitary and awful grandeur. He gazed at a sea of hostile faces; he was alone against the world. "Surely," we have elsewhere written, "the knight of Liberty, the champion of Freethought, who lived such a life and died such a death, without hope of reward on earth or in heaven, sustained only by his indomitable manhood, is worthy to be accounted the supreme martyr of all time. He towers above the less disinterested martyrs of faith like a colossus: the proudest of them might walk under him without bending."

The space left at our disposal does not permit of a detailed account of Bruno's philosophy. Indeed, it is an exaggeration to say that he had a philosophy; nor had the time come for it, even if he possessed the systematic mind for the task. He rather seized on certain new ideas then just broached, championing them with matchless courage, and developed them with wonderful audacity. The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century has attracted most attention; but the scientific movement was the most important, as it heralded a new era of civilisation. Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo were its mathematicians; Bruno was its poet, prophet, and martyr.

Bruno was enraptured with the new astronomy, which dwarfed the earth, but showed that the universe was grander than the theologians supposed. The earth, he said, turns on its own axis, and it moves round the sun. He was the first to teach that the sun also turns on its own axis, and that the earth is flattened at the poles. He insisted that the atmosphere is an integral part of the earth; that all the fixed stars are suns, having their own systems of visible and invisible planets. These truths are common to schoolboys now; but then it required the intuition of genius to perceive them, and the courage of a hero to proclaim them. No danger or odium now attaches to such doctrines; but the teacher of them in that age might at any moment expect his sky to redden with a mist of blood.

Like Montaigne, Bruno derided the notion that the heavenly lights were fixed as torches for man. "Only one bereft of his reason," he said, "could believe that those infinite spaces, tenanted by vast and magnificent bodies, many of which are certainly entrusted with a higher destiny than ours, are designed only to give us light or to receive the clear shining of the earth." Professor Tyndall remarked also, in his Belfast Address, that Bruno not only reached "the sublime generalisation that the fixed stars are suns," but came still closer to our present lines of thought by concluding that "nature does not imitate the technic of man," and by asserting that "Matter is not the mere naked, empty *capacity* which philosophers have pictured her to be, but the universal mother who brings forth all things as the fruit of her own womb." There is a striking passage in Bruno's treatise on the *Cause*, in which he anticipates the idea of Hamlet as to the metamorphoses of matter. "Seest thou not," he says, "what was seed becomes grass, the grass becomes corn, the corn becomes bread, bread becomes chyle, blood, man; the man becomes a corpse, and that turns to earth, and so forth, till all things attain to all the forms of nature." Bacon finely says that we are the ancients of the world, and what we call antiquity was its youth. But he was anticipated by Bruno, who said: "The title of innovator which is fixed upon us is not ignominious. There is no doctrine in antiquity which was not at one time new; and if age is the mark of truth, our century is fuller of dignity than the century of Aristotle, since the world has now attained a greater age by twenty centuries."

Very daring were some of Bruno's utterances on the side of his thought which directly faced theology. "A time would come," he wrote, "a new and desired age, in which the gods should lie in Orcus, and the fear of everlasting punishment should vanish." He expressed a profound contempt for the Christian dogmas of original sin, election, and salvation by faith. "There is a dastardly race of pedants," he wrote, "who, doing no good thing, either by the divine law or by the laws of nature, esteem themselves, and desire to be esteemed, religious and pleasing to the gods, saying that though it is well to do good, and evil to do wrong, we can only be made acceptable to the gods, not on account of the good we may do or the evil we leave undone, but by hoping and believing according to the catechism."

Too much importance, we think, is attached by Bruno's English biographer to his Pantheistic heroics. They were common amongst the poets of that age. Still more do we object to the pretty little sermon which ends this volume being regarded as containing the quintessence of Bruno's thought and the intellectual purpose of his life. We respectfully submit that Bruno's martyrdom is not the thing to serve as a tag to such an effusion. We even venture to assert that his Pantheistic raptures would never have caused his martyrdom. He died for two things: first, the new scientific ideas, which have since conquered; and secondly, for Truth itself, which he called the philosopher's mistress, and the only object worthy of a true man's reverence.

We note in the Preface of this volume that "It is in contemplation to print a second volume, containing a summary of the works, with the documents of the trial and other confirmatory evidence." Such a volume will be welcomed, we imagine, by a considerable circle of readers. But we trust that the editress will keep her eye strictly on the subject, let Bruno speak always for himself, and show less anxiety to defend him "against the unjust and terrible imputation of Atheism," as she pathetically calls it, without condescending to inform us how any opinion as to the constitution of the universe can be either "terrible" or an "imputation."

Pantheism, Atheism, Theism, and all other abstractions sink into insignificance beside the grandeur of Bruno's life and death. Speculations of that kind amuse, interest, and inflame us; but true inspiration is to be found in principles that affect humanity, and in far-shining examples of virtue and courage. Bruno has exercised, indirectly, no mean influence on modern thought; but it is the heroism of his career that most profoundly affects us, and has now become a permanent glory of our race. He worshipped Truth, the revealer and savior; he sacrificed reputation and life on her altar; he cried for "the clearness of the young morning," and then he exclaimed "the outrage of the rabble, the storms of Time, the slings and arrows of Fortune, shall fall upon this tender body, and shall weld it to steel." These were not cheap heroics; they did but express the fiery daring of his heart; and such glorious courage is worth a hundred systems.

G. W. FOOTE.

## ACID DROPS.

We are glad to see both *Reynolds'* and the *Clarion* tackling hypocritical Hugh Price Hughes for objecting to Mr. Newman's Sunday Concerts at the Queen's Hall because he may make a little profit on them. *Reynolds'* wants to know whether Price Hughes pays rent for St. James's Hall, and whether he gets paid for talking there—on Sunday. If he does, he had better hold his tongue (our contemporary says) about what other people make on "the Lord's Day." The *Clarion* writes in much the same vein, and suggests that the men of God want a monopoly of Sunday money-taking. That's the whole truth in a nutshell.

The Rev. A. F. Henderson, preaching in Augustine Church, Edinburgh, on "How to Spend the Sunday," did not deny that a little relaxation was necessary; but people ought not to neglect going to the house of God—where, of course, the man of God is waiting for customers. The reverend gentleman had heard that churches were not attractive enough. Well, he said, let them be made more attractive. But is it possible to do this without introducing side-shows?

Canon Shuttleworth is mistaken in telling the *Daily News* that he was "the pioneer of popular Sunday music in London," having begun it fourteen years ago at St. Nicholas Cole-Abbey. The Sunday League, started and long worked almost exclusively by Freethinkers, was active for a very considerable time before that. But you generally find some minister of religion ready to claim everything, even when it clearly belongs to the "infidels."

Dr. Fox, the Cardiff Quaker, has been condemning British foreign policy as un-Christian. England, he said, relied on ships, not on God. Well, that's true. But suppose England relied on God, and other nations relied on ships, where the devil would England be, with half her population depending on foreign food supplies? Dr. Fox reminded his

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audience that God could easily scatter our navy, as he scattered the Armada. But the Armada was not scattered until the English ships had played Old Harry with it, and driven it into the North Sea from the English Channel. If this is all that Dr. Fox has to offer us, we are afraid that peace is a long way off.

Dr. Fox follows Jesus Christ when it costs him nothing. Does he follow Jesus Christ in laying up no treasures on earth, and in taking no thought for the morrow? We should like to print (and criticise) his answer.

Rev. Dr. Hensley Henson, chaplain to the Bishop of St. Alban's, in his newly-published volume on *Apostolic Christianity*, makes some remarkable admissions. "Scarcely anybody," he says, "reads the New Testament; the current notions about the Gospel are largely based on the productions of Marie Corelli, Mr. Hall Caine, and writers of that type." "There is," he also says, "a widely extended mistrust of the good faith of the clergy in matters of religion. It is thought that language is used in the pulpit which does not correspond with any actual convictions." The greatest need of the day is "the recovery of public confidence in the clergy."

Rev. R. C Fillingham, vicar of Hexton, has been inhibited by the Bishop of Peterborough from preaching or administering the sacrament in his diocese. Mr. Fillingham is a well-known Liberal and Anti-Ritualist, and recently spoke at a Liberation meeting in London.

Emperor William is reported to be greatly disillusioned by his visit to the "holy places" in Palestine. At Bethlehem, it is said, he addressed the clergy, and told them that the Christian Churches had failed in their object, which was to raise and ennoble the degraded people. He advised them to stick to charity and avoid disputes. But that advice has been given to the Christian Churches ever since the days of Constantine, and has always been fruitless.

The *Daily News* special correspondent in the wake of Emperor William speaks out very strongly on the humbug of Palestine. After describing the various rival shows, including two opposition Gardens of Gethsemane, and telling of the "slipshod, unwashed, blear-eyed monk" who showed him over one of the Churches of the Sepulchre, he writes as follows: "In everything except mechanical ritual—parrot-like repetition of formularies—Jerusalem strikes me as the most irreligious, or non-religious, city in the world. It is, without a doubt, the headquarters of lies, shams, and impostures of the ecclesiastical order."

There is an honest church in Toronto; and it is a sort of thing that, when found, should be made a note of. Jarvis-street Baptist Church has sent the City Treasurer a cheque for $275, being its share of the city taxes for the year. The cheque was accompanied by a letter protesting against the exemption of ecclesiastical property from taxation.

Thursday, November 24, was Thanksgiving Day in the United States. President McKinley invited all his fellow citizens—not including the dead ones in Cuba and the Philippines—to "come together in their several places of worship for a service of praise and thanks to Almighty God for all the blessings of the year." The harvest has been abundant, trade and commerce have increased, and the American Eagle has had some fine voice practice in distant regions. Moreover, the Republicans continue in power, and William McKinley is President. What more does America want? Let us pray!

The Boston *Congregationalist* has been cited as having furnished evidence that hell is disappearing; but it protests against being held responsible for any sort of disbelief in future punishment, which is really "entering upon a path that leads to the abandonment of Christian faith altogether." The Boston *Transcript*, on the other hand, declares that the clergy themselves don't believe in a fiery, everlasting hell at all. This, again, is denied by Dr. Withrow, pastor of Park-street church, who says that Jesus did teach the doctrine of eternal punishment, and adds: "I do not see how a man can be a Christian who rejects the doctrine." Nor do we.

The Newark magistrates have a curious way of dealing with conscientious objectors under the new Vaccination Act. They demand proof of the child's birth, and will not even accept the father's sworn testimony unless he was *in the room* at the time. Behold, my son, said a great Swedish statesman, with how little wisdom the world is governed.

Libel actions are not the most profitable form of commercial enterprise. The Rev. W. Hughes, of Colwyn Bay, obtained judgment against the Rev. David Morgan Davies, of Shrewsbury, for slander, and the sum due to the plaintiff is £303. An order was made for the payment of £2 per month, but it was not complied with; and as the defendant has a large family and only £100 a year, the County Court judge refuses to grant an order for his committal. Moral: Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. Moral No. 2: It is often better, if you must take action, to thrash a slanderer than to sue him at law, especially when he happens to be a Christian minister.

At the recent Melbourne Christian Endeavor outbreak a sainted bootmaker gravely related that when, in the course of his business, he met with an obdurate piece of sole-leather, he always asked the Almighty to intercede with the recalcitrant bullock-hide, with the result that it at once became amenable to manipulation. He quite omitted to state why he didn't ask heaven to make the boots for him right out, and be done with it!—*Sydney Bulletin.*

Catholics and Protestants seem to have had a lively time together at Southampton. Mr. Ruthven's lectures against Catholicism were opposed by Father Scannell, and the usual good temper was displayed on both sides. There is certainly a marvellous harmony in the household of faith.

Ex-priest Slattery has been denouncing Roman Catholicism at Cardiff. The Protestants applauded him; the Catholics wanted his blood. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."

During the sensational meeting at Carnegie Hall at which Rev. A. B. Simpson raised in cash and pledges $112,000 for foreign missions, he made this remarkable statement in referring to the progress of Christianity made possible by the partition of China: "God pounded at the gates with the battle-axe of war, and is now softening the blows by the discipline of famine." In other words, a minister of the gospel solemnly informed an audience of Christian people that God had taken sides with Japan against China in the recent war, and that the all-merciful and all-wise Creator, to further chasten a heathen nation, had cursed the land with famine, and starved thousands of innocent women and children. And all for the purpose of introducing the gospel of the lowly Nazarene among the followers of Confucius. Let us be merciful to the Rev. Simpson. It is charitable to conclude that the frenzy of enthusiasm into which he threw his hearers became a flood-tide that swept him from his logical, rational moorings. The Rev. A. B. Simpson is no doubt a worthy and devout man, but he has not cultivated the habit of careful speaking and sound thinking.—*New York "Evening Journal."*

The *Liverpool Courier* prints a satirical letter from Frederick Austin—which we hope for the writer's sake is an assumed name—on the reason why Catholics want to preserve St. Winefrid's Well for holy instead of cleanly purposes. After referring to dirty and verminous saints who died in the full odor of sanctity, he says: "We Catholics prefer to be mangy, dirty, and disreputable. We glory in our shame. For health of body we care nothing. We consider the health of our immortal souls."

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Huddersfield branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Rev. E. Markby complained that half the population of Holland were without the Scriptures, that copies of the Bible were awfully scarce in Poland, and that there were only fifty Bibles in the whole of Iceland. Probably there is a still greater dearth at the North Pole. Anyhow the good people of Huddersfield are called upon to supply these deficiencies, and some of them are foolish enough to subscribe £104 3s. 7d. towards it. No wonder our lunatic asylums get fuller.

Rev. Dr. Mackennal, a Congregationalist minister who lately visited America, has been giving his "impressions" in the Ashton-on-Mersey Congregational Church. He was very strong on the Anglo-American understanding, and the "amazing destiny which God seemed to have been revealing to 120 millions of Christians, mainly Protestants," who were to become civilisers of the world. They were the people who really understood liberty, or, as the reverend gentleman hastened to put it, Christian liberty; by which he probably means the right of Christians to rule other people. For our own part, we value the Anglo-American friendship as much as any minister does; but we hate the cant of these professional soul-savers, and we dread the idea of England and America crusading all over the world in the interest of these men's trade—which is what Christianity comes to.

The *Progressive Thinker*, one of our American exchanges, says that a correspondent of Evangelist F. Campbell gives a lugubrious account of the condition of the Church in the rural portions of New York. Here is an extract from the gentleman's letter: "There are entire districts in the State where it is difficult to find a single family with church-going habits.....Even services brought into the community

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within school-houses are sometimes strangely disregarded; the Sabbath is desecrated by visiting, ball-playing, and unnecessary manual labor; in some farming communities infidelity is getting a strong hold; a tremendous crowd turned out for the funeral of a rural sceptic, when it was understood the speaker was to be Colonel Ingersoll, and was much disappointed when the Baptist preacher appeared instead; a general spiritual deadness comes to rest upon the people, accompanied by a degree of ignorance which is difficult to imagine."

The *Railway Herald* reports a curious assault case at Eccles. James Fitzpatrick, a cattle drover, of Winton, was charged with annoying passengers on the London and North-Western Railway. Besides using abominable language all round, he put his fist into the face of a Strangeways tobacconist, Leopold King, presumably of the Hebrew persuasion, and exclaimed: "Can you fight? You —— Jews killed my Savior." For this energetic championship of the crucified Nazarene, who may, or may not, be proud of his disciple, James Fitzpatrick was fined 20s. and costs, amounting in all to over £5. We advise him to go to France when he wants to do any more Jew-baiting. It is cheaper over there.

Protestants are getting alarmed at the advances of Romanism, outside and inside the Church of England. This alarm, however, is not very greatly shared by the newspapers, and an explanation of this fact is offered by the Rev. Dr. Horton (Congregationalist) to a *Westminster Gazette* interviewer. "The truth of the matter is," he observed, "that the Roman Catholic authorities utilise the services of the Press to an extent of which few who have not studied the matter have the smallest notion. At Maynooth preparation for journalism forms almost as much a part of the regular course as that for the priesthood, with the result that Roman Catholics exercise an amount of influence over the columns of the Protestant Press out of all proportion to their actual numbers. Without actually influencing, perhaps, the declared policy of the paper, or moulding its written utterances, they are yet able to exercise influence over the matter appearing in its columns in a very remarkable, and, as I hold, a very deplorable manner, so that, as I have said, it is next to impossible to get any ordinary newspaper, daily or weekly, to print that which needs saying on the subject of Romanism and its doctrines."

An Islington vicar has thought it necessary to announce, probably for good business reasons, that 16s. 6d. will no longer be charged at his church for tying the matrimonial knot. Henceforth he will tie up couples for 9s. 9d., which is about the same as the registrar's charges. Prayer and the blessing of God will be thrown in gratis, and the children of God are expected to give the preference to the old establishment.

According to the *Pall Mall Gazette's* "Own Correspondent," the old quarrel between the schoolmaster and the priest is breaking out again in France. The religious orders which were crippled by Gambetta, Paul Bert, and Jules Ferry have of late gained the ascendancy in education. The Jesuit schools are specially flourishing, and their pupils are taught reverence for the Church and hatred of the Republic. On the other hand, the State schools are "avowed hotbeds of Freethought"—simply, of course, because the priests are kept out of them. The French Government is said to be contemplating an attack on this problem, which is being considered by a very influential group in the Senate.

The London boy of twelve, who told the coroner that he did not know what an oath was, or anything about the Bible, was reported as attending a Board school; but Mr. A. J. Mundella, of the National Education Association, informs the *Daily News* that the boy really attended the Roman Catholic Voluntary school in Brent's-court, High-street, Southwark. That accounts for his ignorance of the Bible. We are not told what accounts for his ignorance of swearing.

Llandudno is not to go dirty on Sunday. The casting vote of the Council's chairman has saved it from that humiliation. Still, it was a very close shave; and the Sabbatarians, led by the men of God, vow to overturn this arrangement as soon as possible. They hold that cleanliness is next to godliness, but that there ought to be a whole Sunday between them.

William Johnson, tried at the London County Sessions for three daring robberies, handed in a written statement to Judge McConnell, who read it aloud in court. The prisoner thanked Providence for arresting him in his evil courses, and indulged in many pious reflections, which were intended to secure a light sentence; but the judge declared that he had only added hypocrisy to crime, and sentenced him to twelve months' hard labor.

Under another name masses for the dead are creeping into the Ritualistic churches. At St. Peter's, Southwark, four masses for the repose of the soul of a former vicar, the Rev. Father Herbert, were offered up before nine o'clock in the morning—which, we suppose, is the time most suitable for such petitions.

Signor Romussi, editor of the Milan *Secolo*, was sentenced to a frightful imprisonment by a military tribunal for writing articles calculated to unsettle men's minds. Angels and minister of grace, what a crime! This gentleman's real crime, after all, is that he is an enemy of priestcraft. He dared to unmask the clerical plots which led to the abortive revolution of May, and for this offence he is sent to herd with the criminal classes. King Humbert had better beware. He is storing moral dynamite under his own throne, and ought not to be surprised at an explosion.

"That Blessed Word 'Morality'" is the heading of a smart article in Mr. Hess's paper, the *Critic*. The writer deals with Sabbatarianism, the prosecution of Dr. Havelock Ellis's book, and the practical expulsion of Professor Marshall Hall, the Agnostic, from his Chair of Music at Melbourne University. We are glad to see our influential contemporary tilting against the "intolerable ethical earnestness" of pious busybodies.

According to the newspapers, a Berlin workman has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for sending Emperor William a letter filled with nonsensical speculations concerning the wickedness of the world. The punishment for insulting God Almighty varies in Germany from eight days to six months. It is easy to see, therefore, which is the more important personage.

Seriously, it seems to us that Emperor William must be a man of very small, contemptible character to allow so many of his subjects to be imprisoned for showing him any lack of respect. All the respect he is entitled to is the respect he earns; and the more he felt that he *had* earned respect the less he would be annoyed at its not being manifested. A little *self*-respect goes a long way towards compensating for the want of public testimonials.

Really great men are never afflicted with this paltry vanity. Can anybody imagine Shakespeare fussing round the town because someone said he was no poet, or Raphael in a passion because someone said he couldn't paint, or Napoleon raging because someone said he was no general?

M. Goblet, the French statesman, and one of notorious honesty as well as capacity, has come to a very sensible resolution. He is tired of politics and city life, and is going to settle down once for all in a village near Tours, where he will inhabit a wing which is being added to his brother's house. He will have the best of society—the society of those he loves and who love him; and find good acquaintances amongst his country neighbors. Instead of the noise and dust of Paris, he will have quiet and clean fresh air. Instead of telling lies, or winking at them, he will be able to speak and hear the truth every day and all day long. He will hear nature's sweet and unobtrusive music by day, and enjoy sound sleep by night, and read his books, and correspond with his friends, and take his share of the golden age. Happy, happy Monsieur Goblet!

Terah Hooley presented St. Paul's Cathedral with a service of gold Communion plate, valued at £1,500. Since then he has become bankrupt, and it was a question whether that Communion plate would not have to be returned to the Official Receiver. In order to avoid this frightful catastrophe, a number of good Churchmen have clubbed together and paid the Official Receiver the sum of £1,500. They desire to remain anonymous, and a *Morning* interviewer could get no news of their identity from the Bishop of London. "All I can tell you," Dr. Creighton said, "is that the money has been paid, and the difficulty is now at an end." Yes, and just in time to save the plate from being melted down.

"Providence" still allows the plague to afflict poor India. There is a large increase in the Dharwar district, the number of deaths being 2,200 in a single week.

## 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) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, November 27, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London: 7.30, "Christian Science, Peculiar People, and the Dying Faith."

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 27, Birmingham. December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

N. S. S. BENAVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Mrs. B. M. Marks, 10s.

CHILDREN'S EXCURSION FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Mrs. B. M. Marks, 5s.

M. LOAFER.—We desire to express, for our own part, a high appreciation of your steady devotion to the work of the Freethought movement. Too many have axes to grind, or over-sensitive ambitions. It is good to meet with one who desires nothing but the success of the cause he labors for.

T. WILMOT.—You had better send notice of the entertainment for next week.

L. MARTIN.—Thanks for cuttings.

STUDENT.—Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, in the old small folio form, can be picked up for a guinea or so, sometimes cheaper, according to date and condition. It is delightful reading if you have leisure and taste for such compositions. Sidney's poems are included in some editions of the *Arcadia*. Some of them are very fine, particularly the sonnets that were so praised by Charles Lamb, whose critical faculty was well-nigh infallible.

C. P. (Southampton).—Mr. Foote would be happy to pay your town a visit if the local Freethinkers would only bestir themselves a little.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Subjects for Birmingham in due course.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—Mrs. B. M. Marks, 5s.; George Crookson, 10s.; T. Wombwell, 1s.; A. Addy, 1s.

R. DAVIDSON.—The only qualification for a seat on the Board of Directors of the Secular Society, Limited, is membership and election at the annual Members' Meeting. Every member is as eligible as every other.

R. CHAPMAN (South Shields) informs us that since the *Secular Almanack* went to press Mr. J. Lamb, the local newsagent supplying this journal and other Freethought publications, has removed to 158 South Taylor-street.

ERNEST PACK asks us to state that he has removed to 10 Henatridge-place, Ordnance-road, St. John's Wood, N.W. Branch secretaries, etc., please note.

W. COX.—We have handed the new N. S. S. member's form to Miss Vance, to whom all such things should be sent direct. We note what you say as to remaining at the Alexandra Hall. Of course it is entirely a matter for local decision. At the same time, it is impossible to disguise the fact that the police have outwitted you. Being honest yourselves, you thought they were; whereas they simply wanted to destroy your chief source of income at your meetings, and to leave you, if possible, without a grievance that could be laid before the public.

T. OLLERENSHAW.—We note your hope that next year's N. S. S. Conference will be held in London. Thanks for your good wishes.

A. E. ELDERKIN, Watford, Herts, is prepared to deliver lectures on the Secular platform. We know him to be well-informed, sincere, and earnest. The printed list of subjects he is ready to deal with is most appetising. Branches of the N. S. S. should apply for a copy.

LEON DUCHESNE.—We shall be glad to receive such cuttings if you will kindly send them.

H. F. S.—Thanks for your letter and your hopes for the success of the Secular Society, Limited.

R. F. MACK.—We are obliged for the reference.

G. CROOKSON.—You mistake us. We are not built to repay kindness with incivility. Thanks; see acknowledgments elsewhere. We have taken your hint and commenced a series of articles on the Czar's manifesto. You say it is hard for readers who cannot hear us lecture to imagine our views on this important topic. No doubt it is; and now they can give their imaginations a rest.

W. W. (Newcastle).—Your cuttings are welcome.

L. THOMAS.—The late J. M. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past* can still be obtained from Mr. Forder. We do not suppose the contemplated second volume will ever be issued. Even if the materials were all ready, no one could properly see it through the press but Mr. Wheeler himself.

W. F. HARRIS.—You will find the whole subject of Tacitus and the famous passage on the Christians at the time of Nero dealt with in Mr. Foote's pamphlet, *The Sign of the Cross*, written in review of Mr. Wilson Barrett's play. Good reasons are given for believing that passage to be a forgery. There are scholars who maintain that the *Annals* is a forgery altogether. Certainly it was never heard of before the fifteenth century. We have not space to dilate upon the matter here, and must refer you to the pamphlet, where all the facts are stated in a manner which should be intelligible to ordinary readers.

RECEIVED.—Two Worlds—Ethical World—Freidenker—Huddersfield Examiner—Southern Echo—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Liverpool Courier—Truth About Spiritualism—Crescent—Isle of Man Times—Edinburgh Evening Dispatch—Railway Herald—Manchester Guardian—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Clarion—Braun's Iconoclast—Torch of Reason—Sydney Bulletin—New Century—Secular Thought—Public Opinion—Newark Herald—People's Newspaper—Free Society—Bolton Evening News—Der Arme Teufel.

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.

*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.

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 is due.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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. FOOTE lectures at the Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, this evening (Nov. 27), taking for his subject, "Christian Science, Peculiar People, and the Dying Faith." This is a lecture which Freethinkers should make a special effort to induce their orthodox friends to hear.

There was a very crowded audience at the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Meaning of Death"—Mr. Victor Roger, the new president of the Camberwell Branch of the N. S. S., being in the chair. Upon the platform were Messrs. Hartmann and Heaford, and in the body of the hall Messrs. Lees Sumner and H. Percy Ward, up for a brief holiday from Birmingham. The lecturer was in his best form, and the audience kept up a running fire of applause and laughter to the end, the final demonstration being particularly enthusiastic. Some criticism was offered by a Christian Evidence lecturer named Haile, who, unlike most of his tribe, was thoroughly good-tempered and polite. He differed from Mr. Foote very much, but he didn't know when he had enjoyed himself so much as in listening to the lecturer. This good-tempered critic had a good-tempered reply and a hand-shake at the finish.

Before his lecture Mr. Foote said a few words about the editor of the *South London Mail*. It was only a few words, because no more were necessary, the scribe who egged on the Hooligans of South London to break up the Freethought meetings on Peckham Rye having had to vacate his editorial chair in a hurried and undignified fashion. In the circumstances, Mr. Foote said that all he had to do was to congratulate Secularism on the fine advertisement it had enjoyed, and the Camberwell Branch on the way, at once brave and judicious, in which it had successfully upheld the flag of Freethought.

Last Sunday Mr. Watts lectured three times in Sheffield, to large and very appreciative audiences. We are glad to hear that Mr. Watts was in fine form. Friends from the surrounding districts mustered in good force. There was not much discussion, but in the afternoon several questions were asked, and a young Unitarian made an excellent speech from the "Agnostic Christian's" standpoint. Mr. Watts's reply was enthusiastically applauded.

To-day, Sunday (Nov. 27), Mr. Watts lectures, morning and evening, in the large Bristol school-room, Bristol-road, Birmingham.

The first General Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, was held on Friday evening, November 18, in the York Room of the Manchester Hotel. There was an excellent attendance of London members, and many proxies were sent up from country members, though there was no necessity to use any of them, as the voting was so unanimous. Mr. Foote, as chairman, had first of all to explain the absence of Mr. Forder, whose wife was lying dangerously ill. Then he proceeded to give a brief account of the Society's history, present position, and future prospects; incidentally stating that 124 members had already been enrolled, that several friends had already put the Society

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in their wills for legacies, and that other friends are willing to do something shortly in the way of donations. For the present, he said, it would be advisable to elect directors living in London. Hereafter, if the Society grew as he hoped, it would be advisable to elect some directors living in the provinces, with enough Londoners to ensure a quorum at the Board meetings.

The election of a new Board of Directors followed, consisting of the full complement of twelve members. Their names are: G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, C. Cohen, A. B. Moss, R Forder, S. Hartmann, Francis Neale, G. J. Warren, Victor Roger, George Ward, J. Neate, and Annie Brown. Only four lecturers are included, Mr. Foote not counting as such for the present, as he does not intend that the Society shall employ his services in any such way, at any rate until the next annual meeting. The laymen have a large majority, and the most fastidious critic ought to be satisfied with the relative composition of the new Board.

Miss E. M. Vance's appointment by the first Board as secretary was confirmed by the meeting, and a special vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Forder for acting as secretary *pro tem.* The meeting did not see its way to appointing auditors on the spot, and therefore instructed the new Board to engage the services of a chartered accountant for the first year's audit. After the asking and answering of various questions the meeting ended with a warm vote of thanks to the chairman for his work in building, launching, and piloting.

Mr. Foote will write at length on the subject of the Secular Society, Limited, in next week's *Freethinker*. Meanwhile, he refers the more anxious readers to what he has already written on the subject in the *Secular Almanack*.

The *Two Worlds*, a well-known Spiritualist paper, in its last issue doubts the very existence of Jesus the man. This is what it says in concluding a long article on the subject: "The priests invented the Trinity, and therefore invented the Holy Ghost; this, like all other priestly inventions, is myth, therefore the father of Jesus is myth; and, as by a law of nature each kind reproduces its own species, Jesus must be myth. We, for ourselves, therefore solve the Christian problem by accepting Jesus, the Christ, as a spiritual ideal personified, and we will neither hate, despise, nor quarrel with those who do not see with our eyes, if they will leave us alone."

Two successful Freethought demonstrations took place last Sunday in London. For this the rampant ruffianism of the Holy Hooligans was chiefly responsible. The morning demonstration was at Limehouse. This station has recently been infested by bigots of the baser type, who are green with envy at the larger and more intelligent audiences that fall to the share of the Secular lectures. On this occasion they imported a bevy of blatant "infidel-smashers," a cornet player, a female choir, and an asthmatical harmonium. All these attractions were exhibited on an improvised platform, formed in the entrails of a greengrocer's cart, on which the legend ran, "Goods carefully removed." Judging from the rabid specimens of abuse which were doled out by the oratory, it will be a God-send to Limehouse when these "good goods" are carefully removed to Colney Hatch.

The Secular meeting was very large and enthusiastic. The speakers were Messrs. Pack, Ramsey, Edwards, and Heaford. A collection was made for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund. In the afternoon the Freethinkers had a final Demonstration on Peckham Rye. The audience was simply enormous in size, and evidenced by repeated cheers and hearty applause its appreciation of the arguments of the different speakers. Mr. Percy Ward led off, followed by Mr. Moss. The two other speakers were Messrs. Heaford and Pack. Interruptions, of course, there were, but these were kept within moderate bounds for fear of the police. The enthusiasm, the mirth, the good temper, and quick appreciation shown by the crowd made Sunday afternoon memorable.

The Camberwell Branch committee, on Sunday evening, passed a resolution thanking all their numerous supporters at Peckham Rye, with special mention of Messrs. Edwards and Loafer.

Mr. A. B. Moss lectured at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, his subject being "The Creed of a Rationalist." He had a good audience and a warm greeting.

A monument to the late Mathilde Blind, poetess and Freethinker, will be unveiled at St. Pancras Cemetery, Finchley, on Thursday, December 1—the second anniversary of her funeral—at 2.30 in the afternoon.

Our recent article on the *Reflections of a Russian Statesman* is noticed in an Anarchist journal called *Free Society*, which reaches us from San Francisco. This journal is one of our exchanges, and we generally glance over its columns. It is conducted with some ability, and, we imagine, with some self-denial; and we are bound to respect men of conviction, however much we happen to differ from them. Our own view is that the Anarchist and the State Socialist are both mounted upon true principles, but each rides his principle to death. Life is the balance of many principles, not the expression of one.

Mr. Cohen is leaving London for a fortnight's lecturing tour in the provinces. Huddersfield friends are desired to note that he lectures on Monday evening at 7.30 in the Friendly Societies' Hall on "Morality without Religion."

We have received a most gratifying letter from a correspondent in the far north of England, whose name and address we withhold for obvious reasons. He is a photographer, and is called upon about four times a year by a traveller—"a man so upright and kindly that I felt sure that what he asked me to read could at least do me no harm." This gentleman gave him several copies of the *Freethinker*, which he read with avidity and profit. He had never really admired the Bible, and he found in this journal the reasons that had been unconsciously operating in his mind. He is now a much happier man than he ever was before, and looks forward with pleasure to his weekly copy of the *Freethinker*.

Mr. C. P. Farrell, Colonel Ingersoll's relative and publisher, writing to us from New York under date of Nov. 13, says: "I see by the *Freethinker* that you and Mr. Watts are doing all you can to civilise and humanise your people. I greatly enjoyed your articles on Shakespeare, Shelley, and Gladstone. To my mind you gave an absolutely true portrayal of Gladstone's intellect and character. The Colonel has not yet decided when he will get over the sea to you. I hope soon. The relations between England and America are growing so cordial that I predict a very warm reception for him when he does come. We all speak and think of you very often."

## WOMEN AND PRIESTS.

One of the commonest and, at the same time, most unwarranted claims made by parsons is that religion has tended to improve the position of women.

Martin Madam, D.D., in his defence of polygamy, entitled *Thelyphthora, or a Treatise on Female Ruin*, 1780, in the third volume gives a long list of the Fathers, quotations from their writings, and the various laws, canons, and edicts of councils from the first century.

The result of wading through these old-time writings is the feeling that mentally, morally, and physically these Fathers must have been badly in want of an Act such as was passed last session by the English Parliament empowering magistrates to forcibly apply insect powder, carbolic acid, or some other disinfectant to the foul creatures.

In the minds of all of them woman was something to be shunned and scorned. "Avoid the speech and society of the female sex as the contagion of a plague" was the constant message to men.

Virginity and chastity are the greatest recommendations to God. Since there was no other known way of making saints, monks, or popes than by the slow process of first making children, the making of children was permitted as a necessary evil. Some, however, went so far as to be logical enough to say that the early end of the world was preferable to the sin of procreation.

A modern echo of the old spirit has just been brought to light in the will of the Archimandrite Hieronymos Myriantheus.

The meek and lowly (?) owner of this tremendous polysyllabled title, like all the modern highly-placed followers of Christ, seems to have piled up some considerable treasure on earth, and, after disposing of it in various ways—one being the building of a tomb in Cyprus—he goes on to say:

> "For the consideration of the Mother Church, whose ardent and faithful servant I have been, am, and shall be till my last breath, I consider it my duty to here record that a band of jealous and unscrupulous individuals invented some years ago, and has propagated against me, the infamous calumny that I had, so to speak, abjured my priesthood, and that I had married. I invoke the Omniscient God as my witness that I have not committed so horrible a crime either publicly or secretly. May a just Judge pass judgment on these cowardly assailants of my good reputation on the great and dreadful Day of Judgment."

Good old saint! Good old eunuch! Good old humbug! May you, like your seed, never rise again. T. S.

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## SUPERSTITION.

EXTRACTS FROM COLONEL INGERSOLL'S NEW LECTURE.

*(Concluded from page 747.)*

MILLIONS of men have wasted their lives in the study of this book, in trying to harmonise contradictions, and to explain the obscure and seemingly absurd. In doing this they have justified nearly every crime and every cruelty. In its follies they have found the profoundest wisdom. Hundreds of creeds have been constructed from its inspired passages. Probably no two of its readers have agreed as to its meaning. Thousands have studied Hebrew and Greek that they might read the Old and New Testaments in the languages in which they were written. The more they studied, the more they differed. By the same book they proved that nearly everybody is to be lost, and that all are to be saved; that slavery is a divine institution, and that all men should be free; that polygamy is right, and that no man should have more than one wife; that the powers that be are ordained of God, and that the people have a right to overturn and destroy the powers that be; that all the actions of men were predestined, preordained from eternity, and yet that man is free; that all the heathen will be lost; that all the heathen will be saved; that all men who live according to the light of nature will be damned for their pains; that you must be baptised by sprinkling; that you must be baptised by immersion; that there is no salvation without baptism; that baptism is useless; that you must believe in the Trinity; that it is sufficient to believe in God; that you must believe that a Hebrew peasant was God; that at the same time he was half man, that he was of the blood of David through his supposed father Joseph, who was not his father, and that it is not necessary to believe that Christ was God; that you must believe that the Holy Ghost proceeded; that it makes no difference whether you do or not; that you must keep the Sabbath holy; that Christ taught nothing of the kind; that Christ established a church; that he established no church; that the dead are to be raised; that there is to be no resurrection; that Christ is coming again; that he has made his last visit; that Christ went to hell and preached to the spirits in prison; that he did nothing of the kind; that all the Jews are going to perdition; that they are all going to heaven; that all the miracles described in the Bible were performed; that some of them were not, because they are foolish, childish, and idiotic; that all the Bible is inspired; that some of the books are not inspired; that there is to be a general judgment, when the sheep and goats are to be divided; that there never will be any general judgment; that the sacramental bread and wine are changed into the flesh and blood of God and the Trinity; that they are not changed; that God has no flesh or blood; that there is a place called "purgatory"; that there is no such place; that unbaptised infants will be lost; that they will be saved; that we must believe the Apostles' Creed; that the apostles made no creed; that the Holy Ghost was the father of Christ; that Joseph was his father; that the Holy Ghost had the form of a dove; that there is no Holy Ghost; that heretics should be killed; that you must not resist evil; that you should murder unbelievers; that you must love your enemies; that you should take no thought for the morrow, but should be diligent in business; that you should lend to all who ask, and that one who does not provide for his own household is worse than an infidel.

In defence of all these creeds, all these contradictions, thousands of volumes have been written, millions of sermons have been preached, countless swords reddened with blood, and thousands and thousands of nights made lurid with the fagot's flames.

### AN OUTGROWN DEITY.

In our day Jehovah has been outgrown. He is no longer the perfect. Now theologians talk, not about Jehovah, but about a God of love, call him the Eternal Father and the perpetual friend and providence of man. But, while they talk about this God of love, cyclones wreck and rend, the earthquake devours, the flood destroys, the red bolt leaping from the cloud still crashes the life out of men, and plague and fever still are tireless reapers in the harvest fields of death.

They tell us now that all is good; that evil is but blessing in disguise, that pain makes strong and virtuous men—makes character—while pleasure enfeebles and degrades. If this be so, the souls in hell should grow to greatness, while those in heaven should shrink and shrivel.

All the orthodox churches are obstructions on the highway of progress. Every orthodox creed is a chain, a dungeon. Every believer in the "inspired book" is a slave who drives reason from her throne, and in her stead crowns fear.

Reason is the light, the sun of the brain. It is the compass of the mind, the ever-constant Northern Star, the mountain peak that lifts itself above all clouds.

### THE AGNOSTIC.

After all we know but little. In the darkness of life there are a few gleams of light. Possibly the dropping of a dishcloth prophesies the coming of company, but we have no evidence. Possibly it is dangerous for thirteen to dine together, but we have no evidence. Possibly a maiden's matrimonial chances are determined by the number of seeds in an apple, or by the number of leaves on a flower, but we have no evidence. Possibly certain stones give good luck to the wearer, while the wearing of others brings loss and death. Possibly a glimpse of the new moon over the left shoulder brings misfortune. Possibly there are curative virtues in old bones, in sacred rags and holy hairs, in images and bits of wood, in rusty nails and dried blood, but the trouble is we have no evidence. Possibly comets, eclipses, and shooting stars foretell the death of kings, the destruction of nations, or the coming of plague. Possibly devils take possession of the bodies and minds of men. Possibly witches, with the devil's help, control the winds, breed storms on sea and land, fill summer's lap with frosts and snow, and work with charm and spell against the public weal; but of this we have no evidence. It may be that all the miracles described in the Old and New Testament were performed; that the pallid flesh of the dead felt once more the thrill of life; that the corpse arose and felt upon his smiling lips the kiss of wife and child. Possibly water was turned into wine, loaves and fishes increased, and possibly devils were expelled from men and women; possibly fishes were found with money in their mouths; possibly clay and spittle brought back the light to sightless eyes, and possibly words cured disease and made the leper clean; but of this we have no evidence.

### IT MAY BE.

Possibly iron floated, rivers divided, waters burst from dry bones, birds carried food to prophets, and angels flourished drawn swords; but of this we have no evidence.

Possibly Jehovah employed lying spirits to deceive a king, and all the wonders of the savage world may have happened; but the trouble is, there is no proof.

So there may be a devil, almost infinite in cunning and power, and he may have a countless number of imps whose only business is to sow the seeds of evil and to vex, mislead, capture, and imprison in eternal flames the souls of men. All this, so far as we know, is possible. All we know is, that we have no evidence except the assertions of ignorant priests.

Possibly there is a place called "hell," where all the devils live—a hell whose flames are waiting for all the men who think and have the courage to express their thoughts, for all who fail to credit priests and sacred books, for all who walk the path that reason lights, for all the good and brave who lack credulity and faith; but of this, I am happy to say, there is no proof.

And so there may be a place called "heaven," the home of God, where angels float and fly and play on harps and hear with joy the groans and shrieks of the lost in hell; but of this there is no evidence.

It all rests on dreams and visions of the insane.

There may be a power superior to nature—a power that governs and directs all things; but the existence of this power has not been established.

In the presence of the mysteries of life and thought, of force and substance, of growth and decay, of birth and death, of joy and pain, of the sufferings of the good, the triumphs of wrong, the intelligent, honest man is compelled to say: "I do not know."

But we do know how gods and devils, heavens and hells, have been made. We know the history of inspired books—the origin of religions. We know how the seeds of superstition were planted, and what made them grow. We know that all superstitions, all creeds, all follies ar

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mistakes, all crimes and cruelties, all virtues, vices, hopes, and fears, all discoveries and inventions, have been naturally produced. By the light of reason we divide the useful from the hurtful, the false from the true.

We know the past—the paths that man has travelled—his mistakes, his triumphs. We know a few facts, a few fragments; and the imagination, the artist of the mind, with these facts, these fragments, rebuilds the past, and, on the canvas of the future, deftly paints the things to be.

## THE MURDER OF HAROLD FREDERIC.

Big-hearted, big-brained, big-muscled, open-handed Harold Frederic, the sanest of European correspondents, one of the most delightful of story-tellers, the earnest and kindly student of his fellow men, the novelist, politician, sociological expert, is dead—dead because of this murderous modern fad, which its idiotic devotees call "Christian Science." He was sick, of course, when he became its adherent. His mentality unclouded by disease would have laughed its meretricious pretensions to scorn. Because of the ravages of his ailment, he possessed no longer his clarity of vision; but his will-power was left, his dominating personality, his obstinacy. He insisted, with a sick man's unshakeable clinging to a belief, that he be left alone, and there was near him no one of his old companions to take a club and chase the "healers" into the street, or throw them downstairs and land them afterwards in jail, where they belong, and all of their kind belong.

A truly great man and a lovable man has gone into the night. He has been done to death by these mumbling mummers as surely as if they had struck fifty daggers through his heart. Nothing will be done with them. The crime is theirs, but there is no punishment for it under the inadequate American or English law. A man is still given the right to choose his own physicians, and the machinery for the restraint or direction of those mentally incapable of choosing wisely has not been so far perfected that suicide through "Christian Science" can be prevented. Only a simple statute is needed, however. This statute should declare guilty of murder any gang of men or women who approach a sick bed, drive away legally authorised physicians, and then pray their victim into the tomb. A graduate of an authorised medical college, if guilty of malpractice, can be convicted of malpractice. It appears that we have no law to reach these malpractitioners, who ought to be confined for life when death results, and placed in the penitentiary for five years when their patient happens to fight through. Never in the history of their "Science" have its "professors" cured anybody of anything, saving hypochondriacs, who had nothing the matter with them. All of the "Christian Scientists" between the poles, herded into a single field and told to yelp prayers like a tormented terrier, could not cure a man of a pimple on the nose.

The Harold Frederic murder has attracted especial attention because of the victim's especial prominence; but the long list of people done to death by these fools within the past ten years would reach from New York to St. Petersburg. Not a day passes but some valuable human being breathes his or her last while the couch is surrounded by muttering imbeciles, who imagine that the Deity has nothing better to do than to spend all his hours in curing rheumatism of the second joint of the middle finger, diarrhœa from green apples, and toothache because the sufferer has been too lazy to use a brush with regularity, or too stingy to pay a dentist.

—*Brann's "Iconoclast" (Chicago.)*

## Obituary.

We much regret to record the death of Mrs. Ellen Forder, wife of Mr. Robert Forder. The sad event took place on Sunday morning last (Nov. 20). The deceased lady had only been ill for a few days, but on the Friday night an operation became necessary, and in about twenty-four hours she had ceased to live. Happily, her last hours were without pain. Mrs. Forder was the daughter of an old Woolwich Freethinker. She was forty years of age, but looked much younger. Mr. Forder will have the sympathy of very many friends in this sudden and painful bereavement. We are asked to state that the funeral is arranged to take place at Finchley Cemetery on Saturday afternoon (Nov. 26) at 3 o'clock. Mr. Foote has promised to officiate at the burial

## INGERSOLL THE MAN AND ORATOR.

[The following paragraphs are extracted from a long article by Herman E. Kittredge in the *Medical Brief*, an important and widely-circulated magazine published at St. Louis, and edited by Dr. J. J. Lawrence.]

Seen and heard in his wonted *rôle* upon the lecture platform, Ingersoll is not to be forgotten. His splendid physique—tall and erect, with broad and massive shoulders supporting a perfectly-shaped head—is worthy of admiration, while his mode of entry, in a calmness amounting almost to indifference, and his manner of plunging abruptly into the subject, are characteristically, if not distinctively, Ingersollian. Everything is said and done just as Ingersoll says and does it, and, were we to judge from even nothing more than a comparison of his audiences with those of other lecturers, we should have to conclude that no one has yet been able to show the public a better or a more fascinating way. To his merited praise let it be said, in passing, that the Colonel has not, in even his driest moments, been guilty of the wearisome habit of pausing during a discourse to moisten a defective vocal apparatus by resorting to the usual and unsightly pitcher and glass. Apparently, he knows no fatigue, while his remarkable voice—rich, melodious, and as deep as the theme that gives it birth—carries every syllable full and rounded to "the gallery of the gods." It is said, however, that, quite naturally, it has not the charm it possessed in 1876; for instance, when, in the Cincinnati Convention, it told in undying simile of the "armed warrior" and the "plumed knight," or when, at Indianapolis, several months later, it painted that which is acknowledged to be the truest, the sublimest war picture ever produced without canvas or brush—"A Vision of War."

Of the many laudable traits in the character of the great Agnostic, absolute honesty and perfect candor most deeply impress his hearers. "Let's be honest," "I do not know," and similar expressions, are some of the crevices through which shines out the splendor of his soul. He is apt to impress the stranger as one who believes himself to be equal to the occasion, and it may be truthfully added that all who have experienced the magic spell which Ingersoll only can throw about an audience, or who have followed him to "the dim heights of thought" in any of the written controversies to which he has been a party, agree that whatever self-confidence he may possess is excusable.

However incongruous or improbable it may appear to some who do not accept his philosophy, or who have, it may be, failed adequately to comprehend it, Ingersoll is nothing if not an ardent champion of the fireside. Those who have not already learned this through their good fortune to see him in his magnificent home, amid "the love of wife and child and friend," will find most touching and beautiful evidences of it in all his works.

* * * * *

If there is any other characteristic of Ingersoll that merits comparison with his candor or his incredulity, any trait that has played an equal part in the upbuilding of his reputation, it is benevolence. His charity is of the most unselfish form—the result of mentally putting himself in the place of others. Among his neighbors, past and present, wherever he has lived, whether in Shawneetown (Illinois), where he and his brother Ebon first commenced the practice of law, or in Peoria, Washington, or New York, anecdotes of "Bob" Ingersoll's charity are as common as the tale of George Washington and his hatchet is familiar. It is said that no worthy person or cause ever appealed to him in vain. His numerous gifts and contributions to needy individuals and to societies, both charitable and intellectual, are widely known. How many similar ones have been made without the knowledge of the public, his modesty in such matters precludes the possibility of discovering.

* * * * *

Ingersoll has never been found wandering in the maze of metaphysics. He is satisfied as to the limitations of the mind—where the known stops and the unknown begins—and in defence of his position he produces arguments as easily as a laden tree in autumn sheds its ripened fruit.

Of expression he knows every grace, and in his pictures logic, wit, humor, and pathos blend with all the harmony of "divided light." Everything is natural—spontaneous. In the mirror of his genius Nature smiling looks, and we receive her image—perfect, and fresh as the dewy morning. In his eloquence are the wild fury of the storm—the white-capped anger of the sea—the snow-crowned peak—the perfumed and sunny fields—the delicious solitude of the shady wood, in which, perhaps, the songs of birds mingle with the dreamy murmur of a brook. Between his style and the style of most other speakers is the difference between oratory and elocution. At his feet all artists pay the tribute of their admiration. But to convey by a few brief quotations a true estimate of the orator, or to give an adequate written description of the man, is as impossible as to tell the composition of a mountain by examining a fragment of its rock. Ingersoll must be seen and heard.

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When you do not know, to admit it—that is honesty; to express your real thoughts, knowing that the scorn and hatred of the majority will be your lot—that is courage; to love humanity, "to give to every other human being every right that you claim for yourself," to put justice above all else—that is goodness; in the world of thought to see always the purpling dawn; to walk alone; to bring from fancy's painted realm new poems, new pictures, which ennoble and delight—that is genius. Robert G. Ingersoll has all of these.

## BOOK CHAT.

MARK TWAIN, in the *Forum*, makes an appeal for tragedy. We are all too fond of comedy and farce, he says; in short, he harks back to the view of Aristotle that tragedy elevates and purifies by terror and pity. This is Mark Twain's conclusion: "Comedy keeps the heart sweet; but we all know that there is wholesome refreshment for both mind and heart in an occasional climb among the solemn pomps of the intellectual snow-summits built by Shakespeare and those others. Do I seem to be preaching? It is out of my line; I only do it because the rest of the clergy seem to be on vacation."

* * *

It appears that F. C. Burnand, the editor of *Punch*, was educated as a priest. The secret is out at last. We have often wondered why the humor of our contemporary was so deadly dull.

* * *

This paper suffers from the Press boycott. This has, however, never prevented rival editors from stealing our ideas. Our esteemed contributor, "Mimnermus," has published in our columns a series of "Prehistoric Peeps." A recent "Peep" was entitled "The First Policeman." A fortnight later *Pick-Me-Up* paid us the compliment of publishing an imitation—"Prehistory: The First Policeman." We apologise to the editor of *Pick-Me-Up* for having dared to anticipate his thoughts in this way.

* * *

It is worth noting that the present issue of the *Secular Almanack* is the thirtieth. For thirty years this publication has regularly made its appearance. This is not a bad record for a dying organisation.

* * *

The *Secular Almanack* is a most useful publication, as it gives in a handy form all the needful information concerning the work of organised Freethought in this and all other countries, besides containing a number of bright articles by leading Freethinkers. By handing a copy to a friend each of our readers would do the cause a real service.

* * *

*Do You Believe the Bible is the Word of God?* is the question asked at the top of an anonymous eight-page tract published by Watts & Co., London. There is nothing to indicate whether it is for sale or private circulation. It is well-written, and should set Christian readers thinking.

