

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## MR. GLADSTONE ON THE CREATION STORY.

[CONCLUDED.]

Now let us return to the centre of Mr. Gladstone's argument. Everything turns upon his convenient theory that the six days of creation are not six literal days, but six "chapters in the history of the creation." By this means he seeks to overcome the difficulty of the fact that the order of creation in Genesis does not properly correspond with the teachings of Evolution. The Mosaic writer, it appears, anticipated the modern fashion of writing history, of which we have the first great example in Gibbon. His order is not strictly chronological, but in accord with his subject matter. Thus "in point of chronology his chapters overlay." So that, if light exists three days before the creation of the sun, the explanation is that the Mosaicist simply puts them in different chapters, not for chronological reasons, but for a special purpose. And what was that purpose? Mr. Gladstone says it was "to convey moral and spiritual training." He goes to the length of saying that "the conveyance of scientific instruction" would not have been "a reasonable object for the Mosaic writer to pursue." An ordinary person might suppose the Deity capable of imparting scientific instruction as well as moral instruction, and the Jews capable of receiving the one as well as the other. Mr. Gladstone's theory implies a very serious limitation of God's power, or a no less serious misconception of the causes of human progress. Is not science as necessary as morality? Is there much use in desiring the welfare of mankind without the knowledge of how to promote it? Will a good-hearted doctor do a patient any service if he is lacking in skill? Buckle, indeed, contended that civilisation was entirely owing to the advance of the intellect, and very much the same contention was advanced by Macaulay. But here is Mr. Gladstone arguing that "moral and spiritual training" is most necessary, while mental training is so unimportant that the Deity wisely refrained from taking the trouble to assist us in that respect.

We have already said that Mr. Gladstone's interpretation of the "six days" as "six chapters" is arbitrary. Neither the chosen people, nor their inspired teachers, ever understood their cosmogony in that sense. They existed before the days of antagonism between the Bible and Science, when new meanings have to be discovered in every part of God's Word. They took the language of Genesis, as the Church of England presents its Articles, in the plain, grammatical sense of the words. It is too late to rescue the Mosaicist in Mr. Gladstone's manner. The "six chapters" theory is worthy of the old parliamentary hand, but he himself perceives its inadequacy, or why does he endeavor to show that the chronological order of creation is after all in harmony with the conclusions of modern science? Will it be believed that after pressing his super-subtle argument through thick and thin; after declaring

that day is not day, and morning and evening not morning and evening; after claiming that the Mosaicist sacrificed chronology for the sake of shaping his chapters so as to convey a moral and spiritual and not a scientific lesson; will it be believed that, after all this, Mr. Gladstone goes on to argue for so close an agreement between Genesis and Science that nothing short of inspiration is adequate to account for it? Yet that is precisely what he does. "The Creation Story in Genesis," he asserts, "appears to stand in such a relation to the facts of natural science so far as they are ascertained, as to warrant our concluding that they first proceeded, in a manner above the ordinary manner, from the Author of the visible creation." Or as he expresses it in his concluding sentences, "to warrant and require thus far the conclusion that the Ordainer of Nature, and the Giver or Guide of the Creation Story, are one and the same."

This is clearly a complete change of front. The "six chapters" theory is virtually discarded as useless, and Mr. Gladstone proceeds to defend the scientific character of Genesis. The Creation Story was a scientific lesson after all, only it was skilfully disguised. Moses anticipated Darwin; in fact, Moses is the original author and Darwin is only the commentator. Such is the true character of Mr. Gladstone's theory, and in arguing it he flounders, as might be expected, in a morass of bad science, bold assumption, and wild exegesis.

According to Genesis the earth was at first "without form and void," a description hard to realise, and "the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Now Mr. Gladstone is aware that "the Hebrew word for earth means earth, and the word used for water never means anything but water." How then is this to be explained away? Why easily. The Hebrew word always means water, but the Mosaicist meant something else. He meant that the world was at first *fluid*, and as the people he wrote for only knew of one extensive fluid, namely water, he called it water to suit their comprehension. But in reality he was adumbrating the nebular hypothesis. That, at any rate, is what Mr. Gladstone argues, and we will not venture to refute him. We can only stare with astonishment at his coolness—not to use a harsher word; and we suspect that the writers of the Creation Story, if they could live again and read Mr. Gladstone's article, would be quite as astonished as we are.

The Mosaicist, it seems, not only sketched (in a very occult manner) the nebular theory, but showed how "the *chaos* passed into *cosmos*, or, in other words, how confusion became order, medley became sequence, seeming anarchy became majestic law, and horror softened into beauty." But *chaos* is not a doctrine of science. It belongs to the old Pagan cosmogonies. The laws of nature obtained in the fiery cloud whirled off from the sun precisely as they do now it has cooled down into a solid planet. According to Mr. Gladstone's science, if we may reason from analogy,



there is *cosmos* in a cubic inch of cold water, and *chaos* in a cubic foot of steam.

With regard to the existence of light three days before the sun, Mr. Gladstone tells us that it simply means (observe how he knows what the Mosaist *meant* but did not *say*) that the sun became visible in that stage. The earth's photosphere, or something, cleared away, and "the visibility of the sun was established"—when there was no one to see it. The "light-power" became "concentrated by the operation of the rotatory principle," and — But how on earth are we to go on? Our gravity is not equal to Mr. Gladstone's. We require an interval for laughter.

Modern science has told us the truth about the stars. Outside our solar system there are other and mightier systems. But it was natural for the Jews to regard the stars as dots of light. The sun and the moon were the "two great lights," and the stars were thrown in with an "also." But "relativity is the basis of the narrative," and the Mosaist wrote like an ignoramus, not because he was not as wise as Herschel, but because his readers were too thick-headed to learn the truth. He was like the gentleman in the play, who "could an' he would."

The Mosaist also tells us that not only grasses, but the later fruit trees, grew before the sun shone upon the earth. This nonsense was exposed by Professor Huxley, but Mr. Gladstone has not profited by that discussion. Assuming that the sun, in the Creation Story, can be shuffled in before the earth, and that our planet was veiled in vapor, he argues that "there were light and heat, atmosphere with its conditions of moist and dry, soil prepared to do its work in nutrition," and so the Mosaist is saved by the skin of his teeth. But the argument is really too barefaced. Fruit trees are not a part of the world's primitive fauna. They are probably later than man himself.

Mr. Gladstone strains his faculties in vain to reconcile the Creation Story with palæontology. He cannot work in reptiles and marsupials, so he says they did not come within the Mosaist's "moral and spiritual" purpose. Then there is the difficulty that fish and fowl are created on the same day, while geology shows they are separated by millions of years. But day does not mean day. The Mosaist simply puts them in the same chapter, and he puts the fowl after the fish, and that is the right order.

After all this special pleading, the credit of the Mosaist being saved at every point by incessant assumption and forced logic, Mr. Gladstone advances to his triumphant conclusion. The Creation Story is a perfect miracle of scientific anticipation, and if God did not write it who did? But it will be observed that the old parliamentary hand is silent as to the creation of man. "As the objector is silent," he says, "I remain silent also." The objector silent, indeed! Whatever objector has Mr. Gladstone in his mind? The account of Adam and Eve is the most difficult, and the most ludicrous, part of the Creation Story. Up to that point the writer preserves a certain grandeur, however mistaken; but the narrative of Adam's production from dust, and Eve's production from one of his ribs, to say nothing of the farce of the Fall, and the six thousand years' chronology, is positively food for mirth. Mr. Gladstone is the Rip Van Winkle of religious controversy. For seven years Darwin has lain in his grave, yet Mr. Gladstone writes as though the Newton of biology had never been born. Still Mr. Gladstone's "silence" is not without its eloquence. It shows that the champion of the Creation Story must avoid Darwinism. In the light of that great doctrine, which has revolutionised the world of thought, the Creation Story is an old fable, the drama of Eden a Semitic fiction, the Fall a fallacy, and the foundation of the Christian creed a mere fragment of oriental mythology.

G. W. FOOTE.

## THE APOSTLES' SISTERS.

WHEN Christians are told of the ill-effects of their faith, their usual plan is to attribute these effects to corruptions which crept in and tainted the original purity and simplicity of the Church. Why a divine revelation should become tainted is not explained, nor is proof offered of this original purity. The earliest Christian writings, those of Paul, exhibit a scene of perpetual strife between the apostles who adhered to the declaration of Christ that he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and the self-constituted "apostle to the Gentiles." Paul boasts himself "not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. xi., 5), speaks of others as "false apostles, deceitful workers" (v. 13), sneers at James, Cephas and John as seeming to be pillars (Gal. ii., 9) and declares he withstood Peter to the face because he acted the hypocrite (v. 11-13).

