

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

BRADLAUGH'S GHOST.

DIRECTLY after Charles Bradlaugh's death we expressed a belief that the Christians would concoct stories about him as soon as it was safe to do so. It took some time to concoct and circulate the pious narratives of the deathbeds of Voltaire and Thomas Paine, and a proper interval is necessary in the case of the great Iconoclast. Already, however, the more superstitious and fanatical Christians are shaking their heads and muttering that "Bradlaugh must have said something when he was dying, only they wouldn't allow believers in his sick room to hear it." By and bye the more cunning and unscrupulous will come to the aid of their weaker brethren, and a circumstantial story will be circulated in Sunday-schools and Christian meetings.

We are well aware that Mrs. Bonner took every precaution. She has the signed testimony of the nurses, that her father never spoke on the subject of religion during his last illness. But this may not avail, for similar precautions are admitted to have been taken in the cases of Voltaire and Paine, and, in despite of this, the Christian traducers have forged the testimony of imaginary interlopers, whose word cannot be disproved, as they never existed outside the creative fancy of these liars for the glory of God.

It is quite a superstition that truth is always a match for falsehood. George Eliot remarked that the human mind takes absurdity as asses chew thistles. We add that it swallows falsehood as a cat laps milk. It was humorously said the other day by Colonel Ingersoll that "The truth is the weakest thing in the world. It always comes into the arena naked, and there it meets a healthy young lie in complete armor, and the result is that the truth gets heked." One good, solid lie will knock out a hundred truths." It has done so with respect to the death of Voltaire and Paine, and it will do so with respect to the death of Charles Bradlaugh.

Meanwhile the Spiritualists are having an innings. Charles Bradlaugh was buried by his friends at Woking, but his ghost is said to have turned up at Birmingham. It appears from a report in the *Medium and Daybreak* that Mr. Charles Gray, of 139 Pershore-road, being "sadly sorrow-stricken by the passing away of a son," was "constrained to remain at home" on the evening of May 31. A seance was arranged "with a few friends," and of course a message was received from the dear departed boy. This was conveyed through Mr. Russell, junior, whose age is not stated. Then Mr. Reedman "was controlled to write by C. Bradlaugh." Mr. Reedman wrote "in a perfectly unconscious state, and on the departure of the influence was much surprised" on being told of the nature of the communication.

Mr. Reedman's surprise may have been great, but it scarcely equals our own. One would imagine that if Charles Bradlaugh still lived, and were able to communicate with people in this world, he would

speaking to his beloved daughter, and to the friends who loved him with a deathless affection. Why should he go all the way to Birmingham instead of doing his first business in London? Why should he turn up at the house of Mr. Gray? Why should he "control" the obscure Mr. Reedman? This behavior is absolutely foreign to the character of Charles Bradlaugh. It was not one of his weaknesses to beat about the bush. He went straight to his mark, and found a way or made one. Death seems to change a man, if we may believe the Spiritualists; but if it has altered Charles Bradlaugh's character, it has effected a still more startling change in his intellect and expression.

Here is a "correct copy" of Charles Bradlaugh's message to mankind, and most of our readers will regard it as a very Brummagem communication:—

"As I am not to speak (so says the 'Warrior Chief'), I am to say in writing, I have found a life beyond the grave that I did not wish for nor believe in; but it is even so. My voice shall yet declare it. I have to undo all, or nearly all, I have done, but I will not complain. My mind is subdued, but I will be a man. It is a most glorious truth that has now more clearly dawned upon my mind, that there is a grand and noble purpose before all men, worth living for! May this be the dawn of a new and glorious era of the spiritual life of your humble friend Charles Bradlaugh!

"There is a God! There is a Divine principle. There is more in life than we wot of, but vastly more in death! Oh! for a thousand tongues to declare the truths which are now fast dawning upon my bewildered mind! Death, the great leveller, need have no more terrors for us, for it has been conquered by the Great Spirit, in giving us a never-ending life in the glorious spheres of immortal bliss. O my friends! may I be permitted to declare, more fully and fervently, the joys which fill my mind. Language fails, no pen can describe."

