

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## MR. GLADSTONE ON THE FALL OF MAN.

(CONCLUDED.)

WHAT is sin? That must be answered before we discuss redemption. Mr. Gladstone calls it "a departure from the will of God." Later on he describes it more fully as "a deviation from the order of nature, a foreign element not belonging to the original creation of Divine design, but introduced into it by special causes."

But how came man to depart from the will of God? How can there be a departure from the order of nature? Who introduced a foreign element into God's creation? What special causes lie outside the sphere of Omnipotence? To say that man's free-will "frustrated" God's "attempt" is to say that God did not foresee the result of his own action, or that he deliberately endowed man with a faculty that would lead him astray. "Foreign element" and "special causes" are polite circumlocutions for the Devil. But who made the Devil? The only answer is—God. Finally, therefore, the Christian has to face these dilemmas. Either God can stop the Devil or he cannot. If he cannot he is not all-powerful, if he will not he is not all-good. Either God knew the Devil would pervert Adam or he did not. If he did not he is deficient in foresight, if he did he had no right to be angry at the inevitable.

Mr. Gladstone speaks of "the revolt of man's lower nature against its higher elements." How came there to be "lower elements" in a divine production? Higher and lower can only be explained by evolution. The lower is the blind animal passion inherited from our brutish progenitors. The higher is the governing reason and conscience developed in countless ages of social growth.

With regard to the story of the Fall of Man in Genesis, Mr. Gladstone takes a position commonly called sitting on the fence. He "deals with it as a parable," but adds "I do not mean to make on my own part any definite surrender of the form as it stands." But the Fall is either history or romance. There can be no medium. If it be a parable it is absurd to talk of it as a fact. If it be a fact it is idle to talk of it as a parable.

Adam and Eve are placed in the garden. They are the work of an Omniscient Designer, but they are incapable of knowing good from evil. They cannot appreciate a moral code. God "has laid upon them a law of obedience." Like stupid, wilful parents he says "Don't do that, because I tell you not to." He does not give them a comprehensive view of their duties to each other. His law is "simply a rule of feeding and not feeding." He governs them through their stomachs. What a noble view of our first parents! What a tribute to the wisdom and goodness of God!

The law of obedience involves the law of punishment. In eating what he is told not to—that is, in gratifying the appetite God gave him—man becomes "a rebel," and is justly punished as such. But is

there any justice in the case? Is not everything arbitrary? Man does what his nature instigates, and God chooses to chastise him. God is witness, counsel, judge, and executioner, and gives penal servitude for life for a first offence.

Mr. Gladstone wastes his time in trying to show the similarity of punishment and consequence. One is arbitrary, the other is natural. If I put my hand in the fire, it burns me. That is consequence. It is indifferent to morality. There is no discrimination. The hand may be an honest man's or a scoundrel's. If I think for myself under the Inquisition I am burnt at the stake. That is punishment. The two may run parallel, but they have no connection. If I steal I injure my fellow men and debase my own nature. That is consequence. If I am found out I am sent to prison. That is punishment.

Adam and Eve did not injure each other, nor did they injure God. Consequently they did not sin. A child does not sin in eating what he is told not to, unless he knows he is stealing or depriving someone else of food. He means no harm, and the action does not deteriorate his nature. Is it not absurd, then, to affirm that God's treatment of Adam and Eve is "in accordance with the laws of a grand and comprehensive philosophy"? Mr. Gladstone says that sceptical objections to the Fall are "the product of narrower and shallower modes of thought." We reply that his "grand and comprehensive philosophy" overlooks the most obvious facts.

Mr. Gladstone calls the Fall "a gigantic drama." It seems to us a petty farce. The people who lived in the ages of Miracle Plays took it seriously, but what educated man of the present age—unless he keeps a dark room for theology in his brain—can regard it without smiling? Of course imagination can make anything gigantic. It can turn a white rag into a ghost, or a donkey's head into the Devil. But imagination is powerless to exaggerate when you see the objects as they are.

Mr. Gladstone's imagination tells him that the Fall "wisely teaches us to look to misused free-will as the source of all sin, and of all the accompanying misery." It is rather cool to assert this in the face of St. Augustine, Martin Luther and John Calvin; in face of the Church of England Articles and the Westminster Confession of Faith. If an unbeliever treated the Bible in this way, putting his own private interpretation on every text, heedless of the settled interpretation of the Churches, Mr. Gladstone would stigmatise him as ignorant or insolent. We do not say a man has no right to his private interpretation. We claim it for him. But we say that when he is opposed to a great historic school of interpretation he is bound to give his reasons. This Mr. Gladstone avoids. He simply dogmatizes. The proper answer, therefore, is to defy him to show a single allusion to free-will in the story of the Fall, or a single text in favor of free-will from Genesis to Revelation.

Let us follow Mr. Gladstone still further. "The original attempt," he writes, "to plant a race upon our planet who should be endowed with the faculty

of free-will, but should always direct that will to good, had been frustrated through sin." How this happened, or how it could happen if God were all-wise and all-powerful, is not explained. Mr. Gladstone introduces "sin" as though it were an entity. Sin is a quality of actions. To make "sin" the cause of actions is an absurdity. The ultimate question is—why did Adam go wrong? To that question Mr. Gladstone never addresses himself.

God's "original attempt" having been "frustrated"—somehow, by somebody—the all-wise and all-powerful ruler of the universe set about a remedy. His operations were so slow that, fifteen hundred years afterwards, the world was so hopelessly corrupt that he lost patience and drowned the lot, with the exception of eight persons, not one of whom was worth saving. Afterwards the Almighty began to work in a small way. He chose the most insignificant people on earth, visited them occasionally, and gave them a little heavenly illumination. Why he chose the Jews is a mystery. Mr. Gladstone admits the choice was not what reason would expect. It was not made on moral grounds. The Jews were distinctly inferior to the primitive Greeks, as Mr. Gladstone proves at considerable length. And finally, when the Redeemer came, after nearly two thousand years of preparation, the chosen people crucified him between two thieves, as a warning to other gentleman in the same line of business. Nay more, after the Redemption has been actively operating for another two thousand years, there is still "a preponderance of moral evil in the world." Thus the Almighty and Omniscient God is able to make a world and pronounce it "good," but utterly unable to keep it good, or to repair it when it falls out of order. Indeed the longer he tries to improve it the worse it gets. All this is asserted or implied in Mr. Gladstone's argument. It is a queer compliment to God, and a flat contradiction to his attributes. Either God is very weak, or the Devil is very strong, or man is very "cussed." We leave Mr. Gladstone to say which. Meanwhile we must observe that his exposition and vindication of the story of the Fall is a shocking example of how devotion to an inherited creed will make even a great man wallow in absurdity. Tycho Brahe, the great astronomer, kept an idiot, and watched his lips for words of inspiration. Mr. Gladstone, the great statesman, finds infinite wisdom in an old Jewish story, which is less moral and entertaining than "Jack the Giant-Killer."

G. W. FOOTE.

#### WHAT IS EVIL?

Dr. Farrar in his reply to Colonel Ingersoll, alludes to the existence of evil as a mystery. The existence of evil. In the first place, what is this existence? or rather what is *evil*? Has a satisfactory definition ever been given? It is difficult to say, for one may satisfy one person, and another satisfy another.

Now here is a definition, which, though rather negative than positive seems to be fairly satisfactory to my mind:—Evil consists of the act or totality of acts of non-conformity with the civil and moral laws of the country. If this definition be true the existence of evil is no longer a mystery. For what is the intention of these laws? For what purpose were they made? If a person exerts his mind a little, he can trace them all down to the one object of restraining man's natural desires.

For what man is there, who on seeing something that he wants is not affected by the desire to obtain it? This is his first impulse—irrespective of *how* he is to gain his desired end. Thus a man of not very high principles—and there are thousands, nay millions in the world—would set to work to form some plan by means of which he can gain his end. And this plan would in 99 cases out of a 100 be *unfair*—in fact it might in the end come to stealing. Of course these remarks only refer to the above mentioned *unprincipled* men.

Thus one law has been traced to the object of restraining man's desires, and it is quite easy to trace all laws whatsoever to the same object. Thus Dr. Farrar's "mystery" vanishes.

C. W. KENNAWAY.

#### FALSE CHRISTS.

"For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders insomuch that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect."—MATT. XXIV., 24.

WHEN quite a boy it struck me as curious that after the genuine Messiah had come, performed wonderful works and risen from the dead, other false Christs and false prophets should arise deceiving many. Now the matter seems simple. Such passages indicate that they were written after several of the said Christs had appeared, and probably because non-Christians pointed to the notorious fact that there were other Christs than Jesus of Nazareth of whom great signs and wonders were alleged.

