

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELFR.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

## THE CONVERTED ATHEIST.

"For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" — ROMANS III., 7.

THE Rev. Hugh Price Hughes is one of the "artful dodger" species. Challenged by Mr. Bradlaugh, challenged by Mr. Foote, and challenged by Mr. Forder, he held his tongue and let the pious fraud do its dirty work. His story of the Converted Atheist Shoemaker was reprinted from the *Methodist Times* without a word of explanation or defence. He had not the honesty or decency to state that the truth of the story had been questioned by the leaders of the Atheist party. His policy was, tell a lie and stick to it, and when proof is demanded stand upon your dignity, put on an air of injured innocence, and decline to say a word. So the prisoner in the dock of the Old Bailey maintains a sullen silence, but it does not prevent the trial from going on. The jury returns its verdict and the judge pronounces the sentence.

Mr. Hughes's thick skin has however been pierced, and he has been stung into speech. He could afford to laugh at "the infidels," for his story was intended for simple minded Methodists, who would never trouble themselves about its exposure. But it was quite another matter when an influential newspaper like the *Daily Chronicle* suggested that Mr. Hughes should lay his cards upon the table, and broadly hinted that some of his clerical colleagues were as anxious for evidence as any Atheist in London. Mr. Hughes saw that it was time to speak. Dead silence would no longer pay, and besides it looked too utterly farcical. Accordingly he devoted a couple of paragraphs to the subject in the *Methodist Times*. The first paragraph deals with "the motive and animus" of the writer in the *Chronicle*, as though it had anything to do with the case, or as though a matter of public interest and importance could be treated as a mere matter of personality. The second paragraph runs as follows:—

"But we are at a loss to understand what right either Mr. Bradlaugh or the Secretary of the National Secular Society has to demand the name of 'The Atheist Shoemaker,' which is suppressed for the reason given in the preface to the book. The narrative makes no attack whatever, either on Mr. Bradlaugh or on the National Secular Society. The Secretary of that Society says no professional Atheist lecturer in London has died during the last ten years in the way described in 'The Atheist Shoemaker.' Mr. Price Hughes never said that 'The Atheist Shoemaker' was a professional lecturer of the National Secular Society. He simply said that he had frequently spoken in advocacy of Atheism in public halls and in the open air, and that he had spoken with great eloquence and effect."

First of all, let it be observed that Mr. Hughes does not say a word about our challenge. No, he takes the easiest course. We dissected his story point by point, and showed its utter absurdity, as well as its self-contradictions. But about all this he is mum. Foolish man! Does he suppose our pamphlet is as good as non-existent because he does not recognise it? Will he fare any better than the proverbial ostrich? Our pamphlet is circulating by

the thousand. And it will continue to circulate. Yes, and it will make Mr. Hughes, in the opinion of many honorable men and women, stand as a convicted liar.

A wretched lie is implied in Mr. Hughes's explanation. It is true he did not say the converted Atheist was a professional lecturer of the National Secular Society. But who asserted that he did? What he said was that the young man was a lecturer at the Hall of Science. Upon that point he has been directly challenged. He has been furnished with a list of the lecturers there during the past ten years, and requested to name one of them who was a working shoemaker, who was converted last winter, and died last spring at the age of thirty. All this he conceals from the readers of the *Methodist Times*, and instead of answering the question at issue he replies to another which has never been raised.

Mr. Hughes forgets that his story is in print. It is not like the Bible in Luther's simile, a wax nose which can be twisted into any shape. It is all very well to assert "I simply said this" or "I simply said that." We possess, in black on white, what Mr. Hughes did say, and we can read it for ourselves. Nor will the trick succeed of whittling down Clerkenwell Green and the Hall of Science into "public halls" and "the open air." The language of the story was precise, and upon it Mr. Hughes must be judged. Of course the precision was a mistake, as we told him; he overreached himself in making his story realistic, and thus delivered himself into the hands of the enemy.

The questioning of Mr. Bradlaugh's right, or the right of the Secretary of the National Secular Society, to ask for the real name of the converted Atheist, is a piece of shocking indecency. Mr. Bradlaugh's name was artfully dragged into the story to spice it up for the Methodist readers. That at least is our opinion. But whatever the reason, is there any man outside Bedlam with a spark of honor who would deny Mr. Bradlaugh's right to ask for further details of a story in which his name was frequently introduced? Nor is it easy to see how the right of the National Secular Society can be challenged. There is no other Society, at any rate in London, under whose auspices the converted Atheist could have lectured. Whether one of its "professional lecturers" or not, he must have stood upon its platform. Certainly he must have done so at the Hall of Science. What humbug it is, then, to affirm that the N. S. S. is not concerned in Mr. Hughes's story.

Equally idle is the statement that "the narrative makes no attack whatever, either on Mr. Bradlaugh or on the National Secular Society." Again we ask, who said it did? The object of the narrative was not to attack Secularists, but to show them a rancid sympathy which they are far from desiring; and, secondly, to show the superior converting power of the West End Mission and the Methodist Sisterhood.

Here, for the present, we take our leave of Mr. Hughes, his fabulous story, and his shuffling vindication. He is only an amateur as yet in the business



of forgery, but he will progress with age and experience, and he may some day be able to lie like truth. Meanwhile his first effort is in print against him, and so is our exposure. Both may be a warning to future tyros in fraud, and induce them to practise their art carefully before inviting a public inspection; for the age grows more and more exacting, and will not tolerate such simple frauds as those which imposed on the credulity of the primitive Christians.

G. W. FOOTE.

### ROME IN ENGLAND.

MR. BRADLAUGH in his valedictory address to the members of the National Secular Society thought well to allude to three perils to the Freethought movement which he believes loom in the near future, an anti-Jewish agitation, the Salvation Army, and the spread of the Romish Church and its appeal to the democracy. Of these dangers there can be little question that the last, if the least pressing, is the most formidable. We are neither of those who are constantly scared by the spread of Popery nor of those who pooch pooch its power. We hold, with Mr. Bradlaugh, that the enemy which we oppose has its real citadel at Rome. Catholicism is the one consistent antagonist to Freethought. Between the two there can be neither treaty nor truce. The various forms of Protestantism are so many efforts at compromise. Though built on the right of private judgment, each sect has had in imitation of Rome to set up its creed as a restraint upon the exercise of this right. And the creeds of Protestantism, even when not identical with those of Catholicism, are scarcely less opposed to reason. There was profound wisdom in the reply of Bishop Talleyrand to a Protestant who asked him how Catholics could believe in such an evident contradiction of their senses as is implied in the doctrine of transubstantiation. "Oh," said the Bishop, "the thing is quite simple; we first teach them the doctrine of the Trinity." Protestantism sets out with premises which lead to conclusions embodied in Catholicism. An infallible Bible needs an infallible interpreter. Three hundred and fifty years of Protestantism has only shown that no harmonious teaching can be drawn from its fetish book. If God authenticated his church with miracles once, why should he not do so now? Salvation through faith is no more reasonable than priestly forgiveness of sins.

Catholicism has great power in its consistency. Priests there find their instinct for sacerdotal sway embodied. Laymen content to rest on authority are relieved of the burden of thought, the anxious duty of truth seeking. Rome has vast resources, and the movement of thought which drives many outside of the Protestant Churches, sends others to seek shelter in the great Mother Church from which the Protestant Churches have sprung. As the belief in hell declines, many are prepared to accept the doctrine of Purgatory. Since dogmas no longer rouse devotion, the churches perforce must have recourse to peacock Ritualism, parodying the rites of Rome, if only to attract their audiences. The Ritualist party is fast becoming the strongest party in the Church of England. Its ultimate and consistent end is Romanism, though those who are upon a path do not always discern where it is leading them. The many disciples of Dr. Pusey who have gone on this track give sufficient warning. Since the prosecution of the Bishop of Lincoln for Ritualism, a dozen Anglican clergymen have been received into the Church of Rome, and although none of these are such important proselytes as Newman, Manning, Dalgairns, Ward, and Faber, whose perversion to Rome aroused such attention between forty and fifty years ago, it is an open secret that if the verdict goes against Bishop

King the seceders from the Church of England would be more numerous and important than they have been since that period. Should political events precipitate Disestablishment it is likely that Rome would receive nearly a tenth of the English clergy.