Our own impression is that Professor Huxley was justified in saying that Spiritualism adds a new terror to death. Fancy the awful depth of flaccid imbecility into which Charles Bradlaugh must have fallen, to indulge in "ohs," and gasp out "glorious," "glorious," and talk of his "subdued" and "bewildered" mind, and bid himself be "a man." It was not thus that he spoke in the flesh. His language was manly, firm, and restrained; his attitude was bold and self-reliant. After four months in the "spirit world" he is positively trembling and drivelling! It is enough to make the rugged Iconoclast turn in his grave. Messrs Gray and Reedman may rely upon it that Charles Bradlaugh is *not* able to enter No. 139 Pershore-road, Birmingham; if he were, he would descend in swift wrath upon his silly traducers, who have put their own inanity into his mouth, making the great, virile Atheist talk like a little, flabby Spiritualist after an orgie of ginger-beer.

Anyone may see at a glance that the style of this message, from beginning to end, is not Charles Bradlaugh's. *Whose* style it is we cannot say. We do not pretend to fathom the arcana of Spiritualism. It may be Mr. Reedman's, it may be another's. If it be Mr. Reedman's, he must have been guilty of fraud or the victim of deception. Three distinct hypotheses are possible. Either someone else pro-

duced or concocted the message while he was in a foolish trance, or he wrote it himself consciously, or he had been thinking of Charles Bradlaugh before falling into the foolish trance and the message was due to unconscious cerebration.

We forbear to analyse this wretched stuff, though we might show its intrinsic absurdity and self-contradiction. One monstrous piece of folly bestrides the rest like a colossus—"Your humble friend Charles Bradlaugh." Shade of Uriah Heep! Charles Bradlaugh the "humble friend" of the illustrious Gray and Reedman! Think of it, Lord Halsbury; think of it, Lord Randolph Churchill. The giant who fought you, and beat you, in the law courts and in Parliament; the man whose face was a challenge; the man who had the pride, without the malignity, of Lucifer; this very man crawls into a Birmingham house, uninvited and unexpected, and announces himself as the "humble friend" of some pudding-headed people, engaged in a fatuous occupation that makes one blush for one's species.

Surely if Charles Bradlaugh's ghost is knocking about this planet, having a mission to undo the work of his lifetime in the flesh, it should begin the task in London. It was at the Hall of Science that Charles Bradlaugh achieved his greatest triumphs as a public teacher, and it is there that he should first attempt to undo his work, to unteach his teaching, to disabuse the minds of his dupes. Of course we shall be told that he must communicate through "mediums," and that the medium must be "controlled" by Charles Bradlaugh's spirit; but to this we reply that Charles Bradlaugh controlled men easily while he was "in the flesh," and it is inconceivable that he has lost that old power if he still survives.

On the whole, we think the Spiritist trick is worse than the malignity of orthodox Christians. A lie about a man's death-bed ends there, and consigning him to hell for his infidelity is only a pious wish that cannot affect his fate. But getting hold of a man's ghost ("spirit" they call it) after his death; making it turn up at public and private sittings of obscure fools; setting it jabbering all the flatulent nonsense of its manipulators; and using it in this manner until it has to be dismissed for a newer, more fashionable, and more profitable shadow; all this is so hideous and revolting that the ordinary Christian lies about infidels seem almost a compliment.

This Gray-Reedman story is probably the beginning of a long and wretched business. The Philistines are upon thee, Charles Bradlaugh! They will harness thee in their mill, and make thee grind their grist; and fools that were not worth a moment of thy time while thou livedst will command thee by the hour; and Sludge the Medium will use thy great name to puff his obscene vanity and swell his obscene gains. This is the worst of all thy trials, for thou canst not defend thyself; and, in thy helplessness, fools and pigmies cut capers over thy grave.

Yes, the Bradlaugh ghost is booked by the Spiritists, the Barnums of all the legions of the dead. For the moment, it is true, the canny editor of the *Medium and Daybreak* hesitates to commit himself. He expresses no opinion; he merely tenders the bereaved Mr Gray his "sincere sympathies at this time of sorrow." But J. Burns will not hold back if the Bradlaugh ghost "catches on." At present he is working the spirit of Robert Bruce, of whom he has some nice photographs—how taken is best known to the takers. But Charles Bradlaugh will be "better business." He is a fresh ghost, and Robert Bruce can be dropped until he is wanted again, or used only north of the Tweed. We shall probably have more idiotic "messages" from Bradlaugh's ghost, and perhaps his "spirit" photograph taken in the dark. The Spiritists provoked his laughter while he lived, but they convert him easily now he is dead.