In the East prophecy has ever been an important factor in bringing about political results. The Indian Mutiny was vastly aided by a prophecy that British rule should terminate in a hundred years from the battle of Plassy. The Jews, always in subjection, longed for and therefore prophesied a redeemer, a king who should conquer and rule over their enemies and enable them to dwell in peace and plenty, each under his own vine and fig-tree, none making him afraid. Demand regulates supply in Messiahs as much as in minerals. When the Jews sought to throw over the Roman yoke, a crop of Christs sprung up like mushrooms after a shower. A number of delirious fanatics started in the prophetic business, found favor for a while in the credulity of the people, and in some cases left followers to perpetuate their fame. It seems certain that John, known as the Baptist, was one of these. One of the most suggestive things in the Acts of the Apostles is the fact that the disciples of St. John apparently had heard no more of Jesus than of the Holy Ghost (Act xix., 2).

Little more than thirty years after the alleged death of Jesus and the supernatural wonders attending that event, the Jews knew so little that their Messiah had come that they were still expecting him, and, as Josephus observes, what most animated them in undertaking war against the Romans was an ambiguous oracle how about that time one of their country should become governor of the whole world. Previously the Pharisees had persuaded Phororas, Herod's brother, that he was the predicted king. This priestly Messianic conspiracy was quenched in blood by Herod. As there were six thousand Pharisees engaged in it, besides influential court people, this is likely enough; but it is very improbable that Herod should be alarmed by the prophecy by Magi of the birth of a child, and that when he did not find the child he should slay all the children in Bethlehem "and in all the coasts thereof," from two years of age and under, without one word of notice from the Jewish historian. Possibly the historic bloodshed gave rise to the gospel legend.

Josephus (*Wars* vi., v., 2) says there were many false prophets, and (in the next section) tells particularly of one Jesus, the son of a plebeian, who cried, "A voice from the east a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice from the holy house, a voice against the holy house, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, and a voice against this whole people!" This Jesus persisted in proclaiming woe to Jerusalem, though scourged till his bones were laid bare, till at last a stone from a catapult killed him. There have not been wanting those who have found the original of Jesus of Nazareth in this cranky prophet. This view was, in part at least, adopted by Mr. Richard Proctor, and is argued in a work on the *Jesus of History* by George Solomon.

In his *Antiquities* (bk. xx., ch. 8, § 6) Josephus tells how these impostors or fanatics "persuaded the multitude to follow them into the wilderness, and pretended that they would exhibit manifest wonders

and signs, that should be performed by the providence of God."

One of the most notable and earliest of these Christs was the founder of the Galilean sect, which arose in the first decade of the Christian era. Judas, their leader, sought to revive the tradition of a theocracy and re-establish the kingdom of God. He was a religious teacher as well as a revolutionist, and taught that men should regard God as their only ruler. Josephus says of his followers: "They also do not value dying any kinds of death, nor, indeed, do they heed the deaths of their relations and friends, nor can any such fear make them call any man lord." Origen tells us Judas was regarded as the Messiah. Basnage says: "The Romans sent some forces against Judas and he perished miserably." It is just possible his fate was the same as that of his two sons, James and Simon, who were crucified A.D. 47.

Another false prophet mentioned by Josephus was Theudas (*Antiq.*, book xx., chap. 5, § 6). Like other fanatics of the period, he persuaded a multitude to follow him. He pretended they would be able to cross the Jordan as on dry land, but the Roman procurator Fadus sent a troop of horsemen against them, and they were killed, taken prisoners and scattered. Theudas himself was beheaded. The compiler of the Acts of the Apostles alludes to Theudas (v. 36), but makes a mistake, placing him before the time of Judas of Galilee, whereas Fadus was procurator of Judæa in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, a generation afterwards. Josephus places the event in its due chronological order, and from his official position could hardly make a mistake of thirty years in regard to an outbreak which took place in his own lifetime. But the Acts compiler in the latter part of the second century mixed up matters without regard to the order of time.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

### THE DECLINE OF CALVINISM.

THE good city of Edinburgh was invaded by crowds of the clergymen and elders of the Established and Free Churches during the last week of May. Usually, the "Assemblies" of these gentlemen are not of an interesting character; and as far as the Established Church is concerned the Assembly this year was no exception to the general rule. It was different, however, with the Free Church Assembly. That body of pious Calvinists had a lively time of it, and the deliberations and decisions of its members, besides being interesting in themselves, are likely to be productive of far-reaching and momentous results. For orthodox Calvinism was on its trial; and it emerged from the ordeal in a very battered and shaken condition. This, at least, is the opinion of the responsible part of the Scottish Press, and I have no reason to doubt that the Press in this instance holds views substantially in harmony with the opinions of the people generally.

Before proceeding to deal with the subject proper, I may be pardoned if I refer to one or two matters of interest connected with the Edinburgh Assemblies. I take the following pretty little story from the *Dundee People's Journal*, of the 31st May; and as it speaks for itself comment is needless:—

"It is generally understood among the more irreverent that occasionally one or two of the ministers who come to Edinburgh for the Assemblies indulge after the manner of the schoolboy in high jinks. On Tuesday, about midnight, a clergyman, wrapped in a huge ulster that completely concealed his "black," and hailing from a quiet little Ayrshire town, lost his way in the Grange district. He had too evidently been on the spree, and persisted in ringing every bell he came across, and asking in a tone that would have been melancholy had it not been maudlin, if he lodged there. Eventually his vagaries attracted the attention of the police, and they interviewed him. His assumption of drunken dignity when he realised with whom he had foregathered was ludicrous in the extreme. The policemen when they found that it was a cleric who had fallen into their hands chaffed him, until, in a

funereal tone, he remonstrated, and said it was going too far to joke on serious subjects. After some discussion, a dim recollection of the whereabouts of his lodgings dawned on the erring shepherd, and a friendly policeman saw him to bed." [Which the "friendly policeman" would not have done if the offender was a fustian-clad Irishman from the Cowgate].

The other matter to which I will refer has reference to the Free Church Committee's report on Religion and Morals. This report is not at all satisfactory from the point of view of its compilers; and to outsiders it is an eloquent confession of failure on the part of the narrow-minded "men of God" who have been endeavoring to keep the people of Scotland in darkness. The Committee is very much grieved at the decline of respect for the "Sabbath." Sabbath pleasure-seeking, it seems, prevails to a large and increasing extent. In Argyleshire, for example, people actually walk and drive on the Sabbath; while in other places they go on excursions by road and rail. This is very sad; but matters are even worse. "Tourists travelling on the Sabbath" are a great nuisance in Ross-shire; but, as the *People's Journal* remarks, the people of that country "make a protest in the name of religion and morals by charging the Sunday tourists double prices for anything they may want on that sacred day." As a further evidence of the manner in which religion in Scotland has failed dismally to improve the morals of the people, it is remarked in the report that Wigtown-shire holds "the place of degradation and shame" in the matter of illegitimate children; while in Shetland "courtship" among the young folk is not at all godly. In Edinburgh people even read for amusement on "Fast" and Sabbath days. All this makes the Freethinker smile at the childishness of these pious humbugs, while it makes him rejoice that the people of Scotland, as far at least as the observance of Sunday is concerned, have grown to be a little more sensible than they were when they punished men for whistling on the Sacred Day.

Disrespect for the Sabbath is a sign that Calvinism is on the decline; but it is not *that* I had on my mind when I gave this article its title. I meant the title to refer to the trial for "Heresy" which Professor Bruce, of the Free Church College, had to undergo before the Assembly. The Professor, it appears, is a capable, learned man, who writes very well, and who has done good work on behalf of his Church. Recently, however, he has shown an inclination to think for himself; and in his book, "The Kingdom of God," he has given expression to opinions that have agitated the Free Church to its very foundations.

From some of Professor Bruce's remarks in his book it would seem that he thinks that Christ was no more than a great original genius, and that he was not at all of that divinely perfect and infallible character that religious folk affect to believe. Of course this pill, so to speak, is dexterously coated over with the usual pious phrases, more distinguished by sound than sense. His remarks on this heading, however, would scarcely lead to his indictment for Heresy, as they are of too unpronounced a character. With the Gospels he is more precise and unmistakable in his tone, and it is for his criticisms of Luke and John that the attack has been made upon him.

As for the Gospel according to Luke, the Professor says that that party cannot be relied upon, as he evidently went the length of actual suppressions and alterations in his writings, being apparently more desirous of saying what would serve the cause of infant Christianity rather than what was the strict truth. As for John, Professor Bruce looks upon him as a fraud who mixed up Christ's teachings and his own bigoted reflections, and called the mixture the doctrines and history of Christ.