### "The Same Old Story."

Such is the heading in a Secular paper of the failure of the First National Bank of Ohio. A few days ago the cashier, who was very active in church work, simply eloped. "It is believed," says the *News Dispatch*, "that investigation will bring his defalcations up to $100,000." This is another exemplification of the divine command, "Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." One hundred thousand dollars will go a long way in that direction.—*Progressive Thinker.*

I was in Melbourne Picture Gallery on the day the painting of "Chloe" was hung. The space opposite the picture was occupied by half-circles of chairs, and these again by society dames and baldheads. One decrepit old gent, shaking with palsy and mouthing silently and horribly, was helped up the gallery to a seat by a fat, ferocious-looking dowager in blue goggles, and there he sat trembling and winking his wicked, watery old eyes at the innocent naked girl in front. Close to me at the far side, beneath "The Brigands," were two young parsons, one gloating over Chloe through a pair of opera-glasses! Said his friend: "Are you not exceeding youah allowance?' The other relinquished the glasses with a sigh. They were each having five-minute pops. And all this disgusting behavior over the figure of a fourteen-year-old girl! And by such sexual wrecks was "Chloe" condemned as "indecent"! Ugh!—*Sydney Bulletin.*

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### FLAGELLOMANIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am at a loss to see the connection between flogging a criminal, who doesn't like it, and the vices referred to by Mr. Collinson; or why, because priests have flogged women lawlessly, that the law shouldn't flog by its duly-accredited agents those who commit crimes of violence, including the aforesaid priests.

However, I am at one with Mr. Collinson that flogging is an inexpedient punishment, except in sparsely settled or new communities. But the British public have got it in their heads that flogging has been beneficial in garroting, and, between the lines of all that Mr. Collinson has written against flogging he has admitted that the British public are right.

There are no greater sufferers in this world than advanced reformers from a lax administration of justice, and the law, aggravated by the atrocious custom of our judges and magistrates of treating crimes of violence, unless accompanied with robbery, as venial offences, is just one of those artful arrangements that plays into the hands of priests, aristocrats, and tyrants generally.

Your columns last week showed the case of a parson who knocked a working man about fearfully, and was let off with a fine of forty shillings; and such cases are of constant occurrence. Such a case as that is not, however, where we propagandists of advanced ideas suffer. Mr. Collinson must be perfectly aware that there are hundreds of places in England where the right of free speech is a farce, as the Peckham Rye ruffians are trying to make it in South London. Take the case of the Oxford riots a year or two back; surely instead of the forty shilling fine a minimum of twenty pounds would not have been too much for the really ruffianly undergraduates.

I am quite certain that fines, if heavy enough, would be a sufficient deterrent, accompanied by a fairly severe alternative of imprisonment; but if the Humanitarian League, contrary to their professed principles, persist in simply attacking the demand for flogging, instead of at the same time earnestly pushing an alternative scheme, and refuse the membership and subscription of persons like myself, who have pushed them hard in what I consider their shortcomings, then they will perhaps have the mortification of seeing those they call flagellomaniacs successful.

A. J. MARRIOTT.

In the vicinity of Galston there is an interesting old candidate for one of those old-age pensions when they happen to arrive. He is an old collier, who, after half a century's faithful service underground, is doing his best to enjoy what remains of his life in the open. He is an inveterate smoker, and on bright days is invariably to be found by the roadside with his pipe going full steam. The other day a well-meaning tract distributor discovered the old fellow sitting by the roadside at his favorite pastime. "Do you think you are a Christian?" asked the distributor of Christian literature of the old man. "I expect sae at onyrate," he replied. "Do you expect to go to heaven?" the man next asked. "If I can," said the old fellow. "But the Bible says nothing unclean shall enter there. Now, the breath of the smoker is unclean. What do you say to that, friend?" "Weel," answered the old man, resenting these repeated queries; "weel, I reckon I mun jist leave a' men o' ye're stamp ahint me when I get there, that's a'." It was enough.

I mark the sable ironclad
In every sea; in every land,
An army idling on the chain
Of rusty peace that chafes and frets
Its seven-leagued limbs, and bristling mane
Of glittering bayonets;
The glowing blast, the fire-shot smoke
Where guns are forged and armor-plate;
The mammoth hammer's pounding stroke;
The din of our dread iron date.
And always divers undertones
Within the roaring tempest throb—
The chink of gold, the laborer's groans,
The infant's wail, the woman's sob.
Hoarsely they beg of fate to give
A little lightening of their woe,
A little time to love, to live,
A little time to think and know.

—*John Davidson.*

We are all equal in the sight of the Devil.—*Life.*

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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, "Christian Science, the Peculiar People, and the Dying Faith."

**Bradlaugh Club and Institute** (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Lyric Musical Comedy Co., "A Japanese Idyll."

**Camberwell** (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, E. Pack, "An Hour with Lecky."

**East London Ethical Society** (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E): 7, H. H. Quilter, "Seneca and Paul."

**South London Ethical Society** (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Sunday-school; 7, Stanton Coit, "Plato on the Love of Justice."

**Westminster Secular Society** (Grosvenor Arms, Page-street): 7.30, E. Calvert, "Religious Symbolism."

**West London Branch** (15 Edgware-road): December 1, at 8.15, Mr. Marriott, "Secularism, Socialism, and the Reformation."

**West London Secular Club** (15 Edgware-road): Every evening 7—10.50.

**West London Ethical Society** (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Stanton Coit, "St. Paul on the Love of Christ."

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

**Hyde Park** (near Marble Arch): 11.30, A lecture.

**Deptford** (Broadway): 6.30, C. James, "Christ and Democracy."

**COUNTRY.**

**Birmingham Branch** (Bristol-street Board-school): Charles Watts—11, "Secular Power of Philosophy"; 7, "The Bible: Past, Present, and Future."

**Chatham Secular Society** (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, Dramatic Entertainment—"Fish Out of Water," also "Family Jars."

**Derby** (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, Debate between Messrs. W. Gough Tunley and H. McGuinness, "Liberalism *v.* Socialism."

**Glasgow** (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 and 6.30, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner.

**Halifax** (Public Hall): November 28, at 7.30, J. M. Robertson, "Imperialism *v.* Social Reform."

**Huddersfield** (Friendly and Trade Societies' Club, Northumberland-street): November 28, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Morality without Religion."

**Hull** (Friendly Societies' Hall): 7, Lincoln Billany, "An Interesting Reading."

**Leicester Secular Hall** (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. Brandon Medland, "Photography up to Date." Illustrated.

**Liverpool** (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): H. Percy Ward—11, "Shall we Live After Death?" 3, "The New Woman and the Old Man"; 7, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secular Platform."

**Manchester Secular Hall** (Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Cohen—11, "Herbert Spencer: I. Religion and Philosophy"; 3, "After Christianity What?" 7 "Christianity and the Jews."

**Sheffield Secular Society** (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Pleasant Evening's Musical and other Recitals, etc.

**South Shields** (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, A Reading.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. Cohen, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—November 27, Manchester; 28, Huddersfield. November 30 and December 1, Failsworth. December 4, Manchester; 5 and 6, Blackburn; 7, 8, and 9, Derby; 11, Stockton-on-Tees.

A. B. Moss, 44 Croydon-road, London, S.E.—November 27, North Camberwell Radical Club.

H. Percy Ward, 5, Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—November 27, Liverpool. December 4, Leicester. 18, Birmingham.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## THE CZAR'S PEACE MESSAGE.

*(Continued from page 754.)*

LET us ask whether the Czar is absolutely sincere in making this proposal to Europe. No doubt this is an unpleasant inquiry, but it cannot very well be avoided. As the world goes, and especially in matters of international politics, it is not wise to be too generous. A certain amount of caution is necessary, or we may be led into a trap; and when we are fooled and cheated it is no great consolation to reflect that we are the victims of our own unsuspecting innocence.

Mr. Stead, who has been perambulating Europe with a view to collecting influential opinions on the Czar's rescript, assures us that Nicholas II. is a splendid young man, full of the noblest humanitarian sentiments, and inspired by the highest Christian ideals. This is all very gratifying in its way, but unfortunately Mr. Stead is not infallible. He is apparently much influenced by his friend, Madame Novikoff, who frequently amuses the Western world with her clever, if cynical, apologies for Russian autocracy. His personal pride was also flattered by the reception he once met with at the court of St. Petersburg. There is no need to look for more sinister reasons, although some of Mr. Stead's critics insinuate that his laudation of the Czar and his government may not be entirely disinterested.

What are the facts of the case with regard to Russia? Despite the rigorous press censorship, and the publication of false reassurances, it is beyond doubt that Russia has very serious internal troubles. Education and the silent spread of Western ideas are slowly but surely undermining the Czar's despotism; and if there were more large centres of population it would be difficult to postpone constitutional reforms for another ten or fifteen years. Moreover, there are a multitude of Jews in Russia, and although they are persecuted and oppressed, and deprived as far as possible of educational advantages as well as other rights or privileges of citizenship, they are in their way by no means ineffective missionaries of liberalism. The various heterodox sects are also a grave embarrassment to the authorities. They have the stolid tenacity of their race, and thousands of them rejoice in martyrdom. The more they are persecuted the more they flourish. Their sufferings excite sympathy, and sympathy often leads to conversion. Moreover, the financial condition of Russia is anything but satisfactory. Loans are more and more difficult to raise in the European money-markets. Even the thrifty French peasant is tired of emptying his stocking for the benefit of the "dear ally." Frenchmen are beginning to see that the alliance is one in which Russia stands to gain everything and France nothing. Finally, there is no denying the truth that Russia has plenty of hard work and harder problems before her in the far East. She has extended herself at the expense of China, and has raised the anger, or at least the suspicion, of more than one powerful rival. To use the expressive if coarse language of the man in the street, she has bitten off more than she can chew; and when a man's mouth is full he does not welcome a slap in the face. Russia requires time to swallow and digest what she has obtained. She needs peace above all things for the next few years. Were she to get embroiled with England, her Pacific squadron would soon be annihilated; she would be shut up in the Baltic and the Black Sea, and forced into the position of a land-locked power. Those who talk of her descent upon India hardly know the facts of that military problem. Even if she found allies, England might find allies too. America is entering the sphere of international politics, and Japan would be more or less than human if she did not long to avenge the humiliation inflicted upon her by Russia after the termination of her war with China.

We do not say it is a positive fact, but we say it is quite conceivable, that the astute gentlemen who conduct Russia's diplomacy have deliberately humored the Czar in relation to his peace manifesto, and that in their opinion it will serve an excellent purpose if it only succeeds in gaining time.

We have now to face a far more painful consideration. The Czar's manifesto is full of fine humanitarian sentiments, and we may be pardoned for asking why he does not keep some of them for domestic consumption. Reformation, if not charity, should begin at home. The majority of the inhabitants of the civilised world would be delighted to see the Czar make a beginning in his own dominions, and amongst his eighty millions of subjects. Let him order his government to cease persecuting and robbing the Jews. Let him stop the blackening of the highways to Siberia with melancholy processions of chained exiles, guilty of no crime but loving liberty. Let him put an end to the brutal flogging of men, and the disgusting ill-treatment of women, in Russian prisons. Let him arrest the horrible harrying of the Stundists, and other heterodox sects, whose honesty, industry, and peacefulness are unimpeachable. Above all, when he invites delegates to a Peace Conference, with a view to the future abolition of war, let him no longer imprison and torture simple men who love peace so well that they refuse to bear arms, or do anything that might lead to the killing of their fellow men. The way in which these people are treated is simply infamous. We have before us a pathetic and tragic little book entitled *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*, issued by the Brotherhood Publishing Co., London, and edited by the exile Vladimir Tchertkoff, with a concluding chapter and letter by Count Leo Tolstoy. It deals mainly with the persecution and sufferings of the Spirit-Wrestlers, who have many points of affinity with the Quakers. Here is an account of how some of these Spirit-Wrestlers were treated, for refusing to perform military service, in the district of Gory:—

> "We visited Lebedeff and comrades who are in the Ekaterinograd penal battalion; besides these there are eleven other men who have been enlisted recently. We saw them by permission of the colonel, who asked us: 'Where are you from, and what did you come here for?' We answered: 'We came from the province of Tiflis to visit our brethren.' He said: 'Only relatives are allowed to see the prisoners, and that only for a short



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time, not more than an hour.' And the meeting was under restraint, but still, thank God, we were able to know about their cruel and unmerciful punishments. Their persecutors cut thorny rods, five or six in one bundle. The men were laid down, and on each side of them were placed drunken men, who began to flay them like ferocious wild beasts which tear asunder meek, gentle sheep. Each received thirty strokes. After this they were placed in a solitary and cold cell for a day, and the next day they were taken out and guns were given to them, and they were led out for drill. They said, like Christians: 'We cannot fulfil what is against God's commandment.' But, in spite of their answer, they were again beaten and abused. After this drilling came dinner-time for all the prisoners; other prisoners were fed well, but our brethren did not receive even sufficient bread, and yet they were asked: 'Are you satisfied, or do you wish more?' They, in their innocence, said: 'Give us more bread.' But they received instead—blows, such blows that they could hardly stand on their feet."

Cossacks were quartered amongst these inoffensive people in the village of Gorelese, and while the men were beaten, flogged, and maimed, many of the women were tortured and violated. Here is the relation of one woman in her own words:—

"Four of us—women—were going from Spaski to Bogdanovka. On the road we were overtaken by a hundred Cossacks, who brought us into Bogdanovka. They there placed us in a coach-house, and then led us out one by one into the yard. Then they stripped us in the yard (throwing our skirts over our shoulders), and flogged our bare bodies. In the yard stood some Cossacks and many other people. There were only a few of our own people. They flogged us so, you could not count the strokes; two of them held us and four flogged! Three of us stood through it, but one they dragged about so that she could not stand. We received many insults."

But why prolong this horrid recital? Count Tolstoy answers for the truth of it all, and declares that everything has been rejected which, although true, might seem an exaggeration.

G. W. FOOTE.

*(To be continued.)*

## A FRESH PLEA FOR THEISM.

IF there existed a common and well-understood agreement concerning the precise meaning of the language we use, controversy, particularly of the religious order, would undergo a rapid and serious diminution. But while we are compelled to use language which has had its associations formed by preceding generations to express the more accurate knowledge of the present, our disputes must very largely turn upon just what is meant, or ought to be meant, by the words in use, and our duty to take care the old ideas are not read into the new knowledge in virtue of our being compelled to use many of the old terms.

I have been strongly reminded of this "quality of polarisation," to use Wendell Holmes's phrase, possessed by language after reading a book recently written by Dr. Keeling,* late Professor of Gynæcology in the University College of Sheffield. Substantially, the book is a new plea for Theism, and while claiming, as the object of the work, "to find out, if possible, simply what science and reason have to say," Dr. Keeling does really go beyond the region of science for the object of his investigation, and I hope to show that the voice of reason is not by any means as favorable to his argument as the author imagines.

Dr. Keeling's position, as laid down in this book, may be briefly summarised in the following two propositions:—Accepting the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge, that all we know, or can know, is the relations between phenomena as represented in the human consciousness, it is, nevertheless, held that there is outside the region of sense perception an unknown and unknowable Reality of which the existing universe is an expression. Second, as the known universe is but the expression of an underlying reality, and as science cannot say by what combination of matter and energy life and mind may be produced, we are bound to assume that "the Reality on which it (the universe) depends must at least equal it," in the sense of being an "adequate and controlling intelligence," which leads to the conclusion that "we have, in the orderly harmony and endless adaptations of *inorganic* matter, abundant evidence of the operation of intelligence, and that the protoplasmic mind itself is but the exquisite and crowning proof of such operation."

I do not think it necessary here to follow the author's exposition of "A Supreme Noumenon," or his interesting and instructive chapter on "The Kinetics and Metakinetics of a Brain-cell." The doctrine therein laid down is not strikingly unlike Spencer's "Transfigured Realism," and does not materially affect the main point at issue between a Theistic and Atheistic conception of evolution. Theists and Atheists may both agree on something existing outside self as the equivalent of changes in consciousness, and yet disagree entirely when an attempt is made to define its nature.

Nor do I see how the bare belief in an unknown and unknowable Reality can help the Theistic case to any appreciable extent. To be of any help whatever, this assumed Reality must stand in some kind of causal relation to the universe as we know it, and that, by the very terms of the hypothesis, is impossible. Dr. Keeling himself admits (p. 119) that this Reality cannot *logically* stand as the cause of the universe; so that we, first of all, have to assume that something exists of which we know nothing, and then assume that it is the cause of existing phenomena; and, by imposing the relation implied by the term "cause," entirely destroy its character as being independent of all relations. Dr. Keeling tells us (p. 33) that the human mind will not rest until it has attached the network of fact and circumstance to something which stands "ultimately in the relation of origin or cause of all phenomena." But, as a matter of fact, we can predicate nothing of the kind of any existence that is assumed outside the region of phenomena. The term "cause" has validity only within the range of experience, actual or possible; it is a conception purely phenomenal in its origin and application; it exists only in connection with, and relation to, a series, and the author is acting in anything but a logical manner—although he is misbehaving in good company—in applying the term to a region which can never by any possibility be brought within the limits of thought. And, at best, Dr. Keeling's position is a suicidal one. For, if it be true that the mind craves for the establishment of causal relations at each stage of its growth, the conception of a first cause—admitting for a moment the validity of the phrase—does not fulfil the conditions it is created to satisfy. If the mind rests content with that, a craving for causal relations is not one of its essential characteristics, if otherwise the same unsatisfied craving still continues, and all that has been done is to add one more link to the chain of causation.

Dr. Keeling says: "Science does not admit phenomena without noumena to account for them"; to which I reply that the question of noumena is not a scientific question at all. It belongs properly to metaphysics, and its presence in modern thought is more or less a survival of that scholasticism which has been so generally discarded. Science is concerned with a classification of causal relations among phenomena, not with the hypothetical existence of a non-causal, non-phenomenal being that really equals nothing at all, and is absolutely valueless as an explanation of anything. The essence of a scientific hypothesis is an identification of two terms—first, "The fact to be explained, and a fact by which it is explained; second, that the latter fact must be known to experience."* The author's Reality comes under neither head. It does nothing, and explains nothing. It removes no difficulty, it solves no problem. No man finds he has a clearer knowledge of the world by believing in it, or loses anything by giving it up. It is there to bolster up opinions held in spite of scientific study, not those suggested from its pursuit.

Dr. Keeling's position is, as I have indicated, at bottom a simple one. It is that any scheme of evolution, to be adequate, must include intelligence as the primal factor in the origination of the cosmic process. Now what reason is there for assuming that intelligence lies at the root of evolution, so to speak, instead of being a product of the evolutional process? To my mind there is only one reason, and Dr. Keeling gives but one—namely, the inability of science to explain, at present, the precise

* *Quæro: Some Questions in Matter, Intelligence, Energy, and Evolution.* (Printed for private circulation.)

* *Concepts of Modern Physics*, by J. B. Stallo, p. 106.

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manner in which life and mind have originated. We are told "science has decided that life always proceeds from previous life." But science has decided nothing of the kind. All that has been decided is that, so far as experiment has gone, living organisms have never been produced from non-living material. Short of that qualification, the statement is decidedly misleading. Again, the author asks the Materialist: "Can physical energy in any form originate life? You have advanced no proof of it.....Take physical energy in any form.....in none of these, and in no combination of them, has it hitherto been proved capable of transforming non-living matter into living." And what then? Are we to assume that science has said its last word on this matter, and that what it is unable to demonstrate under existing conditions of knowledge may never be demonstrated, no matter how widely the boundaries of science are extended? And even if that were the case, even if we put on one side the great advance of biology and chemistry, and the fact that a large number of products, hitherto regarded as purely organic, are now manufactured by the chemist, would even that give logical strength to the author's theory? Surely Dr. Keeling must see on reflection that it is illogical to build the knowledge of A upon the ignorance of B. All that the ignorance of B proves is the ignorance of B. It can never demonstrate the knowledge of his adversary. Yet this is substantially the kind of evidence upon which nine-tenths of the case for Theism rests—either the impossibility of disproving statements concerning a matter which admits of neither proof nor disproof, or the inability of science to explain every step of the cosmic process from atom to man. The very people who are ready to credit the most unprovable theories, when advanced in the name of religion, demand the most rigorous demonstration of everything advanced in the name of science. One may truthfully say that Theism is only certain of an existence so long as there is an asylum of ignorance for it to seek refuge in. It is the unknown or unexplored portions of nature upon which the Theist builds his case, the ignorance of man concerning natural operations to which it appeals for support. It is, therefore, in sheer self-defence that writers on behalf of Theism dwell so largely upon the limitations of scientific knowledge, rather than devote the space at their disposal to an exposition of the knowledge already acquired.

The following passage well illustrates a far from uncommon confusion existing as to the nature of life, and one from which not even, as in the present instance, scientific men are altogether free. "Hydrogen," we are told, "preserves its identity, whether blazing in the sun or buried in a coal seam, or when just caught in the test-tubes of a chemist. Much the same is true of all the elements. Does the experimenter trace in his crucible or retort any spark of intelligence in any of them?" Whatever strength there is in this argument would certainly make against its author, as not being able to find intelligence in analysis would seem to point to the view that its presence is due to synthesis. Did anyone ever imagine that you could discover life as a chemist disentangles an element from a complex product? If Dr. Keeling's view is correct that intelligence or life is an elemental force, then one might hope to discover its presence by careful analysis; but if, on the other hand, life and intelligence are not entities, but results of a complex combination of forces, to look for the result apart from the conditions upon which it depends is to mistake the materialistic view in the first place, and to beg the whole question at issue in the second. The most that the Materialist contends is that life is due to a combination or synthesis of organs and functions working together in a definite and coherent manner; that there is no more reason for assuming a thinking principle for mind than there is to assume a vital principle for life, a muscular principle to account for muscular contraction, or any of the other "principles," "affinities," or "spirits," that the progress of science has already destroyed. As Lewes said, the vital force manifested by an organism may be likened to the mechanical force manifested by a machine; and, although there is the distinction to be drawn that in the machine there is a simple juxtaposition of parts, while in the organism the parts are evolved, still one may say that the life or intelligence of man is as much the sum of all the energies of the organism as the driving force of an engine is the sum of the mechanical force generated by its structure; and, therefore, to separate the body into its elements and ask, Where is the life it manifested? is equal to asking in what part of an engine its driving power resides. Obviously no amount of analysis can discover that which is due alone to combination. True, we may not be able to show the precise manner in which this combination is effected; but the mere fact that the body can be reduced to inorganic elements is, as far as it goes, evidence in favor of the Materialist's position, and he may reasonably hope that the fuller knowledge will come in time.

But, Dr. Keeling urges, "you will never get anything psychic out of the motions of matter." Well, I suppose there is a sense in which you can never get a product out of its factors. It is impossible to get the taste of sugar of lead out of its component parts, acetic acid and oxide of lead; but no one doubts that all the properties of sugar of lead are the result of its two factors, and not of the introduction of some mysterious principle. A product is only the appearance assumed by a number of agents in combination, and to deny the properties of the combination because they cannot be traced in the factors, either separately or by simple addition, is to lose sight of the meaning of causation, in both its scientific and philosophic aspects.

There is, too, this additional presumption in favor of the position of scientific Materialism. From gaseous nebulæ to crystal there is one long unbroken line of mechanical causation. From protoplasm to man there is also a line of natural causation that is being expressed more and more in terms of matter and motion. Is it not, therefore, far more reasonable to suppose that the passage from the inorganic to the organic was achieved by purely mechanical methods; that, as Huxley puts it, "If it were given me to look beyond the abyss of geologically recorded time to the still more remote period when the earth was passing through physical and chemical conditions which it can no more see again than a man can recall his infancy, I should expect to be a witness of the evolution of living protoplasm from not-living matter," than to say that just then there was superimposed upon a nature a mysterious force, the existence of which is absolutely unprovable? In support of the former view there is the fact that, just in proportion as science has developed, its instruments perfected, and the range of its investigations extended, the reduction of cosmical phenomena to problems of atomo-mechanics has taken place; and in support of the latter view nothing but the present limitations of science can be urged—limitations which decrease in extent with the passing of each generation.

C. COHEN.

*(To be concluded.)*

## PONTO THE PIOUS.

BARRY PAIN says he once wrote to the *Guardian* about a dog of his which never barked during hours of divine service. The letter was not inserted, and the dog is dead. Mr. Pain does not say so, but I happen to know. Also I understand the editor would have liked to give publicity to this remarkable instance of reverential feeling, but had some misgivings as to the absolute truth of the story.

The dumb creation, he knew, might be spiritually influenced—as, for example, Balaam's ass, an illustration that readily occurred to him. But there was a tinge of flippancy about Mr. Pain's communication that robbed it of *vraisemblance*. Consequently this earliest effort of budding genius was but coldly received. As I have said, it never saw the light.

The editor, however, was not in possession of all the facts. The dog, I understand, was a legacy from a maiden aunt. It was left to Mr. Pain for his strict veracity at school. That reputation for truthfulness Mr. Pain retained until induced to embark in literary pursuits. The maiden aunt trained the dog. It is necessary to say this, because it would be idle to pretend that Mr. Pain himself could have brought it up to such a pitch of reverential perfection.

Curiously enough, it died at the hands of a Ritualistic curate. The fact that Ponto never barked during divine service immensely impressed that dawning light of High Church. He said that he had never met with such a well-behaved dog before, and really so intelligent too. He said it was a credit to its species. And when, in addition, he received the grave assurance of its owner that it positively refrained from barking during early celebration on week-days as well as on Sundays, his ecstasy knew no bounds.

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He immediately fed it with a hot cross-bun—and the poor dog died.

It is pleasant to be able to supply all this additional information about Ponto the Pious, because there was an impression abroad that the reason he did not bark during these special periods was that he was stuffed and in a glass case, and, of course, never barked at any time.

I am the further pleased to be able to supplement Mr. Pain's asseveration with all these details, because of his graceful though distant allusion in *The Octave of Claudius* to Freethought literature emanating "from somewhere off Fetter-lane." Mr. Pain's humor is bright, but his topography uncertain.

Naturally, Ponto the Pious commended himself to clerical affection. For does not the dogmatist of the pulpit invariably insist: "When I ope my mouth, let no dog bark"? That is why the cleric objects to Sunday concerts. And that is why he would, if he could, stop Freethought discourses either indoors or in open public spaces. He is our spiritual pastor and master—the Sir Oracle of the gospel of humility and peace and goodwill. As such he must have a clear field and undisputed sway. Failing which, he becomes either hopelessly unhappy—and then he is an imbecile; or arrogantly aggressive—and then he is a fanatic.

He will feed, with any number of hot cross-buns, all who will let him rule the roost. Others may live or die on husks. He will find thumping counsel's-fees for any association that will help him to shut up a rival shop. The sweetest music of a classical concert is but hideous discord to him, compared with the sound of his own sweet voice. For other Sunday performances, of whatever sort, the clerical Bottom, with his "fair, long ears," has no taste—not the least inclination for anything but his own pulpit performances with hymns, chants, anthems, doxologies, and dirges.

> *Titania*:—What, wilt thou have some music, my sweet love?
>
> *Bottom*:—I have a reasonable good ear in music; let us have the tongs and bones.

Yes, let us give up Sunday to clerical tongues and the bones of theology.

Mr. Pain's tyke—like other pious animals we know—was a fearful thief on weekdays. But he had the one redeeming, absolving virtue that wiped away all sorts of delinquencies—he never barked during the hours of divine service. He once broke loose and bit an apple-woman, who afterwards died of hydrophobia. But a better behaved dog on a Sunday you never saw. He was always robbing the family cat of its meat, but then—he never barked during the hours of divine service.

There are many sad human dogs who might improve their worldly position by taking a lesson from pious Ponto. As it is, they *will* bow-wow while the parson brays—an offence that will never be forgiven them on earth or in heaven. The men of God will brook no rivalry or opposition. They must have it all their own way. Nobody must be heard but them—it used to be on pain of death; it is now on pain of other action.

It is not recorded of Ponto that he had any good point but that of respect for Divine services. He was otherwise a vicious mongrel. Like Launce's Crab, he was one of the "sourest-natured dogs that lived," "a cruel-hearted cur."

Nevertheless, his untimely decease was deeply deplored. It was felt that dogs that allowed themselves to be led off ratting on Sundays could have been better spared. The President of the Lord's Day Observance Society dropped a gentle tear on his grave. Barry Pain now regrets the many kicks he gave him. His muzzle—alas, no longer needed—is in the possession of the London County Council. There it remains—a much-prized relic of a truly remarkable dog. FRANCIS NEALE.

## THE INCENTIVE TO GOODNESS.

SINCE writing my article last week upon "The Welfare of Others," I have read a sermon preached by the Rev. Chancellor Lias, M.A., at Cambridge University, his subject being "Egoism or Altruism." Taking the two phrases in their popular meaning, there is much upon which the rev. gentleman and myself agree. There is also very much in his sermon upon which we widely differ. For instance, when he refers to the Christian teaching of love, and to the incentive furnished by the religion of the New Testament, the difference between us is indeed great.

There is much that is true in the following, which is from the rev. gentleman's sermon. He says: "We can only attain happiness by making others happy, and they can only find their happiness in ours. Hence the altruistic formula, 'Love thy neighbor, *not* thyself,' is a moral impossibility. We cannot love our neighbors *without* loving ourselves. In loving our neighbors we love ourselves, and in truly loving ourselves we love our neighbors.....Even the Egoist finds that he cannot secure his own comfort without giving *some* thought, at least, to that of his neighbor. And the strongest Altruists do not act upon their own principles. They possess private property, they enjoy a fair share of the comforts of life; but by their own principles they are bound to surrender these to those who have them not. 'Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor' is the only principle a consistent Altruist can act on. And therefore it is no wonder if the attempt to carry out Christian morality involves difficulties in practice." It is here that the inconsistency of Christians comes in. They preach "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; "Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor"; "Give to every man that asketh of thee"; "Lend, hoping for nothing again"; "Do good to them that hate you." This was Christ's idea of Altruism, and anything more absurd and impracticable was never taught by rational mind. That Christianity is not, as its adherents boast, the unique incentive to goodness is proved by the fact that not one of the precepts just cited is ever obeyed by professed Christians. And yet we are told by the rev. gentleman: "It was by the Altruistic element in its creed, moreover, that Christianity chiefly won its way. This was more effective than argument, more convincing than evidence, more persuasive than even the witness of martyrdom itself. Had Christ never lived, the Altruists might have preached and practised in vain. The tendency of a selfish world to appropriate the results of their labor, and then to mock at them, had always been too strong for them until then. If they are more successful now, it is because Christianity has smoothed the way for them. And the superiority of moral force Christianity possesses is due to this, that Christianity has found the way to reconcile Egoism and Altruism. In the person and life of Jesus Christ did the world first learn how the truest Egoism and the truest Altruism are the same thing—how a man cannot do any good to himself without considering his neighbor, nor devote himself to his neighbor's true interest without securing his own."

Here we have the very quintessence of Christian fallacy and misrepresentation. Did the advent of Christ promote the practice of Altruism? Let the miserable and poverty-stricken condition of Christendom for centuries after the inception of Christianity answer the question. And even to-day countries that are the most Christian are also the most wretched, morally, socially, physically, and intellectually. Overwhelming evidence can be adduced to prove that, long before the introduction of Christianity into the world, the desire to do good, not merely to oneself, but to the human family in general, existed; and, what was of greater importance, successful efforts were made to enhance the happiness and to promote the well-being of one and all. J. A. Farrer, referring, in his work on *Paganism and Christianity*, to the effect of Pagan philosophy upon the Greek and Roman character, writes: "So effectually, indeed, had philosophy advocated the claims of the great principles of humanity that in Paganism, before there was any Church at all, there was a party audible in its outspoken opposition to slavery, to cruelty to criminals and to animals, to the gladiatorial games, and to war.....Under Nerva and Trajan the monthly distributions of food became extended to the children of poor families all over Italy, a portion of the interest of the money lent by the State to landlords on mortgage serving to defray the expense. Alexander Severus founded free schools for indigent children. Nerva and Trajan made laws in favor of orphans. Every quarter of Rome had its 'archiater,' or paid medical officer, whose function it was to attend on the sick; and a law compelled everyone who gave a feast to make some provision first for the poor of his district" (p. 184). "In the best days of Athens none of her citizens were in want for the necessaries of life; for the rich, according to Isocrates, regarding the poverty of their fellow-citizens as a disgrace to themselves and the city, helped all who were in need,

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sending some abroad as traders, letting lands to others to cultivate at fair rents, and enabling others to engage in different occupations" (p. 183). Here we see that true Altruism existed before Christianity was known.

It seems to me to be a serious reflection upon the conduct of any God to ascribe to him the withholding of the highest incentive to goodness until about two thousand years ago. Happily for the human race, the idea that the loftiest inducement to a moral life originated with Christ is purely imaginative. It has been shown above that the highest deeds of benevolence were performed by so-called Pagans, and no sublimer teachings ever came from Christ than those found in the writings of Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, Cicero, Socrates, and a score of other ethical teachers who preceded Jesus. Take as an illustration the following as bearing upon the principle of true Altruism. Cicero said: "Nature ordains that a man should wish the good of every man, whoever he may be, and for this very reason, that he is a man." Seneca said: "We ought to devote our soul to no particular place.....I was not born for one corner; my country is this whole world." "Virtue consists in conferring benefits, not as destined to return, but benefits the fruit of which the good man reaps at the very moment of conferring them." Even long before the time when Moses is said to have been born, moralists taught the ancient Egyptian to live so that he could plead before Osiris at the Judgment Day thus: "I have told no lies, committed no frauds, been good to widows, not overtasked servants, not lazy or negligent, done nothing hateful to the gods, been kind to slaves, promoted no strife, caused no one to weep, committed no murder, stolen no offerings to the dead, made no fraudulent gains, seized no lands wrongfully, not tampered with weights and measures, not taken the milk from sucklings, not molested sacred beasts or birds, not cut off or monopolised water-courses, have sown joy and not sorrow, have given food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, and clothed the naked." What moral teaching did Christ give the world that can surpass the love, charity, and compassion taught by Buddha? Of him Dr. Schwartz writes that he was "the man who gave up all that the world holds dear and precious, and, for the sake of suffering humanity, became a poor, wandering outcast; and the importance which attaches to the life, rather than to the teaching, of the initiators of great religious and moral movements, one delights to contemplate that gentle figure, so human, kindly, compassionate, and charitable." Max Müller, in his lecture on "Buddhist Nihilism," writes: "One hardly trusts one's own eye on seeing Catholic and Protestant missionaries vie with each other in their praises of the Buddha; and even the attention of those who are indifferent to all that concerns religion must be arrested for a moment when they learn from statistical accounts that no religion, not even the Christian, has exercised so powerful an influence on the diminution of crime as the old simple doctrines of Rapilavastu" (p. 132).

The Rev. Chancellor Lias then deals with the incentives to goodness as follows. He says: "Christianity does put before us rewards and punishments as incitements to good and warning against evil, and, constituted as man is, she does right in doing so." But supposing these incitements were efficacious, which as a rule they are not, they are purely selfish, and have none of the Altruistic principle in them. Then we are told that Christianity "preaches the true Altruism when she says, 'If any man come after me, and hate not his own life, he cannot be my disciple.'" Why was not the whole verse quoted? It includes hatred of father, mother, wife, children, brethren, and sisters (see Luke xiv. 26). Is this a good incentive to promote goodness among mankind? Christ might have said "Yes," but humanity and experience say "No." Martyrdom is urged as an incentive to moral conduct. Now, whether or not to lay down our lives for others be an inducement to goodness depends upon circumstances. One thing, however, is certain, such martyrdom is not seen among Christians to-day. Finally—and this is the rev. gentleman's principal incentive—to love as Christ loved would not, in my opinion, inspire mutual goodness. His love was confined to those who accepted his narrow faith. His opponents he deemed "fools," "hypocrites," "serpents," "generation of vipers." To such, it is said, he will say at the "last judgment": "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Surely love like this is not worthy of emulation. We quite agree with the rev. gentleman that "the Gospel, like the world, is full of paradoxes. There is no single rule of conduct which can be laid down which does not require to be limited in practice by some other rule, which at first sight appears to be contrary to it" (*Church Gazette*, October 22, 1898).

I believe in the secular motive of goodness, which is to acquire the highest possible conditions of physical, moral, and intellectual excellence. To me Christianity—which mainly urges each one to look after the salvation of his own soul, since it will not profit him if he gains the whole world and loses this—is far inferior to Secularism in this respect, the more so as it engenders hatred and cruelty for difference of belief, while Secularism has no barren creeds into which it would make all alike compress themselves. It simply says, in a purely practical tone: Come and let us work together for the good and happiness of us all, whatever our speculations may be. CHARLES WATTS.

## WHOSE REPUTATION SUFFERS?

THIS Sir James W. Dawson is positively incorrigible. In a short communication, big with flatulent generalities, which appears in the *Expositor* for October, he again allows himself grave liberties with the name and fame of one compared to whom he (Dawson) stands in about the same relationship as minnow to Triton. Sometime ago I exposed his unholy misrepresentation of Darwin's views on the subject of Creation; now it is necessary to rebut a statement which, as it stands, involves a reflection both upon his intelligence and knowledge of the most easily accessible facts of Biblical narrative. "Even Darwin," says Sir James, "in speculating on the first introduction of life, *was obliged* to quote the words in this old document, though *less correctly than if he had been more familiar with its scope and contents.*" The italics are mine. The banal folly and grotesque impertinence of these italicised utterances almost justify a desire to scratch Sir James William Dawson's poll. In the first place, let it be noted that this note of Dawson's has reference to a declaration in a previous number of the *Expositor*, on the part of certain well-known higher critics, that the rock upon which all attempts at reconciling the *first* chapter of Genesis with science were wrecked was the extreme and incredible violence done to the text. Now, the only phrase used by Charles Darwin which could lend the slightest colour to the suggestion that he regarded anything in Genesis as worthy of credit was that which occurred in the famous passage (and in one just preceding) as to the Creator breathing the breath of life into a few forms, etc. Nothing approaching these words appears in the first chapter of Genesis. It is in the *second* chapter that the breathing process is described. Therefore, Sir James W. Dawson, in his own dispute, is quite off the track. It is the scientific accuracy of the *first* chapter of Genesis which is impeached by his opponents, and, by way of fortifying his own position, he adduces the fact that Darwin used certain words occurring in the *second* chapter! Well, really, isn't it enough to—— well, there! Would you believe that this implied unfamiliarity and incorrect quotation of Genesis on the part of Darwin is entirely based on the fact that where Genesis speaks only of *one* act of breathing the breath of life—namely, that into man—Darwin suggests the Creator's breathing into a few organisms or into one. And it is upon this, and this alone, that Sir J. W. Dawson insinuates that Darwin was not sufficiently acquainted with the two first chapters of Genesis. What a tremendous absurdity! We are asked to believe that Charles Darwin, the great mountaineer of facts, allowed himself to remain unfamiliar with a few simple passages in Genesis, which less than five minutes would have mastered. No, thank you, Sir James; your logic may do for young curates and old ladies in their cups at four-o'clock tea, but something more virile is required for students of Darwin.

This unknightly knight says that Darwin was *obliged* to quote Genesis. This is a most disingenuous way of putting it. Because Darwin chose to use a Biblical phrase, it does not follow that he was obliged to do so. Nor was he speculating on the origin of life, but rather on the probable starting-point of the manifold *ramifications* of life as expressed in organisms. The drawing of these subtle distinctions should have been easy to Sir James. But Genesis aside, I think we may say that we have got to the

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genesis of this Genesaic reference. If we turn over a few pages previous to that on which Darwin uses the expression, we shall find him quoting from a "celebrated author and divine" as thus: "He (the divine) had gradually learned to see that it is just as noble a conception of the deity to believe that he created a few original forms capable of self-development into other and needful forms, as to believe that he required a fresh act of creation to supply the voids caused by the action of his laws." We are justified in concluding that, had not this "celebrated divine" written to him in such terms, Charles Darwin would have concluded his great work differently from what he did, and without the faintest echo of anything in Genesis, although he might still have offered a plum to the senile gums of doddering theologians.

Sir J. W. Dawson is a bit of a puzzle to me. If he is honest in his views of Darwin in this matter, then he is most culpably ignorant of what almost everybody interested in Darwin knows full well—namely, that he repudiated what he had said about creation. Further, had not Darwin done so, the passage in question need not have been taken as necessarily committing him to a belief in the notions expressed. But I think all doubt of what he had in his mind when he used the passage may be set at rest by reference to the episode of the "celebrated divine." It was of this gentleman's phrases he was thinking, thus disposing of the notion that he was *obliged* to fall back upon Genesis. Sir J. W. Dawson speaks of the "simple majesty" of the first of Genesis. We will not say that he is so dazzled by this "majesty" that he is unable to recognise the plebeian virtues of honesty; but it is difficult to resist the impression that he is bent upon lowering the crest of Charles Darwin, if not by hook, then by crook. That is a sufficiently painful reflection to us and upon him.

B. Stevens.

## THEOLOGY AMONG THE YAKUTES.

A correspondent of the *Daily News*, who is accompanying the Swedish expedition in search of Andrée, gives the following account of his religious experiences and inquiries amongst the Yakutes, away in the far North, in the seventy-second degree of latitude:—

"One day we had a magnificent thunderstorm, which, of course, occurred on the day of the Holy Elias, the fire-prophet, who, through some mythological amalgamation or metamorphosis in the conception of the masses in Russia, plays the part of 'Jupiter Flugens.' On the 'Djen Ilija' (the Day of Elijah) there is 'prasdnjik' (holyday) over all the Russian Empire. The day of the great 'prasdnjik' dawned clear and warm, and I remarked to one of the Russian fishermen that we were going to have a very fine day. He shook his head, and assured me that we were to have a thunderstorm before night, 'because it is the day of Ilija.' Admiring his strong faith, I started on an excursion out on the tundra. After my return in the evening I was drinking tea, when the door suddenly opened, and in came the Russian fisherman, exclaiming in a triumphant tone, 'The thunderstorm is coming.' For the next moment a distant rumbling was heard. Looking out through the window, I saw a black wall southwards, moving towards us with great speed, the lightning crossing it in all directions. In five minutes we were swept in a violent thunderstorm. My doubts were brought to shame, and the Orthodox Russian's faith triumphed.

"I tried to find out the conception of the thunder and lightning which the natives (Yakutes and Tunguses) entertain. According to the Yakute mythology, there is a mighty being called 'Ai-Tojou' (the mighty Lord), a personification of the inexorable laws of nature. 'Ai-Tojou,' strictly speaking, is neither good nor evil. From his high throne in 'the seventh heaven' he looks down on the world, caring very little about what happens down on earth. Thunder and lightning are 'his words and speech': the eagle slumbers on his foot, and his image is the sun. The conception of 'Ai-Tojou,' however, has of late undergone certain modifications through the influence of the orthodox God, to whom people burn wax candles in churches. This God of the Orthodoxy the Yakutes often call 'Nikola,' sometimes 'the holy old man,' but usually 'Tangara.' 'Ai-Tojou,' as the god of thunder and lightning, has also of late undergone some change, and is very much, in the conception of the natives, mixed up with 'the holy Ilija-Bagatyr,' the thunder god of the orthodox masses; and the 'heavenly fires' are, therefore, now generally regarded as the work of 'the fiery prophet,' both by Yakutes and Tunguses."

## ACID DROPS.

Thomas George Senior, one of the Peculiar People, has been tried a second time at the Old Bailey on the charge of manslaughtering his infant child by allowing it to die without medical assistance under the prayer-and-oil treatment. On the first occasion the judge read the prisoner a dreadful lesson, and then bound him over to come up for judgment if called upon, telling him that if he came up for trial again he would certainly be sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. Well, he *has* come up again, and once more the jury have found him guilty of manslaughter. But he is not imprisoned. Oh dear no! Judges dare not send these people to gaol. It would be too decisive a proclamation that the Bible is not God's Word, and that Christianity is utterly played out. Mr. Justice Wells escaped the difficulty by taking a point of law for the decision of the Court of Crown Cases Reserved.

Mr. Justice Wills made the mistake of arguing with one of Senior's female witnesses. He asked her if she knew the text that those who are whole need no physician, but they that are sick; and she replied at once, "That means sick in sin." "What does the physician mean?" the judge asked. "I believe," she replied, "it is the Lord himself who is the physician. He is the only one who can heal." Just so. Emily Reed was quite right. The context proves it conclusively. Jesus said in the very next breath: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Clearly he was referring to spiritual, and not to bodily, disease.

Mr. Avory, who conducted the Treasury prosecution of Mrs. Mills, the Christian scientist, read out a curious extract from the book of this sect. One sentence came in for much ridicule. It was this: "No matter in mind; no mind in matter." Perhaps this is, as Mr. Avory called it, a mere jargon of unmeaning phrases. Nevertheless it is the metaphysic of nearly all Christians. It is taught in colleges, preached from pulpits, and defended on platforms. All that the Christian Scientists do is to put it more pointedly than is common. To laugh at them *for this* epigram is really to side with the Materialists. But is that what Mr. Avory meant to do?

One of the hypocritical objections to Mr. Newman's Sunday Concerts at Queen's Hall is, that he works his employees seven days a week. Mr. Newman gives this a public denial. "All the staff who work on Sunday," he says, "receive a day off during the week." As for the "greed of gain" of which he is accused, Mr. Newman points out that the Sunday League, with all its gratuitous machinery, only made a very slender profit, and was for some time unable to pay him his full rent for the hall. The small charges for the seats could not possibly yield a large surplus after the payment of expenses. Even if it did, there is no legitimate reason why Mr. Newman, or any other person, should not make money on a Sunday, which is the very day on which the men of God are doing the most work for their livings.

According to Mr. Mark H. Judge, honorary secretary of the Sunday Society, the National Sunday League, as late as October 21, registered itself as a religious denomination "who object to be designated," and also registered the Alhambra Theatre as a "place of religious worship" for the concerts intended to be given there by them. "I doubt very much," Mr. Judge says, "whether the general public who attend them would care to have their attendance construed into a taking part in public worship."

The London County Council has refused a license to the new Varieties Theatre which is building in the Holloway-road. Some large place of public entertainment is very much wanted in North London, and one wonders why it is not to be permitted. Can it be, as we are told, that the real reason is the existence of a Young Women's Christian Association in the Holloway-road, within sight of the projected new theatre? If so, it is simply scandalous; and the "Progressives" who allow bigotry to triumph over the rights of citizens ought to be thoroughly ashamed of themselves.

Our readers will recollect that Terah Hooley's gold Communion plate, presented to St. Paul's Cathedral, has been ransomed (so to speak) by anonymous Churchmen, who have paid over £1,500 to the Official Receiver in Bankruptcy. The plate, however, is irrecoverably Hooley-ised. Each of the eight pieces bears the following elegant advertisement:—

Presented to
ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL,
On the 60th Anniversary of the Reign of
Queen Victoria,
By Ernest Terah Hooley,
Risley Hall, Derby.

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"Bible" is an unfortunate name for anybody. We never heard of it as a surname until a few days ago, when we saw that Thomas Tilton Bible was co-respondent in a divorce case, being accused of committing adultery with Mrs. Ada Caroline Partington. The judge granted Mr. Partington a decree nisi with costs, and Mr. Bible disappears with the lady, who has considerable means.

The Victoria Park Branch of the Christian Evidence Society spent its time last Sunday afternoon in presenting the public with palpable evidence of the unity and concord produced by the Christian religion. This evidence took the form of an edifying quarrel among the members of the Society. When a Christian Evidence lecturer attacks his colleagues and makes public accusations of underhanded and tyrannical proceedings, and of intrigue going on in the Society for years, one is inclined to believe that the truth may occasionally be heard even from a Christian Evidence platform. Probably both parties were speaking the truth of each other. The immediate cause of the quarrel appears to have been the election of a new treasurer. One *clique* claims that its nominee was elected to this office by a majority of votes. The other *clique*, being in power, keeps its own man in office, and overrides all protests.

Theatrical companies have long been allowed to travel on the railways at reduced rates. It is now reported that the Railway Companies have decided to extend the same concession to religious bodies travelling to and from their annual conferences and congresses. We are glad to see the various caterers to public amusement falling into line. Over in America, we believe, the sky-pilots have the best of it; being allowed, when on duty, to travel as deadheads, perhaps on the idea that their full fares with good interest will be paid up in kingdom-come.

There is a story in *Foreign Courts and Foreign Homes* by A. M. F., just published, of the old King of Hanover. The writer's father went to the royal door with some despatches, and knocked several times without an answer. At last the door was opened, and the King could be heard inside using oath on oath, winding up by asking: "What the devil do you want?" A page came out and said: "His Majesty was not to be disturbed, as he was saying his prayers."

This writer tells another story, which the *Daily News* amazingly calls "exquisite." It seems to us the deepest tragedy. A French girl, a Catholic, fell in love with an officer, a Protestant. Her father would not allow them to marry, but granted them a final interview. They parted, and the young lady remained single till death. The young officer had a long illness, which left him with the mind of a little child. He played with dolls, imagining them to be bride and bridegroom; and his lost love sent him dolls dressed in wedding garments. She died first, and he lived on to ninety. Her last words were a desire that he should be kept supplied with dolls, for he would miss them so.

Could there be a more terrible tale of life blighted by the curse of religion? "Ah! I loved him more than my God!" the poor lady exclaimed. But she submitted to her father's will and the custom of her noble family. We are reminded of James Thomson's *Two Lovers*, a poem dealing with a similar theme:—

> Poor human hearts, that yearn beyond the tomb,
> Wherein you all must moulder into dust,
> What has the blank immitigable gloom
> Of light or fervor to reward your trust?
>
> Live out your whole free life while yet on earth;
> Seize the quick Present, prize your one sure boon;
> Though brief, each day a golden sun has birth;
> Though dim, the night is gemmed with stars and moon.
>
> Love out your cordial love, hate out your hate;
> Be strong to grasp a foe, to clasp a friend:
> Your wants true laws are; thirst and hunger sate:
> Feel you have been yourselves when comes the end.

William Booth is like Alexander the Great, always sighing for new worlds to conquer. He has already taken advantage of the American occupation of Manila, and secured a large hall there for Salvation Army performances, which would probably take better in the more remote and savage parts of the Philippines. Of course a few "captains" might be turned into sandwiches at first, but they would doubtless be quite ready to go to heaven through native stomachs. Everybody knows the depth of their self-sacrifice.

"There must be popular adaptation, or people won't read them at all." So says Dr. S. G. Green, of the Religious Tract Society, who adds that "there is still abundant scope for putting the truths of Christianity in a lively, readable, acceptable form." What a fall is here! How different from the simple old style of believe and be saved, or disbelieve and be damned. Christianity has got to compete with a hundred attractions, and has to be "lively" and make itself "acceptable."

"To attempt a defence of Christianity," says the *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*, "is to incur at all times a very grave responsibility, and in the present day to encounter a task of enormous difficulty." We quite agree with our contemporary. But it used to be different in the old days, when sceptics argued with a rope round their necks. Christian apologists could then say pretty well anything and be believed. Nowadays they find their work more arduous. They have to face facts and answer arguments squarely. Hence the "difficulty."

Our heterodox contemporary, the *Crescent*, makes a mistake in quoting from the story of the woman taken in adultery as "the teaching of Christ." A glance at the Revised Version will show that this story is really an interpolation. Dean Farrar admits its "doubtful genuineness"—that is to say, its undoubtful unauthenticity.

A Consistory Court held at Worcester has deposed the Rev. William Rawlings Woods from holy orders and declared him incapable of holding preferment. His offence was seducing and cohabiting with a young lady while he was curate in charge at Willey, Warwickshire. He was a married man living apart from his wife, and his paramour was also engaged to another gentleman. Altogether it was a badly mixed affair.

"The Religion of Materialism" was the subject of a recent lecture by the Rev. Hugh Black, of Edinburgh. After declaring that the Agnostic impeachment of religious knowledge would make real knowledge of any kind impossible, which is the veriest absurdity, the rev. gentleman went on as follows: "The practical effect of the Agnostic faith on life was despair. To be without God was to be without hope, without a proper foundation either for the intellect or for ethics."

So the practical effect of unbelief is despair. The Rev. Hugh Black says it, and he ought to know. But it doesn't seem to fit in with the facts. Take Darwin, for instance, or Spencer, or Huxley, or Bradlaugh, or Ingersoll. Not one of these great unbelievers is particularly remarkable for pessimism or melancholy. For energetic cheerfulness the whole five might be backed against a similar number of Christians—even if the latter were fresh from the exciting influence of a tea-meeting. As for intellect, well you couldn't easily find five Christians to match them; and in the matter of ethics they would probably stand well in a competition with five well-selected, extra-special Christian saints.

Perhaps the truth is, after all, that the Rev. Hugh Black is in a certain line of business, and feels bound to cry down rival firms. It is an old trick of advertising, which deceives nobody but simpletons. Salvation is always sold at *this* house, and damnation at the house *opposite*.