Paul tells us of the "envying, strife and divisions" among the believers (1 Cor. iii., 3), whom he accuses of being "drunken" at the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi., 21), and of having wickedness among them such as was "not so much as named among the Gentiles" (1 Cor., v. 1).

Speaking of the primitive Christians, Dr. Donaldson, the editor of the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, says in his paper on Christianity and Woman in the *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1889 :

"The sects may be divided into two classes. Some affirmed that marriage was unnecessary, that full liberty had been conceded to them of indulging the passion, and that indeed the way to rise to perfection was by a practical acquaintance with all forms of action possible to man. Others held that marriage was immoral, that the flesh was corrupt; that those who sowed to the flesh must reap corruption, and that in the kingdom of God on earth as in heaven there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage."

Again he says :

"It is one of the most striking facts in all history that in the second century the Christians were universally believed by Pagans to be secret conspirators combined for immoral purposes, and at their trials it was sufficient for a man to confess that he was a Christian to be condemned as a licentious villain. The assertions made in regard to them were that they met in secret, that slaughtering an infant they poured his blood into a cup, and that passing this cup round they all drank of it, that then the lights were extinguished and the men and women proceeded to indiscriminate licentiousness."

Of course Dr. Donaldson does not believe in these charges, neither do I. But he agrees there was quite sufficient to give color to the accusation.

"They called each other father and sons, mothers and daughters, brothers and sisters. They were in the habit of assembling before dawn, or at night men and women together in private houses to conduct their worship. The assembly consisted of a strange assortment of characters and grades. The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthian Church, says to them: Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor cheats, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor plunderers, shall inherit the kingdom of God: and these things were some of you."

Two features of the Christian Church which only survive in the case of some small sects further offered ground for the Pagan charge. These were the agapæ or love feasts at night when they all supped in common, and when, as St. Paul shows (1 Cor. xi.) sometimes intoxication and riotousness prevailed. The other was the custom enjoyed by Paul himself of saluting the brethren "with a holy kiss of love," a custom found to be dangerous, or it would not have decayed, being enjoined upon believers no less than five times in the New Testament, while scores of other Christian practices—as for instance keeping the Sunday holy—are not enjoined at all.

It is noticeable that while the orthodox repelled these charges as against themselves, they were quite ready to admit they were true of the heretics. Says the Rev. S. Baring-Gould in his *Lost and Hostile Gospels*, p. 26. "Nicolas, a hot Pauline, and his followers, 'rushed headlong into fornication without



shame" [Euseb. Hist. Eccle. iii., 29]; he had the effrontery to produce his wife and offer her for promiscuous insult before the assembled apostles [Ibid]; the later Pauline Christians went further. Irenæus identifies this Nicolas with the one of the seven deacons mentioned in Acts.

M. Emile Ferrière, in his work *Les Apôtres* (Paris, 1879) expresses the conviction that "Les Apôtres dans leurs missions emenaient chacun une concubine chrétienne." He gives a far from flattering portrait of the twelve apostles, exhibits their obtuse intelligence (Matt. xiii., 36; Mark vii., 18), superstition (Matt. xiv., 26), cupidity (Mark x., 24), jealous rivalry (Matt. xviii., 1), ingratitude and cowardice (Matt. xxvi., 56; Mark xiv., 50). Bad manners (Matt. xv., 2) is added to the indictment. He points out that Christ exhorted to celibacy (Matt. xix., 12), that the disciples were enjoined to abandon not only father and mother, but wife and child (verse 29), and that they regarded this as demanding some recompense (Matt. xix., 27). They were told that whoever had given up house or wife should receive a hundredfold "now in this time" as well as eternal life in the world to come (Mark x., 29-30; Luke xviii., 28-30). From 1 Cor. ix., 5, M. Ferrière argues that it was among the privileges of an apostle to carry about with him a sister-woman who was virtually a concubine. Since the apostles had to give up their wives, he contends that the "woman a sister" there mentioned could not bear the interpretation of being a wife. He points out that these sisters, known as *agapetæ* or "beloved," were frequently the occasion of scandal, and remained in the Church from the earliest times, not being definitely suppressed until the Lateran Council of 1139.

McClintock and Strong, in their *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, article "Agapetæ," say: "In the early ages of the Church this title was given to virgins who dwelt with monks and others professing celibacy, in a state of so-called *spiritual* love. This intercourse, however pure and holy it may have been at first, soon occasioned great scandal in the Church, and at length became the cause of such evils that it was synodically condemned."

Dr. Hefele, in his standard work on the Christian Councils, writing on Canon 3 of the Council of Nicæa (325) which forbids these *Agapetæ* or *subintroducta*, says: "In the first ages of the Church some Christians, clergymen and laymen, contracted a sort of spiritual marriage with unmarried persons, so that they lived together, but there was not a sexual, but a spiritual connection between them, for their mutual spiritual advancement. They were known by the name of *suneisaktoi*, *agapetai* and *sorores*." "That," he adds, "which began in the spirit, however, in many cases ended in the flesh."

In our own time a clergyman, the Rev. Mercer Davies, of Chiswick, has argued in favor of Christians being permitted to have concubines.\* He cites the 17th Canon of the Council of Toledo, which distinctly permits those who live with a concubine to receive communion, provided they have not a wife at the same time. The clergyman finds additional reasons from the practice of the Patriarchs. In view of these facts it looks as if the question of the primitive purity of the Christians was worthy of reconsideration.

J. M. WHEELER.

According to the *Athenæum*, Stanley's forthcoming book is to have for preface an open letter to Sir William Mackinnon, in which the great traveller "repeats his determination to testify to the hand of God before the eyes of men." It is a curious study in religious psychology, how adventurous men like Stanley are prone to see the hand of God in all their successes. Did not Oliver Cromwell call his victory at Worcester "a crowning mercy"? What the Scotch thought of it was something different. The Royalists said Cromwell was in league with the Devil.

\* See *Hagar, or Lawful Concubinage*.

## THE GOSPEL OF FACT.

### PART I.

FACTS are stubborn things. As far as man is concerned, facts are everything. In the pursuit of knowledge it is facts we are after, and experience shows that, like all things valuable, they are hard to get. Schools and colleges and universities are all only institutions for the discovery and utilisation of facts, while books are the storehouses in which discovered facts are preserved for general use. The pursuit of fact is what was Stanley's mission into the heart of the Dark Continent, as it was the same pursuit that moved the great men of old to proceed in their memorable voyages of discovery around the world.

Fact and truth are synonymous terms. Both are used to describe what we know; and at any given time what we call "knowledge" is the sum of the facts or truths we have discovered. But unfortunately most people make a distinction between Fact and Truth; the former, they say, is what they know to be true, while the latter includes in addition what they only *believe* to be true. This use of the term Truth is a prostitution of its real meaning. We cannot possibly say that any belief is Truth of which we have not actual and trustworthy evidence. To believe a statement as true without adequate grounds is exceedingly foolish; to have *faith* in its truth is equally insane. Faith and Fact are totally inconsistent. Fact makes faith unnecessary, for what is a fact, or an established truth, renders faith superfluous. Faith in reality is only credulity writ large; and people who express their *faith* in the truth of any statement only admit that that statement is not a fact. A fact stands on its own legs. The crutch of faith it can neither need nor use.

In man's intercourse with man fact is the great and all-important consideration. Truth in act and truth in word are honesty, and honesty is virtue. On the other hand untruth in act and untruth in word are dishonesty, which is a social crime. In other words, fact is a virtue, and anything not in accordance with fact or contrary to it is reprehensible. This all-important fact which governs every-day life is the fact which our senses recognise and accept. Any thing extern to this is simply not a fact, and is not taken into account between man and man.

In dealing with fact our senses are the sole judge. This is self-evident, as indeed is everything I have said up to the present, for facts are always self-evident. Anything that is not patent to our senses should really have no concern for us except as speculation. Speculation in itself is harmless, and becomes objectionable only when it masquerades as truth or fact, which it has for so long succeeded in doing. The hold which speculative teaching has obtained on men's minds justifies the disciples of fact in eschewing all speculation and adhering strictly to their Gospel, which excludes nothing that is a fact, and admits nothing contrary to or unknown to human reason.