These are dangerous notions for a Free Church College Professor to hold. Their patent meaning is that the inspiration theory as generally accepted is absurd. If it is once admitted that a portion of the

Gospels is not "inspired," people will be inquiring what portion is inspired, and how the inspired can be distinguished from the non-inspired portion? No wonder that the Scotch clergymen were excited over the matter, and that they brought Professor Bruce to task for his heresy, for heresy it unquestionably is.

Writing on the debates on this case, and on a less important heresy case, the *Edinburgh Evening News*, of the 30th May says:—"The intelligent foreigner, if present in the Free Assembly yesterday, would have concluded from the debates that he had got in among a company of Freethinkers, who were desperately trying to make themselves believe that they were believers." And the same journal makes another remarkable admission when it says, regarding the difference between the churches:—"Unless the churches reach unanimity in the essentials of religion, they will lose their influence over plain people as they have already lost their hold upon the intellect of the day."

When the question of Professor Bruce's Heresy came to be voted upon, the heretic had a majority of 155 votes in his favor, out of a house of 629. This means that 302 of his fellow religious leaders are at one with him on the matter of inspiration. And this being so, where is the matter to stop short? Surely, when the majority within the Church declares in favor of such heretical notions, the time must be at hand when the "Confession of Faith" must undergo very considerable alterations. And the disturbance that will be caused by these alterations will inevitably drive many of the honest Free Churchmen along the road to Freethought, on which it is evident they have already entered when they have declared against the very doctrines for which their fathers dared so much.

Commenting on the decision in the Bruce case, the *People's Journal* says that "Antiquated superstition has been effectively disclaimed by the Free Church." And the same paper says: "The doctrines of damnation according to Calvin have too long held sway over us, but there are signs that the day of deliverance has come at last." Let us hope so.

From all these facts and opinions it is safe to conclude that Calvinism has entered on its decline in these countries, as it has already done in America. In truth, it is about time that this hideous superstition, with its degrading doctrines of hell and damnation, went the way of all superstitions. The wonder is that its tenets did not long ago drive those born into the creed into revolt, and that it was reserved for our own day to bring forth men who have manliness enough to be ashamed of its teachings.

J. O. DONOVAN.

#### MOMENTOUS QUESTIONS.

Some of the questions discussed by the scholastics in the middle ages savored of heresy. The famous query as to how many angels could dance on the point of a needle was probably propounded by a sceptic. So too with such conundrums as

Whether angels in going from place to place  
Move over the intermediate space?

Then there was the famous question whether God could make another God like unto himself? and a similar one, if he could become a cucumber or a black-beetle as readily as a man? These were surely the suggestions of wicked sceptics. Such conundrums as whether God could make a harlot into a virgin, and the dispute as to the way in which the Virgin Mary was impregnated were doubtless the outcome of the morbid minds of celibate monks. Protestants ridicule such controversies, but their own disputes as to justification, election, baptism, future punishments, etc. are equally profitless and absurd.—LUCIANUS.

A little parson preached in a high pulpit. His two little eyes appeared just above the cushion. His morning text was: "Be of good cheer, it is I be not afraid." In the afternoon he stood on a foot-stool and announced his text: "A little while ye shall see me; again a little while ye shall not see me." The foot-stool slipped during the discourse and he verified his text.

## ACID DROPS.

Much as we hate police tyranny, we confess to a certain grim pleasure in reading how Monro's lambs chivvied some of the pious demonstrators against the publicans. Hugh Price Hughes himself (dreadful thought!) was hustled about. When the Radicals and Socialists were batoned away from Trafalgar Square these gentlemen uttered no protest. Now they are suffering from the same tyranny, and we are rather glad to see them feel the rod they helped to pickle.

A wealthy Radical of the old philosophical school, who is still living though long out of public life, used to say that Secular Societies were the only ones that really admitted the equality of the sexes, for they made no distinction of sex in their membership, their committees, or their advocacy. Some day or other this will be recognised at its full worth. Meanwhile Freethinkers will be glad to join in the chorus of congratulation on the success of Miss Fawcett at Cambridge. But they will not lose their heads; they will not talk cant; they will just stand upon their old principle of the right for the right's sake. And as they always admitted, not only in theory but in practice, the natural rights of women, so now they will as loyally refrain from befooling them—a trick which is only the old male impudence turned inside out. "Women," says a gushing writer in the *Star*, "have measured themselves against men in the toughest intellectual contests, and proved themselves the stronger." Stuff and nonsense! Cant and humbug! Examinations are not the stiffest intellectual contests. The ability to learn and the ability to do are very different. The stiff intellectual contest really comes in the world of practice. There women have not proved themselves stronger than men, and it is unlikely that they ever will. Surely the best women will not thank those who offer them honied lies. One good result of the mental elevation of women is that it will compel men to be more sincere with them.

The *Irish Catholic Times* gives "Full Details" of the apparition of Our Lady of Dolours at Castelpetroso, Italy. The apparition, it seems, showed herself to a peasant woman in this remote district over two years ago, and the account is now published under ecclesiastical approbation, although it is carefully said that "The apparition has not yet received the solemn approbation of the Holy See."

The mother of God appeared at first to a shepherdess in a cavern on the mountain side. Seven swords is said pierced her heart, her eyes with tears were raised to heaven. As there was a brilliant light, we may imagine there was perhaps a priest with a magic lantern behind the scene. At any rate thousands were led to believe in the story, a priest and a bishop were found who asserted that they too had seen Our Lady of Dolours. The tale is ratified by diocesan authority, and a miraculous cure of a boy born deaf and dumb is reported.

Living people, among them the cashier of a bank at Naples, are found ready to attest the truth of this miraculous occurrence. But what Protestant will believe in it, although he pins his faith to miracles which happened farther off and much longer ago without any equal amount of testimony?

Thunderstorms in the west of the United States have done much damage. There has also been much destruction of property and life through lightning. The *Two Worlds* argues that such events indicate this is a probation for another life, thus supporting one hypothesis, that of an all-perfect ruler of events by another, that of immortality. Will it now answer why a being who permits evil in this life should not continue to permit it in another one?

One of God's houses, a Primitive Methodist affair in Southport, caught fire on Monday. The organ was destroyed and the whole building gutted. Of course the place was insured. There isn't faith enough knocking about to trust the Lord entirely, even in regard to his own gospel-shops.

Mr. Denison, churchwarden of St. Michael's, Woburn-on-Surds, fell back dead during divine service last Sunday. Father Mostyn, of Birkenhead, is dangerously ill with blood poisoning, the effect of pricking his hand with a poisonous plant while on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The Rev. Mr. Kneist, vice-president of the General Synod of the Reformed Lutheran Church in America, was seized with paralysis during divine service at Philadelphia on Sunday, and died in his pew. The incident is perfectly natural, but how the religious press would improve the occasion if anything of the kind happened in a Secular hall. We should be treated to something like this:—"On Sunday evening the hand of God struck consternation into the infidels at the Hall of Science. During a most blasphemous passage in a lecture by their most reckless speaker, a vice-president of their Society was seen to drop off his seat and fall in a heap on the floor. He was picked up in-ensable and expired in the arms of his supporters. This shocking occurrence will be regarded as a judgment by everyone who fears God. Even the infidels are terribly staggered, and those who are not irrecoverably lost will no doubt be turned from the path of sin by this providential warning."

The Sydney *Argus* of May 6 prints a letter from Constable Willshire to his superiors at Port Augusta about the arrogance and cruelty of missionaries at Finke River. These servants of Christ preach the Gospel with whips and revolvers, and sometimes show their Christian charity by chaining up a native to broil in the sun.

Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott, Ward Beecher's successor, wonders at Ingersoll's lack of vision. Ingersoll says he sees nothing of any value to mankind in Genesis. Dr. Abbott refers him to the beautiful stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, with their exquisite moral lessons. Well, those "beautiful stories" are analysed in *Bible Heroes*. They strike a Freethinker as not too edifying. There are better "moral lessons" in any good modern novelist, and infinitely better in Shakespeare.

Dr. Abbott tells of a pigeon that flew into a naturalist's room on a stormy night, and flew out again when it cleared up. The naturalist did not hurt it. He was a Christian. Another pigeon, on another stormy night, flew into an unbeliever's room, and the unbeliever had pigeon pie for supper. Fancy such anecdote as this coming from the first pulpit in New York! Why on earth doesn't the Lord give his champions a little sense?

Rev. Dr. Cuyler, of New York, speaks of "the ribald assaults of Ingersoll." As a matter of fact, in the late discussion, Ingersoll has been the polite debater. All the impertinence and offensiveness has come from his opponents.