Old Nick seems to have strong Protestant tastes. His hatred of holy water is proverbial, and we have clerical authority for saying that he detests incense. According to the Rev. H. E. Copinger, of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Abbeyhill, Edinburgh, "The reason why Satan hated incense in the present day was because he was not willing to acknowledge that Jesus was God." The wise men from the East brought incense when Christ was born. Zechariah, too, was offering incense when the angel appeared to him; and, as the preacher remarked, if God did not like incense he would not have sent the angel. Anybody can see that this argument is irrefutable. Let us therefore have plenty of good, thick, stupefying incense smoke, as Browning called it. Haply enough of it will smother the Devil. But on second thoughts that won't do at all; for if the Devil were killed, or even seriously laid up, the parson's occupation would be gone.

Mr. Edmund Gosse, the well-known writer, gives in the *North American Review* an account of his trip last summer to Bergen. In his opinion there are too many English chaplains in Norway. "Perhaps at one or two tourist centres, such as Balholm and Odda," he says, "it does no harm to have an English chaplain. In other places the thing becomes a farce." At one hotel the chaplain had not a single worshipper to attend his services. "I hope," Mr. Gosse says, "he was honest enough to let this be known at home." Sometimes the hotel servants, and even peasant children, were gathered in to "make up a shadowy congregation for the weekly report." There may be an element of piety in the thing, but Mr. Gosse has no hesitation in saying that "there is also a deliberate bid for the support of bigotry and snobbishness." But is not this a little too severe? The clerical labor market is overstocked in England, and the export of chaplains and missionaries is an aspect of the population question. The poor fellows must live somewhere.

Why on earth do the wretched Atheists refrain from suicide? According to Talmage and some other orthodox

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preachers, they ought to be rushing pell-mell to self-slaughter. But they don't. Indeed, we hardly ever take up a newspaper without reading that some Christian has put an end to his or her blessed existence. The latest case we have to notice is that of Sarah Evelyn Walker, a governess, aged twenty-four, who drowned herself in a brook at Everdon. The poor young woman, in a letter to an old schoolmate at Frome, said that she had been studying her hands and found that she was born mad, with her fate-line upside down. She was afraid of committing the unpardonable sin, so she resolved to die in time. "If you study the Bible," she said, "you will find that it is so." Had she mentioned the *Freethinker* instead of the Bible, the religious journals would have had flaring articles on the matter. As it is, they will say nothing.

Every reader of George Meredith will remember the melancholy ending of *Beauchamp's Career*. Commander Beauchamp, a fine fellow, a thorough Radical, happily married, with a young wife and a newly-arrived babe, jumps into the water to save a strange mud-lark of a boy who had gone under. The boy was saved, and Commander Beauchamp was lost. And as his uncle, Lord Romfrey, and his father-in-law, Dr. Shrapnel, who both loved him, turned away from the insignificant little creature he had saved, they looked into each other's eyes, without speaking, the thought: "This is what we have in exchange for Beauchamp."

We were reminded of this tragic story by the newspaper report of an incident at Chatham Dockyard. Commander Lewis Blackburn jumped overboard from his ship in full uniform to save a pet gazelle that had fallen into the water while affectionately rubbing against him as he was going ashore. It was intensely dark, and ship's chains were about; but the Commander shouted for lights, and kept himself and his gazelle afloat until both were assisted to dry land. It is a fine story. Yet the parsons will go on droning about original sin.

Dr. Tinker, a Hyde magistrate, complimented a witness who desired to be sworn in the Scotch fashion without kissing the book. "That book," the Doctor said, "has been kissed this morning by all sorts and conditions of men—some with dirty faces, others with sores on their faces and lips—and I am delighted that one person at any rate has had the common sense to stand out for the sanitary oath." This is excellent as far as it goes, but the truth is that the Bible is as much condemned by science as promiscuous kissing of it is condemned by the laws of hygiene. Still, we can hardly expect even doctors to go all the way at once.

Sarah Bramwell has been fined 10s. and costs at Church (Lancs.) Petty Sessions for fortune-telling. She told a young woman, who gave her sixpence for the information, that three young men were after her—one dark, one fair, and one half-and-half, and that she would marry the dark one at twenty-six. We dare say the girl got a good deal of comfort out of this prophecy, and, on the common Christian argument, it is a sin to rob her of her greatest consolation. From this point of view the sixpence was an excellent investment. But in any case we don't quite see why a fortune-teller should be punished for earning sixpence, while priests are allowed to take thousands of pounds in their holy conjuring business.

Mr. A. Ballard, B.A., LLB., contributes to the *Daily Chronicle* the following story: A negro student at one of our great missionary colleges was conducting family prayers, and in an outburst of enthusiasm prayed: "Give us all pure hearts, give us all clean hearts, give us all sweet hearts"; to which all the congregation replied "Amen."

Rev. L. H. Parsons, lecturing at Canonbury on Paul Pry," remarked that "Sceptics and Atheists threw doubt upon the Bible, but Christians should not mind inquiry into that matter. Truth had nothing to hide, error only lives in darkness, and therefore Bible criticism could do no harm." These are admirable sentiments. We hope the reverend gentleman's auditors will act upon them, and attend a few Freethought meetings.

Bishop Wilkinson, preaching at St. Godric's Roman Catholic Church, Durham, denounced the Reformation, and said it was "the silver and gold the Reformers wanted." Very likely. That is what is wanted by the priests of every persuasion. They differ about doctrine, but agree on raking in the shekels.

Ingersoll had better look out. The *Woolwich Herald* is on his track. First of all it complains that he makes people laugh at Christianity, which is a very serious thing. Next, he denies that the Old Testament teaches the doctrine of immortality, whereas it is taught by "innumerable passages." But the truth is the *Herald* doesn't know what it is writing about. Mr. Gladstone admits that the doctrine of a future life is not really to be found in the Old Testament; and it was upon this very absence that Bishop Warburton based the whole argument of his famous *Divine Legation of Moses*. Does not the very New Testament itself assert that Jesus Christ brought immortality to light?

According to the New York *Truthseeker*, some of the religious journals are experiencing difficulties. The *Catholic Review* has had to be discontinued, and the *Weekly Witness*, a Protestant publication, is up to eyes in debt, and its affairs are in the law courts. Many poor persons were induced to invest their little savings in it, and all they have to show for the investment is a bit of useless scrip, which won't even admit them through Peter's wicket.

Here is a funny testimony from a Christian convert in Orion, Illinois: "I gave my heart to God many years ago. I called to Christ for help, and did not call in vain, for he heard my cry. Since then I have been called through sorest trouble. Have broken my right leg five times, and my left three times, and have met with other physical calamities; and, worse than all, I have been nearly lost in the slough of distrust and despondency." That unfortunate man should try back before he goes all to pieces.

Palmer W. Hill, a Christian preacher, is in gaol at Muskegon, in Michigan. He seems to have imitated some of the most approved Bible saints. Two of his wives happened to meet in a grocery store, where they had a serious misunderstanding. Other wives, not being duly advertised of the gathering, were unable to participate.

Chestnuts from the Freethought platform often pass as fresh fruit amongst Christians. We see that a correspondent of the *Evening Standard* explains that Noah was the greatest financier on record because he successfully floated a very large company when all the rest of the world was in liquidation.

A Jew named Cohen, recently summoned on a London coroner's jury, refused to visit the dead body. He belongs to the priestly tribe, as his name indicates, and on religious grounds cannot go near a corpse. Of course this is nothing new, but some of the papers are treating it as a fresh discovery. What with Christian Scientists, Peculiar People, and Cohen Jews, the law is getting awfully complicated, and the table of exceptions threatens to grow as long as a lawyer's bill.

Captain Davey, chief prison missioner of the Church Army, has the coolness to tell a *Mail* interviewer that "prisons are made a little too pleasant." This gentleman had better get arrested for blasphemy or something, like Jesus Christ, and try what the stone jug is really like. There is nothing like experience to give value to information.

There are said to be from five to six thousand unemployed clergymen in England. But why unemployed? Can't they go soul-saving without a salary? Can't they trust Jesus Christ's promise, "great is your reward in heaven"? Or is soul-saving merely a business, as we have often declared it is?

What about the heathen? Couldn't those unemployed parsons go abroad without scrip or purse, and preach to the millions who never heard of Christ? Surely the Lord would look after them, even amongst cannibals, and feed and clothe them like the lilies of the field.

The Bishop of Bangor is recovering from his paralytic seizure. We congratulate him as a man, and condole with him as a Christian. From the orthodox point of view, he has missed going home to heaven, and is condemned to a further term of existence in this miserable vale of tears.

## "They Who Know Not Christ."

An eccentric old gentleman, whose enthusiasm for work in the Lord's Vineyard knew no limit, was in the habit of distributing New Testaments during his wanderings to any working men he chanced to meet, the same being wrapped up, curiously enough, in a red handkerchief. Going along a lane one day on his customary mission, he noticed some navvies working away at the bottom of a trench. Stooping down to one of them, he said in low, impressive tones: "My man, have you got Christ down there?" "Eh!" responded the navvy. The question was repeated. The workman walked along the trench a little to where the excavation was still deeper, and where some other co-workers were busy. "Bill!" he shouted. "Hoa-a-a-" was heard. "Have yer got Christ down there?" "Christ! Who's he anyway?" "Why, I dinna knaa, but here's a chap browt his dinner."

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, December 4, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London: 7.30, "John Burns, Price Hughes, Sunday Concerts, and Sabbatarian Tyranny."

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. Charles Watts's Lecturing Engagements.—December 4, Glasgow; 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

W. R. Fraser.—There is a very pretty little volume just published that would probably suit you. It is entitled *Gleams from Goethe*, and is edited by Henry Attwell. The publisher is George Allen—Ruskin's publisher—and the price is 2s. nett. A somewhat larger selection of Criticisms, Reflections, and Maxims from Goethe, also recently published, is translated by W. B. Rönnfeldt. Walter Scott is the publisher, and the price is 1s. 6d. You should obtain and read both volumes. Goethe's *Autobiography* (two vols.) and *Conversations* with Eckermann and Soret (one vol.) are included in Bohn's Library at 3s. 6d. per volume, the translator being the accomplished John Oxenford, who was for many years connected with the *Times*.

Owing to a pressure of other work, Mr. Foote is obliged to defer until next week his promised artic'e on the future of the Secular Society, Limited.

T. Wilmot.—See paragraph.

American Exchanges.—Our American exchanges are once more desired to note that our address is 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. Some of them continue to post to an old address, which we left four years ago.

N. S. S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss Vance acknowledges:—Parcel of clothing from Mrs. Mann.

Harry Brown.—It was an unfortunate omission. See "Sugar Plums."

W. Heaford.—Sorry to hear that you and other friends were too late for the funeral of the late Mrs. Forder, owing to delay on the G. N. Railway. The weather was very inclement, and Mr. Foote, who officiated at the graveside, did not keep the mourners longer than was necessary. It was good to see so many there in such circumstances.

M. Loafer.—We hope the East London Branch will have a good gathering on December 11. Mr. Foote's visit amongst you will be a hurried one in the circumstances, but he looks forward to it with pleasure.

R. P. Edwards.—Will you kindly see Mr. Foote on the matter? Say, after his lecture at the Athenæum Hall this evening (Dec. 4), or elsewhere within the next few days. He will make an appointment with you if you drop him a line.

J. Fish.—Inserted as desired.

W. P. Ball.—Many thanks for your weekly batch of cuttings, always welcome and always useful.

D. Kay.—Thanks for the paper. We will notice it next week. Jokes acceptable.

A. Window.—We have not time to answer such queries through the post. As you read (and enjoy) the *Freethinker*, you will see the answer here. There is no such volume as you mention among the Sacred Books of the East. Colonel Ingersoll's new lecture on Superstition will be published at our office shortly.

W. Bendit.—Thanks for the cutting and reference. See "Acid Drops."

G. W. Blythe.—The subject is not one which can be discussed in our columns.

W. Whitney.—Tuesday morning is the latest time for receiving Lecture Notices for the *Freethinker*. Your postcard bears the Derby postmark of November 29. We wish Branch secretaries would take note of this arrangement, which cannot be altered.

L. Forman.—You will find all the information you seek in the *Secular Almanack*. The price is only threepence, and all profit on the sale accrues to the National Secular Society.

W. Cox (Liverpool).—We meant nothing offensive. We have the highest respect for the intelligence and character of your committee. What we thought was that you made a mistake in having any consultation with the police. They are practised hands at trickery in regard to advanced movements. So far as the *illegality* of charging for admission to Sunday lectures is concerned, we should much like the opportunity of fighting the question to a finish. We have long had our plan of campaign ready, and we believe we should win. Perhaps the police think so too, for they won't attack us.

Received.—Huddersfield Examiner—Liberator—Ethical World—Aberystwyth Observer—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Crescent—Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette—English Mechanic—Bristol Evening News—Islington Gazette—Newcastle Daily Leader—Progressive Thinker—Rochdale Observer—New York Truthseeker—Isle of Man Times—Blue Grass Blade—Torch of Reason—Sydney Bulletin—People's Newspaper—Woolwich Herald—Two Worlds Secular Thought.

Leon Duchesne.—Shall be glad to receive cuttings whenever you please to send them. Kindly note on each the name of the paper it is taken from.

A. J. Hooper.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

B. Stavens.—Not shocked. He deserves a shaking.

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.

*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.

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 is due.

The National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

There was a large audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Christian Science and the Peculiar People." Mr. Harry Brown occupied the chair. This evening (December 4) Mr. Foote lectures again from the same platform, taking for his subject, "John Burns, Price Hughes, Sunday Concerts, and Sabbatarian Tyranny." Many liberal-minded men and women who are not exactly Freethinkers should be interested in this subject. Will our readers make the lecture widely known?

Our friend and colleague, Mr. Charles Watts, is going to say good-bye to old England for three or four months. He is going westward to rediscover America. Friends over there have pressed him to pay them another visit, and while he is there he will lecture in many great centres, including New York, Boston, Toronto, Philadelphia, and Chicago. He sails from Liverpool on December 21, and will, of course, spend Christmas on the Atlantic. Probably he will get a piece of plum-pudding on board, and even a slice of turkey, but no kiss under the mistletoe. We dare say, however, that he will arrive at New York in good condition; and we have no doubt that he will meet with a very hearty reception there, as well as in any other place he visits.

We have asked Mr. Watts to convey our personal regards and good wishes to many friends across the Atlantic particularly to Dr. E. B. Foote and his son "Ned," and to Eugene and George Macdonald of the *Truthseeker*. We have straightly charged him to tell Colonel Ingersoll that the Freethinkers of this country are counting on the fulfilment of his promise to come over next year. Mr. Watts says he will try to bring the Colonel back with him, but that is perhaps too soon for the Colonel's convenience. Yet it is always open for Mr. Watts to say he dare not return home without our longed-for visitor, and the Colonel may strain a point for the sake of Mrs. Watts and the rest of the family.

To-day (Sunday, December 4) Mr. Watts lectures three times at Glasgow, and probably during the week in the surrounding district. As this will be Mr. Watts's last visit to Scotland previous to his departure for America, no doubt he will have crowded audiences.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured at Birmingham to two crowded audiences. In the morning every seat was occupied, and in the evening the hall was packed, and the ante-room was also crowded. We are informed that Mr. Watts never spoke better, and the applause he received must have been exceedingly gratifying to him, particularly at the close of his lectures, when he received quite an ovation. Miss Baker, the daughter of the late veteran Daniel Baker, was present. There was a good sale of literature, every copy of the *Freethinker* on hand being sold.

An effort was made on Sunday evening to re-open the outdoor lecture station on Deptford Broadway. An excellent gathering was addressed by Mr. C. James and Mr. R. P. Edwards. There are many Freethinkers in the neighborhood, where it should be easy to maintain a Branch of the N. S. S. Another open-air meeting will be held at the same

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spot this evening (December 4), and, as strong opposition is promised, we hope the local "saints" will rally round the platform.

We have to observe that the N. S. S. Finsbury Branch is alive and prosperous. By some accident between Miss Vance and the printer it got omitted from the list of Branches in the *Secular Almanack*. This is very regrettable, as the Finsbury Branch has had many difficulties and overcome them all in the most gallant fashion. All through the summer it has held Sunday morning meetings on Clerkenwell-green. The secretary is Mr. Harry Brown, 64 Patshull-road, N.W., and the president Mr. E. Bater.

Another open-air Freethought meeting was held on Sunday at Limehouse. The choir opposition was absent, but abuse remained. Fortunately the large gathering, addressed by Messrs. Davies, Edwards, Pack, Ramsey, and Heaford, was thoroughly sympathetic. These meetings at Limehouse have been continued beyond the usual time as a protest against Christian rowdyism, and a token that Secularists are not to be intimidated.

Mr. Percy Ward paid his first visit to Liverpool on Sunday, and delivered three lectures to good audiences in the Alexandra Hall. We are informed that he gave great satisfaction to all who heard him.

The East London Branch has a tea and concert on Sunday evening, December 11, at the King's Hall, 83-5 Commercial-road. An excellent program of vocal and instrumental music and readings has been arranged. Mr. Foote has promised to run down after his Athenæum Hall lecture and give a recitation. A guarantee for 150 to tea had to be given, so the local "saints" should apply freely for tickets, which can be obtained from G. J. Warren, 20 Rhodeswell-road, Limehouse; Mr. Haines, 212 Mile-end-road; Mr. Pitman, 7 Romford-road, Stratford; and Mr. Neate, 385 Bethnal-green-road.

A meeting of those interested in the work of the Freethought open-air station in Ridley-road, Kingsland, will be held at the Bradlaugh Club, 36 Newington-green-road, today (December 4) at 12 o'clock. Arrangements for next season's propaganda will be considered.

Mr. G. Dawson Baker is the writer of the tract, *Is the Bible the Inspired Word of God?* mentioned in our last issue as an excellent one for general circulation. The price is one penny, or ninepence per dozen. Watts & Co. are the publishers. The author is a converted Methodist local preacher, who lives in a small town of 1,000 inhabitants, with a gospel-shop for every 200 of them. An article from Mr. Baker's pen will appear in our next issue.

Isabella O. Ford addresses a meeting of the Humanitarian League next Tuesday evening (December 6) at St. Martin's Town Hall. Her subject will be "The Woman's Movement in Relation to Humanitarianism." Mrs. C. Mallet takes the chair at eight o'clock. Admission is free.

The Birmingham Branch had a successful and most enthusiastic social gathering at the Victoria Hotel, John Bright-street, during Mr. Watts's visit. The ex-president, Mr. R. Taylor, was presented with a silver-mounted walking stick in recognition of his long and valuable services in that capacity. Mr. Percy Ward proposed the health of Mr. Watts, which toast was received with much cheering. Messrs. Bullows and Matthews, Misses Skett and Jayes, and Mrs. Harrison contributed songs; Mr. H. Berkeley, violin solo; and Mr. J. Partridge a capital reading. At the Sunday morning meeting Mr. Ridgway proposed a vote of condolence with Mr. Forder, which was agreed to.

## A Kindly Prayer.

A little girl in a Pennsylvania town, in saying her prayers the other night, was told to pray for her father and mother, who were both very ill, and for one of the servants, who had lost her husband. She faithfully did as she was told, and then, impressed with the dreary condition of things, added on her own account: "O God, take good care of yourself, for if anything should happen to you we should all go to pieces."

The Sunday School Union have what they facetiously term a "business department" at Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. There the agents of the Union sell their own and other publications. We noticed in the window recently Clodd's *Story of Primitive Man*, Shelley's *Poems*, and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. If these are used generally as Sunday-school prizes and gifts, some of the wealthy Agnostics, who patronised Mr. "General" [illegible], might send on their cheques to the Sunday School

## A GREAT FRENCH FREETHINKER.

EARLY in January, 1883, an autopsy was held in a meanly-furnished bed-room of a house at Ville d'Avray, near Paris. The villa, as it might have been, and probably was, called, had once belonged to the great Honoré de Balzac. Its latest owner lay dead upon a student's pallet on the first floor, and it was his body that was being dissected by the doctors. His name was Léon Gambetta.

Among the medical men present was one who had loved the great orator and statesman with the passion of a worshipper. Familiarity had not bred contempt in this case; it had only deepened respect. The more closely the great man was seen by this friend, himself no mediocrity, the more he was venerated and adored. As the autopsy progressed the cool anatomist lost his nerve, and when at length the noble head was sawn open for the extraction of the brain, he utterly broke down, and reeled, faint and pallid, to the open window. That man was Paul Bert.

Paul Bert was an eminent scientist, a man of varied culture, a leading politician, a keen debater, and an educational reformer hated by the black army of priests. These were titles to distinction. But his highest glory was being for years, and until death, a bosom friend of one of the grandest men who ever trod this earth.

Dead in his turn, Paul Bert was honored like Gambetta, though in a lesser degree. France gave him a public funeral and provided for his family. He died at the post of duty, away in pestilential Tonquin, where he occupied the post of Resident-General. It is said by hypercritics that he should not have gone there, that France had no business there either, and that he committed a species of suicide. But the observation comes with ill grace from Englishmen, whose government is entangled with weak races in every part of the world. France held her far-off possession irrespective of the wishes of Paul Bert. He went there as a wise Englishman might go to India—not as a fire-eater, but as a civiliser. "I will have none of your bristling bayonets and clinking sabres," he said to the *Figaro* interviewer before leaving on his ill-fated mission. His intention was to carry French ideas and French culture to the distant East.

He tried hard to do this, and not altogether without success. His activity was indefatigable. At first, says a writer in the *République Française* who took leave of him at Tonquin in September, 1886, he enjoyed excellent health, and his marvellous appetite contrasted strangely with the dejected features and languishing airs of his companions.

Dysentery, that fatal disorder which lies in wait for Europeans in the East, was the cause of Paul Bert's death. A fortnight before he succumbed he telegraphed to M. de Freycinet, the French Premier, desiring him to say nothing about his illness for the sake of friends and relatives. M. de Freycinet, in return, besought him to take the greatest care of his health, and to give up working. Four days later came a telegram, "Strength returns." But it was an illusion. M. de Freycinet, however, not thinking that Paul Bert's condition so serious as it was, advised him not to come home, as his leaving Tonquin might produce evil consequences. "You are right," the moribund man telegraphed, "it is better to die at my post than for me to quit Tonquin at the present moment." Subsequent dispatches came from other hands. On Thursday, November 11, 1886, a final telegram came from M. Chaillet, Paul Bert's son-in-law, announcing that the end had come. M. de Freycinet, who was profoundly affected, announced the event the same day in the Chamber in the following terms: "I announce with the deepest sorrow the death of M. Paul Bert. He died literally on the field of honor, broken down by the fatigues and hardships which he so bravely endured in trying to carry out the glorious task which he had undertaken. The Chamber loses by his death one of its most eminent members, Science one of its most illustrious votaries, France one of her most loving and faithful children, and the Government a fellow-worker of inestimable value, in whom we placed the fullest confidence. Excuse me, gentlemen, if, because my strength fails me, I am unable to proceed." M. Casimir Perier, who presided, then expressed the sentiments of sorrow felt by the Chamber, and the sitting was raised in sign of mourning.

The next day urgency was demanded for two votes, one giving Paul Bert a State funeral, and the other giving a

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pension to his family. The first vote was strenuously opposed by Monseigneur Freppel, Bishop of Angers, on the ground that the deceased was an inveterate enemy of religion. This ecclesiastic fought tooth and nail for the Tonquin expedition, but probably he thought the atheistic Resident-General had not been too friendly to the mission. He was ignominiously defeated however, 45 voting with him, and 379 against him. Monseigneur Freppel was an ardent warrior, but he was a very poor general; otherwise he would not have courted such a terrible rebuff for himself and his Church.

Paul Bert's personality and career are worthy of attention. His face was fine and handsome. The brow was broad and firm. The eyes were alert yet thoughtful, the nose was well shaped, and there was a kindly yet resolute expression about the lines of the mouth as well as the contour of the chin. His figure was of middle height, well built and finely balanced, with good solid shoulders. His mind was methodical, but his resources were all ready at command, and this gave him the air of a mental soldier ready for combat.

Born at Auxerre on October 19, 1833, according to Depasse, or October 17, according to Vapereau, Paul Bert came of a peasant family, who originally resided at Bouhy (Nièvre). His father, who was an attorney, brought him up to detest nobles and priests, and to admire the first Napoleon. The events of 1852, however, cured the young man for ever of his Bonapartism. Henceforth he was an earnest Republican, and he had no feeling for the Second Empire but that of contempt. We shall presently see his entry into public life after the downfall of that gigantic imposture.

Paul Bert's only education was gained at an Auxerre college. Thence he passed to Sainte-Barbe, where he showed a marked inclination for science. But a romantic notion led him to study law, and he took a licentiate's degree. Soon finding, however, that the law was not his vocation, he turned his back upon it and began the study of physiology under the great anatomist Gratiolet. This atmosphere suited his mental constitution, and he made rapid progress. Gratiolet was his friend as well as his master, and, although they differed fundamentally in their conceptions of the origin and nature of life, their intercourse was always delightful to both; and when Gratiolet died, Paul Bert pronounced his eulogium in terms of delicate praise that were an honor to both.

Taking his degree of Doctor of Medicine in 1863, Paul Bert became also Doctor of Science in 1866. He taught zoology at Bordeaux, and succeeded Flourens at the Museum. Having been for some time preparator to the great anatomist Claude Bernard, with whom, as with Gratiolet, he contracted a warm friendship, he succeeded his second master at the Sorbonne in Paris, where, in 1869, he became professor pf physiology. From that moment he was in full evidence; he had won a place in the front rank at the University, and he was one of the first professors in France.

Never, in the subsequent turmoil of politics, did Paul Bert forget that he was a scientist. He was an ardent experimentalist, and he turned readily from the Chamber to his laboratory. Following in the footsteps of Gratiolet and Claude Bernard, he was ever, to use Bacon's phrase, interrogating nature. Even the Tory *Standard*, referring to Comparative Anatomy, allowed that "the value of M. Paul Bert's personal contributions to it are recognised most fully by those whose own achievements entitle them best to judge." His *Première Année d'Enseignement Scientifique*, written for the primary schools, and almost universally in use there, shows the strength and ease of a master, who makes science live to his readers because he has assimilated it completely himself. Other scientific publications of his reveal the hand of a specialist who, while making "all knowledge his province," feels that his force and skill lie chiefly in one direction, and pursues it with equable enthusiasm and an eye to useful discovery. Darwin also, to take a greater instance, writes the *Origin of Species* and the *Descent of Man*, but he publishes likewise the *Fertilisation of Orchids* and the *Variations of Animals and Plants under Domestication*, which are for specialists, and necessarily "caviare to the general."

Paul Bert's political life began in 1870. The Empire was visibly failing, and the young men who saw the dawn of a better day felt the blood leap in their veins. Standing for the Council General of the canton of Aillant, Paul Bert was beaten by a Bonapartist, but after the Fourth of September he went to Paris and placed himself at the order of the Government of National Defence. "Remain in the provinces," said Jules Simon, "there are too many men in Paris already." Acting on this advice, Paul Bert returned to Auxerre, where, without any official title, he placed his devotion and activity at the service of his friend, M. Ribière, Prefect of the Yonne. They worked night and day at military organisation, but their open town was twice bombarded and occupied by the Germans. After the second occupation, Paul Bert went to Gambetta at Bordeaux. The "Dictator" appointed him Prefect of the Nord, where Lille was menaced with bombardment. It was a distinguished honor, and the patriotic professor proved himself worthy of it. With Gerald Faidherbe, another of Gambetta's men (what an eye he had for a *man!*), Paul Bert made immense preparations for defence, but the armistice suspended his labors, and they were terminated by the peace.

After the war Gambetta plainly told his countrymen, "We have been beaten through ignorance." From that moment national education, as well as military reorganisation, became a recognised supreme duty. Paul Bert splendidly seconded his great leader on both points, but chiefly on the first. The *Standard* justly said that "his interest in popular education gave him his main title to the rank and character of statesman." Having secured a firm seat in the Chamber of Deputies, he was able to give effect to his ideas. His devotion never abated. His elevated ideal is well expressed by himself in his *L'Instruction Civique à l'Ecole*: "The most rapid possible preparation of citizens, masters of their intelligence, sound in judgment, and imbued with the knowledge of their rights and the sentiment of their duties—such should be now the principal preoccupation of every patriot. We must learn to abandon everything for this urgent labor and supreme interest, even the delights of free research in the unknown regions of science."

Paul Bert's efforts were eminently successful. The Superior Council of Public Instruction was reformed according to his ideas in 1879. His influence prevailed also in organising the important primary education of girls. Largely through his exertions the Chamber voted free, secular, and compulsory education. When Gambetta appointed him Minister of Public Instruction and Worship in November, 1881, the clerical party roared with indignation, and it certainly was a strong piece of irony. But before that short-lived Ministry ended, Paul Bert did three excellent strokes of business. He laid the basis of military education in schools and *lycées*, he freed the pupils in State establishments from the obligation of attending religious service or receiving religious instruction, and he organised the secondary education of girls. Paul Bert retired, but his good work remained. It is not too much to say that he was the idol of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses and teachers throughout France. More than any other man he released them from the galling tyranny of the priests. The *Standard* naturally accused him of a "blind hatred" of everything clerical. The hatred may be allowed without admitting its blindness. It was clear-eyed and deliberate. Again and again, when France had risen, the priests had dragged her down. "Clericalism, there is the enemy," said Gambetta, and Paul Bert at least knew he was right. Replying to a clerical opponent in the Chamber, he said: "The conquests of education are made on the domain of religion; I am forced to meet on my road Catholic superstitions and Romish policy, or rather it is across their empire that my path seems to me naturally traced." Still more clearly, at a meeting in the *Cirque d'Hiver*, in August, 1881, Gambetta himself being in the chair, Paul Bert expressed himself on the same subject: "I know very well that the priest will cry, 'You have sent me from the school; I carry with me morality, its basis and sanction; I leave you to the abyss and the mud in which you will roll.'.....We answer him with the map of Europe and of the world before our eyes, history in our memory, commencing with the opening of that sombre, bloody, and fanatical Middle Age, that modern societies march towards morality in proportion as they leave religion behind."

Carrying the war into the enemy's camp, Paul Bert delivered two splendid speeches in the Chamber in support of Jules Ferry's famous Seventh Article, depriving the unauthorised religious orders of the right to teach in public schools. He was interrupted almost every minute by

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clerical party, but he never lost his coolness, and he showed himself a master of repartee. With the calm precision of a surgeon he dissected the teaching of the Jesuits and similar fraternities. His references to their so-called moral teachings were declared to be shameful perversions. Indeed, said the orator, then I will read you passages from their text-books! In a few moments the clerical party cried, Enough, there are ladies and young persons in the gallery! Very well then, said the orator, I will refrain; but I desire you to note that it is a scandal for ladies to hear what these pious moralists teach to boys and girls!

To defend himself from the charge of falsification made by Bishop Freppel, Paul Bert published his *Morale des Jesuites*, twenty thousand copies of which were sold in less than a year. Taking two Latin works by the Jesuit father Gury, both of which were in general use in the religious seminaries, he went systematically through them, and showed that the moral duplicities stigmatised by Pascal, and the bestialities of Sanchez and his compeers, were still used to poison the minds of the youth of France. Paul Bert translated Gury's Latin into French, but asterisks were often necessary, and several revolting passages that it was necessary to quote had to be left in the obscurity of a dead tongue. The book was dedicated, appropriately enough, to Bishop Freppel himself in a vein of masterly irony.

From that moment Paul Bert became a sort of Antichrist to the clericals. Reply was impossible, so they resorted to slander. They called him a libertine, a shameless materialist, a man infected with all the vices and turpitudes of Paris, a disgrace to the Chamber, a debauchee, and so on, in the well-known style of religious controversialists. But the slander was harmless, for Paul Bert was notoriously a model husband and father, as well as a good citizen; and his home, presided over by an accomplished wife of Scotch descent, was a sanctuary of happiness and peace.

The *Standard* allowed that "it is impossible not to admire Paul Bert's single-hearted enthusiasm and devotion," and that "he had the keenest sympathy for the struggles and sufferings of his fellow-men." Without wasting his mental force in dreams of impossible or far-off utopias, he applied himself to elevating the lot of his countrymen; and he did this, not by appealing to their animal instincts of selfishness and pride, but by appealing to their intellects and consciences. His labor was not fruitless, and the mark of his mind is on the upward life of France. Nor was he animated by any hope of reward in this world or the next. He was not only an Atheist, but a militant Atheist; yet, in defiance of priestly croakings, he dwelt on the loftiest levels of thought and feeling, finding delight in the pursuit of truth, and a keener delight in imparting its benefactions to his fellow-citizens of the world.

G. W. FOOTE.

## THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

Report of the Monthly Executive Meeting held at the Society's offices on Thursday, November 24; the President in the chair. There were present:—E. Bater, C. Cohen, T. Gorniot, F. Schaller, G. J. Warren, Annie Brown, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, E. W. Quay, C. Quinton, J. Neate, M. Loafer, B. Munton, H. Brown, T. Wilmot, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting read and confirmed. Cash statement received and adopted. Minutes of sub-committee also discussed and adopted. It was resolved, upon the recommendation of this committee, that Mr. W. H. Spivey, of Huddersfield, be appointed collector for the Treasurer's Scheme.

The President informed the Council of the death of Mrs. Forder, and it was unanimously resolved: "That this Executive desires to express its deep sympathy with the Hon. Secretary, Mr. R. Forder, in his sad bereavement."

The President reported that the *Secular Almanack* was now issued, and hoped those concerned would push the sale and thus benefit the funds of the Society. He then proceeded to call attention to the financial condition of the Society. In the course of his remarks he reported upon the business transacted at the recent General Meeting of the Secular Society, Limited, and indicated how it might be possible for the new Society to assist the N. S. S. to reduce its present expenditure without interfering with its present office arrangements, and asked for other suggestions to reach him by next meeting, when the matter would be again discussed.

The Secretary reported that all arrangements were complete for the Society's annual dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday, Jan. 9, 1899.

Mr. Foote reported his attendance at the meetings called by the Free Press Defence Committee.

Other minor matters of business were considered, and the meeting adjourned until Dec. 22.

Edith M. Vance, *Secretary*.

## FAILURE OF UTOPIA.

### The Death of Icaria.

Icaria is dead. The oldest, and for long the most successful, attempt to found a terrestrial Utopia was brought to an end last month, when the Iowa Courts formally decreed the winding-up of the New Icarian community. The Far West has long been, and still remains, the field of many endeavors to carry out the gospel of "liberty, equality, and fraternity" in self-supporting communities; and Brook Farm, the Greeley Colony in Colorado, Riverside, the numerous Phalanx communities, and various others, all bear witness to a vain search for the ideal existence. But Icaria differed materially from any of its rivals. In the reign of Louis Philippe, Etienne Cabet, a friend of Proudhon, attempted to found a model community in France. The Government was actively opposed to the plan, and after a time Cabet resolved to emigrate with his followers to the New World. He bought the old Mormon settlement at Nauvoo, in Illinois, the State Legislature granted him every possible legal facility, and before long he was joined by about two thousand French people. The central ideas of the colony were absolute equality and community of goods. The colonists lived in little houses round the central one, where they all had their meals together. So far as possible, the colonists strove to produce all they required; but twice a year the Directors made all absolutely necessary purchases from the outside world, each member sending in a list of the things he required. The marriage bond was strictly observed, and the life of the people was regulated on a distinctively Christian basis.

For some years, notwithstanding the nominal democratic basis of the colony, Cabet had supreme authority. So long as he remained dictator, all went well. But, after a few years, considerable murmuring arose concerning his autocratic ways. The members insisted that they should have a more real share in the management, and finally Cabet, with a few of his faithful friends, withdrew altogether from the settlement. A little time before this, seeing the headway the individualistic spirit was making in Illinois, Cabet got a considerable number of the colonists to move to Southern Iowa, where they were more out of touch with civilisation. Here they established a big agricultural colony, introducing the careful methods of French culture to the West. They started grape growing, which has since become a considerable industry throughout the State. In Iowa the administration was democratic in fact as well as in name. The community owned all property, dividing it out to each family according to its requirements. All ate at one table, and the care and education of the children was recognised as the duty of the whole people. The popularly-elected officials had no power to do anything beyond what they were directed by the general assembly, and every attempt at self-assertion was carefully suppressed.

The French emigrants, full of their ideals, were more than content to give up their all for the common good; but when their children came in their places the real troubles of the community commenced. The industrious complained that all their energy was absorbed in helping on the idle and shiftless colonists. The young people saw their non-communal neighbors accumulating riches in a few years, while, work as they would, they never could say that anything was theirs. Twelve years ago they again divided, and before long the Old Icarians dissolved, sharing the property among the remaining members. The New Icarians still struggled gallantly to realise their ideal. But internal troubles and jealousies proved too strong, and three years ago all the remaining estate was placed in the hands of a Receiver. Acting under the District Court, he has now divided it, and New Icaria has been formally dissolved.

—*Daily News.*

## A Greater Power.

"Now, children," said the Sunday-school teacher of the juvenile class, "our lesson to-day tells of the powers possessed by kings and queens. Can any of you name a still greater power?"

"Yes'm; I can," replied one little fellow.

"What, Willie?" asked the teacher.

"Aces," was the unexpected answer.

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## BOOK CHAT.

We hear that Mr. W. E. Henley is to contribute the monthly *causerie* to the pages of the *Pall Mall Magazine* during the ensuing year, and that the illustrations will be drawn by Mr. S. H. Sime, the well-known creator of the supernatural cartoons.

* * *

Messrs. Harmsworth announce what is practically an *edition-de luxe* of Sir John Lubbock's Best Hundred Books. Sir John's list is by no means an ideal one; but it is at least useful. The *Daily Mail* advertisement informs us that Sir John's list has won the written approval of H.R H. the Prince of Wales, the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, the Duke of Argyll, etc. "Angels and ministers of grace defend us"! if these gentlemen are the final court of appeal on literary matters.

* * *

Baron Corvo's delightfully blasphemous book, *Stories Toto Told Me*, is exciting the bile of the orthodox reviewers. They do not at all relish the Baron poking fun at the Padre Eterno and the other *dramatis personæ* of the Christian religion. Some of them even talk about the Baron hurting the feelings of the believer. Bah! "An ounce of civet, good apothecary"!

* * *

The unco' guid care a great deal about the feelings of others. We invite these delicate reviewers to glance at a few numbers of the so-called Christian Evidence periodicals, edited by evangelists and other of that ilk, and we venture to say that Baron Corvo's delicate banter will be a positive relief after the Christian garbage.

* * *

Talking about blasphemy reminds us how profane are many of the titles of popular books. Here are a few we remember offhand: *God's Gentlemen, God's Fool, If I Were God, The Wheel of God, God's Outcast, God Forsaken, In the Image of God, God and the Ant*, etc.

* * *

The principal item in the *Literary Guide* for December is Mr. Gould's interview with Dr. Edward Westermarck, author of the *History of Human Marriage*. Dr. Westermarck's opinions on many men and views are recorded, including Lecky, Buckle, Kidd, Balfour, Tylor, Adam Smith, and Paley. We are glad to note the high praise of Tylor. The other contents of this publication are replete with interest and information. The opening article is by Mr. Charles Watts.

* * *

The near approach of the merry celebration of the alleged birthday of the "Man of Sorrows" (not, by the way, our scholarly friend Mr. Satan, who has sorrows of his own) makes Mr. Foote's pamphlet on *Bible and Beer* a topical publication. Our readers might direct the attention of their friends and acquaintances to this booklet at this season of the year with advantage.

* * *

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie, the "Laureate of Secularism,' deserves well at the hands of Freethinkers. He has devoted his talents to Rationalism for a number of years, without any recognition beyond the satisfaction of having done his best for the cause he loves. Arrangements are now being made for the publication of the best verses of Mr. Mackenzie in volume form. The price will be half-a-crown, and Mr. Forder will be happy to receive the names of any of our readers who wish to be added to the list of subscribers for the forthcoming book.

* * *

One result of the Bedborough trial is that the pornographic publishers are issuing a number of books ostensibly on the subject of sex inversion. These dealers in garbage know perfectly well that public curiosity has been roused on this subject, and they are meeting a real demand. We put it to our readers whether it is better that the country should be flooded with these filthy works, and a genuine scientific work like that of Dr. Havelock Ellis's should be "snowed under" in the alleged interests of Sweeneyism?

* * *

Mister Anderson's subordinates, including, in all probability, Sweeney the Magnificent, are very busy visiting the booksellers' shops seeking for any books of an incriminating nature. It must be a novel experience for booksellers and their assistants to have to continually wait on gentlemen with very large feet, who ask for scientific books, and drop their h's.

* * *

A bookselling acquaintance of our own informs us that he was asked lately for Dr. Ellis's "*Pishcology*" *of Sex*. Mister Anderson had better send his boys in blue to the Evening Continuation Classes.

* * *

The Bishops and the other illustrious obscure members of the clerical profession are still publishing weekly doses of twaddle in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*. Half-a-column seems to be the regulation dose. The editor probably thinks that is about enough of the mixture if he wishes to avoid fatal results.

* * *

Mr. Sidney Lee's *Life of William Shakespeare* is just published by Smith, Elder, & Co. We mention it hurriedly for the sake of readers who may be anxious to procure a copy of such an important work as soon as possible. It will be noticed at some length in an early number of the *Freethinker*.

## SAVED BY A KORAN.

How a Dervish's Heart was Preserved From the Lance of a Lancer.

Among the trophies of the battle of Omdurman now on exhibition at the United Service Institution is a small leather-bound Koran, half pierced by a jagged hole, which was, it is told, the means of saving a Dervish's life.

He carried it in the breast of his jibbeh, and the lance of a trooper of the gallant 21st was stopped by it; but the precious book stuck fast on the lance-point, and was dragged from its owner's breast; surely, the most strangely-captured trophy ever won in battle.

The following is an unauthenticated copy of the letter written by the saved Dervish to his mother. It is sent to us by a correspondent who remembers having read something of the same sort before:—

"To the honored mother of me. Greeting!

"Know ye by these presents (which I nicked them off the bodies of my less fortunate companions) that the tide of death rolled over me at Omdurman and left me scatheless, thanks to Allah and the pious mother whose parting gift to me was a copy of the Koran as bound by the S. P. M. K. for cheap distribution among the poor. Never had it left my bosom (in verity I had forgotten it was there), and when a dog of a pig-sticking infidel rode at me with a lance, and I thought to be speared like an eel of the Nile, Allah was good, and interposed the word of his prophet between me and a short, sharp death. Truly the infidel carried off my book on the point of his lance; but what is a copy of the Koran, 12mo., cloth boards, sprinkled edges, compared with sweet life. And so no more at present, my honored mother, hoping this will find you well as it leaves me at present.—Your living son (praise be to Allah!), Mustapha.

"P.S.—If you show this letter to the S. P. M. K., they will give you many shekels for it, and print it in tracts for the infidel Christian dogs.

"P.P.S.—The surviving members of my company (they are but few, but Allah is good! great was the loot of them) beg that the S. P. M. K. will send them each a copy of the Koran—one man one book. If out of stock, try small dictionaries."

—"*Star*" (*London.*)

## SMOKED MISSIONARY.

A correspondent sends us the following from Egremont Cheshire: "I was told of an amusing incident which occurred here a few days ago. Some wag had pasted on a wall in one of the main thoroughfares the cover of *Harmsworth's Magazine*, having on it the bust of a smiling black girl, and at the bottom of it the following: 'Pleased.—Just had good fed missionlilly for dinner. Bolly good "chop" missionlilly, only smell of brimstone.'

"Two gentlemen stopped to read it, and at the same time came up a clerk employed in a Liverpool office, the self-elected detective to a Bowling Club, of which he is a member, for the purpose of seeing whether any of the members go anywhere else to get their evening drinks instead of spending the money in the club, and is also a great advocate of 'Ritualistic candle-shows,' by which he has been dubbed some very funny names, and among them 'Tallow Jack' and 'Candle Jack.' Seeing us reading, he stopped also, and, after reading it, took out his knife, and, suiting the action to the words, 'I'm d——d if I'm going to see my religion insulted in this fashion,' cut off the (to him) objectionable description. The roars of laughter that followed this from those standing by is beyond description, and I think 'Candle Jack' felt rather ashamed he had made such an ass of himself.

"This incident, since I heard it, has set me thinking. I know nothing of anatomy, nor of any of the sciences under or by which the question can be answered. The thought which occurred to me is this: Since sky-pilots now, and have for some time, ceased to preach 'Hell-Fire and Brimstone,' is it possible, as they, as it were, bottle-up this 'brimstone' in themselves, for diners off 'missionlilly' to smell the brimstone, particularly if the cut is from that part where, in ordinary persons, the brain is usually situated? I ask for light—I am a smoker—and don't ask for the orthodox fire; 'it tastes the mouth.'"

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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, "John Burns, Price Hughes, Sunday Concerts, and Sabbatarian Bigotry."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A Concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7, Entertainment and Dance.

WEST LONDON BRANCH (15 Edgware-road): December 8, at 8.15, Chilperic Edwards, "The Book of Jonah in the Light of the Higher Criticism."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, F. J. Gould, "The Day of Judgment."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, Meeting at the Bradlaugh Club.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Discussion on "Buddhism"; 7, J. Clarke, M.A., "An Ethical View of God and Christ."

WEST LONDON SECULAR CLUB (15 Edgware-road): Every evening 7—10.50.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, J. M. Robertson, "The Ethic of the Intellectual Life."

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Marriott, "Socialism, Secularism, and the Reformation."

DEPTFORD (Broadway): 6.30, R. P. Edwards and C. James.

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): E. J. Sale—11 "A Secularist's View of the Bible"; 7, "Did God Make Man, or did Man Make God?"

BLACKBURN (Power-loom Weavers' Large Room, Clayton-street): December 5, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Substitutes for Religion." December 6, at 7.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and the Jews."

BRADFORD (Oddfellows' Hall): 7, H. Smith, "The Ruins in the Soudan."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, R. Forder, "Historical Christianity."

CHESTER (Corn Exchange): G. Standring—3, "Am I my Brother's Keeper"; 7, "Christianity and Social Progress."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 11.30, 2.30, and 6.30, Charles Watts.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, H. Percy Ward, "From Wesleyan Pulpit to Secular Platform."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Woollett, "An Italian Pessimist, Giacomo Leopardi."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Cohen—11, "Herbert Spencer: II. Ethics and Economics"; 3, "Why People do Not Attend Church: An Answer to the Bishop of Manchester"; 7, "Religion and Man."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): E. Evans—3, "Roots, Stems, and Leaves"; 7, "Studies from Nature," with lantern illustrations. Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, A Reading on "Materialism."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—December 4, Manchester; 5 and 6, Blackburn; 7, 8, and 9, Derby; 11, Stockton-on-Tees.

H. PERCY WARD, 5, Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—December 4, Leicester. 18, Birmingham.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

VOL. XVIII.—No. 50. SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1898. PRICE TWOPENCE.


## THE CZAR'S PEACE MESSAGE.

(*Concluded from page 770.*)

CERTAINLY the Czar would afford us better evidence of his *bonâ fides* if he treated his own subjects to some of the delicacies in the bill of fare which he has arranged for the rest of Europe. Still, we do not wish to press this point too strongly; for, after all, he may be filled with the best intentions, and may not feel able to effect any great change in the government of Russia. Let us, therefore, assume that he means well, that his proposal is a sincere one, and that the Conference will meet to discuss the policy of gradual, proportional, or some other form of disarmament; and let us see, if we can, what is likely to happen.

First of all, there is the Alsace-Lorraine question. France is always looking eastward to her lost provinces. She means to recover them if she can. One of her distinguished sons has declared that the Frenchman who said aloud that she was yearning to get them back deserved to be shot, and that the Frenchman who did not think so deserved to be hung. Germany, on the other hand, means to keep possession of them while there is a German sword left to fight with, or a drop of German blood left to be shed. To propose disarmament while that open sore is left running is, on the face of it, a wild absurdity. Moreover, there is a smaller Alsace-Lorraine question, so to speak, between most of the other nations. We have not space to particularise, and every well-informed reader can easily fill in the details for himself.

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that all these territorial questions could be laid dormant. How then could a reduction of armaments be decided? No two countries are alike, no two are in the same circumstances; each at the finish would regard itself as the best judge of its necessary strength of army and navy. But suppose the great military powers—Russia, Austria, Germany, France, and perhaps Italy—could miraculously agree to some common ratio of disarmament; what is to prevent them from spending all the money they thus saved on battleships? And how would that serve the turn of Great Britain? Suppose the other powers called upon England to make a reduction in *her* military forces; would she not reply that her army is a kind of imperial police, scattered all over the world, that she could not possibly collect it all together for purposes of offence, and that, if she could do so, it is not large enough for aggression against any European power which raises soldiers by the hundred thousand through the conscription? Suppose the military powers then told her that she, as the great naval power, should reduce the number of her warships; would she not reply that a navy is more a defensive than an offensive weapon, and that *her* navy is required to defend her vast empire scattered all over the globe, and to protect the mighty commerce upon which her very existence depends? And if Russia, for instance, were to say that this answer would not do, might not England turn upon her and say: "Well, if it comes to that, what do *you* want any battleships *at all* for? What colonies or dependencies have you to reach by sea? Is not every single ironclad you buy or build quite superfluous from any *peaceful* point of view? Is it not really a menace, and nothing but a menace, to other nations?" And what answer could Russia make to that?

It appears to us that the Czar approaches this problem from the wrong side—the impracticable side. No man is able to conceive how partial disarmament could be brought about in the present state of international politics. Nor would a reduction in the strength of armies and navies prevent nations from fighting if they wanted to; on the contrary, there is a certain measure of safety in armies and navies being as large as possible, and in war being as destructive as possible, for the more costly and deadly war becomes the less likelihood there is of its breaking out, as every government is more and more afraid to begin.

Let us take an illustration. Two men, who hate or mistrust each other, live in neighboring houses. One keeps six revolvers, the other five. Presently a third man comes along and proposes a conference on disarmament. Finally an agreement is arrived at. The man who kept six revolvers will henceforth keep four, and the man who kept five revolvers will henceforth keep three. "See what they save in revolvers!" you exclaim. Yes, but they can still shoot each other if they feel disposed. Would it not be better if you could get the two men to associate a little and try to understand each other a bit? Better still if they could be got to trade with each other and profit by each other? Better even than that if one's son got married to the other's daughter? In the course of time friendship would take the place of hostility, and the revolver question would settle itself.

In our judgment the right side to approach the problem which the Czar places before Europe is not that of disarmament, but that of arbitration. This is practicable; it is also consonant with what we know of social evolution.

Look at the back of a frock coat, and you will see two buttons at the bottom of the waist. They are no particular ornament, only we are accustomed to having them there. Nor are they of any particular use. They are relics of an older fashion. Those buttons helped to support a gentleman's belt and keep it in place. From the belt hung a sword. Every gentleman wore one. And his sword-arm had always to be kept free. That is why he took a lady on his left arm. It was not because she was a little nearer his heart in that position. The reason was not poetic or fantastic, but severely practical.

Gentlemen do not wear swords now. They are not necessary. Wrongs that were redressed, and insults that were avenged, by the sword are now carried before tribunals of justice. Regular fighting between individuals has ceased. Duels, at least in England, are penalised. To kill a man in one would be murder. The law covers all citizens with its protection; and, on the other hand, it forbids them to resort to violence against each other.

Why should not the disputes of nations be adjudicated upon in the same way? Why should there not be an international tribunal as well as national tribunals? Why should nations fight any more than citizens? Why should not evidence and argument be presented at the seat of justice? Why should right and wrong continue to be decided by bloodshed and mutual slaughter? A nation's honor is not wounded by the decisions of an acknowledged tribunal; but every victory in war leaves behind it a rankling hatred in the heart of the vanquished.

An international tribunal cannot, of course, be established at once. But every civilised nation may work towards it, under the inspiration of its sanest judgment and noblest desires. And the road to it is arbitration. Whenever a quarrel between two states is settled in this way, a certain step is taken on the path to ultimate peace. Naturally the smaller disputes will have to be arbitrated upon first; but each case is a wholesome precedent, and the larger



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disputes would take their turn in time. And with the gradual progress of arbitration there would be an inevitable, because really possible, reduction in the fighting strength of all nations; until at last there would be but one army and navy, at the service of the one supreme court of the world, acting as a kind of international police.