The Gospel of Fact then is the simplest of all gospels. It contains nothing that is not known to be true, and truth is simplicity itself. It is not however a stereotyped, cast-iron sort of gospel. It expands as human knowledge increases; and it accompanies the scientist in his voyages of discovery, encourages him in his investigation, and joyfully accepts the truths he is able to demonstrate. In short, the scientist—who uses nothing but fact whereby to discover other facts, and who deals with nothing but what is evident to human reason—is at once the founder, the supporter, and the preacher of the Gospel of Fact.

While the Gospel of Fact is elastic enough to accept discovered truths at all times, it is otherwise a stern, inexorable Gospel. No fine theories, however plausible or clever, can be included in its tenets, nor



be tolerated at all except in so far as they seem to be reasonable deductions from established truths.

What we know of ourselves and of the world is the limit of the Gospel of Fact. That we exist, that we have feelings, that we have eyes to see and minds to think, are the facts that are the groundwork of all our knowledge. That there is a world, wonderful, grand and beautiful; that there are sun and moon and stars, magnificent, brilliant and moving with inexorable regularity, are facts that every human being is aware of. Practically, this is the sum total of the teachings of the Gospel of Fact. This much we know; more than this we cannot know. Our minds are such that it is beyond their power not alone to know how the world originated, but even to conceive it as originating at all. That the universe is there, and that it reveals its nature and its motions to our senses, are facts enough for us. Behind this we cannot go. Beyond the visible and apparent attributes of nature all is mystery and uncertainty; all is incomprehensible. The Gospel of Fact shuts it absolutely out, and completely ignores it. Because the mind cannot unravel the mystery is no reason why we should trouble ourselves by endeavoring to account for things by plausible explanations and apologies. We must take things as they are, admit nothing but what we know, and not bother about reconciling fact with speculation, or speculation with fact.

As to the origin of Nature, if it had an origin within human comprehension, we now know nothing, and mayhap may never know anything. As to the ultimate destiny of Nature, we are and must be in equal ignorance. But this really does not matter. Established facts are what we have to deal with, and nothing else. As to the origin of life and mind and reason, we are not in such blank ignorance. Evolution may not be the absolutely correct theory of the origin of species and the development of the human mind; but it is the nearest to the truth that we have yet been able to get. Evolution as a whole may not be allowed to form a portion of the Gospel of Fact, as it is not absolutely devoid of all speculation; but in so far as its principles are deductions from fact, and in strict accordance with human reason, it is not only allowable but essential that evolutionary principles, in the main, should form a portion of the Gospel of Fact.

It might be more satisfactory if the Gospel of Fact was not so limited as it is. With this, however, we have nothing to do. Unsatisfactory or otherwise, fact is fact. Wishing things to be different, or trying to convince ourselves that they *are* different, will not help matters. If we do try to so convince ourselves we are merely using our minds, which can only comprehend facts, for the purpose of endeavoring to explain matters which our reason tells us are inexplicable. By speculating at random the mind is abused, as it is used for purposes for which it is unfit and worthless. In strict truth, therefore, the name Freethinker is somewhat paradoxical, as it implies a man who denies himself the freedom of mind to soar into the realms of speculation, where all is doubt and uncertainty.

J. O'DONOVAN.

(To be continued.)

The criminal statistics fully justify the expenditure devoted to education since the School Board Act of 1870. In 1868-69 there was one known thief to every 1,000 of the population. In 1887-88 the percentage had fallen by nearly half, and there was only one known thief to every 1,945. The decrease in receivers of stolen goods is still more marked; in 1868-69 there was one in 8,430, in 1887-88 one in 25,595. Murders have, however, increased, which perhaps is not to be wondered at, since every condemned murderer is sure to evoke a deal of public sympathy, in addition to having secure quarters in Abraham's bosom.

## ACID DROPS.

General Caprivi is apparently as pious as Prince Bismarck. In his speech on Monday he said that "the rifle and the Bible must do the work of Christianity" in Africa. That they *will* do so who doubts? They have done it in America, and in the course of a century or two the African blacks will probably be as rare as the American redskins. Their exterminators will pray and prey, and however unscrupulous the white policy may be the men of God will be found "to bless it and approve it with a text."

Any clergyman who wants a striking opportunity for a sermon on Prayer might avail himself of the recent fire at a large lunatic asylum near Montreal. Many of the inmates were burnt to death, most of the poor creatures having been too frightened to move. The rescuers strove with great gallantry, and in one or two cases lost their own lives. But the personage called Providence did nothing. After creating the poor lunatics in such a boggled fashion that they were incapable of helping themselves, he left them to their fate when they were threatened by the most agonising form of death. We are not saying that this shocking calamity proves the inefficacy of prayer, or the non-existence of Providence; but we do say it would give a justifier of the ways of God to men a splendid scope for the strenuous exercise of all his faculties.

The newspapers will write nonsense about Mr. Bradlaugh. Here is the London correspondent of the *Western Morning News* asking if Mr. Bradlaugh is to be "a preacher of the faith he once reviled," and gravely asserting that "the idea is mooted in religious circles, and there are outside indications enough to cause it to be regarded seriously, even by those who know 'Iconoclast' well." This will be news indeed to some who do know Mr. Bradlaugh well, or at any rate better than the writer of this oracular rubbish. Our old general is very much talked of at present, and he hears a great deal of novel information about himself. The gentlemen of the press credit him with religious virtues, which he repudiates every week in the *National Reformer*.

The *Morning News* man draws on his imagination very freely. He refers to the "bitter hostility" shown towards Mr. Bradlaugh in "some of the blatant organs of the more blasphemous." Names, please. But of course they will not be given. It is a pious invention à la Hugh Price Hughes.

That funny paper *The Christian Herald and Signs of Our Times* looks on the railroad from Jaffa to Jerusalem as a fulfilment of prophecy. The Bible writers, however, quite forgot to mention any of the inventions of modern science. We guess the railway will help cut up the supposed sanctity of the Holy Land.

The same paper, under the heading of "Anecdotes and Incidents at Gospel and Temperance Meetings," has a story of a nameless "gentleman" who until the last five months was "an infidel and a follower of Charles Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant." This "gentleman" was in the habit of jeering at his wife and religion, and, after the usual fashion of infidels, "burnt her Bibles and religious books." But she, good woman, never ceased to pray for him, and he is now "a believing, faithful [but nameless] Christian."

"H. S. B." writes to the *Hornsey and Finsbury Park Journal* asking that the Secularist lectures in Finsbury Park shall not be allowed "to poison the sweet stillness of the Sabbath and the minds of our people." He says he shall bring the matter before the London County Council, but is evidently doubtful of the result since he asks, "Could not some Evangelist, accompanied by a good choir, do something to remedy the sad state of affairs of which I complain." "H. S. B." evidently trusts to Freethought being suppressed by authority or by noise rather than by argument.

According to the *Weekly Times and Echo*, "the casuistry with which Mr. Gladstone evades the objections of plain people to the obvious fact that the author or authors of Genesis contradict themselves hopelessly in the first chapter is worthy of a Jesuit."



The chaplain of the American House of Representatives on April 30 caused consternation by protesting against the blasphemy used during a debate. The States seem to have a profane Parliament or a particular chaplain.

Sky-pilots are proverbially prolific. We suppose they trust in Providence and human stupidity for provision for their families. Last year the Poor Clergy Relief Corporation relieved 127 curates who had families of from five, the lowest, to twelve children. Their average income was £115 each, which is regarded as a beggarly stipend for a man of God who must keep up appearances.

The Wesleyan Missionaries urge that if their salaries are reduced, those of home ministers should be equally reduced in proportion, and they propose to begin with the salary of Hugh Price Hughes, whose West-end Mission has bled the Wesleyan body so profusely.

There was quite a scene at the Glasgow Presbytery of the Established Church. Only six out of thirteen candidates for the ministry brought certificates with them and the Rev. R. Thomson insisted on their being catechised. They were accordingly asked the stupid questions about election, justification and sanctification from the Shorter Catechism, and their replies induced Mr. Thomson to say it was a shame to pass such men. Mr. Thomson then took to catechising himself. Addressing one student, he asked "Who is the author of the first five books of the Bible?" Student: "Moses." "Did he write by inspiration or invention?" Student: "Inspiration." "That's right," said Mr. Thomson, quite satisfied as to the orthodoxy of this candidate.

The *Liverpool Citizen* (May 7), in an article on the Corporation Churches, gives figures showing that they cost the city an annual loss of £2,748. It suggests that it would be better if they were let at a low rent to the Salvation Army.