#### TO CANON FARRAR.

If that philosopher you scold and spurn,  
Should deign indifference from his mood to sunder,  
Ah, Canon Farrar, you might shortly learn  
What broadsides Cannon Ingersoll could thunder!  
—Edgar Fawcett.

Poor old Archdeacon Denison is declared by the *Christian World* to be in "a state of doleful dumps" For our part, we think he is both honest and logical. He declares "it is not 'intellectual freedom' that is the salt of faith; nay, it has been from the first, and will be to the last, the poison of it." This is quite true. Those who introduce reason into faith are introducing a solving power, which acts upon it as water acts upon salt. The *Christian World* itself is helping to destroy Christianity.

Dr. Momerie, the Foundling chaplain, goes too far even for the *Christian World*. It takes him to task for branding Luther's doctrine of salvation by faith as "the most vile doctrine with which the world was ever cursed," and asks him whether he is not "playing into the hands of the Atheist party."

According to Dr. Parker, men should pray more and discuss less. A capital recipe—for the pulpit!

We have read some of Parker's prayers, and we prefer the braying of a good honest jackass. They are full of twaddle and affectation. If God hears them he must be thoroughly sick. There ought to be a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Gods.

The *Belfast Weekly Star* attacks Mr. C. J. Hunt as behind the times, because when asked who supported the ideas he

attacked he said St. Augustine. The *B. W. S.* ought to know that St. Augustine is one of the most eminent authorities that could be cited to the large mass of the inhabitants of Ireland.

A well-known Chinese physician having died in New York, his funeral was attended by most of his compatriots in that city. Christian civilisation was evinced by a shower of brickbats which followed the cortège from the house to the cemetery. A Chinaman wrote to the *New York Herald* that "Especially in good Brooklyn, the city of eloquent preachers and expensive churches, every carriage was hooted at and stoned both to and from the cemetery by children, and young men in some instances." The saying, "Let the dead bury the dead," like that of hating father and mother, has always stood in the way of the reception of Christianity by the Chinese. The conduct of the New York Christian hoodlums must induce them still further to detest a faith they regard as barbarous and unnatural.

American papers strain the thing a bit at times in their efforts at acting squarely and honestly. The *Christian Witness*, of New York, being a bit short of copy the other day ran in the ten commandments. Now a lot of other semi-religious journals are reprinting them under the heading, "Pearls of Thought," crediting them to the *Witness*.

At a meeting of the Sabbath Alliance at Edinburgh, the Rev. Dr. Gibson, of Perth, deplored the fact that on the Lord's Day well-dressed crowds filled the streets and country road—"people who had plenty of opportunity of enjoying the fresh air every day in the week," and who appear to find it good to get a little also on the Sabbath. Shocking! Guid God, what is puir auld Scotland coming to?

#### AN ANSWERED PRAYER.

"Oh, where have you been, my pretty maid?"  
"To the morning service, sir," she said.  
"Did you enjoy it, my pretty maid?"  
"I did, indeed, kind sir," she said.  
"And what was the text, my pretty maid?"  
"I didn't hear it, sir," she said.  
"And what did they sing, my pretty maid?"  
"I cannot tell you, sir," she said.  
"Then why did it please you, my pretty maid?"  
"My prayer was answered there," she said.  
"And what was the answer to your prayer?"  
"Mine was the prettiest bonnet there."

The serenity of the Conference of the South-Eastern Church Alliance at Eastbourne was disturbed by a violent attack by the Rev. W. Phelps on the method of preaching in the street in canonicals, adopted by the Rev. A. J. Robinson, whom he compared to one of the Aunt Sallies at which people threw sticks. Mr. Phelps's remarks were received with hisses.

A working man who has had some experience of invitations to church, says: "When you pay your pew-rent it is 'Come to Jesus,' but as soon as you fail to shell out it is 'Go to the Devil.'"

The question of the right of theatres, music-halls, etc., at Sydney to have sacred concerts on the Sunday has been brought before the law courts, the proprietors contending that the English law is obsolete in New South Wales. The judges' decision is reserved. In any case the right of public meeting is maintained by the Secularists in Sydney as elsewhere.

The movement for revising the Presbyterian creeds in America proves to have unexpected strength, and the conservative party are taken aback. They will probably have to give up reprobation, but they fondly hope to be able to retain election and eternal damnation.

A saloon man has been found in Washington who closes his place with prayer. His application for renewal of license having been rejected on the ground that his place bore a bad name, he appeared before the commissioner in his own behalf. In reply to the question, "Do you shut up

promptly at midnight?" he answered: "When ten minutes to twelve comes, I kneel down, say my prayers and shut up" Drinking in such a place as this man keeps must be very much like partaking of the sacrament.—*Freethought.*

The Education Department of Japan has decided to compile a text-book of morals from Confucius as the best in the market. "We hope," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "they will soon learn the superiority of Christ's morals." No doubt. When they learn to give to thieves, and turn their cheeks to the smiter, they will soon be exploited by the Britisher, who calls that stuff divine with his tongue in his cheek.

Spare the rod and spoil the child is the moral of a lady's article in the *Christian Commonwealth*. She tells us naively how she gave baby his first blow, and doesn't see that she took a short cut for want of patience. The admission of such an article, which is unsigned and in a sense editorial, shows the natural tendency of Christian ethics. God punishes *his* children, and we should punish ours. Rare old Ben Jonson struck a higher note, writing to a father on the education of his son—"And from the rod or ferule I would have him free, as from the menace of them; for it is both deformed and servile."

Canon Wilberforce has been airing a story—one of the good old sort; O how often we have heard it before! yet it only happened "last week"—of a good young man among "scoffing sceptical friends" who "challenged him to kneel down and pray," and he did so, and "silent and thoughtful they left him without a word." But why not go the whole hog? Why not add that they were all converted on the spot? 'Tis a pity to spoil the dish for a hap'orth of fat.

Notwithstanding the "lapsed masses" in London, the Methodists have a mission in Paris, "the city of sin" as they call it. The Rev. W. Gibson, who bosses the affair, is urgently appealing for funds. He wants to make a special attack on the students' quarter. He is also spending £500—a pretty big sum—on a Hymn Book, with which he expects to "evangelise France." What a mouse to produce such a mountain!

A good cadger is the Rev. George Farmer, of Borstal Church, near Rochester. In his parish magazine he tells the flock how to give to his Parsonage Fund. They should lay aside a tenth of the price when they sell poultry, rabbits, or garden produce. Others should put by farthings and threepenny pieces. Even washerwomen are requested to give a trifle out of their poor wages to this clerical beggar.

The *Bournemouth Guardian* reports a discourse by the Rev. J. Ossian Davies on the Bible. We agree with him on one point. Would that people read the Bible more frequently. If they did they would become Freethinkers. But they believe it without reading it, and that's easy.

Archdeacon Sinclair is not a friend of Polytechnics for educating Londoners. He recommends—no doubt on the nothing-like-leather principle—the erection of a Westminster Abbey in the East-end "where for many hundreds of years the ashes of the illustrious dead would be committed to their stately repose, each a lesson to the million toilers of the East." We fancy the million toilers of the East are not so fond of corpses.

Lye is a very appropriate name for the town where a Mr. Moyle, from Birmingham, is carrying on "a mission." He professes himself "a convert from professed infidelity," and the pious Lyers seem to look upon him as a sort of tamed tiger. He is described as "formerly one of the most prominent infidel debaters in Birmingham." But his fame never reached our ears. Can any Birmingham Secularist throw a little more light on the illustrious Moyle?

At the Church of Mary Magdalene, Bridgenorth, the pastors instruct the sheep in the way they should go. Lest they should make any mistake the following directions are conspicuously painted up:

HINTS TO WORSHIPPERS.

1. Be in time.
2. Go straight into church,

3. Kneel down on your knees, and instruct your children to do so.
4. Join in all the prayers, singing, and amens.
5. Stand up directly the hymns are given out.
6. Do not whisper to your neighbor.
7. Keep your thoughts fixed.
8. Bow your head at the holy name of Jesus.
9. Make offertory a regular part of your worship.
10. Stand up when the clergy and choir enter or leave the church, and join in prayer for those who minister. Use the scraper and doormat, and use the hassocks only for kneeling upon, and not for footstools.

The remaining North American Indian tribes, it is said, are much excited over the expected appearance of an Indian Me-siah. The tribes camped in the river bottom, near Port Reno, are daily expecting the arrival of their greatest medicine man, who will come from the northern Cheyennes, near the Black Hills. He promises to restore the country to the Indians in its original state, with its forests, its prairies, its buffalo and wild game. They won't wait quite so long as the Christians have waited for the second coming of Jesus, for they will be exterminated by the Christians long before the Messiah comes to save them.