Since 1850 the Romish Church in England has increased vastly. Its bishops have increased from 8 to 17, its priests and churches have multiplied threefold, while religious houses have increased from 17 to nearly 600, and Roman Catholic school children from 24,000 to nearly 300,000. Its proselytes have mostly been drawn from the wealthy classes. To this end the efforts of the Jesuits have been directed. In this respect there is a great contrast with Freethought. Our proselytes are mostly drawn from the poor, and though we may boast the elite of the working classes, we have few indeed who could endow our halls, even if the law permitted them to do so, and none who could place the sums of money for the support of Freethought which the Marquis of Bute and the Duke of Norfolk devote to the Church.

But it is not only among the wealthy that its efforts are directed. In every large town and district in England the Roman Catholics are now establishing societies of men and women called Ransomers, White Cross Ransomers and Red Cross Ransomers, whose main object is to bring back England to "the faith of our fathers." In view of a significant fact like this it surely behoves Freethinkers to close up their ranks and be prepared to fight superstition not simply as free lances, but in strong organisation. These Ransomers are being trained to operate upon the weak points of Protestantism, and already we see in the provincial press that they have trained pens in their service.

It is not only on proselytism that Roman Catholics rely to revive "the faith of our fathers." If they did we might be well content, since we can show at least as good a set off as our enemies. But the Church relies on two other weapons, immigration and increase of population. It is undeniable that the bulk of the increase of the Catholic population can be traced to Irish and continental immigrants. We cannot count the influence of our foreign friends on the greater freedom of Sunday observances as any sufficient set off to this. The other factor, if more subtle, is still more important. While Freethinkers are everywhere voluntarily restraining their numbers, and thereby slowly improving their social position, the Catholic Church through the means of the Confessional is inculcating on its votaries "to increase and multiply." A few generations of this would result in a vast numerical difference even were the parties equal at the outset. As it is Mr. St. George Mivart has confessed that the Church can rely on this alone for victory. But as the Church becomes more numerous by this means it is bound to become more democratic. At any rate it must be so to the extent of claiming every political privilege for its supporters, and seeing they have their full shares of public offices. Indeed by their discipline of obedience, and voting together, they will, as the experience of America shows, be able to do far more than this, and secure to their institutions large sums of money as the condition of securing the support of a united party. The recent elections in Protestant Germany, where the Ultramontane party have come out far ahead of all their divided opponents, show what a political force the Catholic Church still remains. It warns England to be on her guard and Freethinkers to prepare themselves for the coming fight. They are grossly mistaken who fancy the days of struggle are over.

J. M. WHEELER.

An Irish girl, looking at a large picture of the "Cherubs," asked her mistress, "And what is that?" "Those, Mary, are the Cherubs from the foot of the Throne in the Madonna St. Sistine." "There now!" says Mary, "And here was Bridget declarin' they wuz hens—but I sez they wuz bats."



## THE BRAIN AND THE BIBLE.

THOUSANDS of very estimable people in this country, who one might reasonably suppose were possessed of good brains, fail to use them on some of the most vital questions of the day. Ask their opinion on business matters and they will give you very intelligent answers; question them on politics, or inquire their views on the great social problems that engage the thought of reformers and philanthropists, and if they cannot give a decided answer they will acknowledge that these matters deserve the most serious consideration; but ask their opinion on the Bible and the view of modern thought in relation to it, and they will answer that they believe the Bible because they have been taught to do so; that it is "a good old book, and will stand when all infidel objections to it have passed into the limbo of forgetfulness." This shows how little they know of the subject, for if they would only inquire even superficially into the matter they would find that infidel objections have played such havoc with the Bible that it has effected a complete change in the aspect of its teachings. The clergy themselves recognise this fact so far that they do not now regard the Bible as an inspired record of God's views in the same sense as they did a few years ago. Many of them claim that it is inspired only in the same sense as every grand literary production is inspired. They acknowledge, indeed, that much of it is unscientific; much unhistoric; much mythical; and that some of it is incompatible with what we now regard as a high standard of morality. But while they make all these admissions when they are talking to persons who know something about the subject, they are less candid to their congregations. Indeed, they are careful above all things to cling tenaciously to the story of the Fall; for they perceive—and in this they are more logical than the late Dr. Colenso—that if this, the foundation of the Christian religion, be removed, the whole edifice must tumble about them like a house of cards.

Man, therefore, they maintain, fell in the Garden of Eden some six thousand years ago—fell spiritually, if in no other sense. After the Fall man became sinful by nature. As Dr. Parker once put it, "At the Fall man not only went down physically but intellectually. Since then he has been incapable of himself, not only of doing a good deed, but of thinking a good thought." No doubt the conceited pastor of the City Temple excludes himself from this sweeping charge, and would feel insulted if some member of his congregation told him that he had a wicked thought in his mind while he was delivering his last sermon.

If, however, the story of the Fall of Man was the only biblical statement that was opposed to reason, the clergy would long ago have set up another theory to account for the original introduction of sin into the world. The Bible, fortunately for humanity, is full of incredibly absurd statements; and any attempt to reconcile them with the "common sense" of the intelligent portion of the community must end in ignominious failure.

If the first chapter of Genesis is correct, God made a lot of men and women at the start, and Adam and Eve may not have been included among them. On the other hand, if the second chapter is right, Adam and Eve were our first parents, and the human race was propagated by an incestuous mode horrible to contemplate. And when Cain went into the Land of Nod—that's where the Lord sleeps—and got married he must have wedded his sister or his mother, for no other persons of the feminine gender were in existence, unless perhaps a few fine specimens of anthropoid apes, such as the chimpanzee and the ourang outang. Is it not insulting to people with brains to ask them to believe such biblical stories? A highly intelligent ape would grin at the mention of such fables.

Then, who that knows anything of history believes in a universal flood?—a flood that never touched China, and quite overlooked America and Australia. Some of the clergy suggest a local flood. But if it were only a local flood what was the use of Noah's Ark? Why should all the animals come into the ark "just to get out of the rain" if it only rained over a very limited area? If Jahveh wanted to save Noah and his family, why didn't he tell them to emigrate? Too much water would not then have provoked Noah to drunkenness, and his children might have been spared a disgusting sight.

Then we have the story of the Tower of Babel; how the people to frustrate the purpose of an omniscient and omnipotent God thought to make a side entrance to heaven while Jahveh's back was turned; and how Jahveh came down and confused their tongues—so that the man who spoke Hebrew last night woke up and spoke French. I daresay the language that would be used under such circumstances would be very confusing. But who believes in such a story? Nobody with brains. I have no hesitation in saying that any man who believes such a monstrous story must be classed among the majority of persons so forcibly referred to by Carlyle when he declared emphatically that Great Britain contained thirty millions of people, mostly fools.

Balaam and his intelligent moke, Samson and his poetical jawbone, Jonah's lodgiag in a whale's interior—such stories as these may be thrown in as make-weight, and thus constitute a fair load for the Christian to carry about with him, and in respect to which he might exclaim "I believe" when he is asked to unburden himself in regard to his "Great Faith."

Yet thousands of estimable people say they believe this nonsense. I dare not say they are knaves, though I often am candid enough to declare that they are not the wisest among their fellows. But if they are foolish in their belief now, there is no reason why they should remain so. How can we bring them to their senses? Many of them would not listen to a Freethought lecture. Yet it is our duty to save them from intellectual suicide. How can it be done? There are many ways of doing it. Let me suggest a few. Plenty of these unreasoning Christians belong to Young Men's Institutes. Freethinkers should join and give them a mild dose of Freethought in their speeches in the discussion class. That will open the ball. These Christians, too, come to business by tram in the morning. Freethinkers should give them the Freethought aspect of every question that comes on the *tapis*.

Many Christians are total abstainers; Freethinkers should show them by chapter and verse that the Bible is in favor of strong drink. Many Christians are interested in politics; Freethinkers should point out that Mr. Bradlaugh is just to the Irish people and will vote for Home Rule, notwithstanding the fact that the Irish members tried to keep him out of his seat; that Mr. John Morley—another Freethinker—does not ask whether a man is a Catholic or a Protestant before he consents to remove a grievance. Get the Christians to discuss with you, the Bible question is sure to come up before long. And depend upon it if it does come up brains will get the best of it in the end.