With regard to arbitration, England has a better record than that of Russia. She has really been the pioneer in this direction. Much virulent nonsense has been written about the famous *Alabama* case. But the compensation money was paid by England, and she could afford to forget it. On the whole it was a remarkably good investment. A grave dispute between two great nations was settled by the payment of what, after all, was a comparatively trifling sum by the one who was adjudged to be in the wrong. Surely that was infinitely better than spending a hundred times as much on war, which would have involved great slaughter and destruction, and must have left a legacy of bitter ill-will, however it ended.

We hope this side of the problem will not be ignored by the Conference which is to assemble at the Czar's invitation. There is no allusion to it in his manifesto, but that may not prevent its discussion. In any case, we are glad that the Conference will meet. Its deliberations will certainly set the people of Europe thinking. The problem of peace will be pressed upon their attention. And this is a clear gain. It is a great advantage to any question to be put prominently before the public mind. It becomes the subject of unlimited talk, newspaper articles and reports are devoted to it, and books are written round it; and amongst all the mass of words some grains of reason will appear to enrich the world. Nor is this all. The Czar's manifesto is a striking admission that something must be done to arrest the march of Europe towards general bankruptcy. It is also a hint that, if governments do nothing, the people may be goaded into flinging off their burdens unceremoniously.

G. W. FOOTE.

## NATURAL LAW: ITS MEANINGS.

At one of my recent lectures in Sheffield a young, intelligent Unitarian Christian was very anxious that the term "Natural Law" should be properly understood. In his opinion, no law could exist without a lawgiver; therefore, the fact of there being natural laws was evidence to him of the existence of God. After the lecture several friends asked me to write an article upon the subject for the *Freethinker*, and to include in it the principal points of my reply to my Unitarian opponent; therefore, I now proceed to explain what I understand to be the meaning of the phrase, "Natural Law." Here let me say that, according to my view, all that is is natural. The term "supernatural" conveys to my mind no idea whatever. I regard all phenomena as belonging to the one known existence, and therefore all our knowledge is purely phenomenal. Of course, with the progress of science and other sources of information, we may learn more of phenomena than we know at present. Still, it will be phenomena; I don't pretend to have any knowledge of "something" behind, or separate from, that which my senses cognise. Granted that in the future the human race may receive new revelations; they will be natural, and made known through natural channels, and consequently such revelations will only be an extension of human knowledge of the phenomena of nature, and not the presentation of any outside elements. In other words, it will be an extended view of Nature herself, and a further experience of her forces and capabilities.

The popular error among theologians as to natural law is, that it is something superimposed upon things from without, instead of which it is but a condition of their existence. These persons seem to suppose that the laws of the universe are a species of natural legislation, like the Acts of Parliament upon our statute-books; that, as there are laws, these must have been originated by some special power, and that they have to be continually enforced. This, in my opinion, is not so. The laws of the universe are not made—in fact, they are not entities at all; they have no actual existence, but are simply the conditions under which things have their being They are part and parcel with the things themselves, and often the object is known only through the operation of the law. Most of the laws of nature are, to people in general, simply as orders of antecedence or sequence. By the impartial student of science it is observed that definite results always follow particular causes, and hence a certainty that such will invariably happen becomes a fixed idea in the human mind. In truth, paradoxical as it may seem, there is a tendency in this direction to increase the number of fixed laws, and discover a *nexus* between events that have no necessary connection. This only tends to prove that in loose thinking, or in non-thinking, the human mind is likely to fly to errors at either pole, or at the two opposite poles at the same time. For instance, a man will believe, as the Bible states, that an iron axe could swim, that a human being could exist for three days in the alimentary canal of a whale, and that a thick wall came down at the sound of a trumpet, despite the natural laws which must in these cases have been violated or abrogated; and yet the same mind will trace a cause and effect in a hundred little events in life, and thus fancy that he reaches a law where none exists.

A law may be known, whilst its cause—that is, that form of force upon which it depends—is unknown. In this case, the business of science is to pursue investigation, so as, if possible, to bring to light the hidden spring which gives rise to the law. We call an observed order of antecedence and sequence a law, and we conclude it is to be fixed after it has been seen in operation thousands of times, with never-varying regularity, even though we may be quite ignorant of the force to which it owes its existence. And we never expect that any other result than the one with which we are perfectly familiar will arise. In fact, did any other sequence follow, we should at once conclude that a new factor had been introduced. Suppose we saw a heavy weight suspended in mid-air in a room, apparently in defiance of the laws of gravity, it would never occur to any rational being that gravitation had ceased to operate, or that the particular object had been removed from its influence; but the conclusion at once arrived at by a sudden impulse, without any reflection whatever, would be that some new force—it might be unseen by the bystanders—was playing a part. Hence the human mind reaches the idea of the fixity of the law in all matters of which we have every-day experience, as no suspension or diminution of the powers of these laws can be imagined possible.

The business of science is to trace, not simply the order of events, but the cause of such order; to learn what is the exact nature of the force on which the law depends, which thus manifests itself in the antecedence and sequence. The discovery of Kepler's three laws was a most important fact in the history of astronomy; but it was by no means so valuable as the theory of gravitation, brought to light by Newton, for the reason that the latter furnished the key wherewith to unlock the former. The fact involved in the celebrated laws was made known by Kepler; the cause of it was left to Newton to discover. So with regard to many other phenomena in nature. Modern science has not simply demonstrated the existence of the law, but it has discovered, in many instances, the force upon which the law depends. We are thus indebted to the Secular Providence for our knowledge of the potency and grandeur of Nature, and also for the manifold advantages she is ever bestowing upon those who study her resources and follow her beneficent promptings. "Nature never did deceive the heart that loved her."

Natural law also pertains to the actions of men, although in the field of human conduct the forces in operation are somewhat complex; but that does not alter the fact of the universality of law. From what we know of the relationship of cause and effect, we can fairly estimate the results of certain actions. If a man during his youth leads "a fast life," he will be sure to pay the penalty in after years. Drunkenness, dishonesty, lying, and neglect of home will surely be followed by injurious consequences, which no belief in Christ can avert. Virtue and vice are not mere accidents of the time, but are as much the result of natural law as the falling of a stone or the growth of a flower. Of course it is not here meant that the same law applies to moral actions which controls the movement of the stone or the development of the flower. But in each case it is law, nevertheless. Hence, as Secularists, we do not look for a supernatural cure for vice. When a man feels the pangs

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of some physical malady, he might be sure that there is some derangement in the organ in which it occurs, and if he is wise, in addition to applying a remedy, he will endeavor to discover the cause of the complaint, so as to avoid, as far as possible, the malady in the future. Now the same course should be taken with moral diseases, which almost invariably arise from a morbid condition of the brain, or a defective environment. The physical and moral qualities are more closely connected than is generally supposed, and the influence of the one upon the other is, beyond all doubt, very great. Man's mental and moral natures both depend upon material organs, and are therefore influenced by physical forces; and it is not at all unusual for the same causes that generate disease to produce crime. The Secularist recognises these important facts, and, expecting no supernatural help, he goes earnestly to work, and by material means alone he strives to remedy whatever drawbacks they are from which he is suffering. Believing that whatever happens occurs in accordance with some natural law, he deems it his business to try to ascertain what that law is, that he may use his knowledge for some practical and useful purpose. Remind the devout orthodox Christian that people die of starvation and cold; that infants are destroyed by hundreds; that frequently suicide is preferred to the pangs of poverty; that vice often rides in gorgeous carriages; that virtue pines neglected and uncared for; that the innocent suffer and the guilty escape. He will reply:—There is another world, where all this will be set right. But, to the Secularist, these misfortunes are terrible evils, to be remedied as much as possible in this world. I gladly acknowledge that, after centuries of apathy and reliance upon some supposed supernatural power, some of the more intelligent of professed Christians see the force of the Secularists' position, and are adopting natural means to secure the moral and social regeneration of society. Hence, within the Church, reliance upon natural law has taken the place of dependence upon a supernatural power.

It is often asked, How did natural laws originate? And, Are the laws of the universe eternal? The correct answer appears to me to be this: The origin of the laws of nature is really the origin of nature herself, and upon that science is silent. Personally, I have no idea of any origination in the matter. It is impossible for me to think of a time when there was no time, and a place where there was no place. If, however, our orthodox opponents can fix a period to their own satisfaction when they imagine the universe originated, they can put down the origin of some of nature's laws to that date. I say "some," not all, inasmuch as the things in which the laws inhere had a beginning. But the origin of parts of what now constitute the universe must not be confounded with the universe itself. Then it is asked, Who made the laws? This question is based upon the error already noticed, that laws are things superimposed upon other things; which they are not. The question, therefore, Who made them? is resolved into the query, Who made the things themselves? A reply has been given to this, and it only remains to be said that the method, not the cause, of the universe is the business of all scientific discovery and investigation.

CHARLES WATTS.

## A FRESH PLEA FOR THEISM.

*(Concluded from page 771.)*

IN putting in a plea for mind as the cause of universal evolution Dr. Keeling not only advances a proposition on behalf of which no evidence has been offered, but he advances a thesis entirely at variance with the whole testimony of science. In the first place, mind as a metaphysical entity is unknown; it is always found in connection with a specialised structure, its efficiency can be shown to vary with the condition of that structure, and it remains for those who believe it to be independent of these conditions to advance positive and definite proof of their contention. And not only is mind always and only found in connection with a specialised nerve structure, but it appears as a comparatively late product in the history of evolution; and it is simply foreign to the evolutionary philosophy to imagine a highly-specialised intelligence such as man possesses to be at the base of evolution instead of the apex. Evolution shows the simplest forces giving rise to complex results, these in turn giving rise to more complex results, and so on in a series continually increasing in complexity.

Secondly, far from mind acting as a "true cause," in the sense defined by the author—*i.e.*, "independent of, and prior to, its effect," it is one of the most dependent of phenomena. To quote Dr. Maudsley: "Instead of mind being, as assumed, a wondrous spiritual entity, the independent source of all power and self-sufficient cause of all causes, an honest observation proves incontestably that it is the most dependent of all the natural forces. It is the highest development of force, and to its existence all the lower natural forces are indispensably requisite.....To deal with mind as a force in nature apart from the consideration of the matter through the changes of which it is manifested is truly no less vain and absurd than it would confessedly be to attempt to handle electricity and gravitation as forces apart from the changes in matter by which alone we know them."*

And, finally, to accept the position laid down by Dr. Keeling is not to explain the phenomena of mind, but to surrender all possibility of explanation. If intelligence is to be explained, it must be done in terms of that which is not intelligence, for one cannot explain a thing in terms of itself; and if it be an ultimate force, any such merging of it in a wider conception is obviously impossible. So that once more the author is on the horns of a dilemma. If it is impossible to accept an Atheistic view of evolution because it does not explain the phenomena of intelligence, Dr. Keeling's position is equally unsatisfactory, since, mind being an ultimate, it is impossible to merge it in something else; while if, on the contrary, his theory is accepted, the objection urged against Materialism loses all its force. Personally, I think that not only does Materialism, on the lines indicated in my previous article, afford the most satisfactory explanation of the phenomena of mind, but it is the only one that can lay claim to being a genuine explanation in the scientific sense of the term, the Theistic explanation (so-called) being merely a phrase used as a cloak for absence of knowledge rather than a symbol representing its possession.

I have dwelt at considerable length on these points, because, to my mind, they contain the essence of Dr. Keeling's position. The remainder of the objections I have to urge come under the head of verbal fallacies, rather than aught else, although some of them are extremely important in their way. I will specify briefly the most important.

In criticising a conception of evolution that excludes a controlling intelligence, Dr. Keeling drops into a very characteristic Theistic error. Chance and law are everywhere used as antithetical terms, as in the following passages: "The unceasing play of energy and matter leads to results which cannot be attributed to chance.....From the first we ruled out chance; order and law are everywhere." Common as this antithesis is, even with some of our greatest writers, it is an utterly indefensible one. Chance is not a thing or a process to be ruled out as one might dismiss natural selection, or the transmission of acquired characters. It is a negative, not a positive term. To say that a thing occurs by chance is merely a popular way of saying that we are ignorant of the causes that produced it. It connotes the absence of knowledge, not the perception of a process. Chance is not the opposite of law, but simply a statement that we do not know the law.

Indeed, in strict accuracy, there is no antithesis whatever to the scientific conception of law. A scientific law is merely a summary of the observed sequence of phenomena, and even if we conceive that order to be different to what it is, the order of its occurrence would still be the law of its existence, and consequently it is a case of either knowing the law or not knowing it; but there is no such thing as the antithesis set up by Dr. Keeling. The confusion is clearly due to the importation into the region of science of the social sense of law as a regulative power. In this case there is an antithesis in the shape of anarchy. In science, however, while the same word is retained, it is used in an entirely different sense.

A similar fallacy is indulged in by the use made of the term automatic (p. 17). "If they (the results of the ceaseless action of material forces) were automatic," says

* *The Physiology of Mind*, pp. 125-6.

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the writer, "I must ask you for the author of the mechanism." Here there is clearly a play upon a word. The very meaning of the term automatic applied by the evolutionist to the universe is to exclude the element of consciousness, and, therefore, to assume that, because the word "automatic" applied to a piece of machinery implies an intelligent origin, it must carry the same implication when applied to the universe is to convert a weakness of language into a necessity of existence.

But Dr. Keeling would argue (pp. 18–34–35) that the case for an intelligent origin of the universe is based not merely upon the perception of a sequence, but upon the further perception that there is a unity running through all, the same causes always producing the same effects when a different condition of things might have existed. To which the reply may be made that if existence be granted—and whatever the name given to it matters little—the persistence of the same properties under identical conditions follows as a logical necessity. If matter and energy be all-in-all, then any alteration of their method of manifestation is unthinkable. The only changes conceivable are due to different combinations. Only on the supposition of there existing some power external to matter and energy, capable of modifying or suspending their normal manner of operation, is any alteration in a fixed and definite order possible; so that one may reverse the argument and say that an unconscious universe must be an orderly universe—in the sense of the same causes always producing the same effects, while the introduction of a creative and governing intelligence must always make that order a matter of more or less uncertainty. Once we admit the probability of an external controlling intelligence, and the most certain scientific generalisation must always have attached to it the saving clause: "If the controlling intelligence does not see fit to prevent natural forces producing their normal result."

There are several other verbal fallacies that I had marked down for criticism, but want of space prevents my dealing with them at any length. I may, however, point out one or two, such as "Evolution cannot evolve the forces upon which the universe depends," as though the universe were one thing and the forces another. The universe includes all forces, and therefore cannot depend upon any. Again, to make the Materialist assert that evolution is "a form of physical energy" is to put words into his mouth which no thoughtful Materialist would dream of using. The same idea is carried further in the sentence, "Evolution is itself a thing to be accounted for, and needs a cause." To a right conception of nature evolution is not a thing, but the name given to a process; it needs no accounting for, in the sense of showing how it began, since a beginning of evolution is inconceivable. If evolution be true, it is true of all existence and through all time. To ask for a beginning to evolution is to ask for a beginning of existence, and I do not think Dr. Keeling would go so far as that. All that is necessary to prove the validity of the law of evolution is to show that it holds good of natural processes in the same sense that the law of gravitation holds good of matter in the mass, or the conservation of energy holds good of the transformation of forces.

There is just one more point I have to raise before closing this criticism. Dr. Keeling sees clearly enough that man's religious beliefs are selected for him rather than by him. They are determined far more by domestic and social influences than by deliberate choice. He says:—

> "One's respect for creeds and beliefs is diminished when one comes to think how, for the most part, they are determined. What a man believes depends far more on the country and race to which he belongs, on the times in which he lives, on parentage, training, temperament, and individual experience of life, than on any process of reasoning. He is a Christian, Mohammedan, Buddhist, or worshipper of sticks and stones, because he belongs to this or that country and people.....They hold their creed.....just as they put on the same clothes, live in the same house, or adopt the same pursuits and habits as their neighbors."

All this is true enough, and well enough said; but it has a far wider application than the writer imagines; for not only is this generalisation true of those who accept without reservation the creed of their "forbears," it is also true of those who reject portions, and still hold certain beliefs which have really no better warranty for their existence. There seems to me little doubt that the assumption that there is a divine intelligence is just a survival of the belief which clothed that intelligence with hands and feet and all the organs of a human being. And the later view is no more reasonable than the earlier one. It is just as reasonable to assume that God Almighty possesses all the physical organs of a man as it is to assume that he resembles man only in the possession of intelligence. Intelligence is as peculiar to the animal world as organisation; and the retention of the first, while rejecting the second, is merely a halting step in the process of giving up both.

It is to me indisputable that no scientific man, educated apart from the religious beliefs around him, would find an intelligent author of the universe as the result of his scientific studies. Theism is not a conception derived from the study of nature as pursued in our scientific workshops, but an idea imported from without; and the fact that scientists, in spite of early training and social environment, have given up so many of their religious beliefs is really a strong argument in favor of the logical surrender of the whole. Dr. Keeling himself has surrendered much, and his book shows a strong sympathy with such as have rejected more, as well as a really sincere desire to discover how far his opinions at present are logically sound, and to give up still more if necessary. The conditions under which his book is printed and circulated are ample evidence of this. Still, I cannot view his Theistic ideas as being anything else than the remnants of a belief the grosser forms of which he has long outgrown. We are all of us children of our parents, and none give up their beliefs in a body. Man's religions neither burst like bubbles, nor depart like conquered soldiers vacating an enemy's country. Rather do they melt like heavy vapors before a gentle breeze, or recede before advancing knowledge as imperceptibly as darkness gives way to dawn. It is sometimes even the mark of a gentle and lovable nature that the past be not broken with too hastily or too rudely. But all who think think to surrender as well as to accept. Man has, in the course of his religious development, often at the cost of much pain and tribulation, given up much. Modern Theism, strong only because of its vagueness, is the last refuge. Here religion makes its last stand; and even here it is only a question of time for this belief to travel the same path and share the same fate that has already overtaken the beliefs surrendered by man on his march towards a truer conception of things.

C. COHEN.

## CIVILISING THE SOUDANESE.

THE British public is always open to appeals. The more remote the object, the greater the response. National charity is chiefly of the carrier-pigeon variety. Let loose at the Mansion House or Exeter Hall, it has little liking for home. Its most congenial flights are those which it makes far a-field. When occasionally it becomes, in the language of Columbarians, a "homer," it is nearly fagged out. It returns droopingly to its native isle, and awaits with anxiety the first excuse for another and, if possible, a wider and wilder flight.

The recent appeal to John Bull by one of his military employees is worthy of note only for one or two accidental features. In this case, as in others, the object of the appeal being far away, and in its details sufficiently indefinite, John Bull has made the usual handsome response. He understands that a memorial college, or something of the sort, is proposed to be founded where Gordon went, and where the Sirdar has followed. That is enough for him. In an indistinct way he understands that the memorial is to be of an educational character. He has now an overpowering veneration for anything educational, after having allowed himself to fall far in the rear of other countries in actual educational achievements.

A greater consideration, however, than the precise object of the college is the fact that it is to be dedicated to the memory of Gordon. And a still more effective motive power to subscribing is the Sirdar-mania, which, somehow or other, has taken possession of John Bull and caused a temporary aberration of intellect.

It would puzzle him—even under mild cross-examination—to say why he has made so much fuss over Kitchener, and the military expedition which did *not* happen to fail. Was it, after all, really such an extraordinary thing that

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the savage, though brave, Dervishes were wiped out with slight loss to the assailants? Considering all the preparations made, and the irresistible forces of modern warfare brought to bear, could any other result have been anticipated? John pays dearly enough for the military services he requires. Why so much delighted surprise when, upon a trifling test, this highly-priced service turns out to be fairly efficient?

We must not, of course, fail to recognise the "religious" sentiment underlying a considerable part of the response to the appeal. Christian Gordon has been avenged, and Christian Gordon's memory must be tangibly perpetuated. Gordon had many great and good points. Yet it is not to be doubted that much of the extravagant eulogy bestowed upon him is due solely to his excessive, almost painful, piety, and to that proselytising spirit which Exeter Hall so much admires. How he reconciled the duties of his military office with the teachings of the so-called "Gospel of Peace" is a problem not easily solved. It must be one of special interest and of anxious thought to the Christian sect who call themselves the Society of Friends.

Lord Kitchener is evidently much more of the soldier than the gospeller, and seems not to have laid sufficient stress on the purely Christian aspect of the Memorial to satisfy all the subscribers. This note of dissatisfaction from the ultra-pious, who would label everything with the name of "Christian," no matter what secular purpose it was intended to serve, has drawn from the *Times* a very remarkable comment. That staid and orthodox sheet says: "There is no doubt that Gordon had abundance of simple faith, but he also had abundance of saving common sense, and swift practical decision. Simple faith in one's own religion does not require one to dream of Utopia, or to be always forcing a mechanical acceptance of the formulas of one's creed upon others." The Sirdar's proposal has served a useful end, if only in being the means of inducing the *Times* to deliver itself of so liberal and rational a sentiment.

The Church Missionary Society, one is thankful to note, sees its way to derive benefit from the £100,000 outlay. It is a peculiarity of Christian organisations that, when there is any money about, they do their best to find means of drawing some of it into their own coffers. At present the Church Missionary Society contents itself with discovering in the establishment of the Memorial "a great possibility of new missionary enterprise." The Society hopes to carry amongst the population of the Soudan the "blessings of English medical skill, and thereby open a door for a beginning in the great work of spreading among them the benefits of the Christian religion."

The Soudanese would probably prefer to have whatever benefits may be derived from English medical skill, and leave the blessings of the Christian religion alone. The Church Missionary Society, however, can be trusted to know how to gild the pious pill, and later on we may expect to have glowing accounts of the multitude of converts who have been won over to the faith.

As to the proposal of the Sirdar generally, there is probably a great deal of force in the observation that "those who have conquered are called upon to civilise." But is there not a great deal of civilising needed very much nearer home?

FRANCIS NEALE.

## 3,170,193.

THE figures make me melancholy. I look vacantly round the room, but the only thing which meets my eye with any appropriateness is a picture of mad Ophelia, weaving fantastic garlands of "crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples." I gaze from the window, but no knight-errant appears, and no Messiah comes in sight. I rove in imagination over all England, and wonder how many people feel any concern about the whole thing.

Of course, I am talking in riddles, and it is time to explain. This number—consider it well—3,170,193 represents the attendance of children at the Nonconformist Sunday-schools. The Church of England and the Roman Catholics have other hosts of little recruits, but it will be enough to study the 3,170,193. I fear there is little doubt as to the general correctness of the statistics. Last week a demonstration, organised by the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, was held at the City Temple, London. Dr. Clifford occupied the chair. He rolled out the figures triumphantly, like a herald who proclaims the style and title of a victor-king. The Free Churches (Wesleyans, Congregationalists, Baptists, etc.) included 1,841,767 members; the worshippers in their chapels made an army of 7,000,000; their property was worth £50,000,000; and they were training 3,170,193 children and young people in their Sunday-schools. Members, buildings, children—these are the strong supports of any faith, religious or secular. So far as material power goes, the Christians sit in the seats of the mighty.

Now, I do not envy the Christians their possessions, nor shall I, like Satan, "grin horribly a ghastly smile" as I regard their happy chapels and their ecstatic tea-meetings. In a certain sense, I admire it all; for all this success means perseverance, pluck, and grit. At any rate, the pluck and the grit were in the fathers of Nonconformity, who neither trembled at bishops nor bowed to kings, nor quailed at the rattle of manacles. There must be still a certain amount of spirit and energy in the midst of the Dissenting bodies, or else 7,000,000 people would not even pretend to listen to chapel-sermons on Sundays. And as to the £50,000,000, the Christians are welcome to their own property. Their gospel is intended to encourage the accumulation of property; property is its inspiration, and property is its ideal. Jesus did not say that, but then Jesus was only the Founder, and every orthodoxy smiles at founders. And besides, we have always to deal with the paradox—Ideals attract property, and then property kills the ideals. A man preaches, and suffers for an idea; people crowd about his tomb, and set up a cult in his memory, and endow the cult with all sorts of wealth, and then that very wealth stands as the enemy of the idea. Supposing the Nonconformists of England wanted to change over to a better creed, they must first climb the barrier of the £50,000,000. The chapels and schools form a terrible vested interest, with trust-deeds lurking in every recess, and forbidding the entrance of a newer wisdom.

Nevertheless, in some way or other, it has all got to be done. The £50,000,000 must be dedicated to a nobler purpose, and the trust-deeds must be left to the book-worms, literal and figurative. But how is the change to be brought about? Even the twentieth century cannot work miracles when it comes. The sons and daughters of Freethought must go on writing and speaking and demonstrating; and, little by little, the heavy car will be pushed forward. But I keep turning, as if magnetised, to the 3,170,193. Every Sunday most of these 3,170,193 young people troop to the chambers of obscurantism and receive spiritual food from the priests. Priests! The Dissenters abominate the word! They are always crying out against Ritualism and the High Church! Why speak of priests? Ah, I will not be put off with innocent-looking words. You say the children are taught by "laymen" and by "deacons" and by "ministers." But the priest is there in essence. These men take a book, and they tell out of it to children stories that are not true. They tell to English children a story about the creation of the world in six days, and the story is not true. They tell about Adam and Eve, and the story is not true. They tell about the Fall of Man, and the story is not true. They tell about the Flood, and the story is not true. They tell about the Brazen Serpent, and the story is not true. They tell about Jonah in the fish's alimentary canal, and the story is not true. They tell about the Resurrection of Christ, and the story is not true. I call this priesthood, this taking of a holy book, and investing its statements with an undeserved sanctity and authority. You can call it what you like—education, morality, philanthropy. I call it priestism. It is the essence of priestism to assume a superiority which is not founded on reason. It is the essence of priestism to make assertions that are not founded on living, historical fact. These 3,170,193 children are sitting there every week under a priestly hypnotism. They are made to believe, poor souls, that the waters of the Red Sea stood up like masonry. And, after learning such chaotic doctrine as that, they grow into free and independent electors and ballot-box rulers of the British Empire.

This spectacle of the 3,170,193 children afflicts me.

In the midst of writing this article, I dropped my pen, and took up a small, geographical globe, and called my seven-year old son to me, and told him where primitive man probably first appeared, in Western Asia or Eastern Africa. Then I described the rise of man from brutism,

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how our ape-like ancestors chose the more refined mates, and had more refined children; and how they made flint weapons; and how some clever fellow rubbed dry sticks, and made fire; and how the fable of Prometheus, the good giver of fire to mankind, was made by the simple fancy of the early world. All this I said to him in easy words, and with the aid of the map and of pictures. His eyes sparkled with interest, and his cheek flushed; and I know that, should he live to be ninety, he will never believe the Genesis story now that I have once implanted the more rational thought in his mind. On that subject, as on others, he will be a Freethinker. Take note that I have also told him the other story—the romantic history of the rib. Why should not all these other children—these 3,170,193—learn the true history of man, and man's works and genius and development and aspiration? They cannot, because they go to the Free Churches. Free Churches! What a name! Let us call Iago a saint, and the jail a lady's bower, and Popery the health of the human soul!

F. J. Gould.

## ACID DROPS.

The case against Miss Lyon was withdrawn, and the Croydon magistrates dismissed the case against Mrs. Mills. It is difficult to see what else they could do. This is a Christian country with a State Church, and Parliament opens every day with prayer by the chaplain. How on earth then is it possible to punish people as criminals for practising what is called Christian Science, which simply consists in seeking unto the Lord instead of unto the physicians? The House of Commons pays its praying-machine a regular salary, and is a private praying-machine any worse than a public one? All the clergy of every denomination are really in the same line of business as Mrs. Mills. Of course they won't admit it, but that doesn't alter the fact.

Some pious inhabitants of Birmingham have been complaining in the columns of the *Daily Gazette* of the National Secular Society's announcements outside the Bristol-street Board-schools. "A Native," whose mind is like an oyster's—if an oyster has any mind—expresses horror at the title of a lecture on "Who Made God?" He begs the authorities to stop the display of such "indecency" on the walls of public buildings. He does not explain, however, where the indecency comes in. There are three words in the title he objects to; and we beg to ask him which of them is indecent? It cannot be "who" or "made." Are we to conclude it is "God"?

According to the *Daily Mail*, a certain Spiritualist, named J. F. Hunt, of Biggleswade, has received hundreds of communications from William Shakespeare. He says they will astonish everybody—which is probably true; but he cannot get a publisher to bring them out in print, and his own finances don't warrant such a large expenditure. The *Mail* doesn't seem to attach great importance to these communications. Perhaps it thinks Mr. Hunt has a good cheek to fly at such high game as Shakespeare. Well, the gentlemen who wrote the Bible flew at higher game still. They published communications from God Almighty.

The London *Star* falls foul of the Rev. Robert Linklater, whom it calls a "fossil," although his bigotry is too lively for that cold description. This clergyman objects to the waste of public money on national education, he complains that well-to-do people's children actually attend Board schools, and darkly hints that these schools don't "provide domestic servants." Parson Linklater should go to the heathen as a missionary. He would get plenty of domestic servants then dirt cheap. He would also be free from Board-schools.

The *Tailor and Cutter*, a journal devoted to the sartorial business, advises the practice of prayer. "The cutter," it says, "who prays over his cutting will produce a better coat than he who does not." The Bible is also recommended as "the oldest tailoring book in existence." But what does this mean? We wish the writer would explain. Is it a sly allusion to Jehovah's making a suit of clothes each for Adam and Eve? By the way, that suit was a leather one. Few Bible-readers would like to wear such a rig-out nowadays. Certainly the modern daughters of Eve would put it on the dustbin. Great improvements have been made in the art of tailoring since Jehovah started it near the Garden of Eden.

Father Darmody, discoursing on "The Church and the Serf" at St. Patrick's Church, Wolverhampton had the effrontery to assert that the Church abolished slavery. As a matter of fact, the Church held slaves itself all through the Middle Ages, and ecclesiastical bodies held serfs in what was practical slavery in France in the days of Voltaire Clericals run a history of their own, and, like the Bible, it abounds in falsehood and falsification.

The Sirdar's scheme, whatever its merits may be as a civilising project, fails to satisfy the demands of many pious people. They think it should be more distinctly stamped with the cross-mark of Christianity. The Sirdar has put his foot down, and says that the College is to be conducted on purely secular lines, and will have absolutely nothing to do with religious training or religious propagandism. It remains to be seen how far that determination will be carried out. If it can be evaded, it will.

A writer to the *Times* thinks there is something "quite incongruous" about a proposal to found a Gordon Memorial upon a purely secular basis. It ignores the great efficient principle of the man's life, and seems thereby to reflect upon it. Probably so; and hence the correspondent's suggestion that the College should be associated with the Church Missionary Society's work, handing over—though he does not quite say so—some of the funds.

Amongst other letter-writers to the *Times* who are seized with a feverish anxiety to divert the Memorial to religious ends is Mr. B. Baring-Gould. He gives some more or less apocryphal account of an interview on the general question of education with a "most intelligent Hindu judge." The Hindu, it will be noticed, is always "most intelligent" when represented as making some statement which is traitorous to his own faith. This intelligent Hindu judge, being asked whether he would desire the Bible to be employed as a text-book in the schools, "cordially assented, saying that he regarded the Bible as containing the highest code of morals in the world." That native judge is on the right road for promotion.

Another letter-writer, signing himself "A British Officer," observes that charity begins at home. He does not apply the remark to the whole scheme, but to a proposal to collect pennies for the Sirdar's fund from little breakfastless children attending London Board-schools.

The last time Mr. Gladstone saw Dr. Pusey alive was in 1881 at Oxford. "When he went away," Pusey said, "he kissed my hand and knelt down and asked my blessing." Gladstone was then Prime Minister, but Pusey, being a clergyman, belonged to a higher order of beings. He had received the Holy Ghost.

"General" Booth's Central International Trade Department in Fortress-street, Kentish Town, has subsided. We don't mean that it has gone under commercially. The building has sunk eighteen inches, and is still sinking. It has been shored up by order of the County Council. We don't suppose that all the prayers of the whole Salvation Army will lift it half an inch.

Mr. John Price has disappeared from Swadlincote. Heavy defalcations are alleged, and a warrant is out for his arrest. He was closely connected with the local Wesleyan body.

God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. So the poet says, and we cordially agree with him. The bubonic plague is not confined to India. It has broken out in Madagascar, and goodness knows where it will break out next.

Speaking of Madagascar, it is just as well to note how profitable the possession of that island is to France. She sends out plenty of soldiers, but very few colonists; and the poor devils of conscripts who go out there perish like flies. It is reported that 7,000 of them have died for want of quinine. But what does that matter? There is Déroulède, the patriotic poet, at home to cry: "*Vive la France! Vive la Gloire!*"

Mr. Mallock contributes to the *Nineteenth Century* an article entitled "Does the Church of England Teach Anything?" He adopts some lines of Swinburne applied to the French Republic, and, while observing that they would hardly apply to the land of Dreyfus, says that they might, "when scientific criticism and the mass of scepticism engendered by it has reduced the religions of the Protestant world to chaos some day or other, be not inapplicable to Rome." Mr. Swinburne's poetic interrogation is:—

> Who is this that rises red with wounds so splendid,
> All her brow and breast made beautiful with scars,
> In her eyes a light and fire as of long pain ended,
> In her mouth a song of morning stars?

It is, perhaps, a fairly safe prediction that the Church of Rome will survive the mushroom sects by which she is

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surrounded. But is it not equally safe to predict that the Church of Rome herself is doomed?

Obituary notices of some dozen clergymen appear in the *Guardian*, and attention has been directed to the longevity disclosed. The list includes rev. gentlemen who died at the ages of 97, 89, 84, 81, 80, 80, and 78. There are, without doubt, some dear, nice old gentlemen in the Church, and one is glad to know that they live so long—if they prefer a lengthened sojourn here below to a speedy flight to the realms of glory. In the instances cited the venerable clerics seem mostly to have lived in pleasant rural places, where it is easy to spend a placid and prolonged existence—especially if deaf and blind to the intellectual agitations and social struggles of the times.

Canon Barnett, parochial clergyman in the East-end, and a warden of Toynbee Hall, proposes to reform cathedrals by making them really national monuments, and he suggests that there should be submitted to the Privy Council proposals "for the better use of the cathedrals." The *St. James's Gazette* observes, in its superior way: "Really, these absurdities cannot be seriously discussed."

As showing that Bishop Warburton was right when he said man "is not a reasoning animal," we commend our readers to the last verse in St. John's Gospel, which says: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they could be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." This miracle, it will be seen, overshadows all the rest; it is arrant nonsense, and the wonder is that anyone should say he believes it. This silly statement can be tested by a simple arithmetical sum. A rapid speaker utters about 150 words a minute. Jesus is said to have expired on the Cross when about thirty-three years of age; if he had talked and worked night and day, and someone had recorded his history at that rate, how many words should have been written? Some years ago we worked out this sum, and we found that all the words, printed on paper as thin, and type like that of which some Testaments are made, the books could be conveniently packed in a joiner's tool-box.—*Two Worlds.*

The great Louis de Rougemont has turned up in a new avatar. He has just figured on a Spiritualist platform. Being a man of great energy, enterprise, and imagination, he ought to do well in this fresh direction. Hardly any of the professional Spiritualists—mediums or otherwise—could hold a candle to the hero of those marvellous Antipodean adventures.

The dead bodies of the Americans drowned in the *Mohegan* disaster were conveyed across the Atlantic on board the steamship *Marquette*. They were carefully disguised as "machinery," for sailors have a superstitious dread of sailing with a corpse, which they believe is sure to bring some disaster to the ship.

The United States government will have all its work cut out to deal with the Catholic Church and its possessions and privileges in the Philippines. Four great monastic Orders have been the feudal lords, ever since 1565, of lands out there equal in size to the whole of Italy. These Orders have successfully obstructed every effort of the Spanish rulers to ameliorate the wretched condition of the inhabitants. No political officer who made himself distasteful to them could remain long at his post.

We are glad to see the *Daily News* admitting what we have declared all along—namely, that the Dreyfus outrage is a result of clerical intrigues against the French Republic. "In France," our contemporary says, "the shameless persecution of Dreyfus, and the still more infamous persecution of Picquart, are notoriously the result of clerical manœuvres. .....The origin of the plot is clearly shown by the language of the clerical and military press, which openly demands the revival of the Inquisition for getting rid of Protestants and Jews. It is in the Jesuit colleges that the officers of the general staff are trained, and the miserable Boisdeffre is the creature of Father Dulac."

Here are some significant extracts from Lord E. Fitzmaurice's recent speech to a Liberal meeting at Montrose:—"He had said that the Public Prosecutor in the Stokes trial at Brussels was applauded by the Clerical mob. The unjust verdict of the court was also received with frantic delight by the whole Clerical press of Belgium and foreign countries. And that brought him to what was the most disturbing feature of the European situation, taken as a whole—he meant the activity and the power for harm of the Clerical party in foreign countries generally at the present time. In Belgium they had destroyed the Liberal party, and, in the opinion of well-informed observers, were steadily but surely driving the country to the edge of a revolution. In France the disgraceful proceedings connected with the Dreyfus trial, and the episodes connected with it, it was notorious were the work of the Clerical party. They used to be told that the Clerical party had learned wisdom by experience, and only desired liberty for others. But they saw, on the contrary, that the ideas of the Middle Ages were being renewed, and the prosecution of Jews and Protestants was being openly advocated in language of shameless violence and scurrility, and already in those circles where the Clerical party was supreme—the upper ranks of the French army—promotion was becoming impossible for anybody not educated in one of the Jesuit colleges.....In Austria and Hungary it was the same. The object of the Clerical party there had for years been to make a government, except their own, impossible; to ally themselves with every discontented faction; and to upset one ministry after another, in the hope that, in the resulting confusion, they might themselves obtain the upper hand. And, unfortunately, those efforts had only been too successful. In Austria the Liberal *regime*, which was established in 1868, and under which the country had made such remarkable progress, had fallen; and in Hungary the situation was becoming daily more dangerous, and owing to the same cause. In Italy the Clericals were ready to unite with any party which would work with them against a common enemy, against the free institutions established after the fall of Rome in 1870, and the abolition of the temporal power of the Pope. Their weapons were the same; a spirit of universal distrust, and to inflame every wound in the political system until the Government was discredited and finally upset."

There is trouble at Colchester. The Rev. C. C. Naters, rector of St. James's, has given the School Committee three months' notice to quit the school buildings, which he claims as vested in himself and his churchwardens. He also notifies that he will no longer require the services of the present staff of teachers. They are most efficient, and obtain the highest possible Government grant. But it appears that they have expressed a wish for a little rest on Sundays, and the parson wants them to go on teaching in his Sunday-school. Hence these tears.

Alderman Collings, J.P., senior deacon of Kingston Congregational Church, admits that it suffers under a serious disadvantage. One of the objectionable things in the Church, he says, is bad varnish, which often proves very irritating. When there is an air of drowsiness about the church, and the preacher gets a little prosy, the people drop off to sleep, and on waking find themselves stuck to the pews in most awkward positions, not to mention the spoilt clothes. However, the church is to be renovated, and it is hoped that this defect will be so remedied that the congregation may sleep in peace.

Trained parrots, according to an American paper, are used on German railways to call out the names of stations while the trains stop there. Ecclesiastical opportunities may open out in the future for highly-trained birds. Who knows?

"Heavenly love" was the kind of affection that an Ilchester co-respondent said he had for a married lady. An earthly jury have assessed damages against him.

The coroner at Shoreditch has been asked by a juror if there would be a pub. in the Land of Promise. Apparently Paradise would hold out no promise to that juror in the absence of such an establishment. The coroner declined to express an opinion, Heaven being outside his jurisdiction. The point arose in consequence of a witness stating that the Shoreditch Workhouse was ironically called the "Land of Promise," whereupon the coroner inquired whether there was a public house in the locality of that name.

As to the juror's question, Christ's rather superfluous miracle at Cana of turning water into wine seems to suggest that thirsty angels will be suitably accommodated, whatever happens to folks in the other place.

The following advertisement appears in a Hampshire paper:—

> Wanted, in a Church of England family of eight.—A Kitchen Maid, £6 a year (with substantial yearly rise if found honest and hard working). Must be an early riser. Everything found except drink and washing. No fringe. A good Churchwoman. Apply, as soon as possible, as applications may be numerous. Mrs. Davies, the Rectory, Turnbalym, S. Wales.

The applications to enter the service of this recklessly liberal Church of England family ought to be, indeed, as the advertisement anticipates, "numerous." It may be hoped, for the sake of the family of eight, that the Rector's stipend is on a more generous scale. His Bishop's income is sure to be.

The biggest Bible in the world in regard to dimensions and measurement is, it is said, over two hundred years old and belongs to a lady residing in Manchester. It woul

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take a much bigger volume to satisfactorily explain what the smallest printed Bible really intends to teach.

Archdeacon Sinclair laments that "the times are out of joint, and evils are multiplied all round about us to a degree that is without precedent or parallel. The Sceptic laughs at the Christian belief, and cries out to us that we ought to be content with nothing less than knowledge. But Christ is enough for us." Yes, Christ is better than any amount of knowledge. Choose between them: the two do not go very well together.

The Bishop of Lahore, who was seized with paralysis on Sunday, November 27, during a service in the Cathedral, died on the following Friday. Of course there is no moral. The moral would only arise if a Secular lecturer were stricken down on a Secular platform.

The Czar has shown just a little mercy to the Spirit Wrestlers, who are so opposed to all war that they refuse to perform military service. Instead of being harried at home, they have now permission to leave Russia. Some thousands of them are to be personally conducted to Canada by Count Serge Tolstoi, son of the great writer, and at the expense of the Society of Friends. They will find any part of the British Empire much better to live in than Holy Russia, in spite of the fine humanitarian sentiments of the Czar's peace message to Europe.

The Church Missionary Society's expenditure is estimated at £322,000 for the year ending March 31 next. And all this for converting the heathen—and finding berths for an army of clerics.

The Rev. Alfred Gurney, vicar of St. Barnabas, Pimlico, has recently died. He was the author of *Our Catholic Inheritance in the Larger Hope*. His inheritance on earth was pretty comfortable, for the *Manchester Guardian* says he died "a master of great wealth." His "larger hope" must have embraced a specially-fine mansion in the skies. As a rich man, he seems to have faced the difficulty of getting into heaven with comparative composure.

An official statement as to the finances of the Vatican describes as an exaggeration the rumor that the Holy See holds in deposit with the chief continental banks from £4,000,000 to £5,000,000. Only an exaggeration! Lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, because you never know when you may need them.

The Rev. B. Senior is one of the white-chokered gentry who interest themselves in temperance work, and do more harm than good. He has been visiting thirty-two public-houses in Bradford. He is careful to say that he did not go as a spy. He simply desired to see the landlords and landladies "to have a quiet conversation with them on spiritual matters." As regards things "spiritual," he certainly went to the right shops. He went as "the representative of the Master," and talked about the Bible, which happens not to be on the teetotal side at all.

This clerical busybody says that he had previously induced three publicans to give up their business owing to the religious convictions he had implanted. We don't dispute his word that these publicans gave up their business. What we want to know is, had they "made their pile," and how much did they receive from the incoming tenants?

Sir James Carmichael, who was for some years private secretary to Mr. Gladstone, has been delivering an interesting lecture on the contents of the Premier's post-bag. One correspondent was a clergyman who signed himself "A Chosen Minister of Christ," and warned Mr. Gladstone to flee from the wrath to come if it was not too late, and stating that he was the instrument of Beelzebub to lead the people astray into Socialistic ways. An old Welsh woman, with much better feeling, sent Mr. Gladstone a ridiculous present. It was a roll of flannel, which she said had been soaked with medicine, and had given great relief to her husband, who was now dead—and she thought Mr. Gladstone might also derive benefit from its use. She added that the flannel had not been washed since her husband used it, for fear of losing the virtue of the medicine.

The *Record*, like some other dense and doddering Christian journals, seems to be quite too old to learn anything. Without the slightest reference to recent remarks in the *Freethinker*, it once more lifts up its head and wails at the absence of Sunday services on board British merchant vessels. This time it talks about work on Sundays. Well, of course, the winds and waves know nothing about Sundays. And the crews can be trusted to see that they are not put to any unnecessary labor either on Sundays or weekdays.

This plea of the *Record* about work is mere pretence, being simply of a piece with the artfulness of land-lubbing sky-pilots, who now talk of the "Day of Rest" when all the time they mean the "divinely-ordered" Sabbath, and the religious services in which they desire to force everybody to take part. What the *Record* really wishes is not cessation from work, but something by the side of which most crews would consider work a perfect godsend.

The *Record* shows what it is aiming at when it says: "The cross in the British flag is a Christian emblem, and, of whatever creed the crew may be, the shareholders and masters profess themselves to be Christians, and the souls of the half dozen or more officers, engineers, and petty officers are precious in the Master's sight." Then let the Master look after them. The ship's master is either too busy or quite disinclined.

The suggestion of the *Record*, that the shareholders should be invoked to interfere, is only on a par with the mean and roundabout methods by which Sabbatarians have egged on the London County Council to make themselves laughing-stocks of all sensible people.

The Puritans, whatever we may think of their methods, manage pretty frequently to score. They have successfully opposed at Birmingham the license of a handsome and well-appointed theatre proposed to be erected at a cost of £70,000. The Corporation, who are the ground landlords, and would benefit to the extent of £1,000 a year, cordially supported the application, and no fault could be found with the plans. Nevertheless, the application was opposed by "various ministers of religion," and ultimately refused.

"Putting improper questions to a girl in the Confessional" is the charge against the Rev. H. F. Hinde, Vicar of the Church of the Annunciation, Brighton. The Rev. Seymour Terry is responsible for the accusation, and the Bishop of Colchester has appointed a Commission to inquire.

"The credit of a prophet was not overthrown by the failure of his predictions." This is quite true as far as Bible prophets are concerned, but we did not expect to read it in a paper like the *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette*. It occurs in the report of an address by the Rev. B. Moffett, of Carrickmacross.

"Providence" has been pretty active of late, and the celestial weather bureau has been kept very busy. Gales and shipwrecks are the order of the day on the English coasts. Over in America it is still worse. Fifty vessels were wrecked in one storm at Long Island, and the New England coast is strewn with the ruins of other craft.

Rev. Dr. Clifford, president of the National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches, speaking at a recent meeting in Dr. Parker's Temple, declared that "they had no fear as to their leader, for he was the Son of God." Yes; but the same Son of God is the leader of the Church of England, also of the Church of Rome, likewise of the Salvation Army. All the Churches claim him as their boss.

"We voice," Dr. Clifford said, "the convictions of 1,841,767 members." This was greeted with applause. But just fancy all that number of people in any one country having "convictions"! All that most of them have is opinions. "We are training," Dr. Clifford continued, "3,170,193 children in Sunday-schools." More applause. But is it not a fact that about ninety-five per cent. of all the prisoners in our gaols have been Sunday-school scholars? "We own," Dr. Clifford added, "£50,000,000 worth of property." Well now, that *is* something. Stick to the property, Dr. Clifford. It is vastly more important than all your doctrines, or even your "convictions."

According to the *Ohio State Journal*, a great hubbub has been raised in the staid old village of Baltic, below Canal Dover, over the announcement that the most estimable dames and damsels of the town propose to give what they term "a hugging social" in the town church. The objection made to it, of course, comes from the husbands and sweethearts of the ladies who are behind the project; but the latter have refused to compromise, and say they will carry out the program as it has been planned. The "hugging social" is likely to be followed by a coolness in many Baltic homes, and estrangements without number; but that it will be a success there is no doubt. The proceeds of the affair are to go towards paying off church debts. The *State Journal* says this is "a novelty" in the way of raising church funds; but it is not. It is a custom older than Christianity for women to offer themselves for pay, and to devote the proceeds to pious uses. Only the practice has not always been restricted to the distribution of innocent favors.—*New York "Truth-seeker."*

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, December 11, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London: 7.30, "Souls, Spirits, and Ghosts."

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—December 11, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

T. HOPKINS.—Thanks for the subscription, which is duly acknowledged elsewhere; also for your humorous letter. What you thought of sending to 23 Stonecutter-street would have reached us all right. We do not print our private address in the *Freethinker*, because if we did we should never have a minute to call our own. We like to see friends, but work has got to be done, and quiet must be had somewhere.

H. EARLY (Brighton) warns South of England Freethinkers against a man about fifty years of age, who calls on Secularists, whose addresses he obtains somehow, and endeavors to obtain money on pretences that are fraudulent. It is always best to make enquiries before assisting perfect strangers.

WHEELER MEMORIAL FUND.—James Neate, 10s.; Mrs. Neate, 10s.; W. Clogg, 1s.

A. V. KOHN.—Mr. Foote will consider your suggestion of delivering another memorial lecture on Charles Bradlaugh at the Athenæum Hall at the end of January.

CASTOR.—Thanks. See paragraph.

JAMES NEATE.—Yes, better late than never. Some are late *and* never.

E. W. QUAY.—Mr. Foote could not very well report his own words at the grave of Mrs. Forder. We printed an obituary notice of the deceased lady, and it is not customary to do more except in the case of public personages. Perhaps you overlooked the reference in the "Correspondents" column.

W. B. THOMPSON.—Mr. Foote will take one of the dates, and will shortly write you which. The Chatham friends must not be too hard upon him. He has so much to do, and so many places to visit.

C. H. CATTELL.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. C. MORGAN.—Under consideration.

SAMUEL HALE.—Arrangements for debates must be left with the local committees; *we* cannot undertake them. Thanks for your cordial letter, all the same.

C. E. BRAMMER.—Pleased to hear you "much admire the scheme of the Secular Society, Limited." You will be proposed as a member at the next Board meeting. Yes, the Mr. Holyoake you met all those years ago is the same Mr. Holyoake you hear of now. He is very old, but in fairly good health, and lives at Brighton.

E. J. JAMES.—Thanks. See paragraph.

C. K. DAVIES.—We are obliged. See paragraph.

W. J. WINSOR.—See answer to another correspondent on the same subject. You must have overlooked the obituary notice in the previous week's issue.

JAMES TULLIN.—See paragraph.

J. G. BARTRAM.—We are very sorry to hear of Peter Weston's trouble. See "Sugar Plums." Thanks for the trouble you are taking in the other matter. Mr. Foote would be very happy to have another debate with the Rev. Dr. A. J. Harrison. He retains pleasant recollections of the previous one at Newcastle in 1877.

PROTESTER.—See paragraph.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—T. Hopkins, £1; W. K., 5s.; S. A. Bendit, 2s. 6d.; R. S. N. (per R. Forder), 5s.; C. E. Brammer, 11s.

JAMES W. LEADER (Cambridge) applies for membership in the Secular Society, Limited, and pays £1 to cover the first three years' subscription. This correspondent is an ex-Catholic, having started as a Jesuit. He got disgusted with the humbug, and became an Evangelist, but found that a farce too, and is now an out-and-out Freethinker. He is at present occupied in the commercial world, but hopes some day to stand upon the Freethought platform.

ROBERT FORDER writes: "Kindly spare me space for a few lines to sincerely thank the large number of friends in all parts of the kingdom for their sympathy and good wishes in my recent sad bereavement. It would ill-become me if I did not specially thank Mr. Foote for the beautiful and feeling address at the graveside on that inclement afternoon, and to those good friends who braved the elements to show respect for my good wife."

S. A. BENDIT.—Thanks for the fresh reference. The matter will be dealt with at convenience. Subscription acknowledged elsewhere.

W. MCDONALD.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks for your good wishes. No doubt Freethought lectures are much wanted at Aberdeen. The local friends ought to bestir themselves and secure a visit from lecturers when they are in Scotland. Glad to hear you so enjoy reading this journal.

AMERICAN EXCHANGES.—Our American exchanges are once more desired to note that our address is 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. Some of them continue to post to an old address, which we left four years ago.

RECEIVED.—Progressive Thinker—Isle of Man Times—Two Worlds—Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette—Public Opinion—Burton Mail—Sydney Bulletin—Liverpool Echo—New York Truthseeker—Liberator—Free Society—People's Newspaper—Natal Mercury—Freidenker—Leeds Daily News—Boston Investigator—Adult—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Huddersfield Examiner—Zoophilist—Ethical World—Humanity.

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.

*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.

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 is due.