We wonder what sort of a choir the Rev. Mr. Madden, of Liverpool, has in his church. He says he does not ask the members how they can sing, but whether their hearts are right with God. His opinion was that "if God was offered a consecrated heart he could forgive an occasional false note." This seems to depend on whether God has a musical ear or not. If he has, he will think a consecrated heart—however excellent in its way—is no apology for an occasional false note.

According to the *Methodist Times*—that is, Hugh Price Hughes—"the rock upon which we are to build must be neither the infallibility of the Church nor the infallibility of the Bible, but the infallibility of Jesus Christ." This dismisses the Catholic dogma and the Protestant fetish, and sets up a new idol. But Jesus Christ is no more infallible than the other two. However, if the Christians pursue this line, we shall have to concentrate our attack on Jesus Christ.

*Tit Bits* answers a correspondent, "N," who has been religious for two years, and has prayed every night for prosperity. He has never got it and does not make any headway. *Tit Bits* gives him a lot of buncombe in reply. All prayers are not answered. God makes a judicious selection. *Tit Bits* is in it, but poor "N" is out. Evidently! Our advice to "N" is this—Stop praying, and spend the time in thinking and working.

The Rev. R. J. Bond, a member of the Devonport School Board, is a zealous religionist and something of a bigot. He went into one of the Board Schools and told a female candidate for a teachership that if she did not go in for the religious examination he would do all he could to ruin her prospects. Being challenged on this, at an open Board meeting, by our friend Mr. R. S. Smith, he gloried in the action, and declared he would do his utmost to blast the career of any candidate who did not qualify herself to give Biblical instruction. Unfortunately Mr. Smith was feebly supported, and Mr. Bigot Bond came off with flying colors. Still, something is gained by making these wretches take the full public responsibility of their conduct. We hope Mr. Smith will not be discouraged. He will do good by dragging these clerical ruiners of free-minded girls into the light of publicity.

Boulanger's failure is bad business for the French priests who favored his cause and looked forward to a handsome reward when the dashing shallow-pate had overturned the Republic. The Abbé Villiard expected the bishopric of Tulle. He invested 9,000 francs in the Boulanger boom, and has lost his money. We congratulate him. He will be 9,000 francs thinner when he tries to get through the narrow gate of Paradise.

Messrs. Trübner and Co. will shortly publish what promises to be an important book by Edwin Johnson on *The Rise of Christendom*. We shall notice the work when it reaches our hands.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 15, Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, All Saints, Manchester; at 11, "Heresy at Oxford"; at 3, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; at 6.30, "Is there a Future Life?"

June 22, Liverpool; 29, Reading.  
July 13, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.  
August 3, Camberwell; 10, Hall of Science; 17, Hall of Science; 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.

W. (Middlesbro').—We do not believe that falsehood is necessary to morality. The average man's goodness does not depend on his creed. Divorced from theology, morality will be nobler because more disinterested, and brighter because more intelligent.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—Yes, accidents happened to all alike, and if a Christian cannot swim he is drowned like a Freethinker. The "hand of God" people never see it when it strikes themselves.

E. CHESHIRE.—Not badly written, but you require more practice in composition.

C. MITCHELL.—To form a Branch at Bexley Heath it will be necessary to get seven persons (at least) to join the N. S. S. The Executive will then sanction the formation of a Branch and give it advice and assistance. Communicate with the secretary, R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C. Mr. Foote cannot undertake any open-air lecturing at present. His doctor warns him to be careful for some time.

J. R. WIDDUP.—We cannot answer such inquiries by post. Farrar wrote, "If Colonel Ingersoll really takes in the meaning implied in his own words, I should think that he would have recoiled before," etc. He ought to have written, "I think he should have recoiled." The double subjunctive is unnecessary and therefore improper. Indeed the whole sentence is dreadfully slipshod.

C. H. KELF.—Mr. Foote does not think it would be prudent—at any rate for the present—to put any pressure on the Branches; but he is decidedly of opinion that the Branches would do well to bear in mind the decision of the Conference as to the minimum subscription. He is convinced that the Branches, no less than the parent Society, would profit by the new policy. At any rate it is worth a trial. Get in all the members you can. This is the easier with the shilling minimum. When they are in, appeal to their generosity. Some are more liberal than others, some can afford more than others, but that is inevitable. Get from each what he can and will give in money and work. Ours is a *voluntary* society, and we should carry out the voluntary principle logically. That is Mr. Foote's view, and he urges the Branches to give it the consideration he has a right to expect. He may feel it his duty to draft a circular to the Branches on the subject by-and-by.

F. WESTON informs C. K. Laporte that the *Freethinker* can be obtained at Mr. Daw's, 7 Pratt Street, Camden Town, close to Camden Square. This correspondent is thanked for promoting our circulation.

W. LEMAITRE.—Don't take it to heart. We have as keen a nose for a joke as most people. But it isn't always possible from a man's letter, when you don't see his face, to tell that he doesn't mean what he says, especially when you have no preliminary clue.

R. G. LEES.—Better try for yourselves. You could engage him for an outdoor lecture first. We never heard him lecture, but we can speak for his earnestness and sincerity.

W. M. KNOX, secretary, Ulster Branch N. S. S., 14 Stratheden Street, Belfast, will send the two pamphlets on "Prayer" and the "Law of Parsimony" to any applicant on receipt of two stamps to cover postage.

HINDS GREEN.—Thanks. Always glad to hear from you.

W. G. RENN.—Call at 14 Clerkenwell Green, second floor, for the back numbers of the *Freethinker*. Any London Branch can do the same.

J. H. SUMMERFIELD.—Better let the Guide Notice be sent by one person or we shall get mixed. Mr. Brown sends from Newcastle.

J. K. SYKES.—Glad to learn you are still "pegging away" at Southend, and trying to push our circulation. Of course that is slow work, but a little progress is encouraging. You should duplicate your order to Mr. Forder. Probably the original miscarried.

G. E. RUNACRE says the Sunday League runs an Excursion to-day (June 15) to the South Coast of Devonshire, and wonders if some Secular Missionary could go down and wake up the Devonshire dumplings.

A. RENNOLLS.—The exclusion of your letter is not surprising. The Sunday question is hardly opened at Plymouth yet. You'll get a band on the Hoe some day. We dare say the first performance will make Drake's statue turn round.

C. E. HILL.—There is no really good Life of Paine in the field. Mr. M. D. Conway is writing one. We have thoughts of tackling the job ourselves. Meanwhile there is Linton's, which is better than none, price sixpence. Thanks for your efforts to get us new subscribers.

F. ABLARD (Stretford) writes: "About three months ago I got a newsagent to take half a dozen copies of the *Freethinker*, agreeing to take all the unsold ones myself on the Monday, but I never had to take one, and now he sells a dozen." Reader, go thou and do likewise.

UNKNOWN.—No doubt it would do good to leave the *Freethinker* in public reading rooms, or in coffee and cocoa houses. Lots of people don't know of the paper who might like to take it.

QUIZ.—The subject is too large for a paragraph. There is overwhelming proof that our four Gospels did not exist in the first century. Not a single Christian writer mentions one of them for more than a century after the death of Christ. The Tacitus passage is disputed. Even if authentic it lends no support to the miraculous narrative of the Gospels. We thank you for circulating five copies of this journal weekly.

R. ATKINSON.—It is pleasant to see the *Bradford Observer* giving a good report of the Shipley Glen demonstration. The provincial press is more impartial than the metropolitan.

W. J. GRIFFITHS.—Thanks for the cuttings. Mr. Forder shall send you a contents-sheet.

LEXICON.—No numbers were kept in stock.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—Always pleased to receive cuttings.

FREETHINKER.—The man must be a fool to charge the loss of Napoleon's wars to Atheism. Napoleon set up again the very Catholic Church which the Revolution abolished. When you heard Mr. Foote he was speaking of the Reign of Terror. The number of victims is given by Carlyle—a very accurate authority on matters of fact.

G. F. MARGETSON.—The *Freethinkers* must be fetched from 14 Clerkenwell Green. We cannot send them anywhere.

DOLE.—Cuttings are always welcome.

E. Y.—"London, E.C." means London East Central. Mr. Forder will send you the two pamphlets post free for the full published price (6d.)

B. BRIGGS.—Thanks for your ordering extra copies. We are glad to hear they sold. The Ingersoll extracts would be better arranged according to subject. We are afraid we have no room for them.

J. JACKSON.—Vaccination is a question on which Freethinkers may differ. We are opposed to it medically, and we hate it as a compulsory rite of doctor-craft.

FREETHINKER.—We are not good at conundrums, and cannot tell why the Pyramids prove the Bible is true.