G. W. FOOTE.

DREAMS.

"Irrational as may be the attributing of mind to the inanimate world, the primitive mind seems to have been led to it step by step, through an almost unavoidable interpretation of dreams."—A. Bain, "*The Emotions and the Will*," p. 529.

DREAMS are the foundation of faith. To the savage they first suggest the theory of another self. When he dreams that he goes to hunt or fight he can only account for his imagination by the supposition that he has a second self or soul, that has thus acted while his body has rested. Hence dreams are invested with what Theosophists call a supernormal character. Other religionists, indeed, termed them divine. Homer says they came from Zeus, and the same belief, as we shall see, can be found in the Bible.

Sir Samuel Baker, in his *Nile Tributaries* (p. 130), says: "If in a dream a particular course of action is suggested, the Arab believes that God has spoken and directed him. The Arab scribe or historian would describe the event as the voice of the Lord (*Kallam el Allah*) having spoken unto him, or that God appeared to him in a dream and said." With this key we can understand how much of the alleged word of God is nothing better than oriental dreams.

The Lord is said to have declared through Moses, "If there be a prophet among you I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream" (Num. xii., 6). This method of divine revelation is alluded to in Job xxxiii., 14-16, "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth his instruction." "God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and threatened him for taking Abraham's wife" (Gen. xx., 3). So he revealed himself and his angels to his favorite Jacob (Gen. xxviii., 12). "God came to Laban, the Syrian, in a dream by night" (Gen. xxxi., 24) to warn him against touching juggling Jacob. Joseph dreams of his own future advancement and of the famine in Egypt. Gideon was visited by the Lord in the night, and encouraged by some other fellow's dream (Judges vii.). Jahveh appeared also to his servant, Sultan Solomon, "in a dream by night" (1 Kings iii., 5), though he refused to answer Saul (1 Sam. xxviii., 6). Daniel, too, was a dreamer and dream interpreter (Dan. ii., 19; vii., 1).

The original meaning of the Hebrew word *cohen* or priest is said to be "diviner." It is, I believe, still so in Arabic. Prophets and dreamers are frequently classed together in the Bible as in Deut. xiii., 1: "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams." Jer. xxvii., 9: "Therefore hearken ye not to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers." Zech x., 2: "The diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams." When religion is organised, the dreamers and interpreters of dreams who are an irresponsible class, fall into the background before the priests.

It is the peculiarity of Christianity that it is ostensibly founded on dreams. The only evidence of the primary doctrine of the Incarnation is a dream. Joseph was minded to put away his espoused wife, finding her with child, when "behold the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream." On this extraordinary foundation we have the story of a man without a father and a god with a mother. The whole faith of Christendom rests on the unauthenticated report of a dream. This is the natural and fitting support of a creed with a phantom god, a bogey devil, an imaginary heaven, and a nightmare hell.

Dreams and cognate abnormal mental phenomena sufficiently account for the belief in ghosts, gods, devils, angels, revelation, and inspiration. This being so, it is unphilosophical to invoke the aid of other causes.

J. M. WHEELER.

WHERE IS THE PUBLIC PROSECUTOR?

A SHOCKING CASE OF BLASPHEMY.

It is with sincere regret that we, in the discharge of our public duty as journalists, are compelled to direct attention to that which we have described as a shocking case of blasphemy—a description which will presently be seen to be amply justified by the facts of the case.

It may be necessary to premise that we are in no way seeking to restrict liberty of thought or expression. Freedom is a very precious thing; it is a right which, having once been won, must be preserved at all costs. But the freedom of which we speak—the only kind, in fact, which has any charms for us—is two-sided. We insist not only on liberty to do as we please, but also on the co-ordinate right to prevent other people from doing as *they* please. Without the latter, the former is a juiceless platitude, a monotonous equality.