Men cannot believe what they like. Absurdities cannot always pass as profound truths. Common sense will count for something, and in the long run the dignity of people with brains will not allow them to say they believe that which the wisest of mankind now regard in the light either of ancient ignorance or arrant nonsense.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

"Here's the devil to pay," said the printer when his office boy presented himself on Saturday.



## ACID DROPS.

"From Bradlaugh to Foote," says the *Rock*, "is from worse to worst, for even in Secularism there are deeper depths." We tender the *Rock* our sincere condolence and hope it will soon recover.

There is a wag in the *Star* composing room. In last Saturday's issue a Sunday lecture was announced by the "Rev. G. W. Foote." As a first offence it is overlooked, but a repetition would justify an action for libel.

Slaves are generally fond of their chains. This may account for Margaret Lee's effusion on Divorce in the *North American Review*. Apparently she understands the subject as much as the proverbial cow understands musketry. Her remedy for the low morality of society is simple—"Let divorce be abolished." But—too lady-like alas!—she exclaims in the very next breath, "Let sceptics have their own system. A civil contract, elastic as necessary, could be drawn by each State. This would satisfy couples who do not care to face poverty, sickness, or trouble together."

The last sentence puts the lady out of court. How Ingersoll must smile at the notion that sceptical husbands and wives want a divorce law to enable them to part company when baby has the measles, or money is scarce, or either of them falls ill! Ingersoll's home is known to be one of the happiest and noblest in America. He would tell the lady, with a beaming face, that people who love each other are more likely to quarrel in prosperity than in adversity, and that two human beings who have shared the same sorrow are faster friends than two who have only shared the same pleasure. He might even ask her to take the trouble to read what he had written—not with her eyes only, but with her mind. He might also ask her to explain her proposal. Is the State to have two marriage laws, one for Christians and one for Freethinkers? Is any arrangement to be made for Christian husbands and wives who become converted to Freethought? And if so, what is to prevent Christians who want to be divorced from registering themselves as Freethinkers? It appears to us that the lady's scheme is as impracticable as her knowledge of human nature is superficial.

By the way, it would be interesting to ascertain the proportion of Freethinkers among divorced couples. Our impression is that the overwhelming majority are Christians. Anyhow we don't know a single Freethinker in England who has been divorced. We know one Freethinker, at any rate, whose wife turned Roman Catholic, and left him and her children to gallivant about the world in search of her own poor, miserable salvation. But he is too much of a man to wash his family linen in public, and would probably bear his burden to the end rather than be freed on any other terms than those of justice and delicacy.

It is amusing to see the theological warp in Christian minds on this subject. Only the other day we read a withering rebuke of "the sin" of George Eliot and George Henry Lewes. They offended against "religion" in their domestic arrangements, and hence all these tears. But the pious rebukers of "sin" never think of inquiring into the *morality* of the case. If they did they would find, we believe, that Lewes might have legally freed himself from his first wife if he had not been too magnanimous to drag her into a public pillory. This little fact lets all the gas out of the bubble that is so successfully floated in orthodox meetings. Lewes obeyed a higher law than his traducers are able to appreciate.

It is curious that the *Vegetarian* should be so given to pious goody-goody utterances. Nothing is more certain than that bloody sacrifices were the prominent features of the Old Testament, and that "Rise Peter, kill and eat" is the doctrine of the New. Orthodox Christianity is founded on salvation through blood. Yet the organ of dietetic reform laments the blindness of the Freethinker and continually talks of vegetarianism as an ordinance of God—the God who has made nature a vast system of prey, one animal living on another's life blood.

Out in Kansas a new sect called the Samaritans has started near the Blue river, founded by one Silas Wilcox. Ostensibly devoted to the welfare of the sick, they are found to be devoted to horrible practices. Wilcox openly advocates the drinking of blood as cure for all diseases, giving as his authority the fact that the Bible teaches that "the blood is the life."

At the home of John Wrinkle were found two emaciated children. On the bed lay Wrinkle, who was apparently in the last stages of consumption. When questioned about drinking the blood of the children he strenuously denied having done so. The children also denied it. Their bloodless appearance, however, excited the suspicion of the officer, and he compelled them to show their arms. Their limbs were in a terrible condition, being covered with scars around the inside of the elbow joint, showing plainly the effects of the bleeding. When confronted with this evidence of the truth of the accusation, Wrinkle acknowledged that he had availed himself of the opportunity, and asserted that the children had willingly given their blood to restore him to health. Another instance of the folly of founding practice on the word of God.

A pious baker, at The Hague, absolutely refuses to fill up the Census for himself and his family. He refers as his reason for refusal to the narrative in 2 Sam. xxiv., which relates how the Lord sent a pestilence because David numbered the children of Israel. He declares that the Russian influenza epidemic is similarly sent by the Lord as a punishment for taking the Census.

Father J. Murphy supports the right of priests to mix in politics, and says that to deny it "is to hand over the government of the world—which is God's—to Satan and his satellites." The priest always stands in his own eyes for God himself, and his adversaries appear as devils.

The Rev. John Campbell, of Buccleuch Parish Church, has brought down an avalanche on his head. He preached a teetotal sermon and pretended that the Bible, from beginning to end, taught abstinence from strong drink. Thereupon two gentlemen wrote to the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, giving chapter and verse, and completely smashing the reverend gentleman's position. We have not seen Mr. Campbell's answer, and we never expect to.

That erratic politician, Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P., preached a temperance sermon last Sunday in the Congregational Church at Anerley. He called for a new party, pledged against the drink traffic, whose leader should be neither Gladstone nor Salisbury, but Jesus Christ. Well now, that is good. Fancy the teetotal party led by the gentleman who turned seventy-five gallons of water into wine to keep the spree going at a nuptial feast! After that Lord Churchill might lead the Liberal party, Mr. Labouchere preside over the Primrose League, and Mr. Bradlaugh fill the Archbishopric of Canterbury.

Mr. Foote's visit to Reading has stirred up the place like an earthquake. The orthodox party has had Mr. Barber there several times displaying his wonderful ignorance. One of his discourses was on the Bible and Science, and Max Müller was cited against Darwin as to the origin of man. Now, if Mr. Barber will read Max Müller instead of using the stock quotations of the Christian Evidence Society, he will find that the great philologist is a far less strenuous opponent of Darwinism than he used to be. He might also reflect, or some of his audience might, that Darwin is a supreme authority in matters of biology and Max Müller none at all. There never was a more ludicrous idea than that of advancing a mere scholar, however eminent, as an authority on the question of the origin of the human race.

Mr. Barber showed his imbecile misconception of Darwinism by asking for a monkey that could produce a man now. Such nonsense is really beneath contempt. Monkeys do not produce men, but sometimes men produce something very little superior to monkeys.

Quite ignorant of the writings of Churchmen like Canon Cheyne and Dr. Driver, the worthy Barber told his ignorant audience, who received the statement with applause, that



"the Bible was written by a number of men ranging over a period of 2,000 years." Taking the Old Testament and the New, this is just a thousand years too much. Mr. Barber is either very ignorant of ordinary Biblical criticism or he requires a little elementary instruction in arithmetic.

After Barber's tribute to the holiness of the Bible it was amusing to see the treatment of a sceptic who mounted the platform and wanted the lecturer's candid opinion on the fifth chapter of Numbers. Directly he began to read this specimen of "holiness" the Christians made an uproar, and he had to leave the platform exclaiming, "You're afraid of your holy book."

Mr. Amos, the Unitarian minister, has been opposing Barber and lecturing himself against the inspiration of the Bible. No wonder, therefore, that the Reading Branch is gathering fresh strength every week.

There has been talk of a public debate at Reading. Mr. Foote has told the Branch that he is ready to discuss with any representative Christian in the town. Surely there is some minister able and willing to champion his faith in debate.

Norristown is, we believe, the place where the ex-Rev. C. B. Reynolds was tried for blasphemy. They appear to draw the color line pretty fine there. An entertainer, who is assisted by a choir of thirty girls, was engaged to give a concert in the Mount Zion Colored Church. Only ten of the girls put in an appearance, the others declining to appear before a colored audience.

Talmage went to Albany to preach upon the Ten Plagues of New York, upon which the *Sun* observed that he forgot that in his absence there were only nine.

The old joke that Christianity bore traces of its having been originated by fishermen, from the interdiction of meat during Lent, will lose its force this year, since the Pope gives indulgence to non-fasters on account of the influenza. This shows that secular prudence overrides ordinances even at Rome.