Orthodoxy can only advance by the march of its expounding army away from its base of supplies. And it can only forage on the enemy by becoming the enemy's. Orthodoxy is in a bad way, because the world is moving. To move forward with it is death to orthodoxy; to stay behind and let it move on is extinction to orthodoxy.—*Ironclad Age*.

An American paper remarks on the inscription on their coinage, "In God we trust," that it should properly read "In *this* God we trust."

The *Christian Life*, the organ of the backward Unitarians, writes of the late Sunday demonstration in Hyde Park under the title "Labor's Debt to the Bible." If we may believe Genesis, the laborer is indebted to Adam for the curse of labor. We do not recollect any passage exhorting to shorter hours, though we do to "be content with your wages."

Five thousand Italian dupes made a pilgrimage to Rome last week, and were addressed by the Pope, whom they hailed with "Long live Pope King." The dispatch describing the affair says that "the Pope admitted to kiss his feet the principal personages of the pilgrimage." It is presumed the other members of the party had to content themselves with less exalted privileges.

The poor old Pope laments that ungodliness is now exalted in Italy. He says, "Look at the men whose names are now selected for honor after death, men who died opposing Christianity—men like Mazzini and Saffi." Yes, people are beginning to see that progress is owing to men who not only put aside the papal creed but fought against the continual enemy of freedom.

The Pope is anxious to proclaim as a dogma of the Universal Church that the Papacy should have temporal power. Does he hope that other Catholic nations would enforce the claim? If so he will be sorely disappointed. The proclamation of the temporal power will only exasperate the Italian Liberals and convince the world that the Papacy can neither learn nor forget.

A fact was recently mentioned by Dr. Sadler in connection with the life of Priestley, which we do not remember having heard before. Everyone knows how Priestley's

house at Birmingham was attacked by rioters in 1792; but Dr. Sadler says Priestley's granddaughter told him that on four occasions an attempt was made on his life. It was no joke to avow unpopular opinions a century ago. No wonder Priestley thought it best to end his days in America.

Beza, in his history of the Reformation in France (Geneva, 1580) says that a parrot that had been taught to say "Fidelite la messe!" was arraigned before the Inquisition at Toulouse, condemned, and publicly burnt by the executioner."

The *Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser* has thought fit to rather summarily close the discussion on "Has Christianity had its Day?" suppressing some passages as blasphemous in the letters of "True Blue," which it nevertheless justly speaks of as "ably and logically expressed."

Hazlitt records that when the Persian Ambassador was at Edinburgh, an old Presbyterian lady, more full of zeal than discretion, fell upon him for his supposed idolatrous belief, and said: "I hear you worship the sun!" "In faith, Madam," he replied, "and so would you too, if you had ever seen him."

The Bishops of Melbourne and Ballarat have directed the clergy in their dioceses to refuse to officiate at any marriage of persons divorced under the new Victorian Act, or to issue marriage licences to such parties. The clergy are always stout supporters of the law while it serves their turn, and turbulent law-breakers when it does not. The action of the Australian bishops may do something to render civil marriages more common.

M. Bouchor, the manager of the famous marionette performances in Paris, announces that he is preparing a new piece entitled, "The Mystery of the Nativity," which is to be performed entirely by these wooden figures, and produced with scenery, costumes, and music designed and composed for the occasion. We are assured that though the Virgin holding the infant Jesus will appear in the last act, she will not be made to speak, though she will sing a cradle song. It seems that the traditional comic personages of the medieval "moralities" will be represented by "Asmodeus the demon," who will deliver a humorous discourse. The action will be comprised in four tableaux, representing the stable in Bethlehem, the shepherds in the fields, the star of the Magi, and the Adoration.

No doubt the marionette play will be far more amusing than the passion play at Oberammergau, which is a dreadfully serious business. The old passion plays which used to import some humor into the characters of Satan, Judas, and Caiaphas, were suppressed, and that at Oberammergau is nearly the only one left which is regularly performed, viz., every Sunday in summer every ten years, it is said in accordance with a religious vow in consequence of being spared from a plague.

Scenic representations played a large part in religion formerly, and seeing that to this day they go through the performance of a crucifixion and resurrection in Jerusalem at Easter, it may be questioned whether the ancient performance of lamentation for the death of the sun-god and joy at his resurrection did not give rise to the story. Myth is often founded upon ritual.

Herr Meyer, the villager who is to take the part of J. C. in the Oberammergau Passion Play, suffers like some other gentlemen who go into training. He has been used to attending the village inn, drinking beer and playing at skittles; but these habits are considered *infra dig.*, and the poor fellow is obliged to leave them off until he ceases to be Jesus Christ and once more becomes plain Jacob Meyer. For our own part, however, when we reflect on J. C.'s partiality for wine, and how he manufactured seventy-five gallons in five minutes, we incline to think that public opinion is unnecessarily hard on his histrionic successor.

Mr. James Neato, the secretary of the Bethnal Green Branch, has been trying desperately to obtain a hall for a course of free Secular lectures in the East of London, but he has everywhere met with refusal. The Hope Town Hall was "engaged." The Morley Hall was "built to specially promote the cause of Christianity." It is therefore



available for Celestine Edwards, the black preacher, to attack Freethought, but not for a Secularist lecturer to defend it. St. Andrew's Hall is under the control of the vicar, who curtly "regrets he cannot" etc. St. John's School-room is also unavailable. Victoria Hall likewise is "not available for the objects of the Secular Society."

The Christian gentleman who sent Mr. Neate the information as to Victoria Hall is not a sworn enemy of discussion, only he likes it all on one side. He "encloses a little book," which he commends to Mr. Neate's notice. It is a pamphlet by a lawyer, who rejoices in the ironical name of Lamb, and its title is *Unbelief, England's Greatest Sin*.

We hope the Bethnal Green Branch will advertise this bigotry. A neat tract, working in these letters of refusal with pointed comments, should do good in the East-end. It is well that the public should know how respectable citizens are treated by the proprietors of halls in that district.

The Literary Society of South Shields is a sensitive body. One of the members of the South Shields Branch of the N. S. S. inserted an advertisement in one of the local papers, "respectfully informing" the members of the Literary Society that Mr. Foote was going to lecture last Sunday morning in the Free Library on Shelley. Nothing whatever was said about the other lectures. However, the Literary Society—or rather its orthodox members—could not stand it, and another advertisement was inserted, informing the world that the Society was not responsible for the first advertisement, as if any sane person supposed it was. The manoeuvre did not spoil Mr. Foote's audience. Even the rain did not do that. We therefore condole with the Literary Society, and regret that its members are too exalted to hear what was relished by the Shelley Society. Perhaps, after all, the fussy bigots whose bristles were drawn out by the advertisement, would be surprised to learn that more than one passive member of the National Secular Society is in their midst.

Henry Rouse, the skipper of a Lowestoft fishing-boat cruising off Cornwall, has more religion than is good for him. He went through the streets of Newlyn with a Bible under one arm, flourishing his hat with the other, and warning the people of the coming end of the world. He frequently knelt in the streets and offered up prayers. He found his way to Penzance, where being followed by a crowd he was arrested and charged with being a wandering lunatic. It seems he had previously suffered with too strong a dose of the Holy Ghost and was locked up in Plymouth last year.

A medical man, who made a foolish speech after one of Mr. Foote's lectures at Cardiff, has started a monthly magazine called *Body and Soul*. He devotes a good deal of space to criticising the lecture on "The Gospel of Secularism," and is especially surprised that the Freethinkers did not cry when Mr. Foote told them that, in his opinion, death was an eternal sleep. This is a fair sample of Dr. William's sense, and everyone will understand why we do not comment any further on his remarkable criticisms.

The Rev. Walter Walsh, of Newcastle, did not attend Mr. Foote's afternoon lecture, "A Defence of Atheism," although he was specially invited. Nor will he hold a public debate with Mr. Foote. But he appears to like discussion all the same. Now Mr. Foote is in London again the reverend gentleman is going to reply. He has issued bills announcing that he will defend his own lecture and reply to Mr. Foote's this afternoon (May 18). Probably he will demolish the Atheist, but at the same time it is unfortunate that he shrinks from meeting the Atheist face to face. If he prefers a written debate, we shall be happy to put the *Freethinker* at his service.

Stanley, it appears, owes something to the superstition of the Arabs. His white cap, designed and made by himself from a piece of tenting as a protection against the sun, was always recognised as a talisman or charm. The Jewish phylacteries ordered Deut. vi., 8, are also of the nature of talismans.