P. H. ECHLIN.—The lines are amusing, but scarcely "profane" enough for the *Freethinker*.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschentum—Progressive Thinker—Fair Play—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Seafaring—Secular Thought—Liberator—Lucifer—Star—Vancouver Weekly News Advertiser—Open Court—Freethought Record—Newcastle Evening Chronicle—Portsmouth Evening News—Twentieth Century—New Zealand Public Opinion—West Sussex Gazette—Belfast Weekly Star—Edinburgh Evening News—Blyth Examiner—Coming Man—Bulletin Mensuel de la Federation Francaise de la Libre-Pensée—Sunday Notes—La Verité—Reading Observer—Irish Catholic Times—Les Etats Unis de l'Europe—Freethinkers' Magazine—Two Worlds—Body and Soul—Gornish Telegraph—Countryman—St. Michaels Union Herald—Bournemouth Guardian.

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 Oxford City Council has decided to open the free public libraries on Sunday evenings, commencing in November.

## THE FREETHOUGHT FUND.

A Fund is being raised to enable the National Secular Society to extend its work and organisation. Members and friends are invited to give a yearly donation. A list will be kept, and the annual subscribers will be periodically applied to for their promised contributions. It is earnestly hoped that *all* will give according to their means. The wealthy should subscribe their pounds, but as much value is attached to poorer men's shillings. If every reader of the *Freethinker* were to join the National Secular Society, and subscribe *something* above the minimum of one shilling, the Society would be able to carry on the propaganda of Freethought with tenfold vigor and success.

Already acknowledged £60 11s. 8d.

## Eighth List.

£ s. d.			£ s. d.		
J. Gott	0	0	6	S. Hartmann	0 10 0
T. Holstead	0	5	0	G. E. Lupton	1 0 0
J. Marsh	0	2	6	J. Tomkins	0 5 0
A Friend, Cornwall	0	10	0	Dick & Mrs. Edwards	1 0 0
A Footite	0	2	0		

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote had a capital audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening to hear his lecture on "Heresy at Oxford." There was great applause at the finish. To-day (June 15) Mr. Foote lectures in the Secular Hall, Manchester. The subjects are interesting, and we hope the local Freethinkers will counterbalance the fine weather by trying to bring their orthodox friends to the meetings.

On Saturday evening, the night before the Manchester lectures, Mr. Foote will preside at a meeting of delegates in the Secular Hall for the purpose of forming a South Lancashire Federation. All Branches in the district should be represented. Just as we are going to press we learn for the first time that the meeting is called for five o'clock. This upsets all Mr. Foote's arrangements. He will try to be present at the opening, but he is doubtful whether it will be possible.

Owing to the smaller hall being pre-engaged, the large Concert Hall, Lord Nelson Street, has been engaged for Mr. Foote's evening lecture on June 22. As the hall will take some filling, especially at this time of the year, the Liverpool Freethinkers should make a special effort.

— We are issuing a fresh supply of Tracts, each bearing (at the end) an advertisement of the *Freethinker*. There will be twenty in all to suit a variety of tastes. Most of them are entirely new. They involve a considerable outlay, and when all are sold they barely pay the cost of production. We therefore appeal to our friends to distribute them widely. First and last our output of Tracts amounts to over half a million. Particulars of the new issue will be found in the advertisement. Numbers 9 to 16, inclusive, are now on sale. The rest will be ready next week.

The final numbers of *Bible Heroes* are on sale at Mr. Forder's. The Second Series, bound up like the first, is daily expected from the binder's.

The London Secular Federation's fourth course of Free Lectures opened on Thursday June 5, at the Hammersmith Club (No. 1 the Grove). Mr. A. B. Moss addressed a very good audience on "Religious Guide Posts." The Christian side was represented in the discussion by the Rev. F. L. Donaldson and Mr. Dell, two able and courteous opponents. Others were prevented from speaking by lack of time. Mr. Moss challenged the clergyman to a set debate, which it is hoped may be arranged. Mr. G. Standring is the second lecturer on Thursday June 12; Mr. J. M. Robertson the third, on June 19th; and Mr. Foote winds up on June 26. Freethinkers in the district willing to co-operate in propagandist work are requested to communicate with Mr. H. Courtney, 8 Norland-road North, Notting-hill, W.

The London Secular Federation is organising a brake excursion to Epping Forest on Sunday, July 20. Each

Branch will arrange its own contingent, and an extra one will start from the Hall of Science. If possible the contingents will all join on the road. The final trysting place is the "King's Oak Hotel," High Beach, where a substantial tea will be served at ninepence. Mr. Foote will join the party. Further particulars in due course.

Mr. Edmund Pounceby is the new secretary of the London Secular Federation in place of Mr. G. Standring who has resigned. Mr. Standring only accepted the office temporarily until the Federation was well established. The Council is grateful for his services and has elected him a vice-president. In that capacity he will continue to take his share in the business of the Federation.

Owing to the decease of the North London Branch the open-air station at the Midland Arches was in danger of collapsing. Miss Edith Vance, however, has undertaken to carry it on if possible. Surely half a dozen Freethinkers will volunteer to help her. They should communicate with her by letter to save the time and expense of preliminary meetings. Her address is 24 Caroline Street, Camden Town, N.W. We may add that it is proposed to shift the stand away from the Babel under the arch.

Mr. Rowney must be supported. He is a modest man but he means business. Last Sunday his open-air meeting at Tottenham was broken up by well-dressed Christian rowdies, egged on by the local sky-pilots. But Mr. Rowney will stick to his post. He will be there again to-day (June 15) at 3.30, and we beg the Freethinkers of the district to rally round him. Mr. Rowney is the very opposite of a ferocious speaker. Those who broke up his meeting were not exasperated by anything he said. They acted from sheer wanton bigotry, and their antics must not be tolerated.

The Yorkshire Secular Federation held a very successful demonstration at Shipley Glen on Sunday. About a thousand people were present. Mr. H. Smith presided. Mr. W. R. Atkinson, secretary, read a statement of the society's objects. An Address was then delivered by Mr. A. B. Wakefield. This was followed by a resolution against the Blasphemy Laws, proposed by J. G. Fisher, seconded by J. Kay, supported by Mr. Leowy (a Jew), and carried. Evidently the Yorkshire Freethinkers only want organising to become a power.

The Leicester Secularists, headed by Mr. Gimson, have interviewed Sir James Whitehead, the Liberal candidate, on the subject of the Blasphemy Laws. They laid their case before him ably and clearly. All they wanted was legal equality—no favor and no disability. Sir James Whitehead replied that he was in favor of the reform they desired, and added "I will support anything brought before Parliament which will put you on a fair footing of equality with all religious denominations." Thanks, Sir James. Thanks also to the Leicester Secularists for obtaining this straight declaration. We hope their example will be followed in every constituency.

The *Reading Observer*, which, considering the general attitude of the press to our movement, is a remarkably fair paper, inserts a capital letter by Mr. J. M. Robertson in reply to an abusive Catholic who criticised the report of his recent lectures at Reading.

The Secretary of the Liverpool Branch desires to acknowledge the receipt of 15s. 6d. in response to an appeal on behalf of Mr. James Thompson, a veteran Freethinker, who upheld the cause a quarter of a century ago. He has now been suffering from a most painful malady over two years, and has undergone three operations (the earlier one the first of its kind), and is now at an advanced age, without hope of recovery. Further donations will be thankfully received by Mr. V. W. Hardwick, 1 Olive Street, Liverpool; or the Secretary, at the hall, and duly acknowledged.

Mr. A. B. Moss is going North shortly. The Tyneside Branches should lose no time in arranging dates. Mr. Moss proposes to spend his holiday from July 28 to September 17 at this work.

Mr. George Jacob Holyoake commences in the June number of the *Freethinker's Magazine* a paper entitled "What would Follow on the Effacement of Christianity?" He lays down the tenets of Christianity as seven in number. 1. The Bible,



the standard of Truth. 2. Three co-equal Gods. 3. A God of Love, appeased by blood. 4. Vengeance, by unending torment. 5. A Devil, who superintends the torment. 6. Prayer, as aid-bringer. 7. Faith, as a final surety. He will not have much difficulty in showing that the effacement of these ideas will accelerate progress. Among the other attractive contents of the *Freethinker's Magazine* we mention Prof. Davidson on "Bruno's Thought," and Lydia Chase's "Hindrances to the Advancement of Women in America."

Centuries ago Englishmen, as well as continental Christians, used to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to worship at the bogus tomb of Christ. Now the Mecca of the English speaking world is Stratford-on-Avon. Last year 20,000 persons, of twenty-one nationalities, but chiefly from America and the Colonies, paid for admission into the house in which Shakespeare was born. The miracle-workers go out with the world's childhood. The poet is the true magician. It is easier to find a talking jackass than a man who can write "Hamlet."