Mr. John Williams, a Welsh preacher at Ynysddu, evidently holds with Paul that God does not care for oxen and such animals. It was proved against him that he worked his horse while covered with sores on its back and shoulders, and with sand cracks in its feet. He was let off with a fine of £5, and at the same time we read of a man sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labor for stealing two oranges.

We have yet to find the crime or offence which cannot find its support in Scripture. Read the following from Birmingham, Alabama:—Rev. John B. Reese, of Girard, in this State, has fled from the country to escape the wrath excited by the story of his daughter Ella, who avers that she was assaulted by her father some years ago and has since been forced to submit to his unnatural conduct. He had quoted Scripture to ease her conscience, but her condition has rendered further concealment impossible. Reese is the father of two married daughters and his wife is still living.

The Rev. Peter Thomas McCallum seems to be a clergyman out of a job. From "The Hermitage," Barnes, he sends a proposal to the Richmond Board of Guardians, offering to act as chaplain to the workhouse without salary, if he is paid fourpence per head for every addition to the present number regularly attending the chapel. He proposes to attract them by a full choral service. He says: "This I could make easy, as one of my sons plays the oboe and the other the fife, while my daughters are proficient in the 'cello, the cornet, and the double bass. I can also do a little on the trombone, and I would willingly undertake the conductorship. I do not doubt that in a very little time, with bright and cheerful services, I could bring the whole of the inmates to chapel regularly." The rev. gentleman can evidently tootle his own trumpet as well as do a little on the trombone, and his offer was declined with thanks.

The Rev. Marmaduke Cheyne Richardson, curate of St. James's, Plumstead, figured the other day in the Woolwich

County Court. He engaged furnished apartments in Blendon Terrace, with the use of linen and plate, at thirty shillings a week. But he failed to pay the rent, and also damaged the furniture by putting his feet on the couch and chairs. The trial of the case lasted two or three hours, and resulted in a verdict for the landlady. Next time she takes a clerical lodger she will probably want the rent in advance.

Margaret Hearn wanted to go to heaven, so she climbed up the Endell Street fire-escape and refused to descend her Jacob's ladder. Eventually she was taken before the Bow Street magistrate, who remanded her for the needless purpose of inquiring as to her sanity.

William Webb, of Orpington, Kent, is described as "of good position and associated with the Church." But he came up to London, and his conduct with a boy in St. James's Park brought him before magistrate Bridge, who would not take less than two bail of £500 each.

Ripon Congregational Church broke out in flames through some defect in the heating apparatus, and narrowly escaped total destruction. From the number of cases of fire on the Lord's premises we should recommend the insurance companies to charge heavy premiums.

Converting Jews is a costly process. A hairdresser in a very long road in South London lost his assistant. The young man was converted by the Jew Conversion Society, which paid him £15 down, and he used the money to go abroad with. Since then the master has got into low water. He also wants to go abroad, and talks of securing another £15 for himself.

From what Jesus Christ said we judge that the sparrows are the peculiar favorites of heaven. It is estimated that they do about £5,000,000 worth of damage to the crops in England.

Archdeacon Farrar and his friends have carried their point, and the Church of England is to ape the monastic system of Rome. It is enough to make some of the old "Reformers" turn in their graves. Able-bodied young fellows are to form Brotherhoods and take "dispensable vows" of chastity and poverty. But it appears that the "poverty" is not to be inconsistent with a secure maintenance. As for the "chastity," we shall see what we do see. Some of the clergy look as chaste as he-goats, while others look as cold and sheepish as Joseph. Perhaps it would be as well to establish the reality of the vow by making the Protestant "brothers" undergo the medical examination to which the candidates for the Romish priesthood are submitted, in order to prove that although they *are* to be chaste they *might be* otherwise. Better still, perhaps, the chastity of the "brothers" might be secured by infibulation.

The Brothers of the Cross exist in Paris to establish "the reign of God on earth." The *Daily Telegraph* says that "nobody knows whether they are pious lunatics or practical persons who want to make money by running an original kind of religion." Probably they are a mixture of both.

Is it true that thirty members of the West Southwark Liberal and Radical Club were chaperoned over Lambeth Palace by the Archbishop, who wound up by leading them in the Lord's Prayer? If so, we can only wonder that some of them did not see the farce of Dr. Benson's praying "Give us this day our daily bread" in a palace whose occupant is blessed with fifteen thousand a year. Why didn't they ask him for a subscription for the George Harrison fund?

Edison says, according to a writer in *Harper*, that the existence of a personal God can almost be proved from chemistry. Such a remark is more wonderful than the telephone. Perhaps the day is coming when theologians will be furnished with chemical apparatus, and lectures in divinity will be illustrated with hydro-oxygen light.

How true is Ingersoll's remark that with respect to the existence of God the idiot and the philosopher are on the same level. It is all a matter of imagination. There is plenty of conjecture and no knowledge. Let a man be



trained to believe in God and he will see him everywhere; just as the horse, who was provided with green spectacles, ate shavings for grass.

Barnum's farewell to the British public is characteristic. The genial (and prosperous) old showman alludes to the time when he will have "joined the great, and as I believe, happy majority." This implies that Barnum has cast away the good old doctrine of hell and damnation, and accepted a heaven where everybody will be happy for ever and ever. But the boss of the greatest show on earth does not tell us why the happiness we are destined to enjoy in another life is not a little more evenly distributed in the present. Nor does he tell us how he himself could be happy in a world where there are no shows—and no gate-money.

A member of the *Pall Mall Gazette* staff has spent seven months in the United States as a working journalist. One of the "three great ideas" he was impressed with is this, that "the Pope has far more power in the States than in any Catholic country in the old World. The papers are afraid to print a word to which the priests take exception, and any Catholic who goes to hear Dr. M. Glynn lecture is excommunicated." This confirms what we read in the Freethought papers that reach us from the States. The Catholic Church is a growing danger to the Republic, and the day seems approaching when Catholicism and Liberalism will engage in a life-and-death struggle.

Two years ago the mystical Mrs. Dr. Anna Kingsford departed from her "earth-life" and went, as the saying is, God knows where. Last Saturday was the anniversary of her exit, and Steinway Hall was occupied by a number of persons who met to celebrate the event. It was a motley assemblage of clergymen, Theosophists, Parsees, society ladies, and politicians in search of "soul-rest." The high-priest of the occasion was Mr. George Chainey, a gentleman who was once a Unitarian, then a Freethought lecturer, then a Spiritualist, and now as mad as a hatter. America and Australia have had enough of him, and we understand he is at present seeking the means to go to Palestine and keep an appointment with the Holy Ghost, who is to make him the medium of a new revelation.

We wish Mr. Chainey no harm. He is not a dangerous lunatic, and a Freethinker might say to him, as Uncle Toby said to the fly, "Surely the world is wide enough for thee and me." But we regret to hear that he is being recommended as a lecturer to the N. S. S. Branches. Of course the Branches will do as they please. There is no authority over their choice of lecturers. But a great many Freethinkers will object to our platform being turned into a refuge for cranks, and protest that we do not "seek for truth" so minutely as to search for it in asylums.

Mr. G. Naewiger, of the Hull Branch, writes to a local paper about the tactics of the Salvation Army. He was out for a stroll with his wife and they went into the Army "barracks" in Cambridge Street. At the end of twenty minutes they found they had had enough, and wanted to retire. But a stalwart gentleman of the "chucker out" species planted his back against the door and told them they could not leave till eight o'clock. A policeman was appealed to, but this legal luminary appeared to think the British people had no right of egress from a public meeting. At length, however, the Secularist presented the doorkeeper in the house of the Lord with his card, and intimated his intention of getting out; and as he looked as if he meant business the door was reluctantly opened.

The cheek of these Salvation gentry is amazing. They appear to think the world was made for them. Were they in a majority their "General" would be the autocrat of England. The reign of the saints would begin in earnest, and everybody with a spark of independence would be glad to emigrate; though the treatment of Mr. Naewiger renders their being able to do so somewhat doubtful.

General Booth forbids his followers to go to theatre, to play cards or billiards, or even to dance. The only game he allows is walking backward in the street for the men, and jerking tambourines for the women.

There is a good story about that walking backward.