Another action against Dr. Barnardo was heard last week

at the Queen's Bench. It was brought by a Catholic mother, who had placed her child with Dr. Barnardo, but now wants the boy brought up a Catholic. It appears that the woman was so little particular that she had the child baptised at a Protestant church, just (as she explained) because a neighbor's child went, and sent it to a Protestant school because it was one minute's walk nearer than the Catholic school. Now the priests have taken up the case her religious scruples are aroused and she wants the child back. The case well illustrates Mr. O'Donovan's recent article on the traffic in souls.

A person applied at Bow Street for a summons against Sir T. Phayre, the chairman of a meeting of the Protestant Reformation Society at Exeter Hall who because the applicant said to a speaker "Don't overlook the ruined souls" rose in an excited manner and incited the people to turn him out. He was gripped by the throat and ejected, this being the usual way in which Exeter Hall Christians turn the other cheek. The summons was not granted.

The London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews has been holding its annual meeting. The society's expenditure last year was £35,455 but it wisely withholds the number of its converts.

A large majority of the Prussian Upper House has voted in favor of the separation of Jews and Christians in public schools, owing to the Christians being outnumbered in some of the higher educational institutes. While Christians outnumbered Jews there was no cry for a remedy.

John the Baptist Freund was charged with causing a crowd to assemble at Exeter Hall, by waving a flag and blowing a small trumpet. He said his was a small crowd compared to what surround the Salvation Army, and hoped his offence would be overlooked on account of his endeavor to preach the truth. He was bound over to keep the peace, which, if it means holding his peace, John the Baptist Freund will find very difficult.

Mr. T. G. Barry sent a letter, headed "Warning," to the *Grimsby News*. He bewailed the dreadful fact that shocking infidel lectures were announced outside the Hall of Science, and hinted that some mark of God's displeasure would fall upon the town if the authorities did not enforce the Blasphemy Laws against these profane wretches. Grimsby, however, is not so easily frightened as it used to be, and the authorities are in no hurry to get some of the most respected citizens thrown into prison. Mr. S. Alward and Mr. J. W. Wittering have given Prophet Barry a good dressing in the *News*, and there the matter is likely to rest.

By the way, if Prophet Barry is really anxious to put down "blasphemy" in Grimsby, there is a short and easy way of doing it. Let him pray to the Lord for help, and then go into the Hall of Science, and imitate Samson, who slew a thousand men with the jawbone of an ass. Prophet Barry has the necessary weapon, and, with a proper supply of inspiration, he should be able to demolish all the "infidels" in Grimsby.

"Where are the dead?" was the subject of a sermon by Mr. Isaac Pitman at Bristol last Sunday. We very much doubt if he has any firsthand information on the subject, but "no matter, the time will come," and when the veteran phonographer joins the majority he will be able to preach, if at all, with greater authority. "Where are the dead?" is a subject on which a dead man would be the most convincing preacher. But, as the Bible says, the dead know not anything, unless they are too discreet to blab.

Hypnotism, which the Theosophists regard as proving the existence of soul, is being played very low in Paris. Dr. Luys has found that men can be fascinated like larks, by revolving colored glasses. After watching for some time they drop off into immobility, the retina having first been affected, and afterwards the whole nervous system. When completely under the spell they are made to go through the usual antics; and it would seem, from the reasoning of some folk, that when a man has been hypnotised, and made to play the fool, it is clearly demonstrated that he has an immortal spirit.



**MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.**

Sunday, May 18, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C., at 7.30, "Is there a Future Life?"

May 25, N. S. S. Conference at Manchester.

June 1, Hall of Science, London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London; 15, Manchester; 22, Liverpool; 29, Reading.

July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

August 31, Birmingham.

**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.

T. W. READE.—Certainly you are eligible as a member of the N. S. S. We have asked Mr. Forder to send you a form to fill in.

A. WHEELER, W. Lappage and others, omitted to mark their envelopes with "Lecture Notice." Their communications were sent on to Mr. Foote in the North of England, and were thus too late for last week's *Freethinker*. We beg the secretaries of Branches to observe this rule, which is not a very onerous one.

J. MILTON.—Mrs. Besant's new belief is called Theosophy. You should read her pamphlet, *Why I became a Theosophist*, and also Mr. Foote's three pamphlets on the subject, if you want to know what it is all about.

J. SPENCER.—Your experience in hospitals is not novel. Those institutions are wretchedly sectarian. Of course a copy of the *Freethinker* is enough to throw the sisters into hysterics.

G. ARMITAGE.—Mr. Foote did not mean to suggest that Mr. Walsh's religion was a matter of £ s. d. Mr. Walsh talks like an honest man, and no doubt is one, only he lets his emotion run away with his reason.

W. HUNTER.—Mr. Bradlaugh's health is very much improved, but he is not his old self yet, and we hope his friends, political and freethought, will not press him to try his strength before he has fully recovered. Thanks for the cutting.

J. PARKER.—Thanks for cutting and enclosure.

BRUNO.—We cannot answer medical questions. Write to Dr. Allinson, 4 Spanish Place, Manchester Square, London, W.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—Thanks See Sugar Plums.

JAMES NEATE.—The East-end of London is more bigoted than we thought. It is really surprising in such a working-class quarter of London.

A. J. F.—The father's bigotry is contemptible, but we hope your friend will be able to adjust himself to his new circumstances. Even a father who wants to force his opinions down your throat is better at a distance.

W. H. JACKSON.—Read Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, and if possible *Supernatural Religion*. Read's *Martyrdom of Man*, Strauss's *Old Faith and the New*, and Mirabaud's *System of Nature*, are also worth your attention. Glad to hear you circulate six copies of this journal in the house where you are employed, and that you have made several conversions during the last month or two.

W. HOLLAND.—Thanks for the batch of jokes.

G. P.—The tract is one of the multitude of silly things issued by Christians. It is hardly worth our notice. No young man it could influence has brains enough to be a Freethinker.

W. NICHOLS.—There is no such danger. Mr. Forder might be able to supply you with a copy of the Owen-Bachelor debate.

C. BUSSIE.—Omitted by accident, but acknowledged this week. Thanks for the book of engravings.

REX REGES.—The Rev. Mr. McFarlane was quite right. The man who can read the Bible without seeing that Jehovah was a purely national god must have a twist in his brain.

W. A. NEWCOMB, 320 Westminster Road, Kirkdale, Liverpool, has a large collection of *Freethinkers*, *National Reformers*, and other Freethought literature, which he will be happy to send to any Branch for distribution. This correspondent is thanked for his good wishes.

R. HASTINGS. Stuff and nonsense! Secularism does not deny moral responsibility, if that means the law of duty. Certainly it does not teach that delicate children should be slaughtered. Your Christian friend is trying to impose on you.

FREETHINKERS' BENEVOLENT FUND.—E. Harriman (Liverpool), 2s. 6d.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—T. Parker, 1s.

J. J. BYRON.—We take it that, in the note you refer to, Shelley is only expressing the logical force of that particular argument. There is no destruction of matter in the disappearance of the moon's atmosphere. It is absorbed by the satellite, which is like a big cinder.

JOSEPH BROWN, hon. sec. North Eastern Secular Federation, 86 Durham Street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne, acknowledges the following subscriptions:—Newcastle Branch, 8s.; Mr. Gillespie, 2s.; J. Brown, 2s. 6d.; H. Sanderson, 2s.; A Friend (per Mr. Peacock) 10s. 6d.; collected at Mr. Foote's Newcastle lecture, £1 3s. 1d.; Peter Weston, 17s. 6d.

R. O. SMITH, hon. treasurer London Secular Federation, acknowledges 2s. 6d. from A. Moss.

BRENO.—The name shall not be divulged. Kuenen's *Religion of Israel*.

J. ROBINSON.—Pleased to hear that you and your wife, who heard Mr. Foote for the first time at Newcastle, were so delighted. If every reader of this journal were to subscribe not less than five shillings a year to the N. S. S., a large income would be realised, and the cause would progress with leaps and bounds.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschenthum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Liverpool Citizen—People's Press—Freedom—Christian Life—Hornsey and Finsbury Park Journal—Christian Herald—Twentieth Century—Knowledge—Hertford Monthly Magazine—Body and Soul—Birkenhead and Cheshire Advertiser—Liverpool Citizen—Cornish Telegraph—Echo—Postmen's Gazette—Secular Thought—The Glasgow Herald—Northern Daily Telegraph.

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.

**THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.**

MR. FOOTE'S appeal, as President of the National Secular Society, for funds to extend the Society's work, is being responded to by friends in various parts of the country. Some of the subscribers promise to remit annually as much as they can afford; others, who can only send a little at a time, promise to remit half-yearly or quarterly. As soon as possible a list of intending subscribers will be prepared. Meanwhile the following subscriptions are acknowledged as actually received by Mr. Foote or Mr. Forder.

		Fifth List.						
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	
W. Holland		0	2	6	W. O.	0	5	0
C. B.		1	0	0	J. H. Ridgway	0	2	6
J. Robinson (qtrly)		0	1	3	J. Partridge	0	2	6
E. L. G.		5	0	0	James Laing	1	1	0

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE N.S.S.**

The Reception Committee will be in attendance at the Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, All Saints, Manchester, on Saturday, the 24th inst., and on Sunday morning from 9 o'clock, to receive delegates.

Delegates, on arriving in Manchester, are requested to take the tram for All Saints, which church is only two minutes' walk from the hall.

Delegates requiring lodgings will please inform the undersigned, stating whether they prefer private or hotel accommodation, and if for one or more nights.

Arrangements are being made for luncheon after the morning sitting, and also for tea at the close of the afternoon sitting, and we shall be pleased if friends intending to partake of same will kindly notify to that effect.

Arrangements have also been made for a limited number to view the workings of the Manchester Ship Canal, on Whit Monday, commencing at the Salford Docks, and inspecting the works along the Canal (about three miles) to Barton Docks, assembling at the Secular Hall at 10 a.m., and returning to the Hall after the inspection for tea, etc. Tickets, including railway fares and tea, 2s. each. Delegates and friends who intend taking advantage of this opportunity must send in their names to the Secretary, the number being strictly limited.

A. HEMINGWAY, Hon. Sec.  
25 Higher Chatham Street, Manchester.



## SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote lectures to-night (May 18) at the London Hall of Science on "Is There a Future Life?" The lectures now begin at half-past seven.

Mr. Foote's lecturing tour in the North closed on Sunday night. During the preceding week, after the Sunday lectures at Newcastle, he visited North Shields, Middlesboro, Sunderland, Darlington and Dipton. Most of the lectures were followed by discussion, especially at Middlesboro, where the proceedings ended at a late hour. Some of the Christian champions were great curiosities. One declared, at Middlesboro, that St. Paul was one of the three most learned men that ever lived. Mr. Foote innocently asked him who were the other two, and the reply was "Milton and Shakespeare." Shade of Ben Jonson! It was a wonder the ghost of Rare Old Ben did not appear, and swear a rattling Mermaid oath.

Sunday morning at South Shields was "a caution." The rain poured down spitefully. But notwithstanding the deluge a very fair audience assembled to hear the lecture on Shelley. The afternoon meeting was still better, and, the weather clearing up, there was a first-rate house at night. Altogether the North Eastern Secular Federation is well satisfied with Mr. Foote's visit, and is full of hope for the cause of Secularism in the district. New members are being enrolled, persons of means and influence are joining the movement, subscriptions are flowing in more rapidly, every branch of the work is being developed, and the press is taking notice of the cause as one that can no longer be ignored.

For some time the Sunderland Branch has been languishing. There was great difficulty in obtaining a hall for lectures. But the Assembly Room is now available again for week nights, and perhaps for Sundays. Under fair conditions, in so large a town, the Branch should flourish.

The South Shields Branch is fortunate in two things; first, in having a man like Mr. Peacock in its service, and secondly in having the use of the large hall of the Free Library, which is conveniently situated in the leading thoroughfare. Mr. Peacock, Captain Duncan, and some other members of the Branch are public characters, and they do much to liberalise the town. Two members of the Branch reside at Jarrow. John and Henry Sanderson are well known there, and widely respected. But we must stop. The fine Freethinkers in that district—men of whom any cause might well be proud—are too numerous to be recounted.

Mr. Bradlaugh, like a wise man, will spend the Whitsuntide in fishing. We hope he will catch health. He urges the Freethought party to muster strongly at Manchester, and certainly it is important that the Conference should be a great success, for our enemies are making much of Mr. Bradlaugh's enforced resignation, and trying to persuade the public that our cause is expiring. Of course this is great nonsense, and the sooner the public is plainly disabused the better. The Conference agenda, which we printed last week, will show that there is a possibility of striking out new lines of propaganda and organisation. Mr. Foote's proposals have been well thought out, and they demand the attention of every member of the National Secular Society.

John Burns did not like to tackle Mr. Bradlaugh, and we are not surprised at his reluctance to meet the old gladiator in the arena. But why did he throw out a challenge? John Burns is a good, honest, hard-working labor-leader, but he is not a Bradlaugh. We hope he will keep his head, be on his guard against flatterers, and avoid hobnobbing with Cardinals and Bishops. He ought to know the real object of the leaders of the Black Army when they coquet with the leaders of the Army of Labor.

Dr. Dodel-Port's book, *Moses oder Darwin*, has reached a third edition, which will number 5 000 copies. Dr. Dodel-Port is professor at Zurich University, and eminent as a botanist all over the world. He is a staunch Freethinker and evolutionist.

*Freedom*, of New South Wales, speaks of Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* as "characterised by that faithful and patient research customary in Mr. Wheeler's writings."

"We are glad to learn that Mr. Foote's 'Letters to the Clergy' are about appear in a separate volume; they contain some of Mr. Foote's best writing, and should be in the hands of all Freethinkers who are gifted with the faculty of enjoying really good literature."—*Stockwhip*.

The Belgian Conference of Freethinkers at Joliment was a great success. *La Raison*, their monthly organ, edited by M. Leon Fournement, now circulates 5000 copies.

The Rev. R. S. Long, who has returned from a mission to Burmah, laments that translations of Ingersoll are now found in that country. Mr. Long was stationed at Rangoon, where we send occasional parcels.

The *Hornsey and Finsbury Park Journal* inserts a very temperate and forcible letter from Mr. Arthur J. Field, defending the right of Freethinkers to lecture in Finsbury Park. Such letters are a real service to the cause.

The announcement we inserted last week as to the course of Free Lectures at the Hammersmith Club, was premature. The four lectures will be delivered on Thursdays, June 5, 12, 19 and 26, by Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. G. Standing, Mr. J. M. Robertson and Mr. G. W. Foote. One result of the lectures, it is hoped, will be the starting of an open-air lecture station.

Bournemouth is a fashionable watering place, and of course it has been very difficult to get the *Freethinker* there. But it is now exposed for sale in a newsagent's window at No. 1 The Avenue, the most aristocratic promenade in the town. One of our readers, who has had to get his weekly copy of this journal by post, went into the shop and bought two copies to give away. The next day he wanted another copy, but the newsagent had sold out. No doubt, if the seller is not intimidated, the *Freethinker* will soon have a fair circulation in Bournemouth, and do something to liberalise that hotbed of bigotry and hypocrisy.

The Manchester Secular Hall Company holds its annual general meeting this morning (May 18) in the hall at Rusholme Road. We are sorry to see there is a loss of £16 on the year's account, and we hope the directors and the honorary secretary (Mr. G. Payne) will succeed in inducing the shareholders to clear off the mortgage, the interest on which is a serious burden. The Branch is at present paying a reduced rent. We fear it has suffered from the loss of some old workers.

Viktor Lennstrand's lecture on *The God Idea*, for which he was sentenced to six month's imprisonment, has been translated into English by a Swedish gentleman. Mr. Wheeler has slightly revised the English, and the pamphlet is published by Mr. Forder at twopence.

"H. P." (Henry Porter) has done our cause a service by replying to a Catholic slander of Giordano Bruno in the *North Lindsey Star*. Freethinkers should press our views in their local papers whenever an opportunity occurs.

A Mohammedan mission to convert the Americans is rather a startling project. But this is what Moulvi Hassan Ali is proposing to large crowds at Hyderabad, and the faithful are actually responding with subscriptions to defray the Moulvi's expenses.

The French Freethought Federation now comprises 77 societies, besides individual adhesions. Its establishment was one of the results of the Paris International Conference of last September.

James Allen, one of the wealthiest men in Stark county, Ohio, died last month, leaving a will in which he said: "I wish that no advocate of the contemptible and blasphemous doctrine of eternal punishment be permitted to talk at my funeral. I desire that the speaker be a Freethinker or Universalist."