THE National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

ANOTHER large audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on Sunday Music and Sabbatarian Tyranny, with special reference to the County Council vote of Mr. John Burns and the utterances of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Mr. Victor Roger, who occupied the chair, said that the topic was one of burning interest, and they would all be glad to hear what the President of the N. S. S. had to say about it. Mr. Foote's lecture, which was a pretty long one, was listened to throughout with the closest attention. His humorous sallies provoked much laughter, which now and then necessitated a pause for the audience to recover; and there was an extraordinary outburst of enthusiastic applause at the end of his peroration, in which he referred to the day of reckoning that would come for the Progressives on the London County Council who had betrayed the highest interests of the people by their recent vote in relation to the Queen's Hall concerts.

Mr. Foote occupies the Athenæum Hall platform again this evening (Dec. 11). His subject will be "Souls, Spirits, and Ghosts." On December 18 the chair will be taken by Mr. Charles Watts, who will say a few words of farewell on the eve of his departure for America.

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured three times in Glasgow. A heavy gale and incessant rain prevailed the whole day. Consequently the attendance in the morning and afternoon was limited, but in the evening the hall was filled. The audiences were very enthusiastic, and Mr. Watts reports that the Glasgow branch of the N. S. S. is doing good work. Its members are earnest workers, who appear never to "grow weary in well-doing." At the close of the evening lecture a unanimous wish was expressed that Mr. Watts may have a safe journey to America, and that he would speedily return and bring Colonel Ingersoll with him.

To-day (Sunday, December 11) Mr. Watts lectures three times in the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool, when he hopes to meet all the local friends to say "Good-bye" on the eve of his departure for another visit to the American continent.

Mr. Cohen delivers three lectures to-day (December 11) in the Borough Hall, Stockton. We hope all Freethinkers in the locality will give him their hearty support.

The new volume of Byron's works, edited by Mr. Rowland Prothero, contains a freshly-printed letter by the poet addressed to Ensign Long, and dated April 16, 1807. The following passage will interest our readers: "Of religion I know nothing, at least in its favor. We have fools in all sects, and impostors in most; why should I believe mysteries no one understands, because written by men who chose to mistake madness for inspiration, and style themselves Evangelicals? However, enough on this subject. Your piety will be aghast, and I wish for no proselytes. This much I will venture to affirm, that all the virtues and pious deeds performed on earth can never entitle a man to everlasting happiness in a future state; nor, on the other hand,

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can such a scene as a seat of eternal punishment exist; it is incompatible with the benign attributes of a Deity to say so. I am surrounded here by parsons and methodists; but, as you will see, not infected with the mania. I have lived a Deist, what I shall die I know not; however, come what may, *ridens moriar*."

The *Natal Mercury* for November 5 has been sent us. It contains a good letter signed "Query" in favor of Freethought and against superstition. We are glad to read such a letter in a leading South African newspaper.

After years of persistent pegging away, Mr. J. T. Embleton has obtained permission to supply a copy of the *Freethinker* to the Reading Room of the Liberal Club, Epsom. Freethinkers belonging to similar Clubs should go and do likewise.

We are always glad to receive papers containing articles, paragraphs, or reports upon which we can base an "Acid Drop" or something. But it is useless to send us papers without marking the special item meant for our attention. Will our friends kindly note this?

Colonel Ingersoll has just been lecturing near home, at New York and Jersey City. His new lecture on "Superstition" is evidently attracting big audiences. The Colonel is lecturing at Washington to-day (December 11).

The new Board of Directors of the Secular Society, Limited, will hold their next meeting on Friday, December 16. All communications intended to reach them should be addressed to Miss Vance (the secretary) at 377 Strand, W.C.

Tickets for the London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner are now in the hands of all London secretaries, and are also to be obtained from Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., Mr. C. A. Watts, 17 Johnson's-court, E.C., and from Miss Vance at the N. S. S. office, 376-7 Strand, W.C. Mr. Foote will preside at the dinner as usual. Mr. Watts will be in America, but Mr. Cohen will be on the list of speakers on this occasion.

The *Liverpool Echo* prints a capital letter by J. Roberts, of the local N. S. S. Branch, exposing the police tactics in regard to the Freethought lectures at Alexandra Hall. The police have been round the city warning all lessees and proprietors of halls that a charge for admission on Sunday is illegal. But they know it is not so, or they would have fought the battle to which they were challenged on the occasion of Mr. Foote's last visit to Liverpool.

Tyneside Freethinkers should drop in at Peter Weston's shop, 77 Newgate-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, and buy some of his stock of books and pamphlets, which he is prepared to sell at what the drapers call "a ruinous reduction." He has to clear out of the shop very shortly, as it has to be pulled down, and he cannot obtain another shop in the neighborhood, so he will probably have to throw up the business altogether and find another way of getting a living. He deserves all the help that can be given him at this juncture. Peter Weston has always been a stalwart of Freethought, and has often taxed himself for the cause to an extent that might well make some wealthier Freethinkers blush. We hope he will be able to clear off all his stock in the way indicated, and have a few pounds to fall back upon in the hour of need.

East London friends will remember that the local N. S. S. Branch has a tea and concert this evening (December 11) at the King's Hall, 83 Commercial-road; tea at 5.30, concert at 7. Those who are not already provided with tickets (1s.) can obtain them at the door. Mr. Foote has promised to run down after his Athenæum Hall lecture and give a reading.

The Freethought open-air meeting at Limehouse on Sunday was a great success, the speakers being Messrs. Pack, Davis, Heaford, Edwards, and Ramsey, and the musical opposition being reduced to one belated cornet. Another meeting will be held this morning (December 11), with the same list of speakers.

The Deptford Broadway meeting on Sunday was addressed by Messrs. Edwards and James. All went well until a Christian called Scach appeared with a band. He occupied the time allowed for discussion, and his abusive speech incited his co-religionists to violence. The Secular platform was broken, and some of the Secularists were kicked and had their clothes torn. Some of the Christians, however, protested against this outrage, and promised to help the Secularists in getting fair play. Another meeting will be held to-day (Dec. 11), and we hope the local Freethinkers will rally around the Secular platform.

Mr. Foote has been heavily overworked for some months, and feels that he must ease off a little. Amongst other things he has decided to postpone, at least for another week, his promised article on the future of the Secular Society, Limited, which article will include a definite appeal for financial support to the new Board of Directors. Mr. Foote will take the opportunity of replying to the curious remarks upon the Society that have appeared in the *Critic*. These remarks are not of very great importance, as the Secular Society, Limited, is not a commercial enterprise, and does not seek or expect aid from the readers of such a journal; nevertheless, a brief reply to Mr. Hess's criticism may do good, if only by showing that the very features of the Society which he regards as faults are precisely the merits which should recommend it to the Freethought party.

## CHURCH AND CHAPEL.

WITHIN the limits of the Christian communion are to be found two rough divisions. There is a section which adheres to conformity; there is another which has a distinct leaning towards nonconformity. In common parlance these parties are known respectively as church-goers and chapel-goers.

The more theologically disposed have a definite religious reason for their adhesion to one side or the other. The churchman's attitude is one of stand-offishness. In effect he says to the chapelman: "I am holier than thou." In his prayers he devoutly thanks God that he is not as other men are—dissenters, heretics, schismatics, and the like. He boldly declares that those whose brows are unbaptised with the holy water of the church are not amongst the elect of God; that those who receive not the sacramental elements from divinely ordained priests shall be shut out of the kingdom of heaven; that, in a word, outside the pale of the Church there can be no salvation. The chapelman, on the other hand, bitterly resents the claim of the churchman to superiority. He contends that the doctrine of the Apostolical succession is a man-made figment; that the true successors of the apostles cannot be episcopally created; that the grace of God can trickle from the end of no man's fingers. The chapelman therefore says that the authority of his ministers is in no sense inferior to that of the priests of the church; that his administration of religious rites is valid enough for all practical purposes; that a man, indeed, most effectively proves his claim to be a successor of the apostles by his manifest ability to faithfully expound the Word of God. The chapelman is oblivious to the peril which the churchman esteems him to be in. He has no fear but what his calling and election will be just as sure as that of the churchman. And so the breach continues. In the meantime those who work and wrestle and pray for the unity of Christendom strain their eyes in vain for the herald of the coming day.

But the great majority of both church-goers and chapel-goers are not theologically minded. To them the line of demarcation represents no such distinction as is here described. If you can only bottom the average churchman's motive in attending church preferably to chapel, you will find it is because he esteems it more respectable to do so. On the other hand, the fundamental principle which dominates the mind of the ordinary chapelman is one of contempt for the churchman's affectation of superior respectability. In nine cases out of ten the position of the believer in the Christian camp is decided by his attitude towards this fetish of respectability.

The question for us to consider is whether there is any counterpart for this church-and-chapel distinction within the domain of Freethought. My personal opinion is that we shall not have far to seek for a corresponding line of severance.

I do not hesitate to assert that Ethicism and Secularism represent simply a church and chapel aspect of one platform. That Ethicism and Secularism are in essence one seems to me indisputable. I have been a reader of the *Ethical World* from its inception—and let me here say that I am an appreciative student of that journal—but I have not yet seen any definition of Ethicism which does not apply with equal force to Secularism.

For instance, it has been declared on editorial authority, in an article on "The Ethical Movement Defined," that "the bond of religious union should be solely *devotion to the good* in the world." I do not suppose there is one amongst

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the many readers of the *Freethinker* who would take exception to such as a definition of Secularism. The difference which exists between Ethicism and Secularism is entirely one of emphasis, not of essence.

Notwithstanding the fundamental unity which underlies both positions, I find myself unable to resist the impression that there is a tendency, perhaps on both sides, to mark a plain line of distinction between the two movements. The worshipper in the stately Ethical church looks down upon the frequenter of the more humble Secularist chapel. On the other hand, the Secularist chapelman feels a withering contempt for the Ethical churchman's claim to superiority.

There is too manifest a disposition on the part of the high priests of the Ethical Church to preach an exclusive doctrine —that is, to anathematise those who are outside the pale of the one true Ethical fold. The unconventional folk, however, who go to the Secularist chapel fail to see what advantage would be brought about by the "visible unity" for which the Ethical churchman is so anxious. And so it comes to pass that men, whose aims in life are identical, are yet hindered from working together in unison. Oh the pity of it!

Can it be that the Ethical churchman is, like the Christian churchman, jealous of his imagined superiority? Is it true that the Secularist chapelman is, after the manner of the Christian chapelman, positively proud of his unconventionality? Is it just possible that the main difference between Ethicism and Secularism is not in any sense doctrinal, but is solely a question of the man's attitude towards the fetish of respectability?

G. Dawson Baker.

## KITCHENER OR CHRIST? OR, THE RIVAL MAXIMS.

(Lord Kitchener says: "To raise the down-trodden people of the Soudan is doing God's service, and laying the foundations of religion.")

Lord K. of Khartoum has started to boom
The name of Lord J. of Judee,
In aid of a plan to boss the Soudan
Through lucre and faith in J. C.

Christ's maxims he reads; but those that he heeds
Are maxims that never are wrong:
The maxims of steel that make the foe feel
That God is the God of the strong.

The maxims of J., though good in their way,
Are useless, say folk that are frank;
The maxims that K. believes in to-day
Are maxims of Maxim the "Yank."

The maxims of J. drive maxims of K.
And maxims of steel from the field;
For those that are "meek," and "turn the left cheek,"
"Resist not," but constantly yield.

The slaves of Soudan are part of God's plan,
If God be the boss of the show;
But yet, says Lord K., we're serving Lord J.
In raising them out of their woe.

Whom J. has enslaved, K.'s maxims have saved,
By blowing ten thousand to hell.
A fact we detest, yet "all's for the best,"
For J. designs ev'rything well.

God blasts the Soudan, to benefit man;
Man saves it, to benefit God;
The weak are oppressed, that rogues might be blessed
For helping them—surely it's odd!

Lord J. of Judee shows clearly that we
May justify means by the end;
Since "All's for the best," all actions are blest,
And nothing we do can offend.

Red rivers of blood have fattened the mud
Of Egypt, for many a day;
A good job for us, because we can fuss,
And rob, while we help—Let us pray!

And thus, says Lord K., in Egypt we lay
Foundations of purest religion,
Yet folk there adore one God, and no more;
Lord K. worships two, and a pigeon!

The maxims of J. implicitly say
That K. of Khartoum will be damned.
In hell he will fry, if J. didn't lie,
For K.'s Christianity's shammed!

G. L. Mackenzie.

## THOUGHTS UPON CALVINISM.

Presbyterianism is one of the few infamies that don't belong to Catholicism. Catholicism is responsible for Presbyterianism; Presbyterianism for Atheism. I was a Presbyterian. I'm not one. I was a good many things I'm glad I'm not. I'm not a good many things I wish I was.

When a man turns Presbyterian, he adds the Devil to the Trinity and hurrahs for Presbyterian enterprise. This Church's discipline is regulated by the pocket of the disciplined. When a poor Presbyterian gets drunk, he's tried for drunkenness and turns Methodist. When a rich Presbyterian gets drunk, he's tried for heresy and turns Episcopalian. I never saw a Presbyterian who didn't thank God he wasn't anybody else—nor anybody else who didn't thank God he wasn't a Presbyterian. When a Presbyterian dies, the live Presbyterians say: "He has his reward." When anybody else dies: "I *hope* he's better off." I expected to be a Presbyterian preacher. But I became interested in the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and consistency did the rest. Think of a Presbyterian preacher's arresting a nigger for beating a sick mule; of an orphan asylum under the care of the Presbyterian God.

### The Denomination of Jehovah.

When I was a Presbyterian, I wondered where I'd go if I died. I was the only one in the congregation who had any doubts on the subject. I was scared to the verge of insanity. I should have gone crazy, but I thought God might not let a crazy Presbyterian go to heaven. If I were God, I wouldn't let a Presbyterian go to heaven who wasn't crazy. Think of a sane man turning Presbyterian; of his keeping his sanity after he turned.

In Sunday-school we studied the Shorter Catechism. It was longer than any other shorter thing I ever saw. Within that nursery of hypocrisy, that laboratory of infantile nightmare, my mind began to prepare for Atheism. I used to wonder which I'd rather be—a nigger owned by a North Carolina gentleman, or a gentleman's son owned by the North Carolina Jehovah. To this day I can't scratch a lucifer match without recalling "the chief end of man."

The sermons were death-warrants of hope; the prayers, sulphuretted suggestions; the hymns, hell-fire and damnation set to long metre. The congregation were herded about 10 a.m. The service lasted till the pastor's stomach suggested the Benediction. From what I hear of Jehovah's character, I've no doubt of his denomination. But if I be mistaken, he'd better change before all the Presbyterians get to heaven. Think of calling Jehovah "father." The man who does is hard up for a daddy. So long as I can trace my pedigree to a monkey hanging by his tail, I'll never disgrace my family by calling the Presbyterian God "pa." Think of a heaven bossed by Jehovah, and populated with Catholics and Presbyterians.

### A Patrician Creed.

When a Presbyterian reforms, he either dies or turns Atheist. He doesn't turn Episcopalian—it's too much like Catholicism; nor Catholic—it's too much like Presbyterianism. No Presbyterian gentleman, for obvious reasons, would turn either Methodist or Baptist. My family never objected to our field hands turning either Methodists or Baptists. But we drew the line at our house niggers. A gentleman's social standing largely depends on the quality of his house niggers and dogs. One of my grandfather's house niggers stole a hog from an adjoining Baptist. The old gentleman didn't so much blame the nigger for stealing the hog as he did a Presbyterian for stealing from a Baptist. In the transports of his consistency, "Ole Marster" opened his batteries: "You damned black rascal! You'd better turn Baptist and finish the job." My grandfather hated Democrats, Secessionists, Abolitionists, Methodists, Baptists, and poor white folks. I wonder what he'd say if he saw his grandson, his wandering boy, to-night. The old gentleman never could make up his mind whether the Devil was a Secessionist or an Abolitionist—the only matter upon which I ever knew my grandfather to be in doubt. I liked to hear "Ole Marster" pray in church. If the Lord didn't hear, everybody else in the township did. And if Jehovah didn't obey "Ole Marster's" orders, Jehovah was the one exception. The old gentleman was a retired sea captain. He hailed his Maker as if

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all hands were called to "shorten sail," and Jehovah was on the topsail yard. When "Ole Marster" told us to do anything, we kept right on doing it over and over till orders came from the quarter-deck to "'vast heaving." The last job he put me at lasted for only two hours, but I've been for thirty-five years trying to recuperate. My chief objection to dying is meeting "Ole Marster" and trying to excuse my apostasy.

As a child I declared that, as a man, I'd never go to church—the only good resolution I ever kept. A friend's mother-in-law died. He invited me to the funeral. He said the clergyman who was to preach the funeral sermon had been his pastor. "And," added my friend, "he will do one mother-in-law justice." As I wanted to hear a man who could do that, I started for church; but conscience whispered: "Remember your childhood's vow." So they towed the old lady up to her last anchorage and moored her bow and stern without my assistance.

JOYOUS HYMNS.

When I was in the gall of Presbyterianism and the bonds of Calvinism, our hymns bespoke our sentiments. I remember "Plunged in a Gulf of Dark Despair," "Mistaken Souls that Dream of Bliss" (referring to those who slept during the sermon), "'Twas on that Dark, that Doleful Night," "'Mid Raging Flames their Late Conviction Comes," etc. I sat and wondered at the "false system" that places God in heaven and Satan in hell.

The character of Calvin exhausts the tongue of virtuous invective. Take Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost out of the Trinity, substituting Calvin and the Pope, and Calvinists and Catholics could unite. Popery is the only thing that Calvinism tells the truth about. The only way to compliment either is to lie about it. Calvinism may have improved since I left it. The rest of the congregation seemed to confound my departure with the approach of better things. Calvinism can't be much worse without being Catholicism. It could be a great deal better without being fit to live. Calvinists have decided that unbaptised infants can be saved. Could anybody but a Presbyterian or a Catholic have ever thought otherwise? Think of Jehovah's shoveling babies into hell-fire; think of his doing anything else. Sometimes I think Jehovah might improve if we could keep him from associating with Presbyterians. For three hundred years he's been a member of that church. Think of a man reforming with three hundred years of Calvinism to his credit!

As to old Nick, we shall have no millennium till we get him out of the Presbyterian church. I would suggest bribing him into apostasy by offering him the next vacant Methodist bishopric. Calvinism could no more run without Old Nick than a steamboat could navigate without a fireman. Old Nick is the stoker of the old ship of Zion. You may call Jehovah captain, but without our colored friend in the fire-room the old craft couldn't keep steerage way on her. Think of loving Jehovah! If anybody ever loved him, 'twas an acquired taste. Think of being infatuated with the Pope. Old Nick shows to what associating with Presbyterians will bring a man. I feel sorry for him—grateful to him. I never received a pleasant suggestion that didn't come from him. If there be anything I do despise, it is ingratitude. Good-bye, old friend. Peace to your *ashes*.

PECULIARITIES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN.

Calvinism is the stanchest of all religious creeds, the most dignified and disciplined lie on earth. You can't shout in this church. Even when a Presbyterian goes crazy on religion he doesn't forget that he's a Presbyterian. If he did, he might be cured. When an Episcopalian goes crazy, he's afflicted with an excess of Episcopalianism—sort of a superabundance of nothing—and is said by his congregation to be "suffering from intense application to parochial duties." When a Methodist goes crazy he improves somewhat on Methodism, but his hallucinations betoken the same Methodist trend. He calls himself "Jesus," "Gabriel," "Satan," or "John Wesley." Sometimes he combines the quartet into a syndicate. When a Baptist goes crazy he suffers from religious hydrophobia. He doubts the efficacy of water. He is a pious clam ready to shut up at flood tide. But when one of my former faith goes crazy, he just "makes his bed in hell," and pulls the bedclothes over his head. He doesn't claim to be anybody unusual. He is only a thermometer for Christ's sake. So you see where I got my modesty. I never saw a crazy Presbyterian who didn't think he was going to hell, nor a sane Presbyterian who didn't think everybody else was going there. Properly speaking, Episcopalians and Presbyterians lose their reason, Methodists and Baptists go crazy.

Only those that go through a Presbyterian tuition, escaping with their reason, appreciate the unspeakable horrors of that apprenticeship. Think of living near the crater of an erupting Vesuvius and with every breath thanking God you're there. Think of working in a match factory as a matter of conscience. One who escapes from Calvinism, as I have, is a burnt child dreading the fire of every creed. M. GRIER KIDDER.

—*New York "Truthseeker."*

## BIBLE-KISSING AS A BURLESQUE.

THE ancient town of Warwick has been holding its almost equally ancient Court Leet. Amongst the civic functionaries present were some of curious nomenclature and jurisdiction. They comprised ale-tasters, bread and butter weighers, fish and flesh tasters, herd and pinners, etc. All these solemnly took the oath of office. Collectively and severally they were called upon to "Swelp their God" and "Kiss the Book" that they would well and truly discharge their respective duties. It does not, of course, seem quite decent or dignified to mix up the Deity with ale tasting, the search for bad fish and questionable butter, or the impounding of strayed oxen and asses. At the same time, we must admit that Christians ought to know what is agreeable to their God.

Whilst they are considering whether these oaths of office are reverential or the reverse, I venture to offer the following rythmical version of the solemn pledges given to the burgesses by the aforesaid ale-tasters and others. The latter we may imagine ranged in line across the stage, and singing as a chorus of rustics:—

We'll well and truly try,
And a true verdict give
Upon the ale you buy
And the food on which you live,
So help us God!

We'll taste your flesh and fish,
And tell you in a trice
If they are fit for dish,
And if your butter's nice;
So help us God!

We'll investigate each herd,
And say if it be sound;
We swear upon the Word
Stray donkeys to impound;
So help us God!

And while we kiss the Book,
We'll think of sacred things,
And for Bible-types we'll look
As we hope for angels' wings,
So help us God!

We'll think of water turned to wine,
Of the man inside a fish,
Of the moke that spoke
And the unholy bloke
Who says to all this—"Pish!"
So help us God!

The versification is weak. I apologise for it. On the other hand, my feeling as to the legal farce of Bible-kissing is strong. F. N.

Some more about the Blood and Blazes Brotherhood. The social annual appeal pans-out an average of £25,000 to £30,000. A progressive provincial town and district is expected to return about £100. All officers are expected to canvass district within a radius of 50 miles. No travelling exes allowed. Meantime, captain and "sub" get their "screw" best way they can out of the ordinary five-times-a-Sunday collections. When the "social appeal" is on no "screw" is forthcoming. Lucky if they pay rent. Every penny collected in the district is at once sent to the C. W. O. in Sydney. There may be scores of Magdalens where that money was collected, but not a penny is used to attempt to raise *them* from the mire, or anybody else there. Centralisation up to the hilt! Then, on top of the S. A. appeal, come self-denial collections, and the province commanding officer fixes financial targets for the officers, who in turn fix them for Brother Bang-the-Drum and Sister Tambourine. And the thing goes on again, so the town loses another "monkey" or so. And the officers revel in the luxury of bread and dripping, or say liver. Wretched indeed is the condition of most country captains, while the "big guns" live in clover, travel all over the shop, and, on an average, support a family of six. For head officers are invariably champion—well, multipliers!—*Sydney Bulletin.*

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## THE CONVERSION OF GEHAZI BROWN.

QUITE tall he was, and dark and staid, he hardly ever joked,
And when he did 'twas but a simple, saintly little wheeze;
He did not swear, he did not drink, he prayed for those who smoked,
And had a tiny cough, and drooped a trifle at the knees.

Gehazi oiled his ebon hair, and brushed it very flat;
His suit was black, his cheeks were lank, he smiled as if in pain;
He'd turned his eyes to heaven with such constant ardor that
They took an upward squint, and never came in line again.

He'd missions to the fallen, burning brands he loved to seize.
Slim spinsters called him handsome, and they spoke of him as pure.
He managed all their Temperance Tents and good societies,
The Purists' Band, the Ladies' Guild, the Mothers of the Poor.

And when a mission, aiming to regenerate the dears
In curls of gilt who serve behind the wicked city bars,
Was started, he was chosen to invade their vicious spheres,
And point them to a higher place beyond the twinkling stars.

He went where men most congregate, and there, with manners meek,
Besought the barmaids all to leave the haunts where sinners herd.
Then whispered horrid tales at members' meetings once a week—
The women called it shocking, and they never missed a word!

Gehazi said his mission was progressing very well,
But rumors reached the ladies—it was whispered far and wide
At Brighton in a dog-cart he'd be cutting quite the swell
With a peroxided female flaunting boldly by his side.

The hopes of frosty spinters to the point of zero sank;
They looked well into matters and emerged with faces glum.
The funds of five societies were missing at the bank,
And cash in hand consisted of a single battered "thrum."

They called upon Gehazi some sufficient cause to show,
But none of them could find him, though they sought him near and far—
He'd wandered to a better land, where good levanters go,
With Flossy Jones, a frisky girl who served behind a bar.

—*Sydney Bulletin.* SILAS SNELL.

## BOOK CHAT.

THE Rev. Hensley Henson, B.D., Rural Dean of South Barking, has written some *Notes and Inferences on Apostolic Christianity* (Methuen). The reason he gives for publishing them in book form is naive and perfectly intelligible. He says that "laymen will neither listen to sermons nor read them." Quite true; why should they? The distaste for theological pabulum may even extend to sermons published in the insidious guise of "Notes and Inferences."

* * *

"Scarcely anybody," he says, "reads the New Testament." That also is true, and perhaps it is as well for the Church that it is so. The current notions about the Gospel and the apostolic age are, he says, largely based on the productions of Marie Corelli, Hall Caine, and writers of that type. Very likely; but does not the statement rather smack of professional jealousy?

* * *

Sixteen sermons addressed to University audiences by Hastings Rashdall, D.C.L., M.A., are published by Methuen. The *Educational Times*, in reviewing them, draws attention to the fact of an Oxford don declaring from the pulpit of St. Mary's that "the re-statement—let us say frankly, the reconstruction—of Christian doctrine is the great intellectual task upon which the Church of our day is just entering, and with which it must go on boldly if Christianity is to retain its hold on the intellect as well as the sentiments and the social activities of our time."

* * *

Following Abélard and Maurice, Dr. Rashdall promptly disposes of the idea of substitution in the Atonement, and speaks of the testimony of the apostles to the resurrection as the report of a "vision." He further says: "We go on teaching children things which we do not believe ourselves, or we do not teach them anything definite."

* * *

Still, the *Educational Times*, which, by the way, is the journal of the College of Preceptors, is not satisfied with Dr. Rashdall. It says he "does well to speak out, but he may rest assured that, if he is to show the masses the truth in such form as to compel its intellectual acceptance, he will have to dig deeper than he has done."

* * *

A novel is in the press, written by a well-known journalist, in which some comments that will be well worth reading are made on Christian journals by the author, who entitles his story *All Sorts and Conditions of Women.*

* * *

*Turkish Baths* is the title of an excellent sixpenny pamphlet by "Lennox," published by the author at 3b Blenheim-mansions, Stafford-street, London, N.W. It deals with the relation of these baths to health and the senses. It is written with knowledge, vigor, and literary capacity, and cannot but do good. We wish it a wide circulation.

* * *

That embodiment of amiable imbecility, the simpering, genteel curate, has been satirised in Mr. H. G. Wells's romance, *The War of the Worlds.* The Rev. Richard Free, of Milwall, is indignant thereat. He says that Mr. Wells has "made the curate the most contemptible character in the book!"

* * *

Mr. Wells may be trusted to know what he is about. His types of character are usually recognisable in life. One wonders why he should have taken the trouble to explain "that it does not follow that he regards all curates with ridicule and contempt because it has served his purpose to caricature an ignoble type."

* * *

The *Adult* for December contains much matter on the Bedborough fiasco, including a curious communication from George Bedborough himself. "I am a coward," he says, "and I reverence more than ever the Bradlaughs and the Footes who have conquered where I have succumbed." Such a frank confession seems to imply some saving virtue after all. This magazine contains good articles by Henry Seymour and William Platt.

## ENGLAND'S GREATNESS!

(*At the Grave of Charles Darwin.*)

ENGLAND'S greatness! not the sword avenging,
Not the nations bowed beneath her heel,
Not the cross of blood that to her kingdoms
Sets its seal.

These are ghosts of old barbaric splendors,
Rotting where Imperial Rome lies low,
Things that thrill the heart like tales of slaughters
Long ago.

Far beyond them is her glory shining,
Brighter than the sword within the sun;
It shall last when these superb oppressions
All are done.

Other armies has she as victorious,
Slayers these whose hands are clean of blood,
Soldiers whose sublime and steadfast phalanx
Wrong withstood.

England's greatness! this abides unchanging,
Won by arms that sound no loud refrains;
When all wars and warriors shall have perished,
Truth remains.

—*The Outlook.* ELLEN GLASGOW.

## PROFANE JOKES.

WHAT is the difference between a Catholic priest and a Baptist parson? One uses wax candles, and the other dips.

Sunday-school Teacher—"Why did they put Joseph in the pit?" Small Boy (who had been to theatre the previous night)—"Because there was no room in the dress circle."

Blackwoods, the publishers, were issuing the *Agricultural Journal* at the time the potato disease broke out, and they invited experts in agriculture to send their opinions as to the cause of it. One famous Scotch farmer replied: "I thocht at first it was a dispensation of Almighty God, but now I think it is an insect."

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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, "Souls, Spirits, and Ghosts."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, A Concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. James, "Christ and Democracy."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Miss Z. Vallance, "Ethical Grace."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Discussion on "Vivisection"; 7, J. M. Robertson, "The Fallacy of Theism."

WEST LONDON SECULAR CLUB (15 Edgware-road): Every evening 7—10.50.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, Miss Margaret McMillan, "The New Education."

WEST LONDON BRANCH (15 Edgware-road): December 15, at 8.15, H. C. Stuart, "Evolution."

WESTMINSTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Grosvenor Arms, Page-street): 7.30, E. Calvert, "History of the Shakespearean Drama."

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Addresses by Messrs. Smith, Stuart, Parsons, Rosenthal, and Faulkner.

DEPTFORD (Broadway): 6.30, R. P. Edwards and E. Pack.

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): For lecturer and subjects see Saturday's *Mail*.

BRADFORD (Oddfellows' Hall): 7, Malfew Seklew, "Why I am an Anarchist."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, A lecture.

DERBY (Central Hotel, Market-place): 7, E. Daniel, "The Antiquity of Man."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class; 6.30, Social meeting.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. McCabe "Authority in Religion."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): Charles Watts—11, "Religion: Is it a Curse or a Blessing?"; 8, "Christian Glad Tidings"; 7, "The Doom of the Churches."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, W. Stanley (Manchester Microscopical Society), "An Evening with the Microscope." Illustrated by microscope and lantern views.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Lecture by a local gentleman.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, A Reading on "Philosophy."

STOCKTON (Borough Hall, Dining Room): C. Cohen—11, "Is There a Life Beyond the Grave?" 2.30, "Christianity and the Jews"; 6.30, "The Search for God."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—December 11, Stockton-on-Tees; 18, Camberwell. January 1 and 8, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road; 15, Camberwell; 22, Sheffield; 29, Bradford Labour Church. February 5, Glasgow.

H. PERCY WARD, 5, Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—December 18, Birmingham.

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# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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## THE SECULAR INCORPORATION.

MY readers will probably recollect that I took an active part in the work of the Free Press Defence Committee, which was formed to assist the defence of Dr. Havelock Ellis's book against a police prosecution. During the five months' agitation I spoke at several well-attended public meetings. All of them, however, were ignored by the newspapers. Even a paid advertisement of one of them was refused insertion in the *Daily Chronicle*. But when the defence broke down through Mr. Bedborough's pleading guilty, and a Committee meeting was held to consider the situation, and to decide what should be done with the balance of funds in hand, the prospect of internal dissension brought a reporter of the *Daily Mail* on the scene. His presence being noticed, the meeting decided that he should withdraw, as private business had to be discussed. Whereupon the *Mail* twitted the Free Press Defence Committee with stifling publicity. Of course, this was disingenuous as well as absurd. The press had boycotted the committee all the day, and only thought of reporting its proceedings a little before twelve o'clock, when there was a chance of picking up something lively—and saleable.

The attitude of the press towards the Bedborough prosecution is the attitude it has always displayed towards Secularism. Our organisation and propaganda are steadily ignored, but we are welcome to publicity when anything occurs which is thought likely to be to our disadvantage. I could name more than one "advanced" journal which has never a good word to say for me personally, or for the National Secular Society, but which cheerfully prints the nastiest criticisms and allusions. The same policy prevailed in Bradlaugh's time. It is not new, and I am not pretending to a special martyrdom. I am only stating the fact—which, by the way, does not impair my sleep or digestion.

In this frame of mind I was somewhat amused to discover that I had excited the interest of Mr. Henry Hess, who edits (and, I believe, owns) the *Critic*. Mr. Hess is good enough to say that I am "a man of strong personality and great ability." Well, if this be true, he can scarcely expect me to accept his invitation to reply to my domestic critics in his columns. The readers of his paper are not Secularists. They would have the interest in such a controversy that a street crowd has in a dog-fight. I am quite unable to see that the success or failure of the National Secular Society is any concern of the miscellaneous crowd who read the *Critic*. It is idle to talk about "the public." The public has no claims upon me. My life is spent in the service of the Freethought party, and when I appeal beyond it I will acknowledge a wider responsibility.

Mr. Hess argues, however, that I may reasonably be asked questions respecting the Secular Society I have Incorporated: He contends that I "ask people" to support it, and that this gives the Press the right to be inquisitive. But do I ask "people" for support? I ask the Secular party only, and solely through the columns of the *Freethinker*. Nevertheless, as this is perhaps a point which is open to discussion, I will deal with what Mr. Hess says about the Secular Society, Limited.

Mr. Hess admits that the National Secular Society "lacked specific provision for possible sources of income—legacies and the like." I am in a position to add that thousands of pounds were lost to our movement in this way. This, indeed, was my chief reason for devising a scheme which would practically circumvent the Blasphemy Laws, at least as they were universally interpreted before the judgment of Lord Coleridge on the occasion of my trial in the Court of Queen's Bench. Incidentally, of course, the Incorporated Society involves certain other advantages. It does place both work and funds on a basis of legal security; and the fact that I, and I alone, have provided the Secular party with this legal instrument is a sufficient answer to those who affirm, either honestly or malignantly, that I desire to profit by a state of illegality and confusion.

I have now to say that I hope Mr. Hess studies the Memorandum and Articles of other Companies more profoundly than he has studied those of the Secular Society, Limited. Writing quite recently, he states that the organisation "has this week taken definite form." As a matter of fact, which can be verified at Somerset House, I registered the Society on May 27. It is also alleged that I gave it "much booming in the columns of the *Freethinker*." Where else could, or should, I boom it? And why should I *not* boom it? Is it not my duty to use the *Freethinker* for the promotion of an object of transcendent importance to the Freethought party? Mr. Hess allows that he can "find no particular fault with the prospectus of the Secular Society, Limited," and then he proceeds to find fault with some of the very provisions which are its highest merits. That as to the admission of members he describes as "curious"—a word so elastic as to be quite unintelligible in this connexion. Now what is this provision? Intending members have to be proposed and seconded in writing, and admitted by the Board of Directors, who are elected at the Annual Members' Meeting. Surely this is the veriest common-sense. It excludes no one who ought to be included. I may add that not a single applicant has yet been rejected. Mr. Hess also applies the word "curious" to the "absence of dividend," but this only shows that he has not grasped the elementary principles of the scheme. By providing that no member, as such, is to derive any sort of profit from the Society, by way of interest, bonus, dividend, or otherwise, all the advantages of a Trust are secured. The funds must be used, absolutely and entirely, in promoting the objects set forth in the Memorandum of Association, and those objects include all the essentials of Secularism. It is easy for Mr. Hess to sneer at "altruistic" language, but what else does he expect in the prospectus of a non-commercial Society, established for impersonal ends? Certainly the language of the prospectus is of severe simplicity. It passed the careful and



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protracted examination of a thoroughly competent solicitor, and the close criticism of an eminent counsel.

I confess I do not understand Mr. Hess's remarks on "allusions to the property" of the Society. He says that this is a "trifle premature," and that the Society "apparently has no property, nor seems likely to have any." Now this is worse than "premature." How does Mr. Hess know that the Society will never have any property? How can he tell whether Freethinkers will or will not leave it substantial bequests, or give it substantial donations? To my knowledge several Freethinkers have already put the Society in their wills for legacies which are substantial enough in the eyes of a comparatively poor party. Mr. Hess further sneers at the allusions to debts and liabilities as perhaps "sadly prophetic." But he knows very well that such allusions are inevitable. They are necessary formalities in a document that must contain provision for every possible contingency. Such criticism is really a waste of words. I hope it is not intended merely as a provocation.

One great advantage of this Incorporated Society is glimpsed by Mr. Hess. It establishes "an unimpeachable trust" for receiving, holding, and expending money for Freethought purposes; and if I have achieved nothing else for our party, I am entitled to a little gratitude for this. Not only will funds be guarded by legal security, which no one can infringe, either without or within, but Freethought leaders will be largely relieved from the possibility of certain sinister accusations. Bradlaugh received several personal legacies in his time, and it was always open to anyone to say or insinuate what could not, from the nature of the case, be disproved, that such legacies were *meant* for party purposes.

I have done with Mr. Hess's criticism. Next week I shall deal with the scheme as it affects the future of our party.

G. W. FOOTE.

## THE REAL JESUS.

In the *Freethinker* for Nov. 27 I pointed out that the modern cry of "Back to Jesus" was remarkable, first for its surrender of nearly all that Christians have hitherto regarded as the essence of their faith, and, second, because of the dishonesty or incompetency manifested by those who set up the plea. For it is evident that underlying most of the pulpit eulogies of Christ there is a desire, not to find out what Jesus taught, but to perpetuate a certain vested interest by creating a character in harmony with modern thought, and affiliating that on the real Jesus as depicted in the Gospels. Apart from prepossessions and self-interest, it is impossible not to realise that the gospel of Jesus presents such a bundle of irreconcileable attributes as to make it impossible to accept him as an ideal without either eliminating certain objectionable features or adding certain very desirable ones. Lectures delivered by such men as Professor Clifford or Dr. Horton are all marked by one or the other of these methods, frequently by both, and one may reasonably question the moral value of a belief which leads to such demoralising results.

To those who impartially study the life of Jesus it is not only plain that his teachings are stated in such an extravagant form as to rob them of all practical value, but that his intellectual limitations are even more clearly marked than is usually the case even with leaders of religious movements.

I have no intention of going over the well-worn ground of dealing with the extravagant and impracticable character of much of his teaching, or the non-moral sanctions attached to all; it will be enough for the present to dwell upon faults of omission rather than those of commission.

Take, first of all, his relation to what is broadly termed intellectual culture. Here his limitations are so clearly marked as to be almost undeniable. His most sanguine supporters have seldom put him forward as a thinker, while even Dean Farrar admits that Jesus was "destitute of all human learning," which, I suppose, is the Dean's way of expressing a truth too ugly to be pleasant, but too plain to be ignored. A reading of the Four Gospels shows that, considered intellectually, Jesus stands lower than either Mohammed, Buddha, Zoroaster, or Confucius. In the reported utterances of either of the last three one meets with flashes of wisdom, deep insight into human nature, or pithy, fruitful utterances on the problems of life. With Jesus we never rise above the very baldest of moral platitudes. Buddhists, Zoroastians, and Confucians have built up systems of philosophy from their masters' teachings, but not even the ingenuity of the scholastics was able to do the same in the case of Jesus. So far as intellectual strength is concerned, the Jesus of the Four Gospels appears destitute of any such feature.

In the one case we see the thinker wrestling with the world's problems, in the other the religious enthusiast exhorting his followers to submit to the will of God, or indulging in splenetic outbursts against such as rejected his message. And when we take the reported discourses of Buddha, his exhortation to conduct, with the culture of the intellect as the condition of its right performance, and contrast them with the precepts of Jesus, the two sets of teachings stand as the utterances of heated fanaticism as opposed to philosophic culture. Such expressions as "Blessed is he that hath not seen and yet hath believed," "He that believeth not shall be damned," the constant praise of blind, unquestioning faith, and equally constant warnings against unbelief, all show Jesus to have been practically dead to what we imply by the phrase "Intellectual Ethics."

Although surrounded by all forms of superstition, Jesus raised his voice against none. He accepted all unquestioningly, even eagerly. The belief in legions of angels and devils, witchcraft, demoniacal possession, with many other absurd fancies, was accepted by him with a gravity almost laughable were it not for the disastrous results that followed from his example. It was his beliefs which gave a fuller measure of authority to the witch-hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and to the practice of exorcism as a method of curing lunacy. It was to Jesus, the man who walked with devils, talked with devils, and cast out devils, that the people of after centuries appealed to in support of their infamous practices. And if Jesus be what the Churches claim he is—a pattern for all men to follow—their position was a sound one.

Upon this question of diabolic possession the verdict of modern science is clear and decisive. No qualified medical man doubts that the people who are represented in the New Testament as suffering from diabolic possession were really the victims of epilepsy or some allied nervous derangement. The symptoms are too clearly described, and analogous cases are too frequently met with to-day, to leave any doubt on the subject. As the late Professor Romanes said, even while putting in an apology for Jesus, "The devils damn the doctrine." A man cannot, with due regard to honesty, believe that a phenomenon due to nervous disorder in 1898 was due to diabolic possession in A.D. 30. We can fully agree with the Rev. Charles Gore that "the emphasis which Jesus Christ lays on diabolic agency is so great that, if it is not a reality, he must be regarded either as seriously misled about realities which concern the spiritual, or else seriously misleading others. And in neither case could he be even the perfect prophet."* The issue here is a perfectly simple one. Either Jesus knew the real complaint from which the so-called demoniacs were suffering, or he did not. In the one case he was just upon a level with the clowns around him, and in the other he was guilty of gross mendacity in supporting a belief which he knew to be false, and one fraught with immeasurable evils to future generations. Of course, to the Freethinker no such difficulty exists. To him it is perfectly plain that on this subject, as on most others requiring real culture, Jesus was upon the same level as the peasantry around him, and consequently his belief in demoniacal possession was only on a line with his mental limitations in other directions.

Professor Romanes considered it to be counted to the credit of Jesus that he taught nothing "which the subsequent growth of human knowledge.....has had to discount. .....For, when we consider what a large number of sayings are recorded of—or at least attributed to—him, it becomes remarkable that in literal truth there is no reason why any

* Note to Romanes' *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 180.

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of his words should ever pass away in the sense of becoming obsolete."* And in this respect, it is argued, Christ is superior to other teachers of antiquity, whose doctrines have all been modified by the progress of human knowledge. A better sample of theological special pleading it would be difficult to find. Putting on one side the absolute falsity of the passage in the light of what I have said above, it might well be argued that, if a greater measure of Christ's teaching has survived criticism than has been the case with many of the philosophers of antiquity, it is largely because of the vagueness of his teaching, and because they grappled with the problems of life in a manner absolutely foreign to the whole character of Jesus. It is their versatility, their breadth of view, their attempt to deal with life in all its manifold aspects, which open them to so much criticism; it is Christ's narrowness of view which makes him less liable to definite criticism, but at the same time renders his teaching less valuable as a factor in the development of man. Indeed, it can hardly be said, in the light of the New Testament, that life possessed any problems at all for Jesus. His view of life was narrow, local, and exclusive, while as to much that constitutes the staple of current thought he seemed absolutely indifferent or ignorant.

Such questions as relate to the family or the position of woman in the State are noticeably absent from his teachings; while as to the State itself his view of the matter appears to have been summed up in "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," which meant with primitive Christianity complete submission to the powers that be.

There is absolutely nothing in the recorded utterances of Jesus that would help us to understand the proper structure of the State, or the most desirable relations between it and its members. Whatever light we need on this subject has to be sought elsewhere. As J. S. Mill says: "While, in the morality of the best Pagan nation, duty to the State holds even a disproportionate place, infringing on the just liberty of the individual, in purely Christian ethics that grand department of duty is scarcely noticed or acknowledged. It is in the Koran, not the New Testament, that we read the maxim, 'A ruler who appoints any man to an office, when there is in his dominions another man better qualified for it, sins against God and against the State.' What little recognition the idea of obligation to the public obtains in modern morality is derived from Greek and Roman sources, not from Christian; as, even in the morality of private life, whatever exists of magnanimity, high-mindedness, personal dignity, even the sense of honor, is derived from the purely human, not the religious, part of our education, and never could have grown out of a standard of ethics in which the only worth professedly recognised is that of obedience" (*On Liberty*, p. 29).

The last thing that Jesus and his immediate followers appeared to have had in their minds was a social revolution, or even a social reformation. "My kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus; while Paul advised his followers to remain content as they were, bond or free, rich or poor, single or married, as the end of the world was at hand. "What difference can it make," asks St. Augustine, "to a man who is about to die whose government he lives under, if only there is no compulsion to impiety or injustice?"† The root conception of Jesus and his followers was the approaching end of the world, and, with this belief strong upon them, earthly government mattered but little. Of the very existence of a social problem there is no hint in the utterances of Jesus. His only cures for such evils as he did see were boundless almsgiving and implicit reliance upon the care of a heavenly father who clothed the lilies of the field, and would therefore all the more certainly clothe human beings. Indeed, granting the accuracy of the Gospel records, it is doubtful whether Jesus ever contemplated anything more than the establishment of a select company of believers, or at best a purified Judaism. Certainly the oft-repeated statement that Jesus worked by his teachings a change in man's conception of the nature of society is one that it is impossible to justify. The gratification of evil feelings was not so much eradicated as they were suspended. "The last shall be first and the first shall be last," the story of Dives and Lazarus, show plainly enough that heaven was imagined as a place where the relative situations of master and servant, tyrant and slave, rich man and beggar, simply underwent a change; and it is difficult indeed to see where the ethical difference lies. Not inaccurately did the philosopher Ueberweg sum up the teachings of Jesus as follows: "The rich man and poor Lazarus, giving to the poor, earthly resignation and the vengeance beyond the grave, which the God who loves the poor wreaks on the privileged ones by the everlasting torments of hell—these are the fundamental ideas of the founder of the kingdom of the Messiah.....There is no idea of a positive dignity of labor, but misery is to be endured and forgotten in the opium intoxication of the blessedness of the Messiah's kingdom beyond the grave. For the first subjugation of barbarians the intellectual opium intoxication might be necessary; now its results are crippling and depressing."

At its best, Christianity introduced a morbid and anti-social view of life into the world. Its doctrines of passive obedience, implicit and explicit encouragement of celibacy, denunciation of wealth, blessing of poverty, and exhortation to indiscriminate almsgiving, could but lead to injurious results. They are, moreover, all ideals of an essentially Eastern type, and, as such, totally unfit for our Western lives. In the East, where the struggle for existence is, on the whole, less exacting than in the West, and where there is always a strong tendency to quietism, such doctrines may take root and flourish; but elsewhere they must always bear the mark of a foreign import, to be maintained by various artificial agencies and by more or less creditable methods. Only by a continuous method of repudiation and retranslation has it been possible even to pretend that Christianity was fitted to serve as a rule of life. The present plan of dropping the supernatural portion of Christianity, its essence, and preaching the moral part, its excrescence, is only the latest phase of a policy as old almost as Christianity itself. The whole history of Christianity has been a history of accommodation, and, in accommodating itself to the modern feeling that natural conduct, and not supernatural beliefs, is the important thing in life, it is forsaking the only ground upon which it could make authoritative claims on the allegiance of man.

C. COHEN.

* *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 157.
† *City of God*, v. 17.

## FAITH-HEALING.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

IT is often said that "the age of miracles is dead." What is meant is that the conviction of the uniformity of law is now so generally established that no cultured person ever supposes that any phenomenon, however wonderful, of which he may hear is to be explained by other than natural causes. Yet, if we look a little below the surface, we shall find that the majority of people are far from emancipated from the superstitious beliefs which we have inherited from the past. If any proof were required of this, it might be found in the practice of public and private prayer. Prayer is really a demand for miraculous interference, and while few expect their petition for daily bread to be as literally answered as did the once-famous William Huntingdon ("sinner saved"), who declared that when he was hungry fishes came out of the water and birds from heaven to feed him in abundance, and who did not scruple to pray for a pair of breeches, prayer is still supposed to have some occult effect in the comparatively unexplored regions of mental and moral phenomena. While no one expects a *coup d'état celeste* to decide in an action at law, Smith *v.* Brown, it is still supposed that some Power above will see that the British are not altogether worsted in the Soudan.

Miracles still happen wherever and whenever they are believed in and expected. In our own time we need not make a pilgrimage to Lourdes or La Salette to learn particulars, nor need we even go to Knock or Llanthony Abbey. We have only to enter the first Salvationist barracks to hear of cases of supernatural conversion, and even of the supernatural cure of disease.

There are so many features common to all such revivals and their attendant miracles that it may be worth while looking at them with some attention, more especially as they may throw some light on the boasted superiority of the miracles related in the New Testament. The first point worthy of notice is that revivals of religion and

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attendant miracles are by no means confined to Christendom. In India hermits of sanctity are constantly arising and attempting to reform the different sects of Hinduism. They are believed to be incarnations of deity, and in their train many of the sick are cured. Colonel Olcott, at the present day, is asserted to have cured over one thousand persons by occult or magnetic power within the space of one year in India. With the Mohammedans it is the same. Although Mahomet did not claim the power of working miracles, he is none the less credited with them, and dervishes of repute, of whatever sect, are believed by their followers to possess miraculous powers, chiefly manifested in works of healing. Indeed, the "hakim," or physician, is looked on with the sanctity given to one who is devoted to religion. The Roman Catholic Church declares that the power of working miracles, which was bestowed upon her by Jesus, never has been, and never will be, withdrawn. The lives of the saints are full of relations of these wonders; some, as in the case of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Bernard of Clairvaux, being given on the authority of eye-witnesses, and, as I think, with an element of truth in them. Visitors to continental churches cannot fail to notice the number of crutches, sticks, and splints that are said to have been left by the owners, who have been relieved by prayers offered to some saint or by the supposed efficacy of their relics—although, like Diagoras, who, when shown in the Pagan temples the votive tablets of sailors who had been saved by calling on the gods, asked where were the tablets of the drowned, we may ask where are the crutches of the uncured? In many of these cases also, I venture to think, the choice does not simply lie between knavery and miracle; the powers of imagination and faith are sufficient to explain the success of the relics or the prayers, belief in which wrought cures that, both to priests and patients, must have appeared miraculous. Protestants, at any rate since the days of Conyers Middleton, have sought to draw an impossible distinction between apostolic and ecclesiastic miracles; between those narrated in the New Testament and those found in the works of the Fathers of the Church. Yet every revival among Protestants has been attended by its miracles. Anabaptists, Muggletonians, Methodists, Irvingites, and Salvationists have this, among other features, in common. During a Methodist revival in Cornwall four thousand people, it is computed, fell into convulsions. Wesley believed these phenomena were of diabolic origin, but the cures he attributed to the grace of God. Wesley declared himself to have been cured of a fever by meditating on the passage interpolated into Mark in which Jesus is alleged to promise that "these signs shall follow them that believe In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Wesley's journal and the early volumes of the *Arminian Magazine* relate numerous instances of miraculous cures attending the propagation of Methodism. The Irvingites, as is well known, claimed to have the Pentecostal gift of tongues, and they considered disease to arise from sin and to be removed by holiness and faith. Mrs. Oliphant, in her *Life of Edward Irving*, gives a striking instance of his curing himself from what he believed to be an attack of cholera, but which was more probably dysentery, by resolutely persisting in attending to his ministerial duties. Yet she also shows that undoubtedly his death was accelerated by want of taking proper sanitary precautions. During the revival in the North of Ireland in 1859 numerous "miracles" occurred, which are described and explained in a work by E. A. Stopford, Archdeacon of Meath. The "miracles," however, consisted far more in believers being "struck" with disease than being healed. Some are said to have become blind and deaf. Others were struck dumb. One girl is mentioned as having been speechless three weeks. "The duration of these affections," wrote a correspondent of Archdeacon Stopford, "appeared to be arbitrary, but both their approach and their assertion were always, I believe, foretold by the patients.....The deafness and blindness generally occurred during the absence of speech, and for short intervals only." No test seems to have been applied to ascertain the reality of these deprivations. "Indeed, the friends and bystanders are so persuaded of the miraculous nature of the affections that they would resent any attempt to test them." This observer saw several cases of temporary paralysis—one of both hands, one of the right arm, and one of the whole of one side. One girl whom he saw had had seventy seizures, sometimes seven in one day, and had lost her speech and the use of her limbs. When the cure came it was, of course, said that the devils were cast out The epidemic or contagious character of these maladies was unmistakable. "She took it, and was very bad with it," said an Irishwoman. "Took what?" she was asked. "Oh, just the revival," she answered; "I have a brother and two sisters, and none of us took it." Insanity was a frequent result of this as of other revivals.