An Army procession was passing down a certain street, led by a captain who faced his awkward squad and gave the public an *a posteriori* view of his elegant person. Seeing a rough fellow looking on, and smoking a short pipe, the captain shouted, "Why don't you drop that pipe, man? Don't you think, if the Lord meant you to smoke, he would have made your mouth a funnel?" "Well," said the smoker, "you needn't talk. Don't you think, if the Lord meant you to walk backward, he'd have turned your feet the other way about?"

Presbyterianism is the vilest, and most logical, creed ever devised. No wonder that the denunciations of men like Ingersoll and Pentecost are making the votaries of this ghastly faith ashamed. A movement in favor of "Revision" is sweeping over the States. The New York Presbytery appointed a committee to report on the question, and the result is a recommendation to omit the doctrines of Reprobation, the Damnation of Infants and the Damnation of the Heavens. Should the recommendation be generally adopted Presbyterianism will have nearly all the damnation taken out of it, and be like a toothless old man-eating tiger.

Canon Talbot's lectures at Newcastle have, apparently been delivered in connection with the University Extension Scheme. This is a fact that should be remembered, since it shows the sectarian character of institutions that should be for the benefit of citizens of all schools of thought.

The Newcastle *Chronicle* devotes a leader to Canon Talbot, lauding him to the skies. "So far as we have observed," it remarks, "there has been no successful assault of his position." Now, for our part, we scarcely know whether to call this impudence or hypocrisy. Canon Talbot is ready to fence with amateur swordsmen, but he positively declines to cross weapons with any leader of scepticism. His victory, therefore, is remarkably cheap, and the *Chronicle* sings a psalm over a laughable triumph.

The Newcastle *Leader* devotes an article to the subject of "Workmen and Church Going." It appears that the Wesleyan Convention held in that city complained that the working classes do not attend the gospel-shop, and the remedy they proposed was short prayers and sermons and lively music. The *Leader* thinks the evil lies deeper than this. It points out that churches are to a large extent social institutions. The middle classes go there to see and talk to each other, to display their dresses, and to form those little acquaintances that lead to marriage. But the working man is very little interested in these things, and as the Church doesn't appeal to him he leaves the gospel-shop severely alone. The *Leader* seems to propose the preaching of morality instead of doctrine; that is, the preaching of Secularism under the disguise of Christianity.

Messrs. Kegan, Paul, and Co. have published a book by a Mr. Gough entitled *The Bible True from the Beginning*. Mr. Gough takes a funny way of proving its truth. Like Mr. Ignatius Donnelly, who finds a cipher in Shakespeare's plays showing Shakespeare was not the author, Mr. Gough finds "grade words" in the Bible showing it has an allegorical interpretation, so that the Bible as it stands is not literally true at all, but only Mr. Gough's interpretation. Before he discovered the "grade words" people were deriving hopelessly false notions of the Bible by supposing it to contain literal history.

#### SARAH BERNHARDT AND THE VIRGIN MARY.

Sarah Bernhardt doesn't see why a Passion play should not be produced in Paris as well as at Oberammergau. She considers the character of the Virgin Mary eminently dramatic and suited to her own genius, and proposes to impersonate the B. V. M. in a play specially written by M. Haraucourt. M. Garnier, who accompanied Madame Bernhardt to America, will undertake the trying rôle of the Virgin's eldest son.

Madame Bernhardt is a public favorite in France, and will probably have her own way, but the religious papers view the prospect with horror and alarm. The Passion play may be very reverential, but who knows how soon it may lead to a burlesque. Jupiter, Apollo, and other heathen gods have often been brought upon the English stage, and there are plenty who think the Christian deities quite as well suited to the purposes of farce or travesty.



**MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.**

*Sunday*, March 2, Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, All Saints, Manchester, at 11, 3, and 6.30.  
*Friday*, March 7, Gladstone Hall, Military Road, Chatham, at 8, "What has Christianity done?"  
 March 9, Camberwell; 16, Cardiff; 19, Southwark Radical Club; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.  
 April 6, Milton Hall; 9, Shelley Society 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science, London.  
 May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.  
 June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C. The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions

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

A SOLDIER.—We do not know of any newsagent at York who sells the *Freethinker*. Should this meet the eye of any reader who knows of one, we shall be obliged if he will kindly send us the address.

G. NAEWIGER (Hull) acknowledges receipt of parcels of literature from Hull, Berlin, London and Glasgow.—Answer to question, No.

*Freethinker* Circulation Fund.—E. Day, 1s.; J. T., 2s. 6d.

W. M. B.—If you reject the Bible as an inspired book we have much in common. Pleased to learn that, although a Unitarian, you find the *Freethinker* so interesting and useful.

E. D.—Glad to hear you thought the first of the course of free lectures at the Hall of Science a "magnificent success" We believe the course will entail very little cost to the Federation. There was a good collection the first night, although the box arrangements were so inadequate.

T. WILLETT.—Thanks See "Acid Drops."

W. LAPPAGE.—Mr. Foote acknowledges with thanks the "hearty congratulations" of the Camberwell Branch on his election to the Presidency.

PERSONNE.—Yes, we have since seen that it was not quite so bad as we thought.

E. HOLLAND.—Sorry to hear the agents are so bigoted. Your newsagent should have insisted on being supplied. Your order and cheque are passed to Mr. Forder.

T. THURLOW.—We are never offended by honest frankness. The West Ham Branch is of course not implicated by what Mr. Carter said, but he certainly spoke as though his sentiments were shared by some members; and, if that be a fact, those members should have protested when Mr. Foote was invited to give a benefit lecture. We are glad to learn that Mr. Carter only spoke for himself; and, in any case, we should not forget that your Branch includes some of the best workers in our party. Your worthy president, for instance, would be an honor to any cause.

D. GOW.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

W. KNIGHT.—Mr. Foote will do his best, and that is all that any man can promise. See "Acid Drops."

J. KEAST.—We fear you estimate our services and ability too highly. Mr. Foote is coming to Bristol with Mr. Forder to establish a *bona-fide* working Branch

SCRUTATOR.—Thanks for the paper. We dare say there are printer's errors now and then in the *Freethinker*, but we cannot afford to pay a special proof-reader. The wonder is that the work is done so well

T. WILLIAMS.—Write to F. Morris, 21 Stacey Road, Cardiff.

W. H. T.—Get our *Bible Contradictions* (4d.), and you will find plenty.

C. FRAKE.—We are not surprised. The clergy hate discussion, and for an excellent reason. You will have to send the Guide Notices weekly, as we cannot keep monthly lists.

H. ROWDEN.—1879, p. 86, line 20 from bottom, should be 1789. Thanks for pointing out the error.

E. S. JONES.—We would rather be spared. Mr. Wise has yet to learn the common amenities of civilised correspondence.

OLDHAM.—The *Freethinker* can be bought at 172 Manchester Street.

A. CLAY.—We are much obliged. See "Sugar Plums."

D. BAKER.—Very glad to have the approval and support of a veteran like yourself. There is much to be said about the future, and the Conference in May will be vastly important.

SPIRITUAL FREETHINKER.—You seem to be arguing in a circle. However, we are pleased to hear you are circulating our exposure of the Price Hughes story.

G. CROOKSON, newsagent, Hoyland Common, Barnsley, says "I have got several new subscribers to the *Freethinker* since I exhibited the placard." This correspondent inquires about the man Lee, who could not be hung because the apparatus would not act. The man was reprieved, but he is still in prison. The story of his being released, in consequence of the death-bed confession of the real murderer, is a recent fiction. The Home Office contradicted the newspaper yarns about a year ago.

W. SIMONS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

E. PINDER.—Glad to hear you are now going to join the N. S. S. Apply to Mr. Forder, secretary, at 28 Stonecutter Street, E. C. The subscription is 4s. per year, or 1s. per quarter. Freethought does not seem in a lively way at Leicester. Why not see Mr. Forder on Sunday evening?

A. B. WAKEFIELD.—See "Sugar Plums" The Farsley project fell through. Glad to see you are moving.

W. T. LEEKEY.—You are mistaken. Mr Broadhurst M. P. is a very good Christian. We remember his look of horror when we sat next him on the St. James's Hall platform and he suddenly learnt who was his right-hand neighbor.

C. DOEG.—The Liverpool friends should mix their congratulations with pity. The Presidency is anything but a bed of roses.