The *Edinburgh Evening News*, which had done so much for the intellectual culture of Modern Athens has nothing less than a Freethought article on the Decline of the Power of the Pulpit. This it traces to the fact that the ideas which used to give it power are out of harmony with modern thought which demands proof for all assertions.

Mr. W. W. Collins has been on a trip to New Zealand. His lectures are well reported in the *New Zealand Public Opinion*. Sir Robert Stout, who was at one time prime minister of the colony, presided at one of his lectures at Dunedin. No doubt his visit will give a fillip to the cause in New Zealand.

A new London Cemetery and Crematorium Co. has been formed, and proposes to erect and work a crematorium within the ground which it has acquired near Streatham and Mitcham, Surrey.

The Conference of German Freethinkers at Hannover appears to have been a success. A public meeting was afterwards addressed by Drs. Specht, Voelkel, Rüdte and Frau Hedwig Wilhelmi.

The Newcastle Sunday League, undeterred by the prohibition of music in the parks by the Town Council, are giving a series of musical performances on the Town Moor. Together with the programme they issue a bright little paper entitled *Sunday Notes*.

Mr. Foote's portrait by Amey, of Portsmouth, will soon be on sale. It is an excellent one. The price will be one shilling for the cabinet size. Some larger ones will be done at a higher price.

#### GOD AND MAN.

"If God did not exist"—it is Voltaire, the enemy of religions, who speaks—"it would be necessary to invent him." Why? "Because," adds the same Voltaire, "if I had to do with an Atheist prince whose interest it was to have me pounded in a mortar, I am quite sure that I would be pounded." Strange aberration of a great mind! And if you had to do with a godly prince whose confessor commanded him, on the part of God, to burn you alive, are you not quite sure that you would be burnt? Do you forget, then, you antichrist, the Inquisition and St. Bartholomew, the stakes of Vanini and of Bruno, and the tortures of Galileo, and the martyrdom of so many Freethinkers? . . . This is not a question of distinguishing between use and abuse: for I would answer you that on a mystical and supernatural principle, a principle which embraces all, which explains all, which justifies all, like the idea of God, any consequence is legitimate, and the zeal of the believer is the sole judge of the occasion.

"Formerly," says Rousseau, "I thought that a man could be honest, and yet do without God: but I have got over that error." At bottom this is the same reasoning as that of Voltaire, the same justification of intolerance. Man does good and abstains from evil only by the consideration that a good Providence is watching him. Anathema upon those who deny it! And, as a height of unreasonableness, the same man who thus claims for our virtue the sanction of a reward-

ing and avenging Deity, is also the one who teaches the native goodness of man as a dogma of faith.

For my part I say: The first duty of man, intelligent and free, is to instantly chase the idea of God from his mind and conscience: for God, if he exists, is essentially hostile to our nature, and we advance in no way by his authority. We arrive at science in spite of him; we arrive at well-being in spite of him; at society in spite of him; every progress of ours is a victory in which we crush Divinity.

Say no more that the ways of God are impenetrable! We have penetrated them, these ways, and we have read therein, written in letters of blood, the proofs of impotence if not of bad will on the part of God. My reason, so long humiliated, gradually rises to the infinite; in time it will discover all that is hidden from its inexperience; with time I shall be less and less an artisan of woe, and by the light that I shall have acquired, by the perfectionment of liberty, I will purify myself, I will idealise my being, I will become the chief of creation, the equal of God.

A single instant of disorder, which the almighty could have prevented, and which he has not prevented, accuses his Providence and puts his wisdom in fault; the smallest progress that man, ignorant, abandoned and betrayed, accomplishes towards good, honors him without measure. By what right should he say to me: *Be holy because I am holy?* Lying spirit, I answer him, imbecile God, thy reign is finished; seek among the brutes for other victims. I know that I am not holy and never can become so: and how can you be holy if I am like you? Eternal father, Jupiter or Jehovah, we have learnt to know thee: Thou art, thou wert, thou shalt ever be the jealous of Adam, the tyrant of Prometheus. Therefore, I do not fall into the sophism refuted by St. Paul when he forbids the vessel to say to the potter "Why hast thou made me so?" I do not reproach the author of things for having made of me an inharmonious creature, an incoherent assemblage. I could only exist on that condition. I only say to him: Why dost thou deceive me? Why by thy silence hast thou unchained egoism in me? Why hast thou submitted me to the torture of universal doubt, by the bitter illusion of the antagonistic ideas which thou hast put in my understanding? doubt of the truth, doubt of justice, doubt of my conscience and of my liberty, doubt of thy self oh God! and as a consequence of this doubt, necessity of war with myself and with my fellows! Behold, supreme father, what thou hast done for our happiness and thy glory; behold what were thy will and thy government from the very origin; behold the bread kneaded in blood and tears, with which thou hast fed us. The sins for which we ask thee forgiveness, it is thou who hast made us commit them; the temptations from which we conjure thee to deliver us, it is thou, who hast held them out to us, and the Satan who tempts us, it is thee.

Thou didst triumph and no one dared to contradict thee, when after having tormented in his soul and his body, the just Job, figure of our humanity, thou didst insult his candid piety, his discreet and respectful ignorance. We were as nothing before thy invisible majesty, to which we gave the heavens as dais and the earth for a footstool. And now thou art dethroned and broken. Thy name so long the last word of the *savant*, the sanction of the judge, the strength of the prince, the hope of the poor, the refuge of the repentant criminal; well then! that incommunicable name, henceforward given up to contempt and anathema, shall be hissed among men. For God is tyranny and misery, God is folly and cowardice; God is hypocrisy and lies; God is evil. As long as humanity bows before an altar, humanity, slave of priests and kings, shall be reprobated; as long as a man, in the name of God receives the oath of another, society will be founded upon perjury; peace and love will be banished from among mortals. God, retire! and from to-day, cured of thy fear and become wise, I swear, my hand extended to the heavens, that thou art only the tormentor of my reason, the spectre of my conscience.

Therefore I deny the supremacy of God over humanity; I reject his providential government, the non-existence of which is sufficiently established by the metaphysical and economic hallucinations of humanity—in a word, by the martyrdom of our species; I decline the jurisdiction of the supreme being over man; I deprive him of his titles of father, king, judge, good, clement, merciful, helpful, rewarder and avenger. All these attributes of which the idea of Providence is composed, are only a caricature of humanity, irreconcilable with the autonomy of civilisation and refuted by the history of its aberrations and catastrophies.

*From the French of Proudhon, translated by Hinds Green.*

## REVIEW.

*Christ and Krishna.* By JOHN M. ROBERTSON. London: Freethought Publishing Company. 1890. Price 2s.

SINCE the last century, when our connection with India gradually brought trustworthy information of Hindu mythology, there has been some speculation as to the possible connection between the legends of Christ and those of the god Krishna. The subject is one wrapped in some obscurity and difficulty, arising from the uncertain character of Hindu chronology. On the one hand it has been asserted that certain elements in Krishnaism have been derived from Christianity, and on the other the reverse has been as stoutly maintained. It must be admitted that the latter side has been badly represented by such writers as the Rev. Robert Taylor, Kersey Graves, Louis Jacolliot and Mrs. Besant, who, in her *Roots of Christianity*, seems to confuse the Bhagvat Gita with the Bhagvat Purana. Some time since we felt called on to warn Freethinkers against unduly pressing coincidences in legends when their dates could not be accurately determined.\* Mr. Robertson deserves the thanks of all Freethinkers for his endeavor to set the matter at rest. The result is scarcely as definite as we might wish, but this arises from the difficulties of the subject, and Mr. Robertson's impartial disposition, which prevents any overstatement of his case.