Still more extraordinary were the miracles and convulsions occurring at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, the former of which are mentioned in Hume's *Essay on Miracles*, and examined at some length in Bishop Douglas's *Criterion*. A good old priest, the Deacon Paris, who had embraced Jansenist opinions, and thereby incurred persecution from his ecclesiastical superiors, dying in 1727, was buried in the cemetery of St. Medard, Paris. The Jansenist party forthwith beatified him, and began to pray at his tomb. Religious exaltation and persecution speedily induced hysterics in certain young women while praying there, others were soon affected, and the malady spread so rapidly that in two years there were from seven to eight hundred *convulsionnaires*. Some—*les sauteuses*—jumped in the most extraordinary manner, turning completely heels-over-head; some—*les aboyeuses*—barked like dogs; others—*les miauleuses*—mewed like cats. These phenomena were considered miraculous, although similar epidemics have been known to frequently break out among nuns in convents; and numbers of invalids visiting the cemetery to pray for recovery, and inspired with an ardent faith and firm expectation of cure, were observed to be either notably improved or wholly healed. These "miracles" were attested upon the spot before judges of undoubted integrity. Indeed, they were performed and testified to in the face of a strong opposition party of Jesuits and Molinists, and, although there were some cases of fraud and imposture, there was a large residue of undoubtedly genuine cures, which, however, Bishop Douglas sufficiently shows need not be ascribed to supernatural agency. The number of those relieved were but a small proportion of the number of supplicants, and in no certain case of cure could the disease be said to be beyond the reach of natural means. In consequence of the tumult attending these "miracles," in 1732 the Court ordered the cemetery to be closed, thus giving rise to the well-known epigram:—

De par le roi, défense à Dieu,
De faire miracle en ce lieu.

Closing the gates of the cemetery stopped the miracles at the tomb, but it did not stay the convulsion epidemic, which spread into the provinces and lasted a whole generation.

*(To be concluded.)*

## THE AGE OF PROGRESS.

It has been well said that "to him who looks at the giant efforts made in that favored age when all things were combining to illustrate and to hasten the progress of mankind, when Cortez led his troops against Mexico, when Luther burnt the Papal Bull and severed the first links of the chain which had so long bound his species to the earth, when Leonardi da Vinci fathomed the depths of every science, and by his exquisite and astonishing eloquence hastened the regeneration of the species; when, side by side with the return to light of the poets, orators, and historians of antiquity, came forth the most glorious monuments of Grecian art; when the system of the universe was discovered by Copernicus, though not published, ere the very year that Columbus died: to him who looks at this sudden and magnificent increase of all the elements of civilisation and knowledge, it would seem that there might well have been anticipated for Europe a destiny far more glorious than she has since achieved, and that, after the lapse of three centuries, a condition would have resulted far more ennobling than that to which she can now lay claim. A history of the follies and absurdities committed by society, if but for the last half-dozen generations, would be one of the most instructive books ever written."

No doubt, considering the many agencies of progress

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which for centuries have existed, the advancement to a higher state of general civilisation has been slow. But then it should be remembered that numerous retarding influences have been at work, and that every forward movement has had to cope with ignorance, prejudice, vested interests, and traditional folly. Moreover, the Church and, in too many instances, the ruling monarchs have arrayed their power against the progressive aspirations of the people. Priestcraft and kingcraft have been the deadliest foes to all true progress. Their combined efforts were directed to keep the masses ignorant, and to make them subservient to the decrees of "the powers that be." For centuries science was crushed, education ignored, philosophy tabooed, and the physical and moral condition of the bulk of the nation entirely neglected. And it must be confessed that the Church has been the greater offender of the two in these respects. As Draper puts it: "The Christian party asserted that all knowledge is to be found in the Scriptures and in the traditions of the Church; that in the written revelation God had not only given a criterion of truth, but had furnished us all that he intended us to know. The Scriptures, therefore, contain the sum, the end of all knowledge. The clergy, with the Emperor at their back, would endure no intellectual competition.....The Church thus set herself forth as the depository and arbiter of knowledge; she was ever ready to resort to the civil power to compel obedience to her decisions. She thus took a course which determined her whole future career—she became a stumbling-block in the intellectual advancement of Europe for more than a thousand years" (*Conflict*, p. 52).

Notwithstanding these many drawbacks, it is a fact, thanks to the rise and perpetuation of scepticism, that the age in which we live is pre-eminently one of progress. Whether we recognise the number or brilliancy of scientific discoveries, the application of physical science to manufacturing industry and the concerns of every-day life, the social advancement of the people at large, or the rapid strides made by liberal views in theology, the present age stands unrivalled in the pages of history. Whilst those circumstances which minister to man's physical wants have been undergoing a mighty revolution, the higher and more ennobling faculties of his nature have not been forgotten. A thousand agencies have sprung up on every hand, by which food has been supplied to the intellectual nature of mankind, which expands the mind and elevates the race. Civil government, political economy, mental philosophy, theological opinions, and the numerous minor subjects which mark the civilisation of a people, have been undergoing a revolution, more silent and perhaps less striking, but no less real, than that which has taken place in physical science. The grand social reformation which is now being effected by the thousand schemes for human amelioration is no transient upheaval of the social condition soon to subside, but a mighty tidal rush of the great wave of human progress, which no force can ever drive back.

True, this progress has been gradual in its manifestation, for, as I have already mentioned, it has had to grapple with a combination of obstacles. As the author of *Progress of Science* (J. Villin Marmery) writes: "The ideas which swept away religious terrorism and persecution, torture, mendacity, and brought in philanthropy, were exceedingly slow to germinate. They took over two hundred years to have practical effects. They were at first opposed by an aggravation of the evils they were intended to destroy; they were combated by men of tradition, by scholars, by princes, and law-makers; they were anathematised by the Churches of all denominations; they were checked by fire and sword, exile, confiscation, expulsion, law, by the whole panoply of brute force; but they were triumphant in the end." From the time when Martin Luther appeared progress became an active factor in mental freedom. By him priestly domination was shaken to its very foundation, and the ecclesiastical despotism under which men had groaned for ages received a shock from which it never recovered. He opened up the way for those more liberal views in theology which are now so widely entertained. The seeds of free discussion may be said to have been sown at the Reformation; the plant developed very slowly, still the fruit is now appearing. The untrammelled expression of any views in theology, however heterodox, would perhaps have been as little tolerated by Martin Luther as by the Pope; but then the course taken by him could not but lead to that in the end. It required the greater doings of such men as Paine, Carlile, Bradlaugh, and others, to thoroughly realise free discussion; but with Luther the movement commenced. The right of private judgment was at least proclaimed, and that with no feeble voice. Monarchy had reached its climax, and universal empire was now wrested from the Pope. The minds of men, roused from the lethargy in which they had so long been resting, became strangely agitated with conflicting interests and opinions. The mere outward trappings and paraphernalia of wealth were seen to be visibly declining, and the reign of mind was dawning.

One of the most striking features of the progress of the age is the fact that the steam-engine and its kindred powers have brought large masses of men together, and rendered easy the transit from place to place, thus opening up a facility for combination, for interchange of opinion, and for mutual improvement. The enormous circulation of books and cheap periodicals testifies to the advancing intelligence of those who are called the lower classes. The eagerness with which great political questions, religious opinions, and social movements for the elevation of mankind are now discussed all tell in unmistakeable language of the improvements wrought. Nor have the upper classes escaped the influence of this change. Dissipation and laxity in morals, once the distinguishing characteristics of a gentleman, are now vices only to be practised in secret, and denied in open day, otherwise a good name and an honorable reputation at once disappear. The improvements that have taken place have permeated the whole of society.

It cannot be said with any degree of justice that this improvement has been produced by what is called Christianity, for that existed for centuries when comparatively no progress was effected. No; as Bonham, in his work, *Secularism: its Progress and Morals*, says, "every step of advance since the Reformation has been marked by some degree of scepticism.....As the fruits of physical science grew, they became silent witnesses of natural law; the sceptical philosopher, employing them to illustrate his particular philosophy, gained a new audience in the world. Then theology began to suffer a process of disintegration and dissolution, such as had never before been seen. These influences not only exerted themselves upon the outside, but reached into the very heart of the Church; a kind of erosion of creed set in, which moved the Church from its position of high authority to a point at which explanation, apology, and adaptation became necessary, and from this point to an attitude in which successive adaptations of creed are made as progressive physical science renders such adaptations imperative" (p. 21). The present disunion and unrest in the various Churches fully justify these remarks, and indicate the progress that is now going on in the Christian world. That progress, however, is not in the "religion of Christ," but in the departure from it.

Science, which wields such a magic power in modern life, has escaped from the destroying hands of theologians, and is now in the custody of men who are sceptical as to the dogmatic claims of theology. Canon Farrar says that science has had a "struggle for life" with theological dogmatists, but frankly admits that "in every instance the dogmatists have been ignominiously defeated." Even Talmage, whose fanaticism as a rule blinds him to facts, acknowledges that our leading men of science are not believers in the Christian faith. Here are his words: "I put upon the witness stand, living and dead, the leading evolutionists—Ernst Haeckel, John Stuart Mill, Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Spencer. On the witness stand, ye men of science, living and dead, answer these questions: Do you believe the Holy Scriptures? No. And so they say all. Do you believe the Bible story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? No. And so they say all. Do you believe the miracles of the Old Testament? No. And so they say all. Do you believe that Jesus died to save the nations? No. And so they say all. Do you believe in the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost? No. And so they say all. Do you believe that human supplication directed heavenward ever makes any difference? No. And so they say all" (*Boston Investigator*, Oct. 8, 1898).

Despite, then, the counteracting influences by which we are surrounded, it is gratifying to know that we live in an age of progress. We must not, however, slacken our progressive efforts; much more is yet to be done. There is still vice to check, errors to destroy, dens of filth to cleanse, distress to alleviate, poverty to relieve, superstition

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to crush, and many other ills to cure. Old worn-out systems of theology are tottering and falling, exploded religious dogmas are rapidly passing away, and the reign of reason is dawning. Let us work earnestly with the means at our command, and the result no doubt will be a wide prevalence of true mental freedom, a still further spread of Freethought, and a higher status of ethical and intellectual culture than the world has ever witnessed.

CHARLES WATTS.

## PROFANE PARABLES.

I.—PRAYER.

Two hungry travellers halted in a forest.

"I will fit an arrow to my bow, and look for conies," said one.

"And I," said the other, "will supplicate the immortal gods."

And while the one went forth to hunt for food the other prayed. And, having prayed, he slept.

When the sun was setting, he awoke and saw his friend returning, weary and footsore, with a bag well filled.

"The gods are bountiful!" he cried. "My prayer is answered. Let us eat in thankfulness!"

II.—CHARITY.

An idle Rogue met a Fool who labored.

"Give me a moiety of thine earnings," said the Rogue, 'and thou shalt have treasure in heaven."

The Fool scratched his head.

"What if I lack bread meanwhile?"

"Fear nothing, my son. If distress should overtake thee, I will e'en return thee a tenth in charity."

And the Fool flung his arms around the Rogue's neck, and blessed him.

III.—DISTANCE.

"Marvel with me!" exclaimed the Dupe. "I have seen strange and wonderful things. The Prophet laid his hands upon a corpse; and, behold! it arose and lived again!"

"Pooh—nonsense!" said the Christian.

"But mine eyes have seen it. And were there not such things in Palestine years ago?"

"Ah—well!" said the Christian.

IV.—FAITH.

An orator arose in a public place and addressed the multitude.

"Believe that two and two make five, and thou shalt be saved," said he.

"But I have studied arithmetic," objected one; "and I know that two and two do *not* make five."

"Arithmetic is of the Devil," said the orator. "You must renounce your vain learning, and become as a little child."

Whereat the sceptic laughed consumedly.

V.—FUTURITY.

A clown in motley met a rich merchant.

"God ild thee, fair merchant," quoth he. "An' thou be willing, I'll tell thy fortune for a penny."

But the merchant shrugged his shoulders, and passed on. And presently there came a solemn man in black.

"Be humble, O merchant, for I am the messenger of the gods," said he. "And if, haply, thou hast wealth, I may e'en secure thee joy hereafter."

And the merchant, prostrating himself, poured his gold at the stranger's feet.

VI.—PRECEPT.

A traveller was beset by thieves, who belabored him with staves, and stole his possessions. And, as he groaned grievously by the wayside, a stranger condoled with him.

"Blessed are they that mourn," said he. "It is good to suffer here, for thy sorrows on earth shall be the measure of thy happiness in heaven."

And, behold, the robbers espied the stranger, and returned. *And he straightway fled.* E. R. W.

Parishioner—"Yes, mum, I do admire the vicar's sermons, that I do." Vicar's Wife—"I am so glad! And you really understand them?" Parishioner—"Me, mum? Oh, no! I wouldn't presume to understand them!"

## ACID DROPS.

THE Lord Chief Justice and five other judges have decided, with reference to the Senior case, that the Peculiar People, whose children die without medical assistance, are legally guilty of manslaughter. We do not believe there will be any appeal against this decision, which will govern future prosecutions. At the same time, it does not bring us much "forrarder," for a conviction without a sentence is equal to no conviction at all. We are still waiting for a Christian judge who will have the courage to send another man to gaol for being a Christian.

Lord Chief Justice Russell made a curious remark when the point of law was being signed. The Peculiar People's counsel said that Senior had done all he could for his sick child. "Yes," said Lord Russell, "he did everything but the one thing that was necessary." According to the law, then, the one thing necessary in sickness is a doctor. According to the New Testament, the one thing necessary is prayer.

Lord Russell is an excellent judge and a thorough gentleman, but he is a Roman Catholic, and therefore does not believe in the right of private interpretation of the Bible. Consequently it was certain that he would take an unfavorable view of Senior's appeal. Some of the other judges, however, might have remembered that England is still a Protestant country, with a Protestant Queen, and an established Protestant Church. They might have pointed out that there was a conflict between one part of the law and another, and that, as Senior could not possibly obey both parts of the law, he was entitled to make his choice, and not liable to be punished for rejecting the opposite alternative. But they held their tongues, and allowed a Catholic to lay down the law in this matter for a Protestant. Is not this a *reductio ad absurdum* of the State's having anything whatever to do with religious opinions?

According to the law of England, as laid down by six judges sitting on one bench, the Bible is a superstitious book, St. James was a fool, and Jesus Christ was no better. We thank their lordships for the declaration. They have not made it in plain words, for they dare not do so; but they have made it implicitly. The Peculiar People say, "We must obey St. James and the Lord Jesus Christ," and the judges say, "We don't care a tinker's curse for *your* authorities; the only authority *we* recognise is the law; the law says you must do otherwise, and if you don't do it we'll send you to prison, and then you will see if St. James and the Lord Jesus Christ will get you out of it." What a roaring farce it is, to be sure, in *Christian* England!

Prophet Baxter is advertising his rotten predictions in the *Methodist Times*, which takes his money without warning its readers that he is a self-convicted charlatan. Baxter's fresh date for the great flare-up is 1908 or 1911. He isn't certain to a year or two. The arithmetic of prophets is always hazy.

The *Methodist Times* says that "the infidel movement in this country has reached and long receded from its high-water mark." Supposing this were true, which it isn't, the simile is an unfortunate one, for tides rise again. It is even possible that Wesleyan Methodism may recover some of its lost ground.

Birmingham Christians, or some of them, are still agitated over the National Secular Society's placards outside the Bristol-street Board School. We see by the *Daily Mail* that the Bishop of Coventry is going to have the matter brought before the School Board. Well, if he does so, we hope the Board will send him to Coventry. It is fairly pointed out in the *Mail* that the Secularists have been holding their meetings at the Bristol-street School for the past eighteen months, and that not a single complaint has been made against them. The present complaint is an illegitimate one. It is simply an exhibition of contemptible bigotry.

The Board-school system is the "work of the Devil," and its teaching is "poisonous." So says Dr. Bagshawe, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham. All he means is what the fishmonger meant when he said of his rival in the same street, "Don't deal at that fellow's shop; his fish stinks."

Thomas Daley ill-used and deserted his wife and children. Then he lived with a paramour, Sarah Ann Penfold, whom he murdered at Chatham on June 4. On Monday (Dec. 12) he was hung at Maidstone Gaol. He took things easy at the finish, feeling booked through to glory. A brief service was held in the cell before the execution, and Daley himself started the hymn, "For ever with the Lord."

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Rev. M. McAuliffe, of the Catholic Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Holbeck, Leeds, is raising money for a new organ. He is circulating lists which people are asked to fill in with the names of their departed friends and relatives, who are to "participate in all the Holy Masses offered for their repose during the lifetime of the good pastor," the said Rev. McAuliffe. Of course, a donation is expected with the list, which is ornamented at the top with a picture of a lot of poor wretches writhing in flames. This sort of cadging is lawful in England, but if an old woman takes sixpence for fortune-telling she is sent to prison.

St. Kilda Presbyterian Church, Jarrow-on-Tyne, has been having an "Arabian Nights' Bazaar" to raise the wind. One of the mottoes on the program is excellent :—

> For what is worth in anything,
> But so much money as 'twill bring?

We congratulate the Rev. David Annal on speaking the truth for once in connection with his gospel-shop.

Dr. Eugene Yarrow, deputy-coroner, who recently held an inquest at Bethnal-green, is not a philosopher. A boy witness was asked by this gentleman where he would go if he told a lie, and he said he didn't know. "Well, who goes to hell?" Dr. Yarrow asked, and the boy replied, "I don't know, sir." Whereupon he was told that they hadn't taught him much at school, and that his evidence was not very valuable. Most people, however, will think that the boy was honest and straightforward, and that he might have learnt a good deal at school without being posted up in the criminology of Gehenna. It was the deputy-coroner, not the witness, who evidently had something to learn.

Mr. Robert Newman has very neatly dished the "Progressive" bigots on the London County Council. The Sunday Concerts at the Queen's Hall are resumed, but instead of being advertised as under the management of Mr. Newman himself they are advertised as under the management of a committee. And as the committee includes men like Sir E. Clarke and Mr. Shaw Lefevre, it is hardly likely to be worried by the bigots, and we presume it will take care that Mr. Newman gets all the profits that are made, barring perhaps a formal donation to a hospital or some other charitable institution.

What will the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes do now? He is done brown. So is Mr. John Burns. But will both their heads together be clever enough to circumvent Mr. Newman? We doubt it.

Mussulmans at Constantinople view with consternation the approaching departure of the British. They do not feel safe in being at the mercy of Prince George and the Cretan Christians. According to the *Daily News* correspondent, they have "had the opportunity of witnessing personally the immense damage done to their properties by the Christians," and they "despair of ever being able to live peaceably under the new *régime*."

Poor old Spain! After being licked and despoiled she still trusts in the Lord. "God in time will avenge us," says her Premier. It would be safer to say "in eternity."

The Chaplain of the American Congress would deserve to be kicked if he were not blind. The other day he officially supplicated the Almighty for the Royal Family and people of Spain. This is making a burlesque of religion. But we don't mind that. What we object to is the execrable ill-taste of the thing.

The *National Review*, dealing with company-mongers, points to their patronage of religious institutions. The *Irish Times* takes exception to the accuracy of the allusion, so that there must have been some misunderstanding in the public mind about Hooley and "Holy Joe" Savory, not to mention Jabez and others.

We seem, however, to be pretty certain of this—the Church of God is open to gifts, and does not make too many inquiries as to the donors. That shows its simple faith in the goodness of human nature. If a scandal arise, the Church would retain the gifts, and disown the hands from which it received them. That shows its desire to maintain a high standard of purity in its relations with the world.

A sad complaint is published in regard to the perpetual attacks on "our oldest missionary societies, such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Church Missionary Society, and the Universities' Mission to Central Africa." The wail proceeds from a gentleman who writes to a Dublin paper, and proudly signs himself "An Incorporated Member of the S. P. G." He says: "The sooner friends of missions give up answering objections, the better." Certainly; let them take a period of repose and employ it in reflection. They may then discover better answers to give when objections are raised. Present replies seem only to afford material for crushing rejoinders. Hence, apparently, the present advice.

The new Bishop of Bangor, being Dean of St. Asaph's, wrote on the 28th ult. a curt and exceedingly uncivil letter to the *Daily News*, calling upon it to correct its statement that he had been selected for the Bishopric. The *Daily News* now caustically "leaves it to his lordship to decide what amend is due to us, and to the diligent correspondent whose prompt and gratifying information he so ungraciously requited."

Dean Williams probably knew, when he wrote the "correction," that he was actually selected. We say so because precisely the same sort of thing has occurred before between newspapers and clerics, who were practically Bishops-elect. It is only of a piece with the insincerity with which Bishops-elects declare that they do not desire to be made Bishops, when, perhaps, for years they have been eating their hearts out with expectation of the preferment.

The divisions in the Church demand its division from the State. That seems to be the main point in the recent address by Mr. Augustine Birrell, M.P., to members of the London Free Churches.

"Christianity must be introduced" in the Gordon Memorial College. So says the Dean of Exeter, and so say many other clericals in the *Times*. Lord Kitchener, however, says otherwise, and the matter lies in his hands, which the clergy are not likely to force. "I am sure," he says in a letter to Professor Josnett, "that any idea of using the College for religious instruction would ruin its utility."

Lord Wolseley gives heaven—or is it the other place?—a new attraction. Speaking at the re-opening of the London Library, he touched on the prospect of there being no libraries in another world, and said that "he could not imagine a state of things in any world in which there would be no books." Let us hope the celestial (or infernal) library will not include the Bible. Most people will have had enough of it on earth.

Rev. Samuel Walton Kay, vicar of Butlers Marston, near Stratford-on-Avon, is doing twelve months' hard labor for forging a promissory note for £500. According to the common scale, his punishment is not excessive. We once saw a boy doing four months for stealing two shillings. On the whole, this man of God is rather lucky.

This servant of the Lord Jesus could not even take his gruel, as so many common culprits do, without a lot of whining. In his appeal to the judge for mercy he recited some of his own "pathetic" verses, talked about "the eternal goodness of God," begged to be restored to his "stricken wife and little ones," and wound up by saying: "I humbly beseech you to allow my tender spirit to lean hard, my lord, upon the full strength of your mercy." What a ghastly exhibition!

Parson Kay is the author of one book. It is entitled *Resist Not Evil*. Was it an anticipatory appeal to the Bank on which he planted that forged promissory note?

A Battersea curate, the Rev. Alfred Ernest Taylor, being summoned by his wife for persistent cruelty, the magistrate adjourned the case in order to let the man of God agree to his wife's offer to take thirty shillings a week, without washing all his dirty family linen in court.

This man of God became very excited. "Please keep quiet," he was told; "remember you're not in church." There is a difference between being in the pulpit and standing in front of the dock. The men of God, it is satisfactory to know, cannot have it all their own way in both places.

An old woman, Mary Ann Pritchard, died in the Medway Workhouse, Chatham, recently, at the age of eighty-two. She had been a pauper inmate for forty years. It would have been interesting to have heard her opinion about Christ's remarks on the blessings of poverty.

Some liars, for the glory of God, once invented the yarn about the Queen having styled the Bible "the source of England's greatness." As a matter of fact, the English are only referred to once in the sacred volume: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

A Church Guild for Journalists! The thing sounds absurd Yet Mr. A. Cefton Kelway, who for a short period was on the *Sun*, is endeavoring to establish such an organisation. The idea, of course, is received with ridicule in press circles Press-men in the bulk are a distinctly unbelieving lot.

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Church journalists, as a rule, are the very people who have the greatest contempt for Church matters. They know too much about them. As the *Westminster Gazette* observes, there is about as much need for a "Church Guild for Journalists" as there is for a "Church Guild for Shoeblacks."

In the recent libel action by Sir Joseph Savory, M.P., against *London*, the plaintiff's cousin, Mr. Joseph Braithwaithe, elected to affirm, "on the ground that Christ forbids swearing." A very good ground, too—from a Christian point of view. Millions of times a year Christians are swearing upon a book in which Christ is represented as commanding his followers to "Swear not at all." The note in the Cambridge Bible to Matthew v. 33-37 is: "This does not, of course, apply to judicial oaths." There is no "of course" about it. It distinctly applies to all forms of oath-taking, as any one may see by referring to the passage.

Sir Joseph Savory is the godly man who, a few years ago, was found out in a very funny pious fraud. Having to address a meeting of the Young Men's Christian Association, he palmed off upon them as his own a discourse of Spurgeon's. His hearers thought it was a bit above the mark of Joe Savory, and inquiries led to detection. One of the "dailies" printed Savory's sermon and the sermon by Spurgeon in parallel columns. The duplication was perfect.

"Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." This, we presume, is one of the precepts that the thirty Army Scripture Readers, who attended the recent Military Convention at Exeter Hall, are engaged to enforce. It seems admirably calculated to make the British soldier—in the words of Lord Chelmsford, who was one of the speakers—"not only a courageous man in the field, but courageous in quarters, upholding his position and self-respect."

"All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" is another good text to impress on the Soldiers Christian Association.

The dying cabman complained that he had been bilked of his Sundays. At least, that is what the following leaflet says: "Sunday travellers—Pause! Before entering a public conveyance on the Lord's Day, consider what you are doing. You are injuring men's souls by hindering them from attending to spiritual things. Remember a dying cabman's cry: 'I have had no Sundays!'" The correspondent of the *Daily News*, who was presented with one of these leaflets in a 'bus, showed it to the conductor, and asked him what he thought of it. "What do I think?" he replied, "why that"—using an expressive gesture. Asked how he spent his Sundays off, he said he lay on his back, smoked his pipe, and read the Sunday papers. Which is pretty much what the dying cabman would have done if, like many of his class, he had had his Sundays off. He probably had plenty of time on the rank during the week to read pious publications, if his taste lay in that direction, rather than reading the latest betting and sporting news.

The Kaiser is disappointed with the Holy Land—now that he has seen it. Many people are disappointed with the Holy Book—when they have read it. Investigation dispels many illusions.

Women preachers are multiplying in America. One woman—the only one—has a D.D. degree. Her name is the Rev. Augusta J. Capin. The Universalist Church, which she belongs to, has fifty-seven ordained women among its ministers. What a treat for St. Paul if he could only witness it!—St. Paul who suffered not a woman to teach, and told her to keep silence in the churches.

Dr. Beattie was a pleasant writer on philosophy and æsthetics, but he quite overrated his powers when he wrote a book on *Truth* to refute the dangerous opinions of David Hume. His portrait was painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, who placed over his head the Goddess of Truth driving away Sophistry, Scepticism, and Infidelity. These demons were said to be veiled likenesses of Voltaire, Hume, and Gibbon; all three of whom are read now—but who reads Dr. Beattie? *We* have read him, but it has been our lot to read piles of books for reasons of necessity.

A *Daily News* correspondent has been giving an account of his experiences amongst the poor children in Lambeth. One little flower-girl, aged eleven, said that her father had been dead four years, and her mother had a baby a year old. Asked whether her mother had married again, she replied "No." "And does the baby belong to her?" the visitor asked, and the answer was: "Jest think it do, sir. She says Gawd sent it speshul for her, from Favver wot's in heaven."

"Providence" doesn't seem particularly pleased with the Czar's efforts in the peace line. The Neva suddenly rose nine feet above its ordinary level, and all the low-lying quarters of St. Petersburg were inundated. Much property was destroyed.

A book recently published by Smith, Elder, & Co., entitled *Pages from a Private Diary*, gives some entertaining stories. One relates to a fine old Berkshire farmer, who said: "Us wun't be prosperous till us have fewer of they black parsons, and more of they black pigs." Here is a quaint advertisement from a bookseller's catalogue:—"Clergyman—A fine collection of 200 clergymen, consisting of Protestant ministers, Roman Catholics, Wesleyan Methodists, Unitarians, and Presbyterians, nice clean lot—5s." The following is about a charitable lady, whose efforts had been assisted by an ill-bred but very wealthy neighbor. "Mr. X. is dead," she said; "he was so good and kind and helpful to me in all sorts of ways; he was so vulgar, poor dear fellow, we could not know him in London; but we shall meet him in Heaven."

The East London Church Fund received a generous donation from an undertaker as a thankoffering because "the death-rate had lately been exceptionally high."

Mr. Justice Day seems to be a firm believer in the moral efficacy of the "cat," and we have been reading an account in a local paper of the infliction of this punishment, under one of his lordship's sentences, on a prisoner in Swansea gaol. The man's hands and feet being bound to a bar, an officer "slowly, but strongly, laid the lash upon the prisoner's bare back until the blood flowed freely." After receiving twenty strokes, the prisoner "had to be moved to the infirmary, where he is expected to lie for some weeks to come." Now we do not care a bit what the man's crime was. It is really nothing to the purpose of a rational jurisprudence. The "catting" of this man was simply a disgusting exhibition of sheer brutality. Only a fool or a bigot—which is much the same thing—could suppose for a moment that it was calculated to improve its victim; and, on the other hand, the infliction and witnessing of such physical outrage must have a debasing effect upon the participants. When will judges learn the most elementary principles of moral philosophy? When will they understand that punishment of any sort is of very questionable efficacy as a deterrent from crime? When will they perceive that the brutalisation of a criminal, who will some day be turned loose again, only makes him a more cunning and dangerous enemy to society?

Our readers would probably guess a hundred times before they spotted the officer who wielded that lash in Swansea gaol. It was the *schoolmaster!* What a task to be committed to such hands! By-and-bye, we presume, it will be delegated to the chaplain.

Mr. Wordsworth Donisthorpe, the brilliant Individualist writer, has just published an account of his recent Eastern travels under the title of *Down the Stream of Civilisation*. Like the German Emperor, he found Jerusalem a great disappointment. He calls it "the offscouring of all nations and the cesspool of all sects." Referring to the harmony that prevails amongst the followers of Jesus, he writes as follows: "The Jews hate the Mohammedans; both hate and despise the Christians; but their united hatred is as charity itself compared with the hatred with which Christians hate one another. Latins, Greeks, and Armenians alike seem to wallow in a slough of religious bigotry and intolerance fouler even than the mire in which their bodies stew."

Another heavy blow has been struck at the clerical and military intriguers in France. The Court of Cassation has stopped the court-martialling of Colonel Picquart—perhaps the most heroic figure in recent French history. The "brave generals" trained in Jesuit schools, and willing instruments of Jesuit designs, are thus completely foiled. They cannot murder their intended victim in prison, for he has told the world that if he is found dead it will not be a case of suicide. Nor can they try and condemn him in hugger-mugger. Justice has stretched forth her strong hand, and reassured the conscience of France.

The latest newcomer amongst newspapers is the *Yellow Journal*. It combines sport and piety, offering prizes for a best-hymn competition and prizes for a football-skill competition. The last page contains some suitable lies about the deathbeds of Voltaire and Thomas Paine, whose name is spelt "Payne."

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An Aitchison girl says such long prayers every morning that by the time she gets downstairs her sister has the breakfast prepared. In this way the girl's prayers that her life may be made smooth are answered at the first jump out of the box.—*Atchison Globe.*

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

*Sunday*, December 18, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London: 7.30, "The Babe of Bethlehem: A Christmas Fairy Tale."

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications for Mr. Charles Watts should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

H. Peacock.—It is difficult to advise you. If the magistrates did not grant you an exemption for your child, you might at least wait until the authorities take the next step. Perhaps you will write again if necessary. Nothing could be more wickedly absurd, or absurdly wicked, than the action of the Government and the magistrates in connection with the new Vaccination Act.

West London Branch.—It is no use sending us lecture notices that arrive on Wednesday. We cannot keep our pages open for such things. It has been repeatedly emphasised that notices should reach us by Tuesday morning.

W. P. Ball.—Thanks again for your welcome batches of cuttings.

J. Shirkey.—Will probably appear in an early issue.

Ignotus.—Mr. Foote hopes to see the second volume of *Crimes of Christianity* through the press early in the new year. He much regrets that his other duties leave him so little time for book and pamphlet work.

M. Loafer.—See paragraph. We hope the social function has resulted in some pecuniary help towards the East London Branch's propagandist work.

W. Cox.—Glad to hear Mr. Watts was in good form at Liverpool, and that his lectures were "splendid." Mr. Foote will write you as to another date.

C. H. Cattell.—Thanks for papers, &c. See paragraphs.

T. Wilmot.—See "Sugar Plums." But, after all, is this quite a suitable time of the year for such meetings?

"Freethinker" Circulation Fund.—A. E. Elderkin, 1s.

W. T. Herbert.—Some paragraphs were already written on the subject. Thanks all the same.

A. Boddy.—We have handed your order to Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., to whom please send direct in future.

W. M.—Thanks.

A. E. Elderkin.—Mr. Charles Watts, senior, has been our printer for the last four years. Thanks for the cuttings, &c.

H. MacLachlan.—See paragraph.

South London Ethical Society and Others.—Lecture notices must reach us by the first post on Tuesday, if you want them inserted.

G. Brady.—Received. Thanks for your good wishes.

Horace Davidson.—You are quite right. The Public Prosecutor ought to tackle the Railway Companies for placing the Bible in their waiting-rooms. Many of its passages, as you say, are too obscene for indiscriminate reading. But there is no likelihood of such a prosecution being started, for Bible filth is privileged in England.

A. J. Marriott.—Received. Will look through it as soon as possible.

J. R. Whitell.—The edition you refer to is fairly good, but you should get Professor Bury's new edition of Gibbon if you can. The volumes are sold separately; you can buy one at a time.

Received.—Crescent—Two Worlds—Lucifer—Blue Grass Blade—New York Times—Torch of Reason—Der Arme Teufel—Freethought Ideal—Tongues of Fire—Open Court—Ethical World—Birmingham Mail—New York Truthseeker—Public Opinion—Boston Investigator—Progressive Thinker—Sydney Bulletin—Liberator—Freethought Magazine—Isle of Man Times—Secular Thought—Birmingham News—New York Journal—People's Newspaper—Liverpool Weekly Mercury.

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.

*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.

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 is due.

The National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

There was a capital audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Souls, Spirits, and Ghosts." This evening (December 18) Mr. Foote lectures again from the same platform. Mr. Watts will preside, and say a few words of farewell on the eve of his departure for America. Mr. Foote's subject will be "The Babe of Bethlehem: A Christmas Fairy Tale." Incidentally he will deal with Professor Ramsey's new book on *Was Christ Born at Bethlehem?* This book is a "vindication" of the historical character of Luke's story, and very much needs a vindication itself.

Mr. Watts has altered the date of his departure for America. He intended to sail on Wednesday, December 21; but, as he was informed there is some doubt if the steamer he had selected to go in would leave on that day, he has taken passage on the *Aurania*, which leaves Liverpool on Saturday afternoon, December 24. Mr. Watts will leave Euston Station by the special boat train at 10.50 Saturday morning, and he hopes to arrive in New York on Sunday January 1.

During Mr. Charles Watts's visit last week to Scotland he lectured at Paisley and Motherwell to good and highly appreciative audiences. Friends came several miles to say good-bye to Mr. Watts before his departure for the United States and Canada. We are pleased to hear that the Motherwell friends are getting on exceedingly well. They hold their weekly meetings, which are well attended, and at which original papers are read and discussed.

Last Sunday Mr. Watts lectured three times in Liverpool, to the best morning and afternoon audiences he has ever had in that town. In the evening the hall was packed. Several questions were asked, and some opposition offered. All the meetings were very enthusiastic, and many good wishes were expressed for Mr. Watts's safe voyage to America and his early return.

The Annual Congress of the American Secular Union, held at Chicago, appears to have been fairly successful. Mr. John E. Remsburg was re-elected President, and Mr. E. C. Reichwald continues as Secretary. We hope the Union will gain many new members through Mr. Watts's tour in the States.

Ingersoll's lecture in the New York Academy of Music is given prominent notice in the *Journal* for Monday, November 28. There are three illustrations of Ingersoll's oratorical attitudes—all caricatures. Then follow a few of his most pointed epigrams. Next come a lot of "opinions" from ministers of the Gospel. One of them says Ingersoll is not worth answering; another says he cannot discuss with Ingersoll, because "to do so would be dignifying him." Thus they drivel on to the end of the chapter.

The Freethinkers are bravely "holding the fort" at Deptford Broadway. More tumult was raised by the Christian roughs, including "Happy Jack," last Sunday, and an attempt was made to rush and break up the platform. However, the Secular party held their ground, and closed their meeting in good order.

Of course the Birmingham Branch is profiting by the bigots' advertisement. This is admitted by the *Mail*. Mr. Willie Dyson, of Sheffield, gave good addresses to large meetings on Sunday. Every copy of the *Freethinker* was cleared out at the bookstall, and there was a demand for more.

We have received a report and balance-sheet from the committee of the Truelove Tributory Fund, to which the N.S.S. subscribed £5. £72 18s. 3d. has been subscribed altogether, of which £36 14s. has been paid to Miss Truelove, and the balance, less £3 for expenses, remains in the hands of the Treasurer, Mr. Alfred Marsh, 62 Pentonville-road, N. Mr. Truelove's health improved in spite of the doctors' fears, and he was able to be removed to the seaside. He is now in his eighty-ninth year, and we are glad that his last days are rendered as comfortable as possible.

This is how the New York *Truthseeker* refers to Mr. Watts's approaching visit to the land of the Stars and

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Stripes: "In further support of the Anglo-American moral alliance, and to cement the good feeling between the tight little island and the greatest country on earth, one of the British Lions is coming over this winter to help the Eagle in its fight against the Church, whose symbol is the snake." Our contemporary says "he will do good wherever heard," which is a statement we are not prepared to contradict.

The *Freethought Magazine*, edited by H. L. Green, Chicago, is well up to the mark in the December number, which opens with a fine portrait of Kate De Peatt, an American lady Freethinker, which is followed by a capital article from the pen of Elizabeth Cady Stanton against the use of the Bible in the public schools.

Editor Moore, of the *Blue Grass Blade*, Lexington, is still enlivening the public with his racy writing, but it is a pity that he is so fond of running amuck amongst his fellow "infidels." He seems to detest Ingersoll for no other reason than that the Colonel is a successful orator and not a Prohibitionist. He also digs away at the *Truthseeker* and *Secular Thought* in the most reckless fashion. Brother Moore should really devote his talents and energies to fighting the common enemy.

Mr. F. J. Gould paid a lecturing visit to the Chatham N.S.S. Branch on Sunday, and was much pleased with the brave spirit he found amongst the members, who have worked so hard, first in building their hall, secondly in maintaining it, and thirdly in improving and redecorating it. We regret that Mr. Gould's lectures did not appear in our last week's list. The notice was sent to us too late for insertion.

The East London Branch had a very successful social gathering at the King's Hall, Commercial-road, on Sunday evening. The place was crowded to overflowing, the stage and off-rooms having to be utilised for tea-tables, and all the tables having to be cleared away to make room for those who attended the concert. There was a long program, including songs by Edith Light, Lily Crystal, and Ernest Pack; a flute solo by G. Balchin, and piano selections by Mr. Wright. Mr. John Warren's absence through indisposition was much regretted. Mr. G. W. Foote arrived from the West-end a little before ten o'clock with Mrs. Foote, and was enthusiastically welcomed. He read Marc Antony's oration over the dead body of Cæsar. A vote of thanks to the artistes was moved by Mr. Haines, seconded by Mr. Thurlow, and carried with acclamation. Altogether, it was far and away the best gathering of the kind ever seen in East London, thanks in good measure to the indefatigable exertions of Mr. M. Loafer.

## AN OUTFIT FOR THE NEXT WORLD.

At a town between Paris and Dijon a vestry clerk employed in the local church heard a noise in the cemetery (says a *Telegraph* message). He then saw a man named Penisson rolling a wheelbarrow containing a coffin towards an open grave. The clerk asked the man what he was going to do, whereupon Penisson calmly replied that he was tired of existence, and intended to bury himself alive near the side of his father. Hearing this, the clerk resolved to go for the local mayor, in order to take combined action with him about the lunatic. In about half an hour the two men entered the cemetery, and went towards the place where they saw Penisson's wheelbarrow. They found that the coffin had been lowered into the grave. They descended into the pit, and tried to open the lid, which resisted their efforts. It was fastened inside, and they next used a pick, and with it lifted up the lid by their joint efforts. The lunatic was laying down in the coffin, but as soon as the cover was taken off he jumped up, clambered out of the grave with the greatest celerity, and ran away. Penisson has not since been seen. The inside of the coffin was comfortably lined with wool, and in it were a dictionary, a prayer-book, Penisson's record of military service, a certificate of his good conduct, and his savings bank account.

The Co-operative Socialistic Community, which was established in the neighborhood of Vancouver (B.C.) by certain ardent British reformers, has completely collapsed, says a New York telegram to the *Morning Post*. The losses of the promoters of the scheme are declared to be not less than £30,000. The Colony seems, from the outset, to have attracted numerous idlers and ne'er-do-wells, and these have managed to live at the expense of the industrious members of the community. There have recently, too, been many deserters, and the experiment has throughout been a disastrous failure.

## THE "FREETHINKER" AND "PICK-ME-UP."

A contributor of ours who signs himself "Mimnermus" has been writing a series of "Prehistoric Peeps." The fourth of these appeared in the *Freethinker* for November 9, and was entitled "The First Policeman." Three weeks later we inserted in "Book Chat" a paragraph sent us by a friend of this same contributor. It may be found on page 765 of the *Freethinker* for November 27, and it ran as follows:—

> "This paper suffers from the Press boycott. This has, however, never prevented rival editors from stealing our ideas. Our esteemed contributor, 'Mimnermus,' has published in our columns a series of 'Prehistoric Peeps.' A recent 'Peep' was entitled 'The First Policeman.' A fortnight later *Pick-Me-Up* paid us the compliment of publishing an imitation—'Pre-History: the First Policeman.' We apologise to the editor of *Pick-Me-Up* for having dared to anticipate his thoughts in this way."

This paragraph has elicited an indignant letter from the editor of *Pick-Me-Up*, who demands an apology. This gentleman says that he has never been under the necessity of stealing anybody's ideas, and that, so far from borrowing from the *Freethinker*, he has never seen a copy of this journal. His letter also contains some splenetic observations which we need not reproduce.

We have looked into this matter personally, and we find that the mere statement of fact in our "Book Chat" paragraph is quite accurate. Our contributor's article did actually precede the similarly entitled one in *Pick-Me-Up* by a fortnight, and the similarity is certainly curious, but we cheerfully accept our contemporary's assurance that it belongs to the chapter of undesigned coincidences. We may add that the similarity is confined to the titles. Our contributor did not achieve the preternatural task of anticipating the "thoughts" in *Pick-Me-Up's* article. We apologise to our contemporary for giving publicity to such a suggestion.

## HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING.

A Christmas Hymn, "Ancient and Modern."

Hark! the herald angels sing—
*Bloody strife Christ comes to bring.*
Peace on earth and mercy mild—
*Battlefields with corpses piled.*
Joyful all ye nations rise—
*Damn each other's limbs and eyes.*
With the angelic host proclaim—
*War and bloodshed in His name.*
Hark! the herald angels sing—
*Bloody strife He comes to bring.*

Christ by highest heaven adored—
*Comes to earth to bring a sword.*
Late in life behold Him come—
*King of beggars, dregs, and scum.*
Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see—
*Sowing seeds of misery.*
Pleased as man with man to dwell—
*Making of this earth a hell.*
Hark! the herald angels sing—
*Racks and stakes He comes to bring.*

Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!—
*'Neath His banner kill and fleece.*
Light and life to all He brings—
*Maxim guns and other things.*
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that "*infidels*" *may fry.*
Born to *make* the sons of earth—
*Rue the day that gave Him birth.*
Hark! the herald angels sing—
*Devil take the "new-born King"!*

Ess Jay Bee.

The National Women's Christian Temperance Union, which has just held a convention in St. Paul, declines to assume the burden of redeeming the Willard Temple in Chicago, which is heavily mortgaged. The Temple has been a white elephant ever since the Rev. Dr. Rusk was expelled from it for inviting Ingersoll to his pulpit.

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## READER HARRIS'S "CASE AGAINST ATHEISM."*

MR. READER HARRIS is a gentleman who combines the lucrative duties of a Q. C. with the not altogether unprofitable occupation of running "the Pentecostal League," a sort of miniature Salvation Army, engineered in the especial and exclusive interests of the third person of the Holy Trinity, who, but for Mr. Harris's crazy revivalism, would stand a good chance of being forgotten altogether by the rest of Christendom.

The worthy Q.C., the "General" Booth of the Pentecostal League, usually confines himself to lecturing his fellow Christians on their shortcomings and failures. *He* is filled with the Holy Ghost, they are not; hence the Pentecostal League. But now he has kindly bestowed his attention on the benighted Atheist, whom, on page 34 of his book, he calls a fool (in the Scriptural sense, he is careful to explain), whatever that may mean. He leaves the believers *pro tem.*, and attacks "Unbelief," which is, he says, "the mother of all sin" (p. 22).

May I suggest to Mr. Reader Harris that, in future, he will do well to confine himself to the platform of Exeter Hall? His addresses are admirably adapted for Y. M. C. A.'s and Mothers' Meetings. They are not worth the consideration of an intelligent thinker. They will only amuse every Freethinker who comes across them. But then our lecturer or author does not believe in argument. On page 22 he says: "Give up arguing and take to accepting." That is so much more convenient—for Reader Harris.

The Preface informs us that these addresses are printed in order to "stem the tide of scepticism." We are glad to have it confirmed from the hero of Exeter Hall that there is "a tide of scepticism." And if Mr. Harris likes to play the *rôle* of Mother Partington and her broom, that is his business. The tide of scepticism will roll on all the same. Mr. Harris opens his first address with a testimonial of himself—by himself. He says: "Seldom, if ever, in the history of modern Christianity, have these great questions been approached, as they will be here, *from the standpoint of Christian perfection*" (p. 8). Hear, O Heavens! and give ear, O earth! Reader Harris is a perfect Christian. In the first place, our perfect author "proposes to prove the existence of a God, and, in the second, to bring our readers into personal acquaintance with him" (p. 8). It does not occur to the militant Q. C. that, if he were to satisfactorily demonstrate his second proposition, he need not waste any time over the first.

He proceeds "to prove the existence of God" by an argument entirely worthy of Paley's Evidences. "I am. Who caused me? Adam. Who caused Adam? God." The sceptic might legitimately ask, Who caused God? Mr. Harris does not entertain the possibility of such a dilemma.

The next argument is: "That the perfect order of the universe is a proof of an omniscient intelligence." Such trifles as cyclones, earthquakes, tidal waves, epidemics, &c., do not disturb the equanimity of the argument.

Mr. Harris next calls himself as a witness, and declares that God reigns in his soul. This declaration, he expects, will be sufficient to bring the hardened sceptic to his knees, and to "accept" salvation forthwith. Unfortunately for our author, sceptics are not exactly lunatics, or they might be inclined to "accept" on such "evidence" as this. Mr. Harris undertakes to remove the unbeliever's "difficulties." This he does by affirming that "pain, suffering, and sorrow are from the devil." Where the *devil* is from he does not say, or why the devil there is a devil at all.

Mr. Harris asks: "Suppose all men were Atheists, what would London be like?" Well, as it is, Mr. Hugh Price Hughes says London is the wickedest city in the world. "Suppose all men were *Christians*, what would London be like?" asks Mr. Harris. Indeed, we tremble to think. Fancy four million Reader Harrises. Heaven forbid!

Mr. Harris quotes two texts to prove the immortality of the soul, and affirms that the Bible is perfectly plain on this subject and never contradictory! I commend Mr. Harris to Ecclesiastes iii. 18–22. But, there, what is the use of pointing this out to the Apostle of Pentecost, for he is filled with the spirit, and consequently cannot see contradictions, for hear him: "To-day, under the light of the Spirit of God, I see no contradictions in the Bible" (p. 48).

"Where will you spend the next ten hundred million centuries of your existence?" asks Mr. Harris (p. 32). Why only *ten* hundred millions? Why not fifteen hundred millions? This, says our magician, is a matter that very probably will be settled by the answer you give to this appeal, which is a polite intimation that, if you don't accept Reader Harris's gospel, you will go to hell!

"The Pentecostal League is a wide-world union of praying believers who have learnt something of the miracle-working power of prayer" (p. 46). Well, they tried it on the Sultan of Turkey when he was butchering Armenians; but I have not yet heard of the conversion of the Sultan to Christianity.

Again: "No one can fully understand the written word of God till he has the incarnate word of God abiding in his heart" (p. 60). Therefore, if you find errors, contradictions, etc., in the Bible, rest assured that you do not understand it. You must stifle your reason and crush your intellect before you can ever hope to comprehend the Impregnable Rock.

Mr. Harris devotes a whole chapter to proving that "there were twenty-four hours interpolated into the history of the world on Joshua's long day" (p. 82).

The final chapter is on "The Divinity of Christ," in which our author advances the astonishing argument "that the very failings and corruptions of the Church prove the divinity of its founder" (p. 89). The greater the corruption, the greater the divinity! With this precious extract we may well close this very brief *résumé* of a book that is too stupid and weak to impose on even a child. If Atheists wish for an hour's amusement, they cannot do better than read this book. I am sorry to say it will cost them a shilling.

ARTHUR E. ELDERKIN.

* *The Case Against Atheism*, by Reader Harris, Q.C.

## MEDITATION MONKHOUSE.

### A STORY OF THE SECOND COMING.

His real name was not "Meditation," but Michael Monkhouse. That, however, was a detail of little consequence to his ungodly acquaintances. They rose superior on that point to his parents and sponsors in his baptism. It pleased them to call him "Meditation" for fun, and occasionally "Mad" for short.

He was, it must be confessed, a somewhat eccentric gentleman. Nevertheless, his piety was beyond dispute. He kept, at the time of which I write, a small shop in the Borough. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that that excellent lady—the hard-working and not unnaturally-anxious Mrs. Monkhouse—really kept the "Noted Fried Fish Emporium," as her husband grandiloquently described it on the sign which stretched itself above the shop-window front.

Mr. Monkhouse, having purchased the business and set it going, had other fish to fry than that which was dispensed across the counter. The oil he chiefly occupied himself in consuming was midnight oil, which he burned at such a rate as to quite unfit him for the ordinary duties of the day. He excused himself on the ground that the "still small hours" supplied the only period of peace and quietude requisite for the stupendous problems on which he was engaged.

In earlier years Monkhouse was sufficiently 'cute and industrious. But soon after the establishment of the Emporium his interest in mundane affairs underwent a remarkable change. It did not, it is true, suffer any diminution, but it took a new direction and shape. He began now to regard himself rather as an interested spectator than as an active agent in sublunary concerns. This occurred about the time he joined the "True and Reformed Ecclesia of Danielites."

The Danielites, according to the description of Mrs. Monkhouse, were a "set of long-haired, long-eared idiots." In the eyes of Mr. Monkhouse, they were the sole depositories of the most startling and portentous truths. He meditated all day on their interpretations, prognostications, and signs, and sat up nearly all night to work out the puzzles that their doctrines presented. A change speedily manifested itself in his outward man. His iron-grey hair he allowed to grow in long and shaggy tangles; he cultivated a patriarchal beard, and hung upon his lank body a suit of rusty black, which carried about in its folds and creases a more than sufficient abundance of the grease and odor belonging to his ostensible trade. His long and solemn visage, his air of abstraction, and his general inattention to business became, in time, the subject of remark, and "Meditation" Monkhouse found himself before long a person of local, and not very enviable, notoriety.

But what did that matter to him? He knew the mystic

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meaning of the "ten horns" of the Apocalypse. He had worked it out with anxious thought and much devout prayer, with the friendly assistance of the True and Reformed Ecclesia of Danielites. There was little else now to live for but to watch that fulfilment which he felt sure was not only inevitable, but imminent.

"My dear," he started on one occasion to explain to Mrs. Monkhouse, in the retirement of their little back parlor, "the ten-horned beast"——

"Ten-horned fiddlesticks!" interrupted his irate partner; "come and help me to fry the fish."

"But, my dear, let me at least explain to you that the eleventh Little Horn"——

"Don't talk to me about eleven little horns. Little horns, forsooth. You've got seven little horns of your own here. And the agent has been three times for the rent."

"Meditation" Monkhouse groaned in spirit. Alas, his "horns," great or little, were not "horns of plenty."

"And the fire insurance agent," pursued his relentless spouse, "has given notice that the premiums are so long overdue that the policy is lapsed. That comes of your seven-headed beasts. If their heads aren't any better than yours, then God help 'em."