MILTON HALL.—The reverse is nearer the truth. Mrs. Besant has not attended an N. S. S. executive meeting for many months.

JAMES HOOPER.—If more life can be infused into the party there will be more work for the lecturers.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Progressive Thinker—Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Liberator—Truthseeker—Market Rasen Mail Bulletin des Sommaires—Open Court—Liberty—Overland Ceylon Observer—Leeds Daily News—Freethought—Evening Standard—the Brooklyn World—Hull Daily News—Freidenker—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Menschentum—Philadelphia Inquirer—Standard—Blackburn Times—The Christian—The Catholic Educator—Newcastle Daily Leader—Dundee People's Journal—Daily Graphic—Shields Daily Gazette—Weekly Dispatch—Swindon Advertiser—Western Mail—La Raison—Echo—Edinburgh Evening News—Islington Gazette—Ironclad Age—Reading Observer.

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

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

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

THE course of Thursday evening free lectures at the London Hall of Science, under the auspices of the Secular Federation, began with *éclat* on Feb. 20. There was a splendid audience when Mr. R. O. Smith took the chair, and the people came streaming in while he was speaking. Mr. Foote, who was in good form, lectured on "Freethought and God." After the lecture there was an hour's discussion, carried on, on the Christian side, by the Rev. C. L. Engstrom, the secretary of the Christian Evidence Society.

THE second lecture on "Freethought and the Bible" will be delivered by Mr. J. M. Robertson, and Mr. Foote will take the chair. This number of the *Freethinker* will be in the hands of many of our London readers before the lecture takes place. May we beg of them to bring their orthodox friends if at all possible? Those are the folk we want to reach. Mr. Robertson is able and scholarly; his lecture is sure to be interesting and instructive; and he is well able to hold his own in discussion.

MR. G. STANDRING delivers the third lecture on "The Church and the People" next Thursday evening (March 6). He will also be opposed by a representative of the Christian Evidence Society, and will probably take a good deal of confuting. The last lecture will be by Mr. Foote on March 13, the subject being "Freethought and Christ."

SHOULD this experiment prove as successful as it promises, the London Secular Federation will organise courses of week-night free lectures, with discussion, in other parts of the metropolis. Freethinkers who can give financial assistance should send donations to the hon.



treasurer, R. O. Smith, 142 Old Street, E.C., or direct to ourselves. Every penny received will be acknowledged—and accounted for. The lecturers, by the way, are giving their services gratuitously, so that the expenses—at least for the present—are confined to rent, printing, and advertising.

AT Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday, the following resolution was carried and ordered to be signed by the chairman, Mr. Daniel Baker:—"That this meeting of members and friends of the N. S. S., while deploring the necessity for Mr. Bradlaugh's resignation, desires to record its satisfaction at the election of Mr. G. W. Foote, and promises the new President as true and loyal a following as was accorded to his predecessor."

THERE was a large audience at the Camberwell Secular Hall on Sunday evening, Mr. F. Millar being the lecturer. After the lecture the following resolution was proposed by Mr. W. Lappage, seconded by Mr. Hartman, and carried unanimously:—"That this meeting congratulates Mr. Foote on his becoming the President of the National Secular Society, and heartily approves his advocacy of Freethought and the persistent manner in which he opposes the dogmas of the Christian Church."

AS the editor of this journal has his duties increased by his election as President of the N. S. S., we venture to appeal to our readers for assistance in the shape of promoting our circulation. A great deal can be done by getting newsagents to sell and if possible display the *Freethinker*. Here is a case in point. One of our Oldham friends induced a newsagent to put the *Freethinker* in his window, and told him, if he ordered half a dozen copies, that the unsold copies should be paid for. The result was that every copy was sold between Thursday night and Saturday morning.

MANY of our readers, who would pay twopence for the *Freethinker* sooner than lose it, might help us by taking an extra weekly copy and circulating it amongst their acquaintances. Were a thousand readers to do this (as they might) the editor would be in receipt of journeyman's wages for his work on the paper, whereas it is all a labor of love at present.

WE have just issued Ingersoll's new article "Why am I an Agnostic?" in pamphlet form. It should have a good circulation.

THE Manchester Secular Hall, we are glad to hear, is to be refurnished with more comfortable seats. In order to raise the wherewithal a bazaar will be held on the last two days in March. Mr. Hemingway, the hon. secretary, 25 Higher Chatham Street, will be glad to receive any articles for sale on that occasion. Those who prefer it can send money instead. Five-pound notes will be acceptable, and shillings will not be refused.

WE see from the *Blackburn Times* that Mr. Foote's lecture on Atheism is still a topic of discussion. The last number of that journal contains a short letter by G. Watts, and a long letter by W. E. Coller, on the subject. Mr. Coller "invites Mr. Foote" to explain this, that, and the other difficulty. Mr. Foote replies that his lecture was an answer to the Rev. J. O. Davies. If that gentleman makes a public rejoinder Mr. Foote will take the trouble to pen a reply. But he is far too busy to discuss in all the local papers of England with all the persons who forget to avail themselves of the opportunity of discussion which is always afforded at the close of his lectures.

FOR years the Derby Branch has been looking out for premises. At length it is able to procure a hall suitable for lectures. But the place requires furnishing, and it has been decided to form a Furnishing Company, with 200 shares at 5s. each, bearing 5 per cent. interest, the Company to have the privilege of buying from the shareholders willing to sell at any time in favor of the Branch. All who wish to aid in this good work should communicate with Mr. H. McGuinness, hon. sec., 20 Newland Street, Derby.

THE Portsmouth Branch is to have a set debate to-day

(March 2) on Vegetarianism. Both disputants are members, both have been secretary, and both president. Mr. Hore is an ardent vegetarian, and Mr. Lush has been one but is now of the opposite persuasion. Both gentlemen are good speakers and the debate should be interesting.

AN effort is being made to revive the Freethought organisation and propaganda in the West Riding of Yorkshire. A Conference is to be held to-day (March 2) at Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Kirkgate, Bradford, at 3 p.m. prompt. The conveners are H. Smith (Farsley), John Grange (Farsley), W. Kay (Bradford), and J. G. Fisher (Leeds). Mr. A. B. Wakefield is acting as secretary *pro tem*. It is to be hoped that the Conference will be well attended and animated by a practical spirit.

THE annual report of the Glasgow Branch is not too cheerful. The balance-sheet is all right, but some of the members are cool in the cause. The worst is that the hall has been "inadvertently" let over their heads by the agent, and the Branch will have to find fresh quarters in May. We hope the crisis will unite the members and put them all on their mettle.

MR. W. CLARK lectured at Liverpool on Sunday and gave great satisfaction. The secretary reports him as an acquisition to our platform.

THE Church papers have been vehemently urging that Her Majesty should put her veto on the Victorian Divorce Bill, which accepts as grounds of divorce for either man or woman desertion for three years; habitual drunkenness with cruelty, or with neglect of household duties in the case of the wife; and sentence for crime or violent assaults. Lord Knutsford has, however, wisely advised the Queen to let the colonies have home rule in this matter.

MR. LESLIE M. JOHNSON, a member of the North Shields School Board, and also a member of the South Shields Branch of the N. S. S., contributes an excellent letter to the *Shields Daily Gazette* in reply to the Rev. J. Morris on the subject of Canon Talbot's lectures. Such letters in the local press are a great aid to our movement.

MR. FREDERICK HARRISON lectured at Newton Hall on Sunday afternoon, his subject being some great books of History. Referring to Carlyle's *magnum opus*, he said that Frederick was, of course, the greatest man of his century. We add that Frederick the Great was a Freethinker.

THE secretary of the Chatham Secular Society has posted four dozen copies of Mr. Foote's exposure of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's conversion story to 19 Church of England clergymen, 14 Nonconformist ministers, 17 laymen, and 2 local papers.

SWEDISH PRISONER'S FUND.—Mr. and Mrs. Hampson, 5s.; T. Holstead, 1s.; J. Doughty, 1s.; J. Scarrott, 10s.; F. E. (Reading), 5s.—R. Forder, Secretary.

"DEMOS," says Grant Allen, "is breaking away fast from the old teachers and the old faiths, and is listening to new guides who directly or indirectly will lead him to places little dreamt of in Dr. Joseph Parker's smug City Temple philosophy."