The *Freethinkers' Magazine* for May gives a portrait and notice of Mrs. Matilda Joselyn Gage, the President of the American Women's Liberal Union. Prof. J. R. Bachanan writes on Bibliolatry, and among other interesting contents is the exposure of a myth regarding the bad ends of thirty-six infidels which is being circulated in the States.



## RELEASE OF MR. LENNSTRAND.

Our readers in all parts of the world will rejoice to know that Viktor Lennstrand, the brave champion of Freethought, in Sweden, is once more free. His liberation was however dictated by fear. Upon being visited in prison last week by his brother, Mr. Axel Lennstrand, that gentleman was seriously alarmed and declared that his brother was being murdered by the imprisonment. Every force was set in motion to obtain his liberation, and aided by a lady of literary reputation, our friends succeeded in obtaining his pardon within four days. The authorities were fully aware that had serious consequences ensued to Mr. Lennstrand, as there was too much reason to fear from his delicate and nervous constitution, there would have been a storm of indignation throughout the land. Mr. Lennstrand, our readers will be happy to learn, seems now thoroughly recovered, though the doctors urge that he should take complete rest for a while in some country place. He appends to a note from our good friend Captain Otto Thomson, with whom he is now staying, at 25 Bryggargatan, Stockholm, the following letter:—

"At last out from prison. I send you my most hearty wishes and thanks for all you have done for me and my cause during my long captivity. As soon as I am quite composed and strengthened both in body and mind, I will do all that I am able to do in order to hold the awakened interest alive. Please forward my warmest thanks to the Freethinkers of England.—Yours fraternally, sincere friend,  
VIKTOR E. LENNSTRAND."

It remains to be seen what will be done with the remaining prosecutions against Mr. Lennstrand. It is certain his release is a triumph to the Freethought cause, and they can no longer cause serious apprehensions.

## ARE CLERGYMEN FRAUDS?

By HUGH O. PENTECOST.

*(From the "Twentieth Century.")*

Are clergymen frauds? This is a delicate and difficult question to answer justly. No general statement can be made of any class of persons without qualification. Some clergymen are frauds and some are not. So much may be said without qualification; without stopping to define the word fraud. There are some bad men among clergymen, as there are in any class of persons. But many clergymen are good men, in a general way, and some of them are very good men, both in general and in particular. In striving to answer the question I have propounded, I mean to leave out of the discussion the confessedly bad men among the clergy. I will not take into consideration the ministerial common, every-day liars, thieves, drunkards and libertines. There is no doubt that there are such ministers even among the very well-known and highly paid clergy. That these are frauds goes without saying, and some of them escape general condemnation and disgrace even when it is pretty well understood by many that they are impostors.

But it would not be fair to condemn an entire class of persons because some of them are notoriously bad. I intend, therefore, to discuss the question: whether the average respectable and respected priest and minister is a fraud even if he is ordinarily honest in his business transactions and clean in his sexual relations.

What do I mean by a fraud? In speaking of ministers I mean one who does not believe what he preaches, or one who does not preach what he believes, or one who conceals his doubts, or one that does not live according to what he believes or professes to believe. A fraud is an insincere man, and inconsistent man, a man without the moral courage to live up to his professions or to confess that he does not do so.

With this definition in mind let us look at facts with regard to clergymen. I will try to keep within the range of those things which are generally understood to be facts. It will not be necessary to go into the inner consciousness of the ministers and attempt to pass judgment upon their motives. No person is capable of judging another person's motives. I leave motives out of the question entirely. I do not inquire whether clergymen mean to be frauds, or whether

they know that they are frauds. I merely inquire whether they *are* frauds.

It is a fact that clergymen, as a rule, do not believe in the precepts of Jesus Christ, and do not conform to them in their own lives. I will not discuss the question as to whether those precepts are true or false, wise or unwise. I merely say that the orthodox clergymen proclaim that Jesus Christ was God and at the same time they deny the truthfulness of most of his teachings and the wisdom or practicability of his manner of life. They declare that he was the "way, the truth and the life," but they turn from the way, reject the truth, and will not follow the life. Jesus forbade the laying up of treasures on earth, forbade taking anxious thought for the morrow, commanded to sell all one's goods and give to the poor. The average minister declares that Jesus is his master, his guide, and his God, but he invariably takes the highest salary he can get, he insures his life, he is no more apt to give his money to a tramp than is anybody else. Jesus forbade the use of titles. All clergymen have one title, at least, and set great store by it, and some of them are so greedy for the supposed honor of having more than one that they are quite willing to wink at any device by which it can be obtained from a college, in some cases actually buying it. Jesus was a very simple-minded man in his religion. He believed in praying for what we need. He said that sickness would be healed by prayer, that snake bites would be cured by prayer, that mountains would be removed by prayer. The modern clergyman believes no such thing. The Jesus-like Faith Healers have no bitterer enemies than the clergymen. There is not a minister in the United States. I venture to say, who would show that he believes in the teaching of Jesus by letting a rattlesnake bite him.

Please understand that I am not defending the teachings of Jesus. I am simply saying that clergymen pretend that Jesus was God and yet they do not hesitate to declare that his teachings are not to be followed. If they would speak right out and say that Jesus is wholly unreliable as a teacher, although he was God, all would be fair. We would then understand that the God of the clergymen was an ignorant and impracticable crank, and we would know just what to do.

But the clergyman flares up in a moment if you intimate that Jesus did not know what he was talking about. He will tell you that Christian civilisation is built upon principles exactly the reverse to those inculcated by the Galilean, and if you ask him why he does not live according to those teachings he will tell you that they were not practised in this day and generation, because the weather is colder here than it was in Palestine, and to follow out the precepts of Jesus generally would interfere with the admirable arrangements of the Charity Organisation Society; and if ministers did not have titles nobody would know who are the genuine articles and who are irregular.

You are all familiar with the various explanations clergymen give of why they do not follow the teachings of Jesus, but the real reason is because if they did they would be poor, and they would not be respectable, and they could not enjoy those worldly honors that are so dear to vain and worthless people. The real reason why the ministers do not follow Jesus, although they worship him, is because it is so much easier to worship him than it is to follow him. It is fashionable to worship him but it is vulgar to follow him. The reason why they do not follow him is because they are frauds.

I know that there are hundreds of clergymen belonging to the Universalist and Unitarian churches who would say that all this does not apply to them because they repudiate the deity of Jesus and openly say that his teaching is impracticable. But they are frauds, too, because they call themselves Christians. They deny that Jesus was the Christ and yet call themselves Christians. This they would not do if it were not that the name Christian carries with it a certain amount of respectability by which they wish to profit.

Another fact is that there is hardly a clergyman in existence who does not preach for the truth that of which he himself doubts the truth. Observe the way I put this. There is many a minister who will tell you that he believes in the existence of God, or the divinity of Christ, or the vicarious atonement, or the reality of heaven and hell. But if you ask him whether he ever doubts these things he will be obliged to tell you that he does. He may tell you that the Devil makes him doubt or that doubt arises out of his own sinful heart, whatever that may mean. But he doubts, nevertheless. If he would go into the pulpit and tell the



people that he believes in the existence of God and all these other things but he also doubts whether what he says is true or not, he would be an honest man. But because he hides his doubts and preaches his beliefs as if they were certainties, he is a fraud.

(To be concluded.)

### THE BLIND MAN AND THE FLEA. A FABLE.

"Why dost thou so trouble me,"  
Said a blind man to a flea.  
"Know'st thou not that I am blind?  
Prithee other refuge find.  
All night long I'm kept awake  
Through the itching thou dost make;  
All day long I writhe in mind  
Through thy capers so unbind.  
Prithee nimble little flea,  
To some other refuge flee.

Said the flea, "No, no, not I;  
Don't you think it. I'm too fly.  
Here I'll stay, and here I'll hatch  
My sweet brood, for you can't catch.  
God, who everything does well,  
Meant that I with you should dwell.  
I'm the finger of our God,  
Bow beneath his chastening rod."

Then the blind man thought awhile,  
Till his face beamed with a smile:  
"Yes, I've got it," thus he cried,  
"Wretched insect, you're defied.  
Science-given turpentine,  
'Neath whose breath all insects pine,  
Water clear and cleansing soap,  
Powders strong with you shall cope.  
Yes, I've got it! I'll be damned,  
Holy Boss, your finger's jammed!

(Moral to be worked in here.)

ALFRED LOVETT.