"What do we want with ungodly, unbelieving fire insurances?" demanded the Danielite, now rising somewhat in wrath. "Don't I tell you that the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is at hand? Have I not fought and wrestled it out with that pious and precious vessel, Presiding Brother Jennifer? The Day of Judgment is at hand ——"

"Yes," observed Mrs. Monkhouse, "there are three judgment summonses on the mantel-shelf."

"Oh, these unbelieving women!" exclaimed Monkhouse, snatching up his hat in utter despair. "Far better is it to dwell in a corner of the housetop than with a brawling woman in a wide house." Emphasizing the "wide house" by barking his shin against a table in his twelve-feet-wide apartment, he flung out of the shop, determined at least to shake its dust off his feet, if he could not quite dispel its aroma from his apparel.

. . . . . .

On a certain Sunday evening, two or three months later, there was a special gathering of the Ecclesia at the little Bethel which they hired. Brother Monkhouse was announced to deliver himself, on this occasion, of an exceptionally important discourse. It was known that he had been wrestling with the topic day and night for more than a month past. He had even been seen rushing bare-headed along Newington Causeway as if in pursuit of somebody or something that he meant to capture, or perish in the chase. He narrowly escaped being "run in" at the police-station, where the only "second coming" they know of implies a previous conviction. Fortunately, he was recognised and rescued by a neighbor in the nick of time. A light now burned regularly in the back parlor of the Emporium long after the witching hour. In vain did the lady of the establishment, first coaxingly and then indignantly, shout downstairs to her recalcitrant husband to find his way to bed. Long and unceasingly, in spite of all expostulation or worldly appeals, he labored on with texts, maps, histories, newspapers, hieroglyphics, chronological tables, and charts.

Daniel could hardly have experienced greater agony in the lions' den than he occasioned "Meditation" Monkhouse in that back parlor, where he was always getting within an ace of a solution, only to find it evade his grasp like one of his own slippery eels. John, at Patmos, was not more delirious "in the spirit" than Monkhouse was intoxicated with the hope that, sooner or later, he would successfully "work it all out."

The Ecclesia, on this memorable Sunday night, was agog. There was a full attendance of the brethren. The bare, white-washed walls of the little Bethel had rarely beheld a gathering so full of expectancy and subdued excitement. Presiding Brother Jennifer had a look upon his grave visage which clearly betokened foreknowledge of something unusually important and quite unique.

Brother Monkhouse, though really the central figure of observation, sat on his right, with clasped hands, and eyes stedfastly fixed on the ceiling. It was noticed that he looked more hairy, gaunt, and careworn than the brethren had ever seen him before. But his pale, drawn countenance was devoid of any indication of what was passing in his mind.

Prayer and praise after the manner of the Danielites, and some introductory remarks by the President, being over, Monkhouse rose slowly to his full height of six feet two, cleared his long, thin throat, and oracularly commenced: "Presiding Brother and my dear Brethren of the Ecclesia of True and Reformed Danielites, in the name of God, Amen. To-night I purpose to unfold to you, after much prayer, anxious thought, and self-communing ——"

"Rats!" The exclamation proceeded from a juvenile interloper near the door, who was at once hotly pursued into the outer darkness.

"No, my dear brethren," resumed Monkhouse, with his eyes still on the ceiling, and looking somewhat aggrieved, "it is not rats. Brother Mumpus may call it rats, if he pleases ——"

The Presiding Brother: "But it was not Brother Mumpus. Pray proceed."

Though still somewhat discomposed, Monkhouse resumed. First of all, he asked his Danielite brethren to bend their minds upon the "healing of the deadly wound" of the seventh governmental headship of the Roman Empire, prophesied in Revelation xiii. 3.

Here twenty Bibles were hurriedly turned over for the text, as though the Ecclesia had never seen it and pondered over it a thousand times before.

The seven-headship, Monkhouse continued, had been supposed to be the Napoleonic dynasty "wounded to death by the sword of war" in 1815, and again "wounded to death" in 1870. Why wasn't it dead? Because it was to be "healed of its deadly wound." Then the wound, it might be said, was not deadly. Of course not; but in explanation of that he asked them to consider Daniel vii. 24.

Another rustle through twenty Bibles to another well-thumbed spot.

That meant, they had heard, the formation of an invincible Allied Confederacy of the countries of Cæsar's Roman Empire, prefigured by the Ten-horned Wild Beast—namely, France extended to the Rhine, Britain, Spain-with-Portugal, Italy, Austria South of the Danube, and other nations, forming a Decemregal Alliance which would dictate its own terms. According to Daniel vii. 24 and viii. 9 (more rustling in the way of verification), the ten allied horns or king would appoint a Napoleon as an Eleventh Little Horn or King to reign over a little State (probably Macedonia) inside Alexander the Great's former Græco-Macedonian Empire, denoted by the He-goat in Daniel viii.

The Ecclesia hurriedly proceeded to identify the He-goat.

Forthwith, said Monkhouse, this Little Horn would take the place of the King of Syria (one of the ten kings), and make a covenant with the Jews for seven years, according to David ix. 27. That would be the last seven years of this age.

Here another interruption was occasioned by a disturbance at the door. All eyes momentarily turned in that direction. The stern janitor posted at the entrance was perceived to be in deadly conflict with an obstreporous juvenile who was making frantic efforts to force his way in.

Loud murmurs of indignation ensued among the elders at this repetition of lawless and unseemly intrusion.

"Drat them boys!" growled Brother Mumpus. "I wish I had my whip here." Brother Mumpus was a carter, and had been twice fined at the Guildhall for his treatment of aged quadrupeds.

"'Withhold not correction from the child,'" quoted Brother Ezekiel, "'for, if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.'"

Meanwhile Monkhouse had come to a standstill in his discourse, and like the other brethren, directed his gaze to the door. He saw, at first, a juvenile—hatless, breathless, and very red in the face—writhing and wriggling about the door-keeper's rheumatic legs. The next instant he recognised in the intruder his own youngest son.

As their eyes met, the juvenile gasped out: "Father, I've come to tell you——"

The rest of the sentence was choked by the grip of the door-keeper, who now had him by the throat.

Brother Monkhouse paused for a moment. Then, in his sternest, most deliberate and unflinching tones, gave forth the command: "Remove that boy."

The boy was at once fired out.

Murmurs of approval at this instance of parental firmness ran round the assembly.

"Even as Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac," whispered Brother Binks.

"'My son,'" was the Scriptural comment of Brother Mumpus, "'despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction.'" The Brother did not look as if he would be weary of administering any amount of correction.

Order being once more restored, Monkhouse took up the thread of his discourse. He said that all he had so far recited was familiar to them, and firmly believed. But he had to declare that all their previous calculations were wrong—absolutely, hopelessly wrong!

The brethren exchanged glances as who should say, What manner of man is this? In truth, a Daniel come to judgment.

Unflinchingly, Monkhouse continued with the devout acknowledgment in the words of Daniel: "I thank thee and praise thee, O God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of Thee." They were, he said, on the very verge of the final dissolution. The kingdom of God—the second coming of Christ—was close at hand. In their own day, this very year, that very night, he believed they were on the eve of a universal break-up of the existing state of things. Chaos was coming. The doom of the world was at hand. Something unspeakably dreadful was immediately

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about to happen. Fire would fall from heaven, the earth's surface would crack and gape, oceans of blood——.

Presiding Brother Jennifer, with a note recently placed in his hand, gently tugged the orator's sleeve, but without effect.

"Yes," shouted Monkhouse, now warmed up into a frenzy. "Prepare ye. Fire, I say, from heaven, the world in flames, nations swimming in oceans of blood——."

Presiding Brother Jennifer: "I am sorry to interrupt Brother Monkhouse, *but his shop's on fire!*"

The excited orator stared around for an instant in tragic amaze. Then he looked in Brother Jennifer's face and at the paper in his hand. Then, with a bound, he leaped from the platform, and in half-a-dozen strides was at the door. The brethren, equally startled, made way for him, and he was lost to view.

In a few moments, however, the door was burst open, and Monkhouse re-appeared. "Don't forget," he shrieked, "fire from heaven, the world in flames, nations swimming in oceans of blood!" With this he finally disappeared.

In truth, the little shop was on fire, and speedily burnt out. And the worst of it was, it was now uninsured. His family and some few belongings were saved. In a short time afterwards they managed to make up another home. Whereupon Monkhouse cooled down, cut his hair, and turned up his sleeves. The Danielites knew him no more. He had been purged by fire. FRANCIS NEALE.

## BOOK CHAT.

THE attempts of the newspaper proprietors to introduce the deferred-payment system of bookselling is causing consternation among "the trade." Booksellers had long looked on the *Encyclopædia Britannica* as an extinct volcano, and their surprise must have been genuine when they found that the *Times* disposed of some seven thousand sets, on the easy-payment system, in a very short time.

* * *

Take the example of Messrs. Harmsworth and the "Best Hundred Books." These, again, were regarded as being "worked out," and yet Messrs. Harmsworth bid fair to dispose of their two thousand sets. Competition may be expected, as Messrs. Pearson and Co. are announcing the same series of books at a much lower rate. This has caused some of the publishers to take action, and it is significant that Messrs. Macmillan, a firm of the first importance, offer a new edition of Green's *History of the English People* on the instalment principle.

* * *

The fact is, that these unlooked-for results were simply the result of bold and clever advertisement among newspaper and magazine readers, not by any means the usual *clientèle* of the booksellers. The irritation of "the trade" is easily understood. The *Times*, Messrs. Harmsworth, and others, are selling books on a large scale without the intervention of the booksellers. And, in addition, the newspaper proprietors are doing excellent business with books that "the trade" had given up as being almost useless from a commercial standpoint.

* * *

We do not hold a brief for either party, but we cannot help thinking that the easy-payment system of bookselling has come to stay. The results will be very far-reaching. What with the drapers' literature at fourpence-three-farthings per masterpiece, and the newspaper proprietors with their instalment system, the poor bookseller is like the man in the tale—between the Devil and the deep sea.

* * *

Messrs. Newnes are issuing sixpenny editions of Conan Doyle's *Adventures and Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, *The Sign of the Four*, and Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Robert Elsmere*.

* * *

Mr. Bertram Dobell announces a new and cheaper edition of the Poems of James Thomson at three shillings and sixpence. The forthcoming volume will contain "The City of Dreadful Night" and a selection of the best of Thomson's poetry. This should bring Thomson's verse within reach of a very wide audience, and we wish the new venture every success.

* * *

Messrs. Macmillan have issued a really sumptuous illustrated edition of Fitzgerald's Version of *Omar Khayyam*. The designs, which occur on every page, are from the pencil of Mr. McDougall, and reflect great credit on the artist. This new book is published at twelve shillings and sixpence nett, and the issue is limited.

* * *

Edward Fitzgerald's great work has been before the world about forty years. Owing to the expensive editions, it is not nearly so popular as it should be. We hope that Messrs. Macmillan will issue this magnificent poem at a popular price.

* * *

Edward Fitzgerald, one of the great poets of this century, was born in 1809, the same year as his friend Tennyson and the great naturalist, Charles Darwin. Curiously enough, his masterpiece was published in 1859, the year of the *Origin of Species*. He died in 1883, having lived for seventy-four years the life of a recluse in Suffolk on the North Sea coast. Like Shelley, he had a great fondness for the sea, and an affection for fishermen and sailors. Fitzgerald began studying Persian in 1853. He then began turning odd stanzas of *Omar Khayyam* into English, and afterwards arranged them in a sequence. The result is only a translation, some four hundred lines long, from a Persian poet who had remained in obscurity for some eight centuries. But Fitzgerald made Omar one of the great English poets, and evermore his version of the old heathen singer will rank with such a poem as Gray's "Elegy," to which it bears some distant resemblance.

* * *

Persian scholars tell us that Fitzgerald dressed up Omar out of all recognition. We can well believe it. "A planet larger than the sun which cast it," said his friend Tennyson. The perennial charm of the poem is that it voices the scepticism at the bottom of all thoughtful men's minds, and makes magnificent music of it. Fitzgerald was a vegetarian, and he once nearly killed his friend Tennyson by persuading him, too, to turn vegetarian for some six weeks. Fitzgerald made translations from Jami and other Persian poets, and translated eight plays of Calderon, the Spanish dramatist. He was a delightful correspondent and his letters are charming and very piquant reading on account of their heterodoxy. Tennyson and Thackeray counted him among the dearest of their friends. In his version of Omar this shy dreamer of dreams dreamed one dream more lasting than we ourselves, or he, or the very Suffolk coast he lived on.

* * *

An amusing story is told of a certain University professor who was lecturing on Omar Khayyam. Most Persian poetry is full of allusions to wine, and Omar is no exception to the rule. The professor quoted those well-known lines commencing,

> O Thou who did'st, with Pitfall and with Gin,
> Beset the road I was to wander in,

and then proceeded to inform his young friends in front that "Omar did not mean the liquor in this passage, but another word for a snare; not but what the old heathen's writings seem to be full of convivial feeling."

## THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

AN astronomer, in the *Temple Magazine*, argues that we are justified in assuming that the Magi were old men, learned in knowledge of the skies, and skilled in reading the stars for the conclusions which astrology was supposed to teach; they would have been the first to notice any strange appearance in the heavens, but there is no evidence that the star was seen by any others. The evidence is quite the reverse. Herod's state of alarm on hearing of the apparition, and all Jerusalem with him, his calling together of the chief priests and scribes, and diligent inquiries of the wise men what time the star appeared, all show that the Star of Bethlehem was no ordinary phonomenon, but a miraculous light vouchsafed to the Magi only to guide their footsteps towards Palestine. An equal difficulty is found in the text expounding how the star "went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was." A celestial body would share in the diurnal rotation of the heavens with which the Magi must have been familiar, and, though it appeared to stand over Bethlehem at their arrival, would quickly move away. From all that has been said the conclusion is obvious: astronomy has no explanation to give of the Star of Bethlehem. It is impossible to fit any hypothesis to the conditions of St. Matthew's narrative, and we revert to the old belief that the apparition of the Magi at Christ's birth was a vision wholly miraculous.—*Birmingham Mail*.

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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, "The Babe of Bethlehem: A Christmas Fairy Tale."

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): 8.30, Animated Photographs.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, C. Cohen.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bow Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, J. Clark, M.A., "The Ethics of Evolution."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, S.E.): 11.15, Discussion; 7, J. M. Robertson, "The Ethical Dilemma of Theism."

WEST LONDON SECULAR CLUB (15 Edgware-road): Every evening 7—10.50.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11, J. R. Macdonald, "Prayer."

**COUNTRY.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH (Bristol-street Board-school): H. P. Ward—11, "Thomas Paine and his *Age of Reason*"; 7, "Why Christianity Lasts."

BRADFORD (Oddfellows' Hall, Thornton-road): 7, J. Hacking, "Land Colonies in Relation to Pauperism and the Unemployed."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, W. M. Thompson, "An Every-day Man's Religion."

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick street): 12, Discussion Class, business meeting; 6.30, A. G. Nostik, A lecture with lantern illustrations.

LEICESTER SECULAR HALL (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, H. Snell, "Brutus: Republican and Philosopher."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Mr. Hammond, "Theology's Last Ditch."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 7, J. Harvey Simpson (Secretary of the Manchester Crematorium), "Cremation."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): J. McCabe—3, "The High Church Movement"; 7, "My Reasons for Leaving Rome." Tea at 5.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Business meeting; 7.30, W. Cook, "Socrates."

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—December 18, Camberwell. January 1 and 8, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road; 15, Camberwell; 22, Sheffield; 29, Bradford Labour Church, February 5, Glasgow.

H. PERCY WARD, 5, Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—December 18, Birmingham.

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# The Freethinker

**Edited by G. W. FOOTE.**

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## THE SHAM OF ORTHODOXY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the many changes which Christianity has undergone, and the various phases which it now assumes, the orthodox form is the only consistent one. By the term "orthodox" is here meant the faith based upon the New Testament when it is taken in its legitimate signification, without any fanciful interpretation. Orthodox Christianity involves the belief in the God of the Bible, the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, the fall of man from his original state of purity, the Atonement through the death of Christ, his divinity, dependence upon him for personal salvation, and, finally, everlasting punishment in hell for the rejection of the faith. That there are *professed* Christians who have no belief in any of the above doctrines we readily admit; but this shows the sham of the Christian profession. The more we study this faith, and the more we observe the conduct of its votaries, the more are we convinced of the delusion and hypocrisy associated with the name of Christ. His alleged followers present him as a model of perfection, whose character and conduct should be emulated, and yet they never attempt to emulate either. They claim for the system which he is supposed to have originated an inherent vitality which it in no way possesses. As it has frequently been pointed out, the secular elements in Christianity are its principal supports. Remove these agencies, and the boasted supernatural structure would soon disappear.

That the fundamental pretensions of orthodox Christianity are delusive the following illustration will, we think, make clear. In passing through a city, we may behold a vast building constructed on no particular plan, with a wing here of Gothic character, a Greek pillar there, and a piece of Egyptian architecture at another part. We find that the dwellers in this building are divided into hostile parties, who are constantly warring against each other. One large flag is to be seen waving over all the various divisions, but it is evident that each separate section is fighting for its possession. Each party, however, has its own little flag, bearing upon it a distinctive inscription. These rival flags are so numerous that it is almost impossible to enumerate them all; but, with a little patience, we are enabled to discern the chief of those floating signals. We recognise the names—"Greek Church," "Latin Church," "Lutheran Church," "Armenian Church," "Anglican Church," "Episcopalian," "Presbyterian," "Wesleyan," "Baptist," "Congregationalist," "Trinitarian," "Unitarian," "Calvinist," and "Baptismal Regenerationist." Such are a few of the many banners which are waving over the strife and disputes which are heard between the conflicting hosts within the building. On minute inspection, it is evident that the strength of the fabric is but apparent; the only strong parts about it are the iron shutters which cover every window through which rays of light could penetrate. All else is uncertain, rickety, and crumbling. On still closer examination, it is clearly perceptible that the structure does not stand by its own strength at all, but that it is supported by a number of piles and buttresses which are there for the purpose of propping up the fragile edifice. Upon those various supports are such designations as "Superstition," "Intolerance," "Social Persecution," "Inquisition," "Star Chamber," "Church Property," "Priestcraft," "Imprisonment for Blasphemy," etc. All these appellations, it appears, have been furnished, and are protected, by the powers and potentates of the different nations. Upon inquiry, we ascertain that these powers and potentates supply a permanent garrison of soldiers of the Cross, who are encamped outside for the double purpose of preventing all intrusion by the armies of the common enemy, and at the same time to prevent, if possible, the escape of the residents.

Now this we regard as being a fair, though allegorical, representation of orthodox Christianity. Its signs of strength are only apparent, unreal, and external, kept up by hired defenders, and supported by buttresses that in no way belonged to the original faith. Take these away, and then the Christian's occupation will be gone. No men ever boasted so much of being able to stand alone as the professors of orthodoxy have done, and yet there was never a supernatural faith—Fetish, Pagan, or Monotheistic—that claimed and received so much external support. Remove all such appliances and secular agencies from the so-called spiritual fabric; leave it to stand, if it can, upon its own foundation; then, and not till then, can we fairly judge of its inherent stability. Then, and not till then, will Christians have a legitimate right to taunt Secularists with not being able to successfully compete with them in grandeur of buildings or extent of propagandism. When Christians are ready to have the value of their system tested by its own intrinsic worth; when they are willing that its principles shall be judged by reason and experience; when they are able to harmonise their faith with progressive humanity; when their conduct in everyday life is consistent with their belief; then, and then only, can they consistently challenge the statement that the external support they receive from a world they profess to despise is a clear and undeniable proof of the inherent impotency of their system.

Orthodoxy is not only one of the greatest shams of the age, but it is also cowardly and arrogant. In the early days of its history questions were allowed to be put in its churches by the hearers to the teachers, and thus an opportunity was given to endeavor to elicit the truth. To-day no minister dares to follow the custom of his predecessors. His pulpit is a castle into which no invader must be admitted, and his so-called sacred building is an entrenchment behind which he makes as cowardly an attack upon his enemies as a man does who shoots another from behind a stone wall. No charge is too mean, no accusation too dastardly, and no misrepresentation too vile, for some of those orthodox ministers of the "meek and lowly Jesus" to make against Freethinkers. Moreover, from the pulpits the most unfair, reckless, and misleading statements regarding our principles are constantly being made. But so cowardly are these pious slanderers that they persistently refuse to attempt to defend, in open debate upon the platform, the unjust aspersions in which they indulge from the pulpit. Again and again have we invited their principal leaders to a fair and honest discussion of their allegations, but no response has come from the orthodox exponents of the faith. They content themselves by hoodwinking their credulous followers, and by indulging in falsehoods as mean as they are unjust. Such is the influence of orthodox Christianity. It robs its victims of the power of intellectual discrimination and of moral aptitude. There is but one explanation that can be honestly given for this undignified and superstitious attitude of orthodox believers, and that is this:—Ministers of all denominations, who occupy a representative position, are afraid to submit their teachings to the only crucible by which truth can be distinguished from error—free and



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open discussion. They thus prevent their followers from hearing "both sides," and, in keeping them in partial ignorance, a superstitious adherence is secured. Knowing this, as we do, to be true, are we not justified in designating orthodoxy a sham, a delusion, and a snare?

But orthodoxy is injurious in other directions. Its exponents have placed themselves in antagonism to unfettered thought and secular progress. In many districts the *ipse dixit* of a Protestant clergyman is considered almost as authoritative, and nearly as infallible, as the bull of a Pope, and he who does not accept it not only jeopardises his worldly position, but is told that he perils his soul's eternal salvation. "I have said it, therefore it must be," is the dictum of orthodox preachers, and in this the whole business is summed up. This is terrible to think of when we consider that the enormous power wielded by the clergy is in nine cases out of ten used on the side of oppression and wrong. Liberty is a word which is hateful to them, freedom to think their especial aversion, and controversy a weapon of Satan. It is the endeavor to remove these orthodox evils that constitutes the destructive work of the Secular party. Before our constructive efforts can meet with thorough success this long-dominant and despotic theology must be deprived of its power, and orthodoxy, with its shams, must be no longer allowed to pervert the human mind.

CHARLES WATTS.

## CHRISTIANITY AND SCHOOL BOARDS.

IT has often been pointed out that, apart from certain fundamental weaknesses, the Roman Catholic Church has a far more logical case to place before an impartial jury than has any of the different Protestant bodies. Paradoxical as it may sound, the fact that it is more reasonably unreasonable, more consistently illogical, than any other Christian body gives it a strength of front and an apparent continuity of teaching which are sadly wanting with its rivals. With Protestantism the spirit of compromise is so strong, its counsels so divided, that it is impossible for it to present a solid and coherent body of doctrines to a critical public. In relation to fresh developments of thought, particularly those inimical to current religious beliefs, the policies of the two bodies are strikingly different. Both agree in doing their utmost to suppress any new discovery; but while the Protestant Churches generally accept it while the sense of conflict is fresh, and thus accentuates the discordance by its own conduct, the Catholic Church waits for a century or two (as in the case of Galileo, whose teachings were not accepted by the Church until 1822) until the new knowledge has been thoroughly assimilated by the majority of people, and then gravely informs the world that Catholics may believe it without running the risk of eternal damnation. In this manner the Catholic Church performs quietly and unobtrusively an evolution which the Protestant bodies carry out in a way that does them far more harm than good.

In the matter of our School Board system the leaders of Catholicism in this country have never ceased to raise protests against it on account of its un-Christian or anti-Christian character. True, Manning and Newman and Vaughan have not always been alone in their protests; it is only a matter of five or six years since Dean Gregory of St. Paul's declared that "nothing had done so much to lower the moral and religious tone of the people as the Education Act of 1870"; but, on the whole, the Protestants have confined themselves to a policy of obstruction, content to try and hinder the development of that which they were unable to altogether destroy.

The most recent utterance on this matter from an official Roman Catholic comes from Dr. Bagshawe, Bishop of Nottingham, who, a few days ago, made the following confession of faith in a letter to a correspondent: "The School Board system I do believe to be 'the work of the Devil,' because it is calculated to destroy Christianity. (1) Because it uses for its teaching a mutilated and falsified version of the Holy Scripture. (2) Because it entrusts the teaching of religious truth to sectarians of every color; to unbelievers, Agnostics, and Atheists; to men who are, or be, without religious training, examination, or certified altogether incompetent; to men concerning whose competency to teach the truths of religion no question may be asked. This brings religion into contempt, since in secular subjects the children know well that no one is allowed to teach who is not educated, trained, examined, and approved. (3) Because it expressly forbids the teaching of any positive Christian dogma, thereby setting aside the teaching of the keystone as revealed by Christ, and the principles which He gave to His disciples. Thus it roots up from the minds of thousands of children every vestige of Christianity, and leaves a great many with no knowledge even of God. I think Christianity can hardly have a worse enemy than the School Board system, which, therefore, I hold to be 'the work of the Devil.' The teaching of the Board schools is poisonous—(1) because it gives sectarians, Agnostics, and Atheists abundant opportunity to scoff at sacred truths, and to insinuate their own heresies, blasphemies, and unbelief into the children's minds; (2) because the system itself of teaching religion by untrained, unexamined, unauthorised, and often unbelieving teachers, and of so teaching it that its principal truths must be eliminated, inculcates these false, pernicious principles—(*a*) that religious doctrine is uncertain and valueless—a mere matter of opinion; (*b*) that its only source is a false version of the Bible; and (*c*) that every one is at liberty to make what he likes out of the Bible, or to reject it altogether."

With the exception that the language here used is a little stronger and plainer than usual, I cannot see how any Christian can logically take exception to the Bishop's confession of faith. It cannot be denied that the teaching of religion in Board schools may be done either by believers or unbelievers, or that by not giving definite and dogmatic religious instruction it fails to adequately protect children against the assaults of unbelief. *I* do not believe that giving them dogmatic religious instruction would do this; but then I am not a Christian, and I am trying to look at the matter from that point of view. Nor can it be denied that the careful exclusion of religion from nine-tenths of the school-time of pupils, with the spectacle of many children not receiving religious instruction in any form, must suggest to some that "religious doctrine is uncertain and valueless—a mere matter of opinion," to be rejected without serious loss or accepted without any special gain.

To me it has always been a cause of astonishment that any sincerely religious man could ever accept the present School Board system as satisfactory. Its whole constitution is a standing declaration of the subsidiary importance of religious opinions. It is the secular interests that receive by far the larger share of attention, the ability of teachers to impart secular instruction that forms the subject of their examinations; their religious convictions are of little or no account; right through the secular is first, and religion a very bad second. There can be no more humiliating spectacle to a religious man than that of seeing beliefs which he believes to be the most essential to a child's welfare, here and hereafter, lightly brushed on one side as being of very minor importance compared with a knowledge of reading and writing.

From both the Christian and Freethought points of view I can agree with Dr. Bagshawe that "Christianity can hardly have a worse enemy than the School Board system." From the Christian standpoint because it fails to saturate the child's mind with dogmatic religion which will serve to some extent to check the influence of religious unbelief, and from the Freethought position because the impetus given by a study of the natural sciences even in an elementary form, and by awakening the love of inquiry, must serve as a powerful force in breaking down the spirit of mental submission and dependence upon which religion lives. And I venture to predict that whatever adverse criticism Dr. Bagshawe receives will come, not from unbelievers, but from his brother Christians. The less astute will attack him because they fail to realise the soundness of his position; the more intelligent, but less honest, for the same reason that many Christians howled at Archbishop Temple for saying there were contradictions in the Bible, because, however true the statement may be, it is bad policy to say it. Dr. Bagshawe has only said what a great many believers must feel, but what few people have the courage to speak out.

Dr. Bagshawe's letter indirectly emphasizes yet another point deserving the notice of all advocates of a really effective national school system—namely, that the interest of the Christian world in education is a religious interest from beginning to end. Why is it that Voluntary schools

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are in existence? Not on behalf of education as education. The Board school system provides amply for that. Not because the education given in voluntary schools is superior to that given in its Board schools. This is notoriously not the case, while improvements in Voluntary schools are usually forced on school managers by the secular authorities. Nor can it be because the Voluntary schools are better staffed, or the staff better paid, for in both respects they fall far below the level of Board schools. So far as any of these legitimate educational interests are concerned, it is not claimed that Board schools do not, or cannot, subserve them in a thoroughly efficient manner. Why, then, do Voluntary schools exist? Simply as religious institutions, maintained on behalf of this or that sect. The question of education, in the secular sense, is the last thing these schools concern themselves about. Their essential object is to breed members of a religious sect, not to develop good and useful citizens. It is for sectarian purposes they are called into existence, for sectarian purposes they are maintained in existence, and the fact that this interest does not bulk larger than is actually the case is due entirely to the rivalry of Board schools and the conditions under which the Government grant is obtained.

There is not even a generous rivalry among them as to which shall teach religion, as religion, most effectively. Nine-tenths of them would rather see religion banished from the schools altogether than see them supplied with an article not retailed at their own private dispensary. Dr. Bagshawe complains that they use a Protestant Bible; the Evangelical party cry out against the surreptitious introduction of High Church doctrines; Episcopalians protest that the religious teaching is not definite enough, and each in turn say they would sooner welcome secular education pure and simple than see any form of religion taught to children with which they are not in complete agreement. It is this petty niggling sectarian spirit exhibiting itself where such vital and tremendous interests are concerned that makes the whole thing so hatefully contemptible.

And note, finally, the hypocrisy of the position of such Christians as agree to the present plan of teaching religion in Board schools. If Christianity is as necessary to the welfare of the child as secular education itself; if, moreover, instruction divested of Christianity is useless, or worse than useless, then every reason that will justify compulsory education will justify compulsory religious education likewise. The opinions of individual parents have no more right to decide the one case than they have to decide the other. And yet, side by side with the general assertion that education divorced from religion is useless, there is given support, openly at least, by a large majority of Christians to a "conscience clause," enabling parents to withdraw their children from any religious instruction whatsoever. Practically, they say: "Religion is essential to the child's welfare here and hereafter; without it it is an impossibility for your children to grow up good and useful citizens. Nevertheless, if you think otherwise, while our children are being instructed in the mysteries of godliness yours can go outside and play peg-top." Surely Christians must realise that in granting or accepting the existence of a conscience clause they are admitting that religious beliefs are not essential to the child's welfare, that they are not certain about the matter, and that the balance of probability is, after all, on the side of the Secular position. Personally, I am convinced of two things: first, that the plain and honest course for Christians to adopt in the schools under their control is to refuse to entertain the "conscience clause," and thus forfeit the Government grant; and, second, that they will not do anything of the kind. Consistency will no more be displayed here than elsewhere, and, after all, the spectacle of religious people arranging for the exclusion of religious beliefs, where their absence is desired, is no more absurd than many other ridiculous compromises effected during the past generation.

Brutally ignorant as the Bishop of Nottingham's attitude is, it is yet thoroughly Christian. It is the expression of a man who *believes* his creed, and is not ashamed to say so. I sympathise heartily with those who say: "We believe that life without religion cannot be worth the living, and we therefore demand that the State shall enforce religious instruction as it enforces instruction in other branches of knowledge." The demand is a simple and, granting the premises, a logical one. But I sympathise still more with those who say that the school is not the place to teach speculative beliefs and metaphysical religious doctrines. The child is not there to be trained into a customer for this or that Church. It is there to be prepared for the larger school of life beyond, where knowledge alone is the key that unlocks problems, where conduct, and not speculative opinions, determine whether it shall sink or swim in the sea of life.

C. COHEN.

## BORING.

"The only riches God cares about are souls saved; He reckons Himself poorer by every soul that is lost, because it did not endure the temptation or trial. It was so that he 'tried' Abraham, and Jacob, and many more; and how He honored them when they bore the trial successfully! It is a curious word in the Hebrew that is sometimes used in speaking of these trials. It is a word that means *to bore*. Isn't that how we 'try' things? When we want water we bore here and there where we hope we may find it; if we do find it, we honor the place and build a well there. So the Lord bores into us, and if He finds the good stuff there He is looking for, He quickly honors us."—REV. J. REID HOWATT.

OUR first impulse is to be tickled with the humor of the notion. We have heard that men *bore* deep holes in the crust of the earth that they may discover the vicinity of coal or iron or gold. We know that engineers will *bore* into the recesses of a mountain or the bed of a river to test the practicability of constructing a railway tunnel. We have ourselves seen the grocer *bore* into the heart of a cheese so that he may prove its sterling quality to a prospective customer. We can understand why well-sinkers *bore* vast pits in the ground; humanity might otherwise go waterless. But the purpose of the Lord who made us in *boring* holes to ascertain the sort of "stuff" he put inside us is one of those inexplicable mysteries which pass our small finite comprehensions.

The matter does not admit of the explanation that God makes up his parcels of humanity without duly labelling them, and so forgets the nature of the contents; for it is written in the infallible book that God understands our thoughts afar off, and that he is acquainted with all our ways, and that there is not even a word on our tongues which is spoken without his knowledge. Since, then, God possesses so wondrous a faculty of penetration, his motive for *boring* into us must ever remain an unsolved problem.

Meanwhile it must not be said of Freethinkers that they fail to make use of the newest light. For instance, let no man in our ranks be ignorant that the latest revised revised version of Genesis xxii. 1 reads: "And it came to pass that God did *bore* into Abraham."

Of course, we are next prompted to inquire: What was the result of the operation? What was the nature of the "stuff" that the Lord brought to the surface? The answer comes that God found in the ancient patriarch a cheerful willingness with his own hands to put his only begotten son to a bloody and barbarous death. It has not been left on record that the Lord was in any way shocked at his discovery, although he has elsewhere instructed men that they should do no murder. Is it possible, however, that God acted upon the principle, laid down by himself, of not letting his left hand know what his right hand was doing? We should, in such circumstances, understand that his left hand manipulated the drill which perforated Abraham, whilst the finger which inscribed the ten commandments on tables of stone belonged to his right hand. I venture to submit that this explanation is an eminently practical solution of a serious Biblical problem, and I offer it gratuitously to all apologists for Holy Writ. How otherwise can we account for the fact clearly indicated by subsequent events, that God was delighted beyond measure with the result of his investigation? Indeed, so enraptured was God with the quality of the "stuff" disclosed in his servant that he caused it to be written in his infallible book for the information of unborn generations that Abraham was called the friend of God. Verily, the reputation of God will not be heightened by too close a scrutiny of the list of his acknowledged friends.

Retribution is slowly but certainly overtaking God. The process of boring still goes on, but the drill has changed hands. To-day we do not hear so much of God boring into Man and his works, as of Man boring into God and his works. The result of our boring is that the book of a New Revelation is being opened to us. The drill of scientific investigation performs its relentless task, and in our hands we hold the very "stuff" of which God is

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composed. Marvellous is the apocalypse which is unfolded to us. We discover that it is not Man that is God-made; it is God that is Man-made.

We have now two Revelations, the Old and the New. The Old Revelation explained to us how God created Man in his own image, in the image of God created he him. It further showed how God provided for the ruin of Man; how he invented a wonderful scheme for his redemption; how he prepared a heaven of rapturous joy for the FEW who should comply with the condition of that scheme; and a hell of intolerable agony for the MANY who, from inability, neglect, or obstinacy, should fail to meet its demands. The Old Revelation was begotten in Ignorance, fostered by hireling priests, and nourished by Folly.

The New Revelation tells us how man created God in his own image; in the image of Man created he him. Numberless are the chiliads which have since dissolved into the illimitable past. So vast are the ages which have for ever fled that Man has even forgotten the work of his own hands. The New Revelation demonstrates more than this bare fact of creation; it shows how Man added to his God attribute upon attribute; how he moulded and refashioned him to meet changing environments; and how he founded orders of priests to formulate doctrines, to elaborate ceremonies, to offer sacrifices to his God, and to live luxuriously upon the credulity of the people. The New Revelation is the offspring of Knowledge, is fostered by strenuous seekers after Truth, and is nourished by the conclusions of Scientific Research.

. . . . . .

Far, far away, beyond the utmost limit of our seeing, stretches the pathway of progress. The road, however, which should be free for the unrestricted march of humanity, is impeded by many vexatious and dangerous obstacles. Prominent amongst these are three towering rocks, and foremost stands that God which Man himself has made.

O God! in thy own most holy word thou art called by many names; but no name is more fitly chosen than that of the Rock. Thou art indeed a strong Rock, a high Rock, a mighty Rock. A rock is the type of pitilessness, of menace, and of obstruction. Such art thou, O God of Abraham, God of the Bible, and God of the Nineteenth Century—three persons and one God.

O God, we are at present mainly concerned with the third of these resemblances. Thou art a strong rock of obstruction, and thou art the stronger because of our blindness and our ignorance. From our earliest years, parent and teacher and priest have combined to instruct us that the chief end of our brief existence is to glorify thee and enjoy thee for ever. In our manhood nothing is harder for us than to unlearn this lesson. We are so slow to realise that this energy were more wisely expended in the service of humanity. Thou dost stand between us and the pathway of progress, O God.

G. DAWSON BAKER.

*(To be concluded.)*

## PROFANE PARABLES.

### VII.—DISILLUSION.

A BAND of knaves assembled together, arrayed in solemn mummery; and they pointed the people to a veiled figure, saying:

"Fall down and worship, O people; for this is God."

And many prostrated themselves in awe, and worshipped the veiled thing; but one remained unbowed, and stood aloof, whereat the mummers were angered, and commanded him to worship.

"First let me see thy God *unveiled*," said he.

"Fool!" cried the mummers. "Thou canst not see the face of God, and live."

But the man sprang forth, and tore away the veil, so that the figure stood revealed . . . . And the man laughed as he looked; and the people arose ashamed; and the mummers departed in silence.

### VIII.—CREED.

A company of theorists declared that the planet Mars was inhabited by dragons; and in the fulness of time they caught a heretic.

"What!" said they, "You deny that Mars is peopled by dragons?"

"No," said the heretic. "But, you see, Mars is so far off, and dragons are such rare animals, that really, gentlemen, I——

"Blasphemy!" yelled the Theorists. "*To the rack with him!*"

### IX.—ETHICS.

The Elders of the Church assembled in holy conclave, and communed among themselves concerning the vices of the children.

"We must guide the infant in the path of righteousness," said they. "And, to this end, we will erect an edifice wherein the young may assemble together, male and female, and read the records of ancient morals; and we will call the place Sunday School."

Thereupon a moralist who was present blew his nose so wantonly that the Elders sprang from their seats alarmed, thinking it was the final fanfare.

### X.—NEMESIS.

A certain Bishop, luxuriating in his palace, heard a great noise. And he inquired the reason thereof.

"There are angry Atheists without!" cried the porter. "They have menace in their looks. Heaven forefend their vengeance!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Bishop. "Ask 'em what they want."

And the porter, having conferred with the Atheists, made his report.

"They say," said he, "they have no desire to harm thee; but they demand that thou shalt publicly declare the truth, and unfold thy mind honestly before the people."

"*Mercy on us!*" cried the Bishop.

### XI.—EMANCIPATION.

A great Logician instructed his pupils in the way of truth, to the end that earlier impressions might be removed, and their young minds freed from the cobwebs of credulity. And, as they grew older, he watched the seed ripen within them, and was glad.

Until, in after years, he met one who had been his brightest follower.

"Art thou still free from the errors of thy fathers?" said the Logician. "Hast thou abandoned altogether the worship of the gods?"

"Yes! yes!" cried the other, with enthusiasm. "I abjure them all. *I am a Spiritualist!*"

And the Logician turned away, and wept.

### XII.—CONSISTENCY.

On a Sunday the Devil happened within a church.

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," sang the owner of broad acres.

"Blessed are the meek," thundered the local martinet.

"Love your enemies," quoth the prize persecutor.

"Body o' me!" gasped the Devil. "*Just hear 'em!*"

E. R. W.

## THE SECULAR INCORPORATION.

I PROPOSE to begin this article with a few words about the legality of the Secular Society, Limited. Let me say, first of all, that the solicitor who assisted me in devising the scheme, and drafting the Memorandum and Articles of Association, was Mr. Harper, of the firm of Harper and Battcock, who acted for the late Charles Bradlaugh. It was not until the scheme was thus completed to our own satisfaction that we took counsel's opinion. One or two slight verbal alterations in the Memorandum were made at counsel's suggestion. He then gave us his opinion, in writing, that the scheme would stand at law. He could not be absolute and peremptory, because there was no precedent; but Mr. Brett's own opinion, which was really all we wanted, was distinctly in favor of the scheme's legality; and as it left his hands it was printed and registered. Mr. Harper was perfectly satisfied with counsel's opinion, which is at the service of the Board of Directors, who are free whenever they please to publish it *in extenso*, although there does not seem at present to be any particular necessity for so doing. For the rest, I desire to say that it is nonsense to talk about the certain illegality of the Society's objects, as set forth in its Memorandum. Collectively and severally, its objects are

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legal. Those who criticise, without the slightest intention of helping, whether the scheme be unsound or otherwise, are invited to point out a single object which is illegal. Of course they must not go back to the law as it was long ago. What is called "blasphemy," apart from mere swearing and profane language, is determinable by appeal to the statute and common law. Now the only statute is that of William III (1694), which has never once been applied, having been drafted so stringently as to defeat its own object. That statute is obsolete All prosecutions for blasphemy have been at common law. And what is the common law of blasphemy? In answering this questions, it is idle to go back to ancient decisions. Laws passed by parliament—such as the admission of Jews to the legislature, and the Oaths Act which allows citizens to affirm instead of swearing, on the ground that they have no religious belief—have changed the old state of things. Lord Chief Justice Coleridge's decision, on the occasion of my trial in the Court of Queen's Bench in 1883, settles the common law of blasphemy for us. "I lay down as law to you," Lord Coleridge said to the jury, "that, if the decencies of controversy are observed, even the fundamentals of religion may be attacked without a person being guilty of blasphemous libel." Of course it might still be easy enough to persuade a Christian jury that the decencies of controversy are violated in a journal like the *Freethinker*, but I defy anyone to persuade anybody that the decencies of controversy are violated in the Memorandum of the Secular Society, Limited.

There are a few people, who never had a good word for Charles Bradlaugh when he was living, who now talk as if wisdom died with him. They want to know why I have done what he did not attempt. Is it meant that he is to rule and guide us for ever from his grave? He himself would be the first to pour scorn upon this idea. When the greatest man dies, something is left for posterity to do. There is room for new poets even after Shakespeare. Moreover, it must be remembered that Charles Bradlaugh was in the thick of his own fight when Lord Coleridge's judgment was delivered; and that, during the few years of life left him, all his time and strength, not expended in earning his bread, was given to his parliamentary duties. Had he lived and kept his health, this task would probably not have devolved upon me.

Let us now suppose for a moment, just for the sake of argument, that the Society should turn out to be illegal. Even then we should gain something by forming and supporting it. If a bench of judges declared its objects to be illegal, this would be a splendid and decisive announcement of our peculiar grievance as Freethinkers, and would soon lead to the passing of an Act of Parliament for its redress. But I have only taken this point, as I said, for the sake of argument; and I may add that while the Society's registration stands, it is not competent for any person to rob it because he disapproves its objects, or for any executor to withhold a legacy due under the will he is administering.

So much for the legality of the Society. As to its future, I can only say that I am not a prophet. What will be will be. It is for the Freethought party to decide. I have fashioned the instrument, but I cannot say how they will use it. Up to the present we have enrolled nearly a hundred and thirty members. There is room for five hundred, and when we reach that number we can easily provide for the inclusion of more. We have a preponderance of laymen (so to speak) over lecturers on the Board of Directors. I do not count myself as a lecturer, because I am determined that the Board shall not employ me in that capacity. Neither directly nor indirectly will I receive any of the Society's money, at least until I make a public announcement to the contrary. It was my hope that some influential and well-to-do layman would take the chairmanship of the Board, but for this we must apparently wait another year. The new Board has pressed me to take the office for the present, and I have accepted it, not seeing any alternative. But the sooner I can relinquish it, consistently with the Society's welfare, the better I shall be pleased.

Every member of the Board is a member of the National Secular Society. With two exceptions, they are all members of the N. S. S. Executive. The idea of any hostility, or conflict of interests, may therefore be dismissed as ridiculous. No one can be quite sure of the future, but even if the Incorporated Society should in time absorb other agencies, as two or three persons seem to apprehend, it could only do so by proving itself a superior instrument for the work; and in that case there would be little occasion for grief and tears. Wise men care for the substance rather than for shadows and names.

Some of the poorer members of our party who wish to become members complain that the entrance fee of ten shillings is a barrier. Well, to meet their case, the Board has authorised Miss Vance, the secretary, to take their fees in instalments. Their subsequent payment will be only five shillings a year, and that could be easily managed, as it is only about a penny per week.

Early in the new year the Board will issue an official circular to the Freethought party. Meanwhile I venture to press the claims of the Society upon the attention of my readers. There ought to be a considerable accession of new members during the present winter. Freethinkers who put the Society in their wills for legacies—and some have done this already—should communicate the fact (in confidence if necessary) to the Chairman. Those who can afford donations are earnestly invited to contribute them as soon as possible. Whatever they give will be paid into the Society's bank account, and be held or expended according to the Board's decisions. I shall be glad to hear from friends who will figure in a list of promises, which I will keep standing in the *Freethinker*. These promises may relate to either of two objects: the general work of the Society, or the establishment of headquarters for the Freethought party in London. Towards the latter object a generous friend of the movement has promised a thousand pounds, on condition that others contribute adequately. Promises may be for any amount from one pound upwards, and the list ought to be started next week.

Freethinkers should put it to themselves whether they really support the movement as they should. Concentrated and continuous effort is impossible without regular and sufficient resources. Instead of merely living from hand to mouth, and doing what little we can from month to month, we ought to be in a position to strike out vigorously in many directions. A great many Freethinkers are too careless. They appear to imagine that all *must* go well, that evolution or something will do all the work of progress without their assistance. But this is a very great mistake. There are signs of reaction everywhere in Europe. They are visible enough even in England. Largely by means of the Voluntary schools, religion has been stealing a march upon the forces of progress. It is now growing more and more audacious. The attacks made upon our Sunday meetings at Hull, Liverpool, and other places; the present attack upon them at Birmingham; all point to a coming fierce struggle, in which Freethought may have to put forth all its strength, courage, and resources.

G. W. FOOTE.

## ACID DROPS.

THE climax has come at last. Judge Wills has sentenced one of the Peculiar People, Thomas Senior, to four months' imprisonment with hard labor for obeying Jesus Christ. Mr. Foote is writing an Open Letter to the judge, which will appear in next week's *Freethinker*.

The Chairman of the Birmingham School Board, the Rev. E. M. F. MacCarthy, reported at a recent meeting that he had received letters complaining of "offensive placards" outside the Bristol-street Board School, having reference to Sunday meetings held there—by the Secularists. He formally moved that the matter be referred to the consideration of the Sites and Buildings Committee. The Rev. J. Wood said, as chairman of the committee, that he had taken action in the matter, which he hoped would prove satisfactory to the Board and the public. But this did not satisfy the Bishop of Coventry, who declared that the matter was "most serious." He moved that the committee should be instructed to frame such a regulation for letting the Board schools as should forbid their being used for the propagation of avowed Atheism. Evidently his lordship was well primed with the most ardent spirit of bigotry. It did not occur to him that Atheists are ratepayers as well as Christians, and have just the same right to the use of public buildings. Professor Windle, who supported the Bishop, referred to a lecture entitled "Why I am an Atheist," as something horrible. He also referred to "An Exposition of

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Romish Errors," by an ex-Catholic priest—Mr Joseph McCabe; and said that, as discussion was invited, the result might have been most undesirable—which is rather a reflection on Catholics than on Secularists. Fortunately, the Rev. J. Hulme and the Rev. J. Sharpe stood up for the sacred cause of liberty of conscience, and we congratulate them on their honesty and courage in so doing. However, the matter ended in a compromise; the committee being instructed to "consider the question of the lettings of schools as well as placards." It remains to be seen how this will practically affect the Secularists. Meanwhile it is worthy of note that the bigots who are seeking to drive them out of public halls are the very persons who are constantly twitting them with their lack of progress. When the Secularists get a little fair play, and achieve some success, these persons agitate to have them gagged and suppressed.

The Bishop of Coventry, following the time-honored tactics of his species, mixed up Atheism with immorality. Upon this head he spoke like a reckless and libellous liar. It is utterly false that Secular lecturers indulge in "indecent allusions," and just as false that there is any "obscenity" in Secularist literature. Let his lordship look a little nearer home. He preaches from a volume called the Bible, in which there are hundreds of filthy passages which we defy him to read out aloud to a mixed congregation. Yet he unhesitatingly thrusts that volume, unexpurgated, into the hands of as many children as possible; and, having given them to read what many a prostitute would probably object to in a brothel, he turns up the whites of his eyes and whines about the "indecency" of Secular publications, which really has no existence outside his own dirty imagination.

We are sorry to see the Birmingham *Daily Post* joining in the chorus of bigotry. It does not go "so far" as the Bishop of Coventry. It does not want to debar Atheists from the use of public buildings. Oh dear no! It only wants to stop their offensive advertisements—for instance, the advertisement of a lecture on "Did God Make Man, or did Man Make God?" Well now, we put it to the *Post* whether every Atheist on earth does not believe that man *did* make every god that was ever worshipped? If the *Post* wants to stop that question being put, it wants to stop the advocacy of Atheism. The *Daily Gazette* takes much the same line, and naturally adds something about "indecent literature." But this is the veriest humbug. It is a hypocritical attempt to confuse the real question at issue. The fact is, that the Christians have become afraid to stand forth as absolute bigots. They no longer like to face the task of suppressing Freethought as such. So they couple it with something else, in the hope that the fact and the falsehood together may do their disreputable business.

The Birmingham Branch has had a well-written, temperate, but firm letter inserted in the daily papers in reply to the slanders of the Bishop of Coventry and Professor Windle. It is pointed out that sexual questions have not been treated at any of the Branch meetings. With regard to the marriage question, it is observed that Mr. G. W. Foote, the President of the National Secular Society, has written: "I believe that marriage, with the probability of offspring, is not a private, but a social act, and should be surrounded by social sanctions."

We regret to state that the Birmingham Branch has already received notice that the sale of literature must be stopped at its meetings in the Bristol-street Board school. This petty act is quite unworthy of the School Board. Of course it will delight the bigots. They reckon it "fine" to prevent a hundred people from obtaining a copy of the *Freethinker*.

The Alcade of Socorro resolved recently that he would "have no more of *such obscene books* offered for sale in that town." And what was the obscene book? No other than the Holy Bible. The real nature of it had apparently been represented to him, because we may not assume that he did more than ordinary professing Christians, and went to the length of reading the volume itself.

Following this prohibition of the Bible, an appeal was made to the authorities of the United States of Columbia, and the government of Bogota ordered the restriction to be withdrawn. In the meantime a number of copies of the Bible had been confiscated as a book dangerous to the morals of the community.

The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, preaching at Oxford, took occasion to denounce those wretched, peripatetic Christians who went to hear Dr. Parker on Sunday morning, Canon Gore in the afternoon, and Mr. Hughes in the evening. No doubt this is very unfair. Every Christian is bound to let each minister have a good chance at him. Moreover, it is unfair to divide the collection money.

The Rev. C. H. Goodman addressed a meeting of Huddersfield Wesleyans on "Life in the Mendi Country." He denounced the superstitions of the natives, and praised the self-sacrifice of the missionaries. "All that the missionaries asked," he said, "was that they would give them some financial help and their prayers." Financial help first, prayers after.

Here undoubtedly we see the finger of Providence. The church of St. Nicholas at Stroud, near Rochester, has been nearly burnt down. It is described as the "ugliest church in Kent." Still, they tried to save it, though parishioners with architectural taste are now wondering why the Almighty was not allowed to have his fling.

That highly emotional, though not always rational, preacher, Canon Gore, has been accorded the dignity of a reproduction of one of his sermons in phonographic outline in the *Phonetic Journal*. We work out, amongst the advanced phraseograms, that Canon Gore says: "I speak soberly"—which is reassuring. And, speaking soberly, "it is hard to believe that we are making any actual moral progress"—which is a fine commentary on all the past centuries of Christian work.

The *Christian*, a weekly journal, in view of Christmas and New Year festivities, urges special attention to abstinence from intoxicating drinks, and speaks with pleasure of the zeal exhibited by Guardians in eliminating these drinks from Christmas observances in the workhouses. The zealous Guardians probably take good care that no one limits their creature comforts at home.