"A SOLDIER" of the Duke of Wellington's Own, now stationed at York, tells us that many of his comrades, who have recently returned from India, are very sceptical and generally use the religious tracts given to them for pipe lights. One of the men says his eyes were first opened in India. At the first Church Parade he attended there a collection was made for "the starving poor of London," and the thought struck him that it was a gigantic system of humbug to collect money in England to convert the Hindoos, and then to collect money in India for "the starving poor of London."

DR. G. W. BROWN'S *Oriental Researches*, in which he gives many facts showing the origin of Jewish and Christian legends, has now reached a second edition.

WE notice in *El Liberal* that Senor Odon de Buen, the



representative of Barcelona at the International Conference of Freethinkers at Paris, was one of the leading speakers at an important Republican assembly. Senor O. de Buen is professor of natural history at the University of Barcelona, and a Darwinian as well as Republican and Freethinker.

"SIXTY Years of an Agitator's Life" is the title which Mr. G. J. Holyoake has given to his interesting autobiographical reminiscences which are now appearing in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*. Mr. Holyoake warns his readers that among his acquaintances have been sixty persons who have been imprisoned, hung, or beheaded.

BABU KALIPRASANNA KAVYABISHARAD, who some years ago edited *The Anti-Christian* at Calcutta, has now started a monthly Freethought journal entitled *The Cosmopolitan*. We wish the new venture all success. It is published by the editor at the Secular Press, Bhowanipore.

THE Annual Congress of the Belgian Freethought Societies will be held on Easter Sunday and Easter Monday (April 6 and 7) at Joliment. M. Emile Feron, the able president of the *Libre Pensée*, of Brussels has had to resign from over-work, and our sympathetic friend Leon Furnemont has been elected in his place.

CELESTINE EDWARDS, the black preacher, held forth at Shoreditch Town Hall on Tuesday evening. His nominal subject was the Tactics of Atheism. His actual subject was anything and everything. He showed his white teeth over a feeble little joke about Mr. Foote being now the head of the movement; but the audience, which was a large one, could not muster a laugh to keep him company. Mr. Sam Standing, who opposed, remarked that Mr. Bradlaugh knew Mr. Foote would keep the Freethought flag unfurled, and so long as he did so the party would fight around him. This was greeted with prolonged cheering, which rather disconcerted the colored gentleman. Mr. Standing pinned him neatly also over the Hall of Science free lectures, and Edwards' reply fell flat on the meeting.

MR. C. J. HUNT, one of our energetic open-air lecturers, has been made responsible for the debts of the defunct Bruno Club. In order to help him out of the difficulty his friends are organising a concert in the Dauntless Hall, Lisson Grove. It will take place next Tuesday evening, and the tickets (1s. each) can be obtained of Mr. Forder. Persons who cannot go may buy tickets and help Mr. Hunt in this emergency.

MR. FOOTE'S letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury is again crowded out. The conclusion will take precedence of other articles in our next.

#### INGERSOLL ON FREETHOUGHT.

[A symposium on the subject of the affirmative side of Freethought is now appearing in the *New York Truthseeker*. It opens with the following contribution from Colonel Ingersoll.]

"Is there an affirmative, positive, constructive side to Freethought?"

The object of the Freethinker is to ascertain the truth—the conditions of well-being—to the end that this life will be made of value. This is the affirmative, positive, and constructive side.

Without liberty there is no such thing as real happiness. There may be the contentment of the slave—of one who is glad that he has passed the day without a beating—one who is happy because he has had enough to eat—but the highest possible idea of happiness exists only with freedom.

All religious systems enslave the mind. Certain things are demanded—certain things must be believed—certain things must be done—and the man who becomes the subject or servant of this superstition must give up all idea of individuality or hope of intellectual growth and progress.

The religionist informs us that there is somewhere in the universe an orthodox God, who is endeavoring to govern the world, and who for this purpose resorts to famine and flood—to earthquake and pestilence—and who, as a last resort, gets up a revival of religion. That is called "affirmative and positive."

The man of sense knows that no such God exists, and thereupon he affirms that the orthodox doctrine is infinitely absurd. This is called a "negation." But to my mind it is an affirmation, and is a part of the positive side of Freethought.

A man who compels this Deity to abdicate his throne renders a vast and splendid service to the human race.

As long as men believe in tyranny in heaven they will practice tyranny on earth. Most people are exceedingly imitative, and nothing is so gratifying to the average orthodox man as to be like his God.

These same Christians tell us that nearly everybody is to be punished forever, while a few fortunate Christians who were elected and selected billions of ages before the world was created, are to be happy. This they call "the tidings of great joy." The Freethinker denounces this doctrine as infamous beyond the power of words to express. He says, and says clearly, that a God who would create a human being knowing that that being was to be eternally miserable, must of necessity be an infinite fiend.

The free man, into whose brain the serpent of superstition has not crept, knows that the dogma of eternal pain is an infinite falsehood. He also knows—if the dogma be true—that every decent human being should hate, with every drop of his blood, the creator of the universe. He also knows—if he knows anything—that no decent human being could be happy in heaven with a majority of the human race in hell. He knows that a mother could not enjoy the society of Christ with her children in perdition; and if she could, he knows that such a mother is simply a wild beast. The free man knows that the angelic hosts, under such circumstances, could not enjoy themselves, unless they had the hearts of boa constrictors.

It will thus be seen that there is an affirmative, a positive a constructive side to Freethought. What is the positive side

First. A denial of all orthodox falsehoods—an exposure of all superstitions. This is simply clearing the ground, to the end that seeds of value may be planted. It is necessary, first, to fell the trees, to destroy the poisonous vines, to drive out the wild beasts. Then comes another phase—another kind of work. The Freethinker knows that the universe is natural—that there is no room, even in infinite space, for the miraculous, for the impossible. The Freethinker knows, or feels that he knows, that there is no sovereign of the universe who, like some petty king or tyrant, delights in showing his authority. He feels that all in the universe are conditioned beings, and that only those are happy who live in accordance with the conditions of happiness, and that this fact or truth or philosophy embraces all men and all gods—if there be gods.

The positive side is this: That every good action has good consequences—that it bears good fruit forever—and that every bad action has evil consequences, and bears bad fruit. The Freethinker also asserts that every man must bear the consequences of his actions—that he must reap what he sows, and that he cannot be justified by the goodness of another, or damned for the wickedness of another.

There is still another side, and that is this: The Freethinker knows that all the priests and cardinals and popes know nothing of the supernatural—they know nothing about gods or angels or heavens or hells—nothing about inspired books or Holy Ghosts, or incarnations or atonements. He knows that all this is superstition pure and simple. He knows also that these people—from pope to priest, from bishop to parson, do not the slightest good in this world—that they live upon the labor of others—that they earn nothing themselves—that they contribute nothing towards the happiness, or the well-being, or the wealth, of mankind. He knows that they trade and traffic in ignorance and fear, that they make merchandise of hope and grief—and he also knows that in every religion the priest insists on five things: First: There is a God; Second: He has made known his will; Third: He has selected me to explain this message; Fourth: We will now take up a collection; and Fifth: Those who fail to subscribe will certainly be damned.

The positive side of Freethought is to find out the truth—the facts of nature—to the end that we may take advantage of those truths, of those facts, for the purpose of feeding and clothing and educating mankind.

In the first place, we wish to find that which will lengthen human life—that which will prevent or kill disease—that which will do away with pain—that which will preserve or give us health.

We also want to go in partnership with these forces of nature,



to the end that we may be well fed and clothed—that we may have good houses that protect us from heat and cold. And beyond this—beyond these simple necessities—there are still wants and aspirations, and Freethought will give us the highest possible in art—the most wonderful and thrilling in music—the greatest paintings, the most marvellous sculpture—in other words, Freethought will develop the brain to its utmost capacity. Freethought is the mother of art and science, of morality and happiness.

It is charged by the worshippers of the Jewish myth, that we destroy, that we do not build.

What have we destroyed? We have destroyed the idea that a monster created and governs this world—the declaration that a God of infinite mercy and compassion upheld slavery and polygamy, and commanded the destruction of men, women, and babes. We have destroyed the idea that this monster created a few of his children for eternal joy, and the vast majority for everlasting pain. We have destroyed the infinite absurdity that salvation depends upon belief, that investigation is dangerous, and that the torch of reason lights only the way to hell. We have taken a grinning devil from every grave, and the curse from death—and in the place of these dogmas, of these infamies, we have put that which is natural and that which commends itself to the heart and brain.