So far as anyone not a Sanskrit scholar can do, Mr. Robertson seems to have surveyed the whole ground. He thoroughly succeeds in rebutting the position that Krishnaism borrowed from Christianity. He establishes that the name of Krishna and his worship as a god existed before the Christian era, though it has undoubtedly developed since. He shows that, in its pre-Christian form, it contained some at least of the myth elements which have been claimed as borrowed from Christianity. Of these may be mentioned the story that the infant Krishna was sought to be killed by the tyrant Kansa, and that Krishna himself killed Kansa, a story referred to by Patanjali in the second century, B.C., as being exhibited in dramatic representation. But the myth, of a predicted child whose life is vainly sought to be destroyed, is, as Mr. Robertson himself points out, so widely extended that it is not easy to draw any conclusion as to its origin. Mr. Robertson holds that the "obviously mythical story in Matthew of the massacre of the innocents by Herod was doubtless concocted by blending the legend of the child massacre by Pharaoh with the legend of the quasi-Messianic, doom escaping, and finally crucified Cyrus, who stood high in Jewish esteem as a liberator of the captive race and a believer in their God; and adding the prophecy of Zoroaster." But, as we point out elsewhere, there is recorded in Josephus an actual historic, Messianic conspiracy in the reign of Herod, which was stifled in blood by that monarch. The incident connected with the infancy of Krishna of the visit of his foster father, Nanda, who goes to the Holy City of Mathura† to pay his taxes, Mr. Robertson, to our mind, does not prove to have existed before Christianity, though he gives good reason for believing that the story in Luke is mythical. Indeed throughout, it seems to us, Mr. Robertson is more successful in showing the mythical elements in the Gospels than in actually tracing them to the Hindu stories of Krishna. His examination of the Christian legends is one of the most valuable features of the work, and the suggestion that the birth myths are due to a ritual of a Babe Sun God is one that will not hastily be dismissed by any competent critic.

But our own frequently expressed opinion is that although Christianity was affected from the East, and that mainly through the missionaries of Buddhism, its extra Jewish legends and doctrines are chiefly to be sought in Egypt, with which country we know Christianity had the closest contact, if it did not virtually arise there. For Mr. Robertson to go to Devaki and Krishna for the origin of the worship of the Virgin Mother and child is travelling far for what certainly existed in Egypt for two thousand years before the Christian era. His theory that Isis and Horus may have been derived from India must be dismissed as utterly without evidence.

Before dismissing the similarities between the stories told of Krishna and of Christ, it should be mentioned that as far as documentary evidence is concerned they mostly depend on the Bhagvat Purana, which the chief authorities assign to the tenth or the eleventh century of our era. In that Purana,

they by no means assume that close parallel which is made by selecting here and there special details, a method which as Warburton long since pointed out, would make King Arthur and William the Conqueror to be one and the same person.

It is noticeable that Mr. Robertson makes little of the doctrinal similarities between Krishnaism and Christianity, although to our mind they even deserve better attention than the likeness of their legends. Mr. Robertson justly points out that certain commonplaces of ethics and theology are equally inevitable conclusions in all religious systems that rise above savagery, but it is unquestionable that in the Gospel of John there is a theosophic doctrine which formed no part of ordinary Judaism and which is not found in the Synoptic gospels. Many parallels are found in the Bhagvat Gita, an often translated episode of the Mahabharata. Chiefly on this account the Bhagvat Gita is usually assigned to about the third century of our era. But though nothing can be founded on the date, our own opinion is clear that the Gita is an original composition in no way indebted to Christianity, but founded on the Hindu doctrine of transmigration.

In conclusion we warmly commend Mr. Robertson's work to the study of all interested in the origin of Christian myths, with the assurance that even those who do not agree with him will find much food for thought, and stimulating suggestion. We trust the sale of the work will in some measure compensate him for the undoubted pains he has taken in his inquiry.

J. M. W.

### HIS FRIEND'S DREAM!

Colonel Ingersoll at the last Lotus Club dinner told a new and funny story. Here it is:

"I have a friend," said the genial Bob, "who dreamed that he died and went to heaven. He wandered through the place without meeting any one whom he had ever known or heard of. Meeting a spirit, he asked: 'Where's Voltaire?' 'Oh, he's not here.' 'Nor Jean-Jacques Rousseau?' 'No.' 'Nor Bob Ingersoll?' 'Oh, dear me, no! They're all over there in hell,' and the spirit pointed away to a place quite distant. 'Can I go over there and see the place?' Certainly; you can get a return ticket if you like.' So the man bought his ticket and started.

"He came to a most charming place, and, entering, was amazed to find it delightful in every way. He met all his friends, companions and the men whose writing he had admired, and to one expressed his unbounded appreciation of all the attractions there. 'Yes, it's very beautiful. You should have seen the place when we came. We have made it over,' said one of the Freethinkers. The man who had come visiting left the others and wandered anxiously up and down, looking to the right and left. 'For what are you searching?' asked one of him. 'I am looking for some one to whom I can sell my return ticket,' was the answer."—*Chicago Herald.*

### JACK IN THE BOX.

I SAMUEL V.

The Philistines once took the ark of God,  
Removed it with Jehovah to Ashdod,  
And placed it safely in old Dagon's house,  
Then locked the door, and held a great carouse.  
When Dagon rose, and saw the wooden box,  
He said: "What's this?"—and gave it sundry knocks  
Which roused Jehovah,—fast asleep inside,—  
Who thought it inconsistent with his pride  
To let a stranger knock him thus about,  
As if he were a mere terrestrial lout.  
Out popped the Jew-god in a dreadful wax,  
And gave him two or three celestial smacks,  
Which brought the bloated Dagon to the ground;  
And *thus*, next morn, the heathen god was found:  
"Deprived of head and hands,—a wretched stump,  
"With old Jehovah's footmarks on his rump."  
Now when the Philistines their god did see,  
They said: "Two of a trade will ne'er agree:  
Let's send the bruiser back unto his Jews,  
Or else he'll plague us like the very deuce."  
The people rose,—the ark they seized upon,  
And in an hour the pugilist was gone.  
Though far away, he played a nasty trick,  
For all victorious Philistines fell sick,  
Sore smitten in the seat with emerods—  
A plague sent by this dirtiest of gods.

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

\* See article "Krishna and Christ," *Freethinker*, June 30, 1889.  
† Mr. Robertson lays no stress on the suspicious fact that in the Gospel of the Infancy the child Jesus is said to have worked miracles at the city of Matarea, which is placed in Egypt.

An attorney in a storm, prayed, saying: "Lord I beseech thee, hear my prayer now, for thou knowest I trouble thee but seldom."

**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, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Bible Biography."  
 Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Is the Story of the Bible Good?" Social evening every Monday at 8. Friday, at 8, discussion.  
 Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Freethought and Politics."  
 Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Meaning of Materialism."  
 West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7, Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, "Socialism and Secularism."

**OPEN AIR PROPAGANDA.**

Battersea Park Gates 11.15, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Liberation."  
 Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "Bible Barbaities."  
 Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. F. Millar, "Christianity and Freedom."  
 Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Life and Character of Christ."  
 Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. L. Keen, "Six Days' Hard Labor."  
 Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. L. Keen, "Six Days' Hard Labor."  
 Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Christ and Crime." June 18, at 8, Mr. E. Calvert, "The Soul."  
 Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Life Hereafter."  
 Mile End Waste, 11.30, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Christianity: Is it Moral?"  
 New Southgate, Betstyle Bridge, 11.30, a Freethought lecture.  
 Old Southgate—On the Green, 7, Mr. J. Rowney, "Jesus Christ."  
 Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "Recantations."  
 Regent's Park, near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Life and Character of Christ."  
 Tottenham—Corner of Seven Sisters Road, 3.30, J. Rowney, "Our Blessed Lord."  
 Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. W. Heaford "The Miraculous Basis of Christianity."  
 Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. Ramsey, "A New Gospel Harmony."  
 Wood Green—Jolly Butchers' Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "Christ as a Teacher."  
 Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite the Arsenal gates), 7, Mr. Sam Standring, "The Triune God."

**COUNTRY.**

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. H. Smith, 11, "What Think ye of Christ?"; 7, "Her House is the Way to Hell."  
 Heckmondwike—at Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, business meeting.  
 Hull Branch—No. 2 Room, Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, 6.30, Mr. W. Craig, "Witchcraft."  
 Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. E. S. Jones, "Creation and Evolution."  
 Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 6.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Heresy at Oxford"; 3, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; 6.30, "Is there a Future Life?"  
 Newcastle—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, meeting of the council of North-Eastern Secular Federation; delegates not met at train are requested to meet their Newcastle friends at Societies' Rooms at 11; tea provided for delegates at 6d. each. At 6.30 band performance on Newcastle Town Moor, leader, Mr. T. Woods  
 Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Mr. J. F. Moulton, a reading, "Velvet and Vice."  
 Rochdale—Town Hall Square (weather permitting), Mr. Ernest Evans, 3, "Origin of the Earth"; 6.30, "Man's Place in Nature according to Paley and Darwin."  
 Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Capt. Pfoundes, 11, "The Science of Religion, Philosophies and Ethics"; 3, "Theosophy: its Follies, Fallacies, and False Pretences"; 7, "Buddhism: What it Was, Is, and Is Not."

**LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.**

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, London, S.E.— June 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.  
 H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—June 15, Birmingham.  
 E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—June 15, Liverpool; 22, Birmingham; 29, Rochdale. July 20, Sheffield.  
 T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—June 15 (morning and evening), Battersea; 22 (morning), Camberwell. July 14 (morning), Wood Green.

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