The observations of the editor are so full of the customary ignorance as to what the Bible really teaches on the subject that if anyone would send him a copy of Mr. Foote's pamphlet on the *Bible and Beer*, it would not only be a seasonable, but a very useful gift.

That admirable work, Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*, is the subject of an inquiry in *Notes and Queries*. "XL" refers to the following passage: "The King of Arabia, Felix, in the fourth century, received an embassy from the Byzantine ambassador, requesting that Christians might be allowed to settle in his kingdom, and also that he might make Christianity the religion of the State. He assented to the first proposition; but with respect to the second he replied: 'I reign over men's bodies, not over their opinions.'" "XL" wishes to know more about that Arabian king.

Cardinal Vaughan, with the innate politeness and becoming dignity characteristic of the leaders of his Church, has replied in the *Catholic Times* to a lady correspondent who apparently has been moved to say something on behalf of Agnostics.

His Eminence says: "So far from thinking virtue in an Agnostic almost an impossibility, I am quite sure that Agnostics may be, and frequently are, extremely virtuous. My own contention was, and is, that whatever virtues an unbaptised unbeliever possesses are virtues in the natural order. An infidel may be a faithful husband, a devoted father, and a stedfast friend, and so kind and charitable to the poor as to spend all he has upon them."

Whilst, however, Cardinal Vaughan is willing to give Freethinkers credit for "these and a thousand other admirable qualities," he thinks that such virtues, "being exercised by one who *(ex-hypothesi)* is not united to Christ, are utterly useless so far as their power to merit eternal life is concerned, and absolutely valueless as compared with supernatural acts performed by one in a state of grace."

The meaning of which is, that not good works, but faith, is the saving power. So that the more credulous a man is, the greater his chances of heavenly favor.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Salford makes a very pointed observation. He says: "In the judgment of many, the Bishop of Manchester would be better employed, at the present day, in defence than in attack; in repairing the breaches in the walls of Evangelicalism than in wasting his powder in vain assaults upon the impregnable towers of the Catholic Church."

Henry Scott Anderson, a pupil residing with the Rev. C. H. Drake, at the rectory, Leverington, shot himself accidentally while cleaning a gun. The coroner's jury expressed sympathy with all concerned; but they pointed out that the gun was a dangerous one, and ought to be taken more care of. They omitted to notice that the deceased handled the gun on a Sunday morning. This explains the accident to the satisfaction of every good Sabbatarian Christian.

"A Wandering Scribe," who certainly is wandering mentally, contributes a long tirade against Secularism in the

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*Liverpool Review*. He rejoices that the local N. S. S. Branch is now unable to charge for admission to its lectures, and denounces Mr. G. W. Foote for his "brazen audacity" in trying to "make Christianity ridiculous"—a thing, by the way, which Mr. Foote never attempted, for Christianity does not need to be *made* ridiculous. The rest of this wandering scribe's letter is simply abuse, which calls forth the editorial comment that his letter is "a typical illustration of the serious mistake the well-intentioned but one-sided good person often makes when he deals with great questions affecting religious liberty and equality."

According to a native correspondent of the *Pioneer* (India), a wonderful performance followed Mrs. Besant's lecture at the residence of Maharaja Sir C. Tagore, in Benares. When this romantic lady's sublime discourse was concluded, it was announced that a Hindu Fakir would walk over a tank of fire, which had apparently been prepared for the purpose. Of course the whole company adjourned to witness the performance. The fire had been raging fiercely for hours, and the heat was intense. A crowd of men, women, and children were dancing round it. Presently they desisted, and it was then announced that the fire had been subdued by the power of the incantations, and that anyone could go over it. Men and boys ran over the fire, some going four or five times without being scorched in the least. "Caught by the enthusiasm of the moment," says the native writer, "I threw away my shoes and stockings, and, tucking up my cloth, I ran over the fire and came out of it safely. My feet sank in the fire, and the sensation felt was as if one was running over a hot, sandy place." Colonel Olcott, Mrs. Besant, and other Theosophists "assisted" at this exhibition. Evidently the ex-Materialist and erstwhile ardent Bradlaughite is very far gone in superstition. Some people call it humbug, but they are unskilled in parliamentary language.

President Kruger has given another manifestation of his Dutch rural simplicity. Preaching on Sunday to a three-fold congregation of the Dutch Churches at Pretoria, he declared that "the reason so few burghers were killed in the M'Pefu campaign was, that the Lord was with the nation." Kruger perhaps laughs in his sleeve at this pious declaration. It is a piece of official formality which is expected of all rulers in Christian countries. President McKinley has recently told the Americans the very same thing about their war with Spain. So we needn't laugh too much at the cute old President of the Transvaal.

The London City Mission is reported to have received a windfall (or godsend) of £38,000, left by an old Frenchwoman who lived in a back street and was thought to be as poor as her residence was squalid. As the City Mission was in low water, there will be much jubilation over this "providential" legacy, which will put new life into its 460 soul-savers working in the London slums, some of whom were shaking in their shoes at the possibility of losing their job.

The *Christian World* reports a strange religious play in a Genoa theatre, based upon the resurrection of Lazarus. The actors and singers wore modern garments. Our Lord was represented by a rather stout man in a dress coat and white cravat. St. John the Evangelist was similarly attired. Martha appeared in a blue evening dress. This travesty had the presence and approval of the local archbishop. Well, we smile at Christ being represented by "a rather stout man." But how do we know that Christ, if he ever lived, was not in reality a "rather stout man"? He might have been.

A proposal to vote a sum from the Common Good Fund of the Edinburgh City Council to the Sirdar's Fund was withdrawn after a heated discussion. One of the Council wanted to know whether England had a special mission from the Most High to pose as civilisers of the universe. He pointed out that when he proposed, some little time ago that a grant should be made from the Fund for the purpose of helping to house some of the working-classes of the city who had been displaced by public improvements, he was told that it could not be done. Charity never does begin at home.

A female defendant in a Mitcham assault case was asked if she had any witnesses. Defendant, raising her eyes: "Only the Almighty God above, sir." As he was not in attendance, and could not be sworn, the case was taken without him, and resulted in defendant being fined.

The Church Missionary Society is in a pickle—or, as a religious print puts it, the Society is in "a delicate position." It must either send a missionary to Fashoda, where the climate will kill him, or it must abandon all hope of establishing missions in the Soudan for the present.

The other day the Northern Primate consecrated a church at Sheffield. It was the third church he had consecrated in that town within a fortnight, and it cost £10,000. There is evidently plenty of loose cash and piety in Sheffield. The money might easily have been put to a better purpose.

John Morley's step-daughter has just become a nun in High-park Convent, Dublin. She has the courage of her convictions, which may not be said of everybody.

The Rev. Alfred Rowland, delivering the "Merchants'" Lecture on the Eastern Church, said that "Christianity had never failed," and that it was "fitted to be the universal religion." At the same time he saw "no hope of re-union" between the Eastern and Western Churches. The boasted universality, therefore, is one of perpetual disunion.

Canon Newbolt yearns for a "healthy public opinion" which "will not tolerate the clergy being accused of lawlessness and disloyalty." Would it not be better if the clergy ceased provoking the accusation?

A young Italian priest named Perosi has composed an oratorio on the Resurrection of Christ, which has just been produced, under his own leadership, at the church of the Santi Apostoli in Rome. The Church was turned into a concert hall on this occasion, and the fashionable gathering did not scruple to indulge in loud applause.

William Hoba has been sent to the workhouse as a wandering lunatic. He haunted the outside of a house in Craven-street, and put cards in the letter-box for a lady inside, whom he claimed as his "spiritual wife." The cards bore pencil scrawls of "mingled blasphemy and obscenity." Perhaps the wretched man had been reading the Bible too carefully, and, worse still, quoting it too freely.

A sly Yankee said some months ago that the Spaniards were probably wishing that Columbus had never discovered America. Well, the women of Granada seem to be actually in this frame of mind. A crowd of them recently threw stones at the statue of Columbus, considering that the man who discovered America was the chief cause of all Spain's misfortunes. It must be admitted, however, that the Granada ladies are *too* logical. As the *Daily News* remarks, if the world had never been created, we might all have had a very quiet time.

Rev. Dr. Horton, the well-known Congregationalist, objects to a State-aided Catholic University for Ireland, chiefly on the ground that "even good Roman Catholics manipulate the facts of history," and "slide over inconvenient events." But the same thing might be said with equal truth of good Protestants. When the great German said that Christian veracity deserved to rank with Punic faith, he made no exception in favor of Protestantism.

The great passion of the inhabitants of the Philippines is cock-fighting. The man who has a good fighting cock is more proud of it than he is of his wife and children, and a roaring trade is done by the "cock doctors" who attend to the ailments of these feathered bipeds. A native may often be seen on Sundays and festivals trudging to church with his darling cock under his arm.

Providence was too busy watching the sparrows fall, and counting the hairs of people's heads, to prevent the two-year-old child of a cabdriver at Kilburn from being burnt to death through its clothing catching fire.

The Liberator Relief Fund, which is a standing object-lesson of the power of religion to restrain scoundrels, has had to deal with nearly one hundred new cases during the past year. About £80,000 has been expended in relief already, and yet no one doubts but that only a small portion of the wickedness of Balfour, Hobbs, and Co. has been repaired.

A lordly servant of the poor carpenter of Nazareth, known as the Bishop of Winchester, discoursed, in a recent sermon, at some length, on the unreality of the words employed in popular hymns, and instanced the well-known lines, "O Paradise, O Paradise, 'tis weary waiting here." Dr. Davidson said, moreover, that this hypocritical phraseology was to be met with in prayers as well as hymns. Just so. Dr. Davidson calls himself a "miserable sinner" in church on Sundays; he would probably resent the remark during the rest of the week and out of church.

Some of the newspapers have been discussing the question as to whether the Pope is rolling in wealth, or whether he is on the verge of poverty. We do not think that there is much doubt as to whether the present successor of the rocky foundation stone of the Christian Church lays awake of nights wondering where his next day's dinner is to come from.

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Nothing new under the sun. The Christian benedictory use of a well-known gesture is found represented in symbolic hands of Pompeii in a pre-Christian period. The subject was discussed at a recent meeting of the Anthropological Section of the British Association.

More humanitarian news from Holy Russia, the sacred land of Mr. Stead's sublime Nicholas the Second, the Czar of Peace! For a long time the orthodox party has yearned for the expulsion of Count Tolstoi, who insists on preaching the Christianity (as he thinks) of the Sermon on the Mount. His influence is regarded as "malevolent," because he does not see the necessity of State priests, and is absolutely opposed to war and every other form of violence. "There can be no toleration of such views," says a Moscow semi-official paper, "and not only the arch-fiend Tolstoi, but all his followers, must be crushed and destroyed." This is beautiful language from the party whose head, the Czar, has just invited Europe to a sort of international love-feast. The expulsion of Tolstoi, the greatest opponent of militarism in the world, would be just the very thing to convince us all of the Czar's absolute sincerity.

Italy believes so much in the coming millennium shadowed forth in the Czar's manifesto that she has appointed a Commission of two Generals of Engineers, and two other superior officers, with General Besozzi as president, to draw up a plan of fortification for the defence of the Italian end of the Simplon tunnel.

We are glad to see that Mr. Justice Mathew is far from sharing Mr. Justice Day's views as to the moral and social virtues of the "cat." Speaking from the bench at Birmingham recently, he said it was inhuman to accompany a sentence which deprived a man of the best years of his life by the torture of the lash; and that any Englishman with good in him, after punishment with the cat, was for the rest of his life a broken-hearted man, or he became a reckless criminal.

Complaints are made that a shilling is charged for administering the oath in connection with vaccination exemption certificates. If the cost of oaths could be raised to some considerable sum—say 5s. a kiss—the abolition of the practice of oath-taking would be within measurable distance of accomplishment.

Sir Forrest Fulton, Common Serjeant at the Old Bailey, had to deal with an uncommon juryman lately, who claimed to be exempted from serving on the ground that he was irreconcilably opposed to capital punishment. Being told that there was nobody to hang, he raised another objection. He said he was opposed to the present system of punishing criminals altogether. Thereupon he was asked what he would do to an assailant who set upon him, robbed him, and perhaps kicked him to a jelly; and he replied, "I would forgive him." The Common Serjeant expressed a hope that there were "not many more of her Majesty's subjects who held such extraordinary views"; and the juryman retorted, "I don't think that is a proper observation to fall from you"—which of course it wasn't if the Common Serjeant is a Christain. This juryman was simply following the teaching of Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount; a sermon, by the way, which the common run of Christians are always lauding without ever obeying.

A little boy, aged twelve, was called the other day to give evidence at the Tottenham Police Court. He was asked: "Do you know what it is to take an oath?" He replied: "Kissing the Bible." The magistrate: "And what do you kiss it for?" The boy: "To show you are a witness." The magistrate: "And when you are a witness what have you to do?" The boy: "Tell the truth." The magistrate: "What is likely to happen to you if you break your oath?" The boy: "Get put away." The magistrate: "Not quite so. You will be punished hereafter, if not in this world." That is as much as the magistrate knows about it. His information is probably not greatly in excess of the boy's.

The late Mr. Thomas Cook, the excursion agent, though a Nonconformist, was once elected Churchwarden in order to get a certain road repaired. Churchwardens have been elected before now for much less useful purposes.

Here is a chance to assist someone who wishes to follow in the footsteps of the Kaiser in the Holy Land. It is an advertisement in a continental paper:—"A man on the road to religious conviction seeks for the money necessary to undertake a penitential and prayerful journey to the Holy Land. Letters headed 'Christian Love' to be addressed to the office of this paper."

The chairman of the Hugh Myddleton group of school managers writes to the *Times* from St. Alban's Clergy House, Holborn. He says: "Personally, I share the opinion of the very few who hold that religious teaching should form no part of a Board School curriculum." That is a very sensible opinion. The trouble is that it *is* shared by "very few."

A correspondent of the *Chronicle* says he has a letter by General Gordon in his possession which would go to show that Gordon saw the "necessity of grappling with our own unbelief at home, and asking ourselves the question whether finance had not taken the place of faith, and to what purpose?" One would scarcely gather, says the correspondent, that the expenditure of thousands of pounds in sending more missionaries abroad was in Gordon's mind at that time or afterwards.

The bell-ringers of St. Peter's Church, Thetford, have struck. They have been informed that they can no longer be allowed to carry liquid refreshment into the belfry. Furthermore, objection has been taken to their not remaining to divine service on Sundays after summoning the worshippers. These bell-ringers seem to be possessed with a very carnal spirit. They might be excused conveying intoxicating liquors into the belfry; but it is quite unpardonable not to go into the church and sit out the sermon.

The editor of the *Freethinker* is quite unable to shed tears over the downfall—"resignation" is the parliamentary term—of Sir William Harcourt. The fat Knight of Malwood was Home Secretary when Mr. Foote was imprisoned in Holloway Gaol for "blasphemy," and being a good Christian, like his chief Mr. Gladstone, he determined that the "blasphemer" should suffer Judge North's sentence to the bitter end. For that, however, he might have been forgiven; but he was not even an honest bigot. Several influential papers published protests against Mr. Foote's sentence, and finally a memorial was presented for his release, signed by half the leading men in science, art, philosophy, and literature. Well, what did Sir William Harcourt do then? He got up in the House of Commons, in answer to a question by Mr. Labouchere, and declared that he would do nothing for one who was imprisoned for "obscenity." He knew it was a lie, but he also knew that lies are privileged in the House of Commons. It was pointed out to him again and again that Lord Chief Justice Coleridge had handsomely exculpated Mr. Foote from this odious charge; but he took refuge in "dignified silence" and let the lie stand—against himself!

Sir William Harcourt was worse than a bigot on that occasion. He played the part of a liar and knave. Now he has "resigned" from the leadership—if he ever was the leader—of the Liberal party, and will probably never realise his ambition of being Premier. And the really curious feature of the case is this: he has joined in the anti-Ritualistic crusade and alienated the support of a section of the Liberal party, which may be small, but is certainly very active and influential. Fifteen years ago he publicly lied for religion, and now religion is the chief cause of his downfall. Evidently our old friend Nemesis is still alive and flourishing.

Miss Marie Corelli has favored the Kingston Debating Society with her views on suicide. "I do not consider suicide justifiable," she says, "under any circumstances whatever." Of course the opinion of so profound a thinker ought to carry very great weight. But persons bent on committing suicide do not often trouble themselves about anybody's opinions. Miss Corelli goes on to state her reasons, and gives herself away. She starts with the old orthodox wheeze about "free will," which she says God has given us; but, in spite of our free will, we must live out our lives to the end "for some purpose known only to the Creator." Miss Corelli, therefore, takes the place of God Almighty in this argument. She undertakes to tell us what he wishes us to do. Well, we will listen to her with respect when she produces her credentials. Meanwhile we beg to remark that nine-tenths of all the rogues, fools, and fanatics in history have professed an intimate acquaintance with the will of God.

Burnt to death by the Bible! This has often happened in Christian history. But a curious case has just occurred at Limehouse. Two little children were left in a room alone; and the elder, who was under two years old, got hold of a Bible, tore some leaves from it, lit them at the fire, and then set alight the younger child's clothing, the result being that the poor little thing was burnt to death. Of course, it was very sad; but the Bible has frequently been the occasion of mischief.

The super-Christian *Daily Chronicle* did not bestow even a passing word upon poor Thomas Senior, the Peculiar, who was sentenced to four months' hard labor for being a sincere follower of Jesus Christ. Thomas Senior ought to have been a Russian, or anything else at a distance. He would have had a column in the *Chronicle* then.

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## Mr. Foote's Engagements.

January 1, Birmingham.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

During Mr. Charles Watts's absence from England his address will be, c/o *Truthseeker* office, 28 Lafayette-place, New York City, U.S.A.

J. C. Morgan.—We have always plenty of copy in hand. That is the explanation.

C. H. Cattell.—Glad to hear that Mr. Percy Ward had large meetings on Sunday at Birmingham. Thanks for papers.

H. Thorp.—Hardly up to our mark.

W. H. Deakin.—We shall be very pleased to see you at the Annual Dinner on January 9. Don't forget to introduce yourself. We hope to see some other provincial friends as well.

J. Partridge.—Kindly send us any fresh news you may have from Birmingham.

L. Despard.—We have intended for some weeks past to write a notice of Mr. George Meredith's new volume of verse, but we have been too busy with other matters. We hope to write the notice for an early number of the *Freethinker*.

R. Hamson.—Too late for insertion this week, and would be out of date next week.

W. H. Harris.—Received. Will use if possible.

H. J. Barter.—Pleased to see your handwriting once more.

W. Cox.—Thanks for the paper. Pleased to hear that some of the Liverpool friends mean to see Mr. Watts off from the landing-stage.

H. Percy Ward.—Thanks for your letter and papers. We hoped better things from a city like Birmingham.

J. Halliwell.—We are obliged for the trouble you have taken. This week we are too full of other matter, but we will try to give the reverend gentleman a paragraph next week.

Cheshire Reader.—Your letter is interesting and encouraging; however, we prefer not to print it. It is sufficient for us to know that we have helped your mental liberation.

E. H. T.—Certainly there is nothing in the Bible *against* polygamy, which was practised by all the Lord's favorites in the Old Testament, and is nowhere condemned in the New Testament.

Querist.—Lange's *History of Materialism* is an excellent work. The English translation is rather expensive, but of course there is only a limited sale for such books, and this involves a high price, if only to cover the cost of production.

W. Sanders.—We have a memorandum by us of the matters you refer to—the educational establishment, the subsequent litigation, and all the rest.

F. F. Jackson.—Mr. Sidney Lee's new *Life of Shakespeare* will give you all the information you require. It is the work of a sober and thorough scholar. Mr. Swinburne's volume on Shakespeare is critical, not biographical. It is extremely well worth reading if you know Shakespeare's writings,

J. E Barton.—Mr. Watts will be in America by then, but he will be represented at the Annual Dinner by Mrs. Watts. We are pleased to hear that you hope to bring some of your liberal-minded friends to the Dinner, to let them see what Freethinkers are like on such an occasion.

Received.—Ethical World—Progressive Thinker—Home Links—Free Society—Wisbeach Advertiser—New York Truthseeker—Birmingham Argus—Birmingham Gazette—Birmingham Post—Record—Liverpool Review—Newcastle Weekly Chronicle—Isle of Man Times—Public Opinion—Oxford Times—Huddersfield Daily Examiner—Hull Daily News—People's Newspaper—Blue Grass Blade—English Mechanic—Independent Pulpit—Cork Constitution—Newcastle Daily Leader—Brann's Iconoclast—Torch of Reason—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Freedom—Lucifer—Two Worlds—Crescent—Freethought Ideal—Middlesbrough Telegraph—Derby Telegraph.

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.

*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.

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 is due.

The National Secular Society's office is at No. 377 Strand, London, where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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.

Next week's *Freethinker*, beginning a new year and a new volume, will be printed throughout in new type. A new letter has also been cut for the title. Our readers, being apprised of this fact, will not fancy it is another paper when they perceive the change.

Another large audience assembled at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening. Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Babe of Bethlehem" was very freely punctuated with laughter and applause. Two Christians accepted the chairman's invitation, and offered some random remarks which they called criticism. Mr. Watts, who presided, wound up with a few farewell words before his departure for America. He spoke with good feeling, and it was evident that he had the best wishes of all present for his success on the other side of the Atlantic.

There will be no lecture at the Athenæum Hall this evening (Dec. 25), for obvious reasons. On the following Sunday (Jan. 1) Mr. C. Cohen will occupy the platform. No doubt he will have a good audience on that occasion.

Mr. Foote visits Birmingham on Sunday, January 1, lecturing three times in the Bristol-street Board School; and, in the view of the local agitation against the Secularists, crowded meetings may be anticipated.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, takes place as usual at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday evening, January 9. The tickets are four shillings each, and can be obtained at the N. S. S. office, 376-7 Strand, W.C., at 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., or from any London Branch secretary. Mr. Foote will preside, and Messrs. Cohen, Forder, Moss, and Heaford will speak to various toasts. The program will also include some good vocal and instrumental music. We hope there will be a large gathering of "saints" from all parts of London. Perhaps a few provincial friends may be in town then, and if they come they will be very welcome.

Colonel Ingersoll made a capital speech at the Lotus Club dinner in honor of Admiral Schley. He said the Americans started with great advantages; they had good blood, for one thing, and for another they had the heritage of the greatest literature in the world, topped by the matchless genius of Shakespeare. Then they had the Anglo-Saxon type of courage, the highest, courage as hot as you like, but without "a cloud in the heaven of judgment." The poor Spaniards had plenty of the courage of passion, but they had no judgment; they "sprinkled holy water on their guns, then banged away, and left it to the Holy Ghost to direct the rest." Ingersoll's fine peroration was thunderously applauded.

Mr. G. L. Mackenzie will perhaps be gratified to learn that his poem on "Moral Weeds" is reproduced from our columns in the *Boston Investigator*—the oldest, and one of the best, of Freethought papers in America.

Last Sunday morning the final outdoor meeting of the Freethinkers at Limehouse was in every way a great success. Mr. Waldron adorned the rival platform. That gentleman, during the progress of Mr. Edward's address, dismounted his rostrum and charged our platform. Despite confusion and contusions, the mob was successfully held back. During the scuffle Mr. Pack was kicked in the ribs by a prominent supporter of the Christian platform. The police intervened, and Mr. Waldron and the Hooligans had to adjourn to their proper place. Subsequently Mr. Waldron apologised for his part in the disturbance, both from his own platform and ours, and explained that he had not lost his temper, but had become excited. His further words condemning disorder were not relished by the local religious rowdies. Messrs. Pack, Edwards, Davies, Ramsey, and Heaford were the speakers. A public vote of thanks to Mr. Loafer, the indefatigable organiser of these meetings, was passed with acclamation. This station, once the most hopeless anywhere, is now, thanks to Mr. Loafer, one of the chief centres of Freethought activity in London.

"Microbe" has an interesting letter in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* on that old watch story, pointing out its antiquity, and how universally it has been applied to leading "infidels." Such pertinent, well-written letters in the local press are of great service to the Freethought movement.

The *Independent Pulpit*, edited by J. D. Shaw, Waco, Texas, is an exchange that we are always glad to receive. It always contains some good reading. The latest number to hand is dated October. It seems to have been a long

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time on the way. Editor Shaw does us the honor of reproducing our article on the Star of Bethlehem.

A meeting of the Plymouth N. S. S. Branch will be held on January 8, at seven o'clock, at the Democratic Club, Whimple-street. Local friends are earnestly requested to attend.

"Are we a Nation of Hypocrites?" is the heading of a vigorous letter by A. E. Elderkin in the Watford *Record*. He points out that we pay an Archbishop £15,000 a year for teaching that the Bible is the Word of God, and then we send a man to prison for four months for obeying it. He appeals to Christian ministers to speak out and say whether Senior was right or wrong, but we fear he will appeal in vain.

*Free Society*, an Anarchist journal, published at San Francisco, is amongst our American exchanges. We differ from it in some things and agree with it in others—as is natural. It is certainly conducted with ability, and we imagine with self-sacrifice for principle. The latest number before us reproduces our paragraphs on the collapse of the Bedborough case.

An anonymous donor has provided the funds for one hundred free scholarships at Ruskin House, Oxford. This advantage is offered to young men of the artisan class who desire to share in the boon of a higher education. Particulars can be obtained on application to C. A. Beard, 41 Banbury-road, Oxford.

The *Secular Almanack* is having a pretty good sale, but there is a fair number still left at the publisher's, and we hope they will soon be cleared off his hands. The editor and the contributors give their services gratuitously, and every penny of profit arising from the sale goes into the exchequer of the National Secular Society, to be expended on Freethought propaganda. We may add that the price of the Almanack is only threepence.

## THE REVIVAL OF CLERICALISM.

"It has been the dream of every Freethinker since the days of Lucretius that the world would, in fifty or a hundred years, be quit of what he called superstition.....Sacerdotalism, mysticism, and clericalism are stronger to-day than was thought possible thirty years ago."—*Westminster Gazette.*

POSSIBLY the above statements are unpleasantly near the truth—so near, indeed, that it is hardly worth while to dispute them. Yet, being admitted, what do they prove? Nothing more serious, we hope, than that Freethinkers have ever been over-sanguine. Without doubt there has been, in recent times, a marked revival of sacerdotalism, mysticism, and clericalism. There is no need to search for evidences of the resuscitation. They present themselves abundantly and obtrusively everywhere; in other countries as well as our own. We may not see in them any occasion for alarm; but we ought certainly to find in them an incentive to more vigorous action.

The revival may mean, at present, a mere "throwing back," the swing of the pendulum, the receding waves of the incoming tide. Unchecked, it may, of course, mean much more—a prolonged reaction, and possibly the work of half a century undone. The Sisyphus of scepticism expects his stone to roll back "many times and oft." But he trusts that his task is not to be like that of Æolus's son—eternal. To escape that unhappy fate, it is necessary that lost ground should be recovered, and that, however slow the progress, some appreciable ascent should be made.

Changes have taken place in the past thirty years that, at least, afford strong encouragement to persevere. They point to the ultimate triumph of Freethought, though the victory may be long delayed. Rationalism has made giant strides, even though "sacerdotalism, mysticism, and clericalism are stronger to-day than was thought possible thirty years ago." Many religious delusions have been for ever laid to rest. Science has sapped the foundations of theological belief. The superstructure is crumbling with rottenness.

In the leader quoted above attention is drawn to the fact that the Protestantism of the Established Church has fallen into slovenly decay. Protestant worship, it is asserted, has become a mere dreary formality, carried on in the least attractive churches. The feminine portion of mankind is always in latent rebellion against it. On the other hand, interest has revived to a remarkable degree in the primitive and the mystical—in the early Church and in Catholic customs. Ritualism is making headway; but not, be it observed, at the expense of Rationalism. Its recruits are drawn from the Evangelical section, which, notwithstanding the efforts of the Church Association and the doughty Mr. Kensit, may wake up some day to find itself in a ridiculous minority.

Side by side with rising clericalism of the Ritualistic type, and the silent, subtle extensions of the Romish Church herself, there is that aggressive Sabbatarian fanaticism which seems to have taken new courage, and has lately achieved some little temporary success. Here the Protestant or Puritan section has made up for the feebleness of its opposition to its natural enemies, by remarkable activity in interfering with the liberty of people who enjoy a happy indifference to churches of any kind. This monstrous and intolerable display of canting Sabbatarian impudence still remains to be adequately resented. But before it is finally scotched the scorpion is certain to make other, and equally venomous, darts. Thus we find that by both sections of the Establishment, and by Romanism too, rational thought and action are to-day menaced to a degree that Freethinkers thirty years ago would not have deemed within the range of reasonable probability.

There is also to be taken into consideration the spread of mysticism which finds its outward expression in Spiritualism, and in that modern jumble of unintelligibilities yclept Theosophy. The disciples of these phases of superstition have, to their credit, freely divested themselves of the "old clo'" of Christian orthodoxy, but the new garments they have donned are scarcely less outlandish and absurd.

What will be the state of affairs thirty years hence? One hesitates to prophesy, lest some keenly-critical leader-writer of the *Westminster Gazette* of that date should point—as he of to-day—to an unfulfilled and over-sanguine prediction. Whilst, however, we refrain from indulging in anticipation—which is usually idle and liable to many rude and disconcerting shocks—we have at hand another and a much better way whereby we may give ease to our minds and outlet to our aspirations. The field of action is wide and invitingly open. Do we not feel impelled, by the duty we owe alike to our traditions and to posterity, to make still stronger and more determined efforts in that arena than ever we have made before?

It astonishes me to discover the existence of a notion that nothing further in the way of demolition remains to be done. That idea must surely be confined to minds of the hermit type. I cannot conceive how it can be entertained by anyone who lives and moves in the world, and keeps his eyes open—who reads the newspapers, and makes the least effort to ascertain what is going on. Probably it is to this imperfect perception and weakness of spirit in the past that we have to attribute the falsifications of prophecy to which the *Westminster Gazette* not unkindly refers.

With an Established Church, the Bible in the schools, the Blasphemy laws still on the statute-books, prayers in Parliament, oaths in the courts of law, absurd Lord's Day Acts unrepealed, millions of money devoted to the "conversion" of the heathen, many Freethinkers still at the mercy of Christian bigotry—it seems to me that there is an abundance of work to be done. An anti-clerical crusade, carried on through the existing Freethought organisations, is, to my mind, an undertaking that, at the present time, is loudly and urgently called for. FRANCIS NEALE.

"And will you be mine for ever?" he asked, after he had her head nicely pillowed on his shoulder. She straightened up with a start. "Now, look here," she said, in her eminently practical way, "if you want to get up a discussion on the future life, you might just as well be moving along. Father is an Agnostic and mother is a Methodist, and I'm marrying as much as anything to get away from controversies about this for ever business."—*Chicago Evening Post.*

"Did you read about that Iowa preacher who was engaged to seventeen girls?" "Yes; I presume the poor man was trying to keep his congregation together through the hot weather."—*Chicago Dispatch.*

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## THE ANAKIM OF HEBRON.

It has been often shown by unprejudiced Biblical critics that the Bible stories of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, of the wanderings in the desert, and of the conquest of Canaan, are so full of contradictions, absurdities, and downright impossibilities that no rational person can be expected to regard them as anything but fable. As an example of the fictitious character of these narratives, I select one which I do not remember to have seen noticed—viz., the Biblical account of the destruction of the giant inhabitants of Hebron, who are described as "a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim" (Deut. ix. 2).

After the Israelites had left Egypt, and had received the laws at Sinai, Moses, it is said, selected twelve men, and sent them to "search the land" of Canaan. These men, we are told, "went up by the south, and came unto Hebron; and Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were there" (Numbers xiii. 22). On the return of the spies, the Israelites, discouraged by their reports, became rebellious, and, as a punishment, were condemned to wander thirty-eight years in the wilderness until all the men over twenty years of age should have died—two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, only excepted.

At the expiration of this period, if we believe the sacred narrative, a new generation of Hebrews, under the leadership of Joshua, miraculously crossed the Jordan, and, during seven years, fought against, and defeated, no less than thirty-one kings, and finally took possession of the land.

After this horde of robbers and cut-throats had captured the cities of Jericho, Ai, Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, and Eglon, and had butchered every man, woman, and child found within their walls—say, in the second year of the war—their further progress is thus recorded :—

> "And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron; and they fought against it: and they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword .....he left none remaining.....but he *utterly destroyed it, and all the souls that were therein*" (Joshua x. 36-37).

Upon reading this passage, one point at least appears certain—viz., that the Canaanitish inhabitants of Hebron were "utterly destroyed"; that the race of giants, the Anakim, who had dwelt there, had been exterminated. Could there be any possibility of doubt in the matter, it must be dispelled by the following statement in the next chapter :—

> "And Joshua came at that time, and cut off the Anakim from the hill country, *from Hebron*, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel: *Joshua utterly destroyed them* with their cities. *There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the children of Israel*" (Joshua xi. 21, 22).

This point being satisfactorily settled, we return to the further conquest of Canaan. Having captured and destroyed Hebron and Debir, Joshua "smote all the land, the hill country, and the South, and the lowland, and the slopes, and all their kings,.....Joshua smote them from Kadesh-barnea even unto Gaza.....and all these kings and their land did Joshua take" (x. 40-42). There remained now but the northern portion of the country. Here "Jabin, King of Hazor," with a number of confederate kings, assembled an immense army, "as the sand that is upon the seashore in multitude." Against this mighty host Joshua and his freebooters marched, and in a pitched battle routed them with great slaughter, the Israelites chasing the fugitives beyond the borders.

The holy war of extermination having come to an end, and the seven years' campaign over, Joshua proceeded to divide the conquered land among the Hebrew tribes. But, while this was being done, there stepped forward the veteran Caleb with a request to have Hebron given to him as a possession.

> "Then the children of Judah drew nigh unto Joshua in Gilgal; and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, said unto him.....Now, therefore, give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and cities great and fenced; *it may be that the Lord will be with me, and I shall drive them out*, as the Lord spake. And Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, for an inheritance" (Joshua xiv. 6, 12, 13).

It will be seen by the words italicised that the dreaded Anakim still held possession of Hebron and the surrounding country. Though stated in the plainest language to have been "utterly destroyed" by Joshua some five or six years before, they were living in the city undisturbed, and were presumably as formidable as ever. Caleb hoped, by the help of the Lord, to be able to expel them, and in this hope, according to the story, he was not disappointed, for we read :—

> "And Caleb drove out thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak" (Joshua xv. 14).

Thus, first we are told that "all Israel" under Joshua "utterly destroyed" all the Anakim found in Hebron, and next that Caleb, several years later, "drove them out." If we take the latter statement as fact, the expulsion of these Anakim by Caleb took place forty-five years after the sending of the spies by Moses (Joshua xiv. 7, 10; Deut. ii. 14), and, what is somewhat surprising, the same three champions occupied the city at each period. Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai were the foremost of the Anakim warriors in the time of the spies, and the same three chieftains were in command of the city forty-five years later. Setting aside this very remarkable fact, it may perhaps be thought that now at least—that is, shortly after the division of the land among the Hebrew tribes by Joshua—we may safely assert that the city of Hebron was freed from its Anakim inhabitants. It has, however, to be remembered that we are not dealing with history, but with a God-inspired narrative. Consequently, it would be the height of rashness to hazard an opinion concerning any statement in one part of the narrative without first ascertaining whether that statement was not flatly contradicted by a counter statement in some other portion. Following this admirable and simple plan, we turn to the first chapter of the Book of Judges. There we read :—

> "And it came to pass, *after the death of Joshua*, that the children of Israel asked of the Lord, saying :—Who shall go up for us first against the Canaanites, to fight against them? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up. .....And Judah said unto Simeon, his brother, Come up with me into my lot that we may fight against the Canaanites.....So Simeon went with him.....And Judah went against *the Canaanites that dwell in Hebron* (now the name of Hebron beforetime was Kirioth-arba), and *they smote Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai*" (i. 1-3, 10).

Here ends the sacred narrative, as far as the Anakim are concerned. It is satisfactory to know that they were really killed at last. We see, however, that it was not "all Israel" under Joshua at the beginning of the war, nor Caleb and his family, after the war was over, who captured the city of Hebron and slew the three great sons of Anak. The grand *coup* was given by the tribes of Judah and Simeon at a much later period. It is also to be noted that the three Anakim leaders, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, were warriors of renown not only at, and before, the time of the spies, but during the thirty-eight years' wandering in the wilderness under Moses, during the leadership of Joshua after Moses' death (which Josephus gives as twenty-five years), and for some unnamed period after the death of Joshua—that is, all three were renowned chieftains for at least three-fourths of a century—a very improbable fact indeed.

When it is borne in mind that the Hexateuch is made up of a number of short scraps pieced together, and written originally by nobody knows whom, we can in some measure account for the contradictory nature of the narrative, and may then form some estimate of its historical value—which, in this case, may be set down as *nil*.

ABRACADABRA.

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Little Archibald was saying his prayers the other evening, while his mother was stroking his curly head, and thinking of something else. Suddenly it struck her that the child had wandered from the text of the supplication that he had been taught to repeat. "What is that, darling?" she interrupted. "Go over that part again." "Give us this day our daily pie and cake, and forgive——" "Why, my love, that isn't right," the surprised mother broke in; "that isn't what mamma taught you to say." "I know," little Archibald replied, "but I don't want any more daily bread. I'd rather have pie and cake, and when we're prayin' for things you might as well ask for what you want the most."—*Cleveland Leader.*

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## FAITH-HEALING.

(By the Late J. M. Wheeler.)

(*Concluded from page 804.*)

Almost in our own time wonders happened at the tomb of that noble apostle of temperance, Father Matthew. Not only did his eloquence convert thousands of life-long drunkards, but he healed numerous diseases among the crowds who followed him, and after his death many a cripple left his crutch at his tomb. This case is especially instructive, for the cures came without praying; there being no living body, there could be no "animal magnetism"; there being no medium, there could be no spirit; no drugs, therefore no physician; and no prayers, therefore no supernatural answer. It was faith-healing, pure and simple.

Somewhat similar are the cases of healing by the royal touch. Dr. Johnson, as is well known, was touched, without avail, by Queen Anne for scrofula, or "king's evil," as it was called. Mr. Dicken, the sergeant-surgeon to Queen Anne, however, affirmed that, of his own knowledge, several who touched received benefit. In particular, he tells of one poor woman whom he told the touch would do her no good, as he supposed she would sell her medal, which must continue about her neck to make the cure last. She promised to preserve it, was touched, had the medal given her, and soon after was healed. Forgetting her promise, she sold her medal; but then her malady broke out afresh. Upon this she applied to Mr. Dicken a second time, earnestly entreating him to present her again to the queen. He did so, and again she was cured. Aubrey noticed long ago that the royal touch proved equally efficacious, whether our kings were of the house of York or Lancaster.

The healing powers of Prince Hohenlohe and Mr. Valentine Greatrex, which are mentioned in the letters between Miss Martineau and Mr. H. G. Atkinson, were probably rather due to expectant belief than any force proceeding from the laying on of hands or other methods employed. Indeed, the majority of physicians are of opinion that the cures alleged to be produced by mesmerism and magnetic healing are not due to any occult force proceeding from A the healer to B the healed, but are rather the result of the particular mental and emotional state in B excited by A.

Every physician has experience of the truth of Professor Carpenter's words, that "the confident expectation of a cure is in many cases sufficient in itself to bring it about." The observation of every reader will furnish illustrations. We all know the success of quack medicines that have been advertised into reputation. Fancy largely enters into many diseases and cures. Dr. Armstrong said in one of his lectures: "I have cured aneurism of the aorta by a slight purgative, ossification of the heart by a little blue pill, and chronic disease of the brain by a little Epsom salts." Pills made of bread are often known to induce the same peristaltic action as would be caused by castor oil, and colocynth has been known to have the effect of an opiate, instead of a purgative, when believed by the patient to have been meant for the former purpose. Treating of hysterical paralysis, Dr. Briquet says: "I have seen the wife of a workman who had been hemiplegic (paralysed on one side) several months, and who could not leave her room. In June, 1848, at the moment of the Paris insurrection, she got up, followed her husband wherever he went during the three days of the insurrection, and when peace was restored fell hemiplegic again as before, suffering violent pain." Professor Carpenter says: "The want, not really of the power to move, but of belief in the possession of that power, is the characteristic of that peculiar form of paralysis which is commonly designated as hysterical, and the most effective treatment of this remarkable disorder is to work the patient up to the conviction that the power has been or will be restored." The confident assertion that a person subject to fits will have an attack has frequently proved sufficient to produce one; and the mere *mention* of water will, in a hydrophobic patient, induce the recurrence of the symptoms. Numerous and far more astonishing instances of the intimate relation between the mind and the body may be found in Dr. Noble's book on *The Human Mind in Relation to the Brain and Nervous System*, and in Dr. D. H. Tuke's interesting and instructive *Illustrations of the Influence of the Mind upon the Body*, which has gone through a second edition, and which fully shows that what Dr. Tuke calls psycho-therapeutics, while of little avail in serious organic diseases, is efficacious not only in nervous affections, but in many other disorders, especially rheumatics, gout, and dropsy. It is indisputable that the emotional frame of mind acts powerfully on the skin, kidneys, and bowels.

Now the common characteristic of revivals is that they all, by various methods, attempt to work up a state of religious excitement. The Salvationists openly profess this in their motto, "Blood and Fire." "Send down the fire" is the constant prayer of these red-hot religionists, and the fire, or "outpouring of the spirit," is supposed to come when their reason quite loses control of their actions. The holy spirit in the heart has much the same effect as alcohol in the head. Religious dram drinkers prefer their theology, like their gin, undiluted. The Salvationists supply their stimulant at full strength—considerably "above proof," indeed. Religious fervor and ferment is excited by representing the eternal destinies of the audience to depend upon their immediate "surrender to God"—that is, coming up to "mercy seat," or "penitent form," the space near the platform, there to be prayed over or pray, and give their testimony of conversion, after which they are assumed to be saved from eternal fire, and unending glory is their adequate reward. It may be laid down as a condition that, in order to effect revivals, the reason must be rendered inactive, the imagination and emotions being excited, and the sentiment of fear being especially addressed and powerfully wrought up. It would have been strange indeed if the Salvation movement had been unattended by miracles. Those of "Major Pearson," which have recently excited so much attention, are in no way removed from the ordinary run of these phenomena. Out of any immense concourse of persons who attend in hopes of being cured, a certain number of persons declare themselves benefited, and of these cases the most is made by excited or interested followers. The cripple who, according to the *Times* account, staggered a few steps, is said in the *War Cry* to have flung away his crutches and gone on his way rejoicing. The great majority received no benefit whatever, and of those who profess themselves cured many appear again, having had a relapse.

A recent report in the *Manchester Evening News* says: "In the early part of the service, after some had been anointed with oil and submitted to the healing operation without any perceptible benefit, the 'Major' said that when on earth Christ was unable to work miracles on account of the people's unbelief, and there were many unbelievers at that service. On their account the meeting would have to be brought to a close, and the poor sufferers who had come to be healed would return to their homes unbenefited. Many persons then left the building, believing the service to be over, but the healing process was continued, and later on about twenty cures were professed to have been effected." It is also noticeable that "Major" Pearson has proved powerless with the diseases of children, infantile minds not so easily being brought under the stimulus of religious faith.

In the case of the Salvationist miracles few will fail to see that such cases as prove on investigation to be genuine are but the effects of natural causes operating on minds predisposed and inflamed by religion, and which have been exaggerated by rumor, if not by the delusion of the patient. Those who see in them manifestations of divine power must also, if consistent, ascribe to the interference of deity the numerous cases of insanity incidental to revivals, many of which in all our large asylums can be traced to the influence of the Salvation Army. This, we presume, they will not be disposed to do. It is not, however, all those who allow that fanaticism is at the present day sufficient for the circulation of stories of miracles who will admit its efficacy in the far more superstitious and excited time which gave birth to Christianity, a time which, says Esquirol, was characterised by its number of religious maniacs. The Gospel narratives are so bound up with the miraculous that most people feel that, if no credence can be placed in the miracles, there is little reason to believe in any such historical character as Jesus of Nazareth at all. The difficulty of supposing the character an invention and the biographies nothing but romances has induced their unconsidered acceptance as a whole. Yet, if we look at the origin of other religions, we observe how rapidly a legendary accretion of miracle will grow around an historic fact. We know that the first

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Gospel was oral, and even Papias, who first mentions the writing of Gospels, declared his preference for tradition. If we suppose, as from the evidence in other cases we well may, that some persons actually did receive benefit from coming in contact with a teacher they believed in and reverenced, we can understand how the impression produced by such cures would suffice to give rise to the legendary ascription to him of yet greater power. No reader of the Testament can fail to notice that the majority of the miracles are works of healing, and exactly of that kind which are found to be successfully treated by psychotherapeutics. The demoniacs are now generally allowed to have been persons suffering from madness and epilepsy. Another point is that called attention to by "Major" Pearson—the dependence of the cures upon faith. Mark vi. 5 says that in his own country Jesus could do no mighty work, and Matthew xiii. 58 says "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." Had Jesus really been supernaturally endowed, we might surely believe that the want of faith among his own people and kindred was rather a reason for the performance of miracles.

## GLADSTONE AND "SWEAR WORDS."

Canon MacColl relates the following of Mr. Gladstone in the *Observer*: "I never heard him utter an oath, even as part of a story, in the presence of ladies, and I have known him postpone the telling of a story, of which the point depended on an oath, till the ladies left the room. Perhaps I may venture to give one instance. I had the honor of being at Hawarden once when there chanced to be a number of distinguished and brilliant men there, three of whom, alas, are dead—the late Lord Bath, Lord Granville, and Lord Odo Russell (as he then was), and also Lord Dufferin. After the ladies had left the breakfast-room, someone related a funny story illustrating the proneness of a certain eminent person to swearing upon occasion. Mr. Gladstone then remarked upon the happy decay of swearing among the educated classes as compared with the recollections of his youth. The greatest swearer he ever came across, he said, was the Duke of Cumberland of that day. 'And the worst of him,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'was that if he repeated the most innocent observations of yours, he took away your character in repeating it by putting some dreadful oath into your mouth.' And then Mr. Gladstone told the following comical story with a facial expression and tone of voice which threw us all into fits of laughter. When the first Bill for the Abolition of Church Rates was introduced into the House of Commons the peers were in a panic. It was the opening of flood gates which might sweep away their House, and even the Monarchy. So the leading peers held a conclave in the House of Lords, at which the Duke of Cumberland was present. After some deliberation it was agreed that the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was known to be within the precincts of the House, should be asked to move the rejection of the Bill in the event of its reaching the Upper House. The Duke of Cumberland was accordingly deputed to see the Primate and return to the peers with the answer, 'Now,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'you cannot appreciate my story, as none of you knew Archbishop Howley. He was a saintly man, of gentle character, with whose name it would be almost a sacrilege to associate the mildest of oaths. Presently the Duke of Cumberland returned with the Primate's answer, and, being very deaf, he spoke very loud. "It's all right," said he, "it's all right. I've seen his Grace, and he says he'll be d——d to h—ll if he don't move the rejection of the Bill."' Some time afterwards Mr. Gladstone did me the honor of dining with me, to meet some friends, including Dr. Magee, then Bishop of Peterborough. One of the company asked the Bishop if the 'bloody shovel' story about him was true, and this led the talk again to the decay of the habit of swearing. I asked Mr. Gladstone in a whisper to relate the Duke of Cumberland story. 'What,' said he, sotto voce, 'before a Bishop?"

A well-known firm in the Strand displays a notice in its shop window saying that, in deference to the wishes of the National Vigilance Association, it has been decided to withdraw a certain popular Christmas card for sale. We really cannot imagine anybody being frightened by the bullying of a representative of the so-called *National* Association, whose offices are appropriately situated at one end of Holywell-street, of indifferent memory.

## BOOK CHAT.

Mr. Edward Carpenter's new book, *Angels' Wings*, is in reality a dozen or so of essays on Art and its Relation to Life, although the fanciful title hardly suggests it. We forgive Mr. Carpenter his title for the sake of the subject-matter. One essay on Art and Democracy, in which he discusses some characteristic comparisons between Whitman, Millet, and Wagner, is delightful reading. Another essay deals with Beethoven and his works, and will be read by all music lovers with feelings of gratitude towards the author. Other essays deal with Manners as a Fine Art, the Simplification of Life, and the Return to Nature. The book is very well illustrated, and will prove a most seasonable gift-book to all lovers of the poet who gave us *Towards Democracy*.

* * *

The Boston *Literary World* says that Mr. Hall Caine had explained to a lady that the lower part of his face was like Shakespeare's, and the upper part like that of Christ. We believe half of this statement. We have no difficulty in classing his intellect as Christlike.

* * *

Talk about the "Best Hundred Books" reminds us that the deservedly popular Scott Library has just reached its 105th volume. The latest addition is *The Principles of Success in Literature*, by George Henry Lewes. It would be commonplace to say that some most excellent writing has here been rescued from oblivion; the fact is self-evident. All lovers of literature will welcome this admirable volume.

* * *

It is not generally known that Mark Twain (or his publishers) have omitted the very facetious passage concerning Joseph and Potiphar's wife from all recent editions of the *New Pilgrim's Progress*.

* * *

Mr. Bernard Hamilton's rationalistic novel, *The Light: A Romance*, which we reviewed in these columns a short time since, has, we are happy to say, reached a second edition.

* * *

Mr. J. Shufflebotham, of the Bolton School Board, has issued a pamphlet (1d.) entitled *The Christian, the Atheist, and the Socialist*, through the Twentieth Century Press, Clerkenwell-green, London. Mr. Shufflebotham thinks the Christian and the Atheist should work together for social reform. Well, that all depends on the Christian. We hope Mr. Shufflebotham's pamphlet will be widely read—especially by Christians.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### A NEW PLEA FOR THEISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—I am much obliged to you for the prominent notice you have been good enough to take of my small book, *Quero*, and also to your reviewer for his very able and full critique. Just now I am closely occupied with urgent professional work, but in January, if you will kindly grant permission, I shall be glad to give, in your columns, such answer as I can to the comments in your issue of December 4 and 11. In this case, I venture to suggest that any of your readers who are interested in the subject would do well to keep by them the excellent review which appeared on these dates. James H. Keeling.

## Obituary.

Yesterday morning (Dec. 18th) we laid to his long rest in Plymouth Cemetery, amid universal expressions of regret, Mr. Gad Roberts, aged forty-two years, late secretary of our Plymouth Branch N.S.S., who died from an attack of pneumonia. A consistent and energetic worker in the cause, a model husband, a true friend, hospitable in his Secular home, large-hearted and generous to many who will sadly miss him, he died firm in his convictions; and his oft-repeated request for a Secular burial was bravely and faithfully carried out by his widow, notwithstanding that some of his orthodox relatives and friends (?) declined, for that reason only, to attend the funeral. Their absence, however, was fully compensated by a large attendance of Secularists, to whom Mr. G. McClusky read most impressively the beautiful service of Col. Ingersoll, after which our veteran worker, Mr. R. T. Smith, delivered a short eulogistic address. The ceremony was a strange but welcome contrast to the monotonous and depressing chapter of absurdities usually drawled out by our surpliced friends, and made a visible impression on the many who stood round the open grave.
H. J. Barter.

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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 (86 Newington Green-road, Ball's Pond): December 24, at 8.30, Social Evening. December 25, closed.

WEST LONDON SECULAR CLUB (15 Edgware-road): Every evening 7—10 50. Visitors invited. The resort of Freethinkers in the district. Lectures every Thursday. Thursday next, Mr. Milnes opens a discussion on "Theosophy."

COUNTRY.

GLASGOW (Lecture Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, Discussion Class: Essay, "The Holy Ghost"; 6.30, J. F. Turnbull, "Thomas Paine Glorified."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): December 25, Closed. January 2, Annual Soirée. Tea at 5.50, dancing at 7.30.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Musical and other Recitals. December 28, Members' and Friends' Soirée and Ball. Tea at 5 30.

### Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 17 Osborne-road, High-road, Leyton—January 1 and 8, Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court-road; 15, Camberwell; 22, Sheffield; 29, Bradford Labour Church. February 5, Glasgow.

H. PERCY WARD, 5, Alexandra-road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.—January 7, Birmingham; 14 and 21, Manchester; 28, Chester.


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