Instead of loving God, we love each other. Instead of the religion of the sky—the religion of this world—the religion of the family—the love of husband for wife, of wife for husband—the love of all for children. So that now the real religion is: Let us live for each other; let us live for this world, without regard for the past and without fear for the future. Let us use our faculties and our powers for the benefit of ourselves and others, knowing that if there be another world, the same philosophy that gives us joy here will make us happy here.

Nothing can be more absurd than the idea that we can do something to please or displease an infinite being. If our thoughts and actions can lessen or increase the happiness of God, then to that extent God is the slave and victim of man.

The energies of the world have been wasted in the service of a phantom; millions of priests have lived on the industry of others, and no effort has been spared to prevent the intellectual freedom of mankind.

We know, if we know anything, that supernatural religion has no foundation except falsehood and mistake. To expose these falsehoods—to correct these mistakes—to build the fabric of civilisation on the foundation of demonstrated truth—is the task of the Freethinker. To destroy guideboards that point in the wrong direction—to correct charts that lure to reef and wreck—to drive the fiend of fear from the mind—to protect the cradle from the serpent of superstition, and dispel the darkness of ignorance with the sun of science, is the task of the Freethinker.

What constructive work has been done by the Church? Christianity gave us a flat world a few thousand years old—a heaven above it where Jehovah dwells, and a hell below it where most people will dwell. Christianity took the ground that a certain belief was necessary to salvation, and that this belief was far better and of more importance than the practice of all the virtues. It became the enemy of investigation—the bitter and relentless foe of reason and the liberty of thought. It committed every crime and practised every cruelty in the propagation of its creed. It drew the sword against the freedom of the world. It established schools and universities for the preservation of ignorance. It claimed to have within its keeping the source and standard of all truth. If the Church had succeeded the sciences could not have existed.

Freethought has given us all that we have of value. It has been the great constructive force. It is the only discoverer, and every science is its child.

DR. HUTCHINSON STIRLING, the Scotch Hegelian, holds, and we think rightly, that Darwinism is fatal to natural theology. Giving one of the Gifford lectures at the Edinburgh University he observed that to the design argument Darwin's theory was fatal, and Darwin himself was not only aware of that, but in express terms acknowledged it. The result of his theory was that if natural selection were true, design was false, and that if that were right there was an end of all natural theology. Dr. Stirling is, of course, a Theist and an anti-Darwinian, but he sees that those only bamboozle themselves who seek to reconcile evolution with natural theology.

J O B.

*An authentic account of the origin of his tribulations; from an old Celestial betting-book now in the Museum of Religions.*

One evening King Jahveh contentedly sat  
Enjoying his "wine from the wood,"  
When there came to his portal a smart rat-tat-tat,  
Jumping up he exclaimed "who the dickens is that  
Who thus boldly dares to intrude?"

But Jeames soon assuaged his Majesty's ire  
By announcing an elderly gent—  
Hook-nosed, long-eared, dressed in sable attire—  
God knew him, 'twas Satan the champion liar,  
Whom to hell for his glory he'd sent.

"From whence comest thou," said he with a smile,  
As he motioned his guest to a seat;  
"From going to and fro in the earth to beguile  
Those fools you've created, and many a mile  
I have walked up and down on the beat."

Then he drank to his host in a cup of champagne.  
And sat himself down for the night,  
And through pledging each other again and again  
I think from what followed it seems pretty plain  
That they both got infernally tight.

For they soon commenced bragging of what they had done  
And what they were able to do;  
Said the Devil, "the Jews are all mine, every one—  
Aye, the whole human race—there's none under the sun  
What cares a brass farthing for you."

Cried Jahveh, "I'm King of the earth and the skies,—  
In fact, I am monarch of space  
And all it contains; I'm exceedingly wise!  
Yet within mine own house the vile father of lies  
Dares cheek me like this to my face."

"Hold hard," said the Devil, "your anger restrain—  
Your temper seems out of repair—  
From such exhibitions the wise should refrain,  
Come fill up the tankards, let's liquor again  
I think we can soon put this square.

"I've considered old Job, your particular pet,  
And I find him choke full of your grace,  
But, although he's withstood all my cunning as yet,  
If you'll let me get at him, a gallon I'll bet  
That I'll make him curse you to your face."

"Done" said King Jahveh, "go do what you will,  
Only spare the old gentleman's life;  
The blood of his children you truly may spill,  
His flocks and his herds you are welcome to kill,  
And—do what you like with his wife."

Thus did Satan the sinful, and Jahveh the just,  
Their little transaction record,  
And he whom the sequel might interest, must  
Read the life of the man who put implicit trust  
In the demon nick named the "Good Lord."

T. CLARK.

#### THE EDDICATED PARSON.

It was Elder Buzzell who called on a worthy deacon to open a meeting with prayer, and was surprised when the good man began his petition with: "O, thou great, insignificant God."

"Omnipotent, brother; you mean omnipotent God," whispered the horrified pastor.

"Huh!" ejaculated the surprised supplicant; "what's that you say?"

The preacher repeated the correction, whereupon the deacon continued his prayer to a great length and concluded as follows:

"Finally, Lord, bless our eddicated parson. Stuff him with religion as well as with words; break him of the habit of fault-finding, and, if possible, at the 'leventh hour gather him with the saints in thy kingdom."

OBITUARY.—The last dying request of Robert Wardle, of West Hartlepool, was that the Secularist burial service might be read at his funeral. Although not a member of the Secularist Society his wish was acceded to by Mr. James McNamee, who read the burial service composed by Austin Holyoake. A good report appears in the *Northern Daily Mail*, which gives some portions of the address.



SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 35 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Mr. John B. Coppock, "The Age of the Earth."  
 Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7.30, G. Bernard Shaw, "Socialism v. Secularism."  
 Bethnal Green—2 Railway Place, Cambridge Road (temporary premises), 8.15, Mr. Charles Bentley, "The Earth's place in the Universe." Admisson free.  
 Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Deluges, Biblical and Real."  
 Clarendon Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville Road, N., at 7, Mr. S. Standring, "God's Paradox: Jesus."  
 Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. Geo. Chainey, "Episodes in a Life of Religious Adventure."  
 Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Theism and Atheism"  
 Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Mr. T. Parris, "Why I became a Freethinker."  
 New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. S. Standring, "God's Comical Ways."  
 Old Southgate—Cromwell Hall, 7, Mr. H. Courtney, "The Apostles' Creed."  
 Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Has Man a Soul?"  
 Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11, various speakers.  
 Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road, 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "A Freethinker's Bible."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, at 7, orchestral and miscellaneous entertainment.  
 Derby Branch, 20 Newland Street; at 6.30, an important meeting of members.  
 Glasgow—Ramshorn Hall, 123 Ingram Street; at 6.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, "Central Africa." With lantern illustrations.  
 Heckmondwike—at Mr. J. Parker's, Oxford Street, at 6.15, a musical evening.  
 Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street, at 11, committee meeting; at 3, "Emotionalism, a Factor in the World's Progress;" at 7, Mr. D. S. Collins (a Christian), "Has Christianity been Tried?"  
 Portsmouth Branch, Wellington Hall, Southsea; at 7, debate on Vegetarianism between Messrs. Hore and Lush.  
 Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street; at 7, special musical evening, instrumental and vocal, recitations. March 5, at 8, members and friends' dance.  
 South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, Mr. Waddington, "The Second Advent of Christ, Critically Examined in the Light of Reason and Science."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon Road, London, S.E.—March 2, Woolwich; 23, Milton Hall; 30, Woolwich. April 6 (morning), Kingsland Green (evening), Ball's Pond; 13, Camberwell. May 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25, Regent's Park. June 15, Ball's Pond; 29, Mile End. July 13, Mile End.  
 TOLEMAN-GARNEB, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—March 9, Woolwich; 16 (morning), West Ham; 23, Woolwich; 30, Westminster. May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkenwell Green.  
 JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham. —March 2, Grimbsy; 9, Nottingham. April 13, Nottingham.  
 F. STANLEY JONES, 53 Park Street, Toxteth, Liverpool—March 16, Liverpool.  
 T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham—March 9, Hyde Park. April 13 (evening), Plaistow; 27, Hyde Park.  
 H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool—March 9, Liverpool. April 6, Liverpool.

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