### SATAN v. JESUS CHRIST.

In Mr. Quaritch's collection of MSS. there is a famous illuminated manuscript written by one Bishop Anton Ruettel in 1480. It is called *Belial*, and describes a lawsuit between the Devil and Jesus Christ. J. C. has so greatly damaged the Evil One by coming into the world and saving sinners who would otherwise have fallen victims to the E. O.'s favorite fires, that he forthwith brings an action for damages against Christ. There is a count in damages for every soul.

Good old Bishop Ruettel went about his work in a very accurate and methodical way. The plaintiff and defendant in the case each have a lawyer. Lucifer appears as counsel for the Evil One, and Moses is lawyer for Christ. Moses, by the way, is depicted with the Mosaic horns of wisdom on his head, and they are quite as diabolical looking as the genuine diabolic horns of Lucifer himself.

Solomon is the Judge and sits supreme above both angels and devils. He can hardly be considered an absolutely impartial judge, since he permits the greatest laxity of speech to Moses, but holds Lucifer strictly to the courtesies of the court-room.

The witnesses, who are various—imps, lost souls and the parties themselves to the suit—are sworn on the Holy Scriptures, just as they are to-day. The effect on a first-class cantankerous devil from the seventh hell of administering to him an oath to tell "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God," to all of which proper sanction is given by a kiss to the Scriptures, is amusingly depicted by the artists. The devils, little and big, swear and kiss the Bible, and then, with their faces still awry, go on the witness-stand and tell what they know.

Moses hectors and bullies the Devil's witnesses on cross-examination in fine lawyer-like style, and whatever he says seems to go with the Court. As for Lucifer, who has Old Nick for his client, he is as courtly and suave as you please, never once forgets himself, and even in defeat, and with the taunts of Moses still ringing in his long ears, is still the courtly, polished Devil. Of course Solomon non-suits the Devil and sends him back to hell.

### BEATITUDES OF THE HOLY SINNERS.

(Appointed to be read in a loud tone of voice in the Church of the Holy Sinners, on the first Sunday in the calendar of Saint Dives, and fifty-one Sundays after that, and three times a day, before, after, and during services, and at other times when convenient and there is a big crowd present. To be read in all the churches that expect or hope to collar the shekels of the ungodly, or rake in the scads of the good, in the year of grace 1890.)

Now there was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

Blessed forever be his memory; for he hath this day given 95,000 dol. to the church societies, and hath 4,000,000 left for himself.

Shout his name mightily, and let it appear in four-line pica at the head of each column.

Blessed is the man who can give his cheque for three figures; his seed shall be mighty upon the earth.

But more blessed is he who can make it four; his name shall be written in the records and printed in the minutes of the association, and graven with the pen of a cunning scribe upon the chronicles of the conference. Yea, they shall call him Mister in the synod and Doctor in the convention.

But thrice blessed is he who can make it a ten and five noughts; his horn shall be exalted with honor; he shall be known in the congregation and on 'change, where he sit'eth with the elders of the land. Yea, when he goeth forth a horn shall be blown before him, and when he giveth a dollar a gong shall be beaten in the sanctuary.

Lazarus shall behold him afar off, and make ready to vacate the premises in Abraham's bosom.

Abraham shall hear of it, and shall greatly enlarge his bosom, and have it newly furnished and re-upholstered throughout. Selah!

The praise of our lips shall set him on high; if it be so that he cannot read, then will we call our colleges after him; and if it be that he signeth his name with a "mark," then we shall endow chairs of Egyptology and Sanscrit literature in his name.—*Brooklyn Eagle*.

### NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR HIM.

Jack o' Nanny's was out walking one day when he came across the curate of the village church. The curate had only been a few months in that district, so he did not know the character of all the inhabitants. He stopped Jack one day and told him he had never seen him at church since he came into that neighbourhood, and asked if he would come. Jack turned his eyes towards the curate and said—"Naw, I'st not come. I've nobbut been twice, an' booath times they made a fool on me. Th' furst time aw went they slat some watter in me face, an' th' second time teed a gurt bouncin' woman raand me neck whear shoo's fast yet; an' I can't get shut ov her. It's not good enough. Let them goa at likes."

### LOOKING AT THE FUTURE.

Deacon Jones: "Mr. Holiman, that sermon of yours bawailing the mad rush for riches which characterises the present generation was the most beautiful thing I ever heard. Your pulpit efforts are getting better and better, and we trust that you may continue with us many years to inculcate in our community the lessons of humility and meekness which you exemplify so powerfully in your own life."

Rev. Mr. Holiman: "Yes, Deacon, I shall only be too glad to remain with you. But—er—my expenses, you know, are pretty heavy, and I've received a very flattering call from another parish, I'm getting along in life where I ought to be putting by something for old age."

### PROFANE JOKES.

"Young man," said an apostle, solemnly, "do you realise that when you retire at night you may be called before morning dawns?" "I hope so; I'm a young doctor, and I need encouragement of some kind."

At a Sunday school a teacher asked a little boy if he knew what the expression "sowing tares" meant. "Course I does," he said, pointing to his little breeches, "there's a tear mother sewed. I teared it sliding down hill."

"I landed a cargo on the wharf of a Turkish town not far from Constantinople," said an old sea captain. "It was towards evening, and I suggested to the Mohammedan gentleman in charge of the quay that a guard be placed over the goods. 'Have no fear,' he declared, stroking his beard, 'there is not a Christian within forty miles.'"



**SUNDAY MEETINGS.**

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

**LONDON.**

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7, Arthur B. Moss, "The Bible and Common Sense."  
 Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 730, Mr. Rossetti, "What has Christianity Done for the World?" Social evening every Tuesday. Thursday evening, discussion  
 Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mrs Thornton Smith, "Miracles."  
 Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Is there a Future Life?"  
 Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, M s. Annie Besant, "Christianity and Woman."  
 Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "Christ's Ascension."

**OPEN AIR PROPAGANDA.**

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. Rossetti, "Is Christianity of Divine Origin?"  
 Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "What Think ye of Christ?"  
 Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. F. Miller, "What is Freethought?"  
 Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. Arthur B. Moss, "Shams and Delusions."  
 Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 3, Mr. J. Rowney, "Freethought and Christ."  
 Finsbury Park (near the band-stand) 3.30, Lucretius Keen, "Holy Matrimony, Part I."  
 Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: Are They True?" May 21, Mr. F. Haslam, "Civilisation, its Rise and Progress."  
 Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "Romans xiii., 1, 2."  
 Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Salvation."  
 New Southgate, Botstyle Bridge, 11.30, Mr. Sam. Standing, "Men who are Rising."  
 Old Southgate—On the Green, 6.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "What is Sin?"  
 Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. E. Calvert, a lecture  
 Victoria Park, near the fountain, 11, a debate between Mr. Cohen (Spiritualist) and Mr. Elfein (C. E. S.) on "Transmutation of Species"; 3.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Apostles of Freethought."  
 Westminster—Old Piccadilly Pier, 11.30, Mr. R. Forder, "Truthful Christians."  
 Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. George Standing, "Faith and Freethought."

**COUNTRY.**

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. J. Clarke, 11, "The Future of Religions"; 3, "The Childhood of Jesus"; 7, "Antropomorphism."  
 Heckmondwike—at Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, an important business meeting.  
 Hull Branch—No. 2 Rom, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. Charles Reynolds, "The Relation of Socialism to Freethought."  
 Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Doeg, "The Resurrection: a Reply to Prebendary Row."  
 Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, Mr. Ernest Evans, "Man's Place in Nature according to Paley and Darwin." Free.  
 Newcastle—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 11.30, a meeting of Sunday Music League 3, special meeting of members to consider the taking of new premises.  
 Reading—Forest's Hall, West Street, Mr. J. M. Robertson, 3, "How the Bible was Made Up"; 7, "Christianity and Civilisation."  
 Sheffield Branch N.S.S.—Members' and friends' first outing of the season, to Catcliffe, by invitation of Mr. J. Nelson. Meet at Midland Station at 1.45 for Rotherham train.  
 South Shields—Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, King Street, 7, a business meeting.

**LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.**

Arthur B. Moss, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.—May 18, (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 22, Hammersmith Club (free); 25 Manchester (Conference). June 1 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 8 (morning), Bethnal Green, (evening), Camberwell; 15 (evening), Ball's Pond; 22 (morning), Clerkenwell; 29 (morning), Mile End, (afternoon), Victoria Park. July 6 (morning), Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich; 13 (morning), Mile End, (evening), Camberwell; 20 (afternoon), Victoria Park.  
 E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—May 18, Failsborough. June 8, Manchester.  
 T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—May 18 (morning), Mile End Waste; 25 (morning), Battersea. June 15 (morning and evening), Battersea.

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