This being conceded—and no reasoning being would for a moment contest the position just stated—we have established our right to call the attention of the public and the authorities to that which we venture to characterise as a wanton outrage upon the deepest and holiest sentiments of an important section of the community. It may here be necessary to explain that we, in common with all persons possessing common-sense, regard the deities of the Greek and Roman Pantheon with more admiration and respect than the later Christian variety. We have a warm corner in our hearts for Venus, and entertain a genuine liking for Vulcan, the John L. Sullivan of his time—indeed, we would rather bow the knee (if at all) to the so-called Pagan than to the Christian deities. Jupiter and his colleagues satisfied the religious needs of civilised nations which flourished before Jesus Christ was heard of; and Jupiter and Co. are good enough for us.

Now we come—perhaps somewhat tardily—to the point. The religious feelings of latter-day Pagans are being cruelly and wantonly outraged by the public exhibition of huge colored posters, in which the gods of ancient Greece and Rome are made the subject of coarse and vulgar ridicule. It is done with a shameless cynicism that is simply appalling. The poster in question advertises the performances of a company of strolling players, organised and managed by a sheriff of the city of London! This motley crew of professional blasphemers place before the public a “burlesque” entitled *Venus* in, which the ungodly and dissolute may perhaps find a degrading pleasure, but to which we could not be dragged by fiery, untamed cab-horses. We can, therefore, say nothing as to the performance, which probably discloses horrors whereof the pictorial bill conveys but a faint suggestion.

The poster, however, gives us ample warrant for asking the question, Where is the Public Prosecutor? The blasphemous bill represents a sylvan scene (presumably in the Elysian Fields) with a host of deities assembled. The females representing certain goddesses are in some cases clothed with a brevity and abruptness—so to speak—which takes away one's breath. The adorable *Venus* herself is attired in garments that are a compromise between the classical age and the Gaiety stage. It may be easily imagined that the feelings of pious Pagans (as, under Jove, we humbly claim to be) are simply lacerated by such an exhibition. Let us reverse the case, and imagine the poster to advertise “an entirely new and original Christmas pantomime, entitled ‘The Babe of Bethlehem; or Harlequin Joseph and the Heilige Geist.’” Could a Christian tolerate that? or contemplate with equanimity the Blessed Virgin Mary, in silken hose and plenty of them, dancing a hornpipe in response to an encore?

Nor are the gods whom we revere treated in a less disgraceful style. *Vulcan* is depicted in an absurd medley-costume, partly of classical and partly of modern fashion. He wears sandals, but has a shirt-front and a flaming neck-tie above his raiment. *Mercury* sports a tall silk hat of the conventional shape, and from the sides of this sprout the famous wings. And so on, and so on; every detail indicates an unscrupulous attempt to extract “fun” from a shameless travesty of deities in whom some of the wisest and noblest men that ever lived have at least pretended to believe.

Is there no law to protect the gods of our forefathers from insult? Has Justice no arm long enough or strong enough to reach and punish those wretched Thespians, blaspheming daily (or nightly) for a precarious livelihood? Again we say: Where is the Public Prosecutor?—and at the time of going to press we are pausing for a reply. G. S.

UNBELIEF AND UNBELIEVERS.

It is a singular fact that persons who at one time were unbelievers, but who ultimately reverted to their former beliefs, often attribute their doubts and scepticism to very unworthy motives. I have been frequently struck with this fact in reading the recantations of men who have formerly professed and called themselves unbelievers; but I must say that I was rather surprised the other day in perusing a book called *The Experiences of a Life*, by Joseph Barker, to find that gentleman affirming that persons mostly become unbelievers from a strong inherent desire to live a free and vicious life. I was surprised because, from what I had read and heard of Joseph Barker, I had formed a different opinion of him. Even Mr. Bradlaugh at one time regarded Joseph Barker as a “sort of genius.” And here was a man of genius, thought, reaffirming the old theological delusion that men become unbelievers in order to live vicious lives. But when I reflected I began to understand that it was because Joseph Barker was “a man of genius” that he was so erratic in his character and so changeable in his belief. For my part, I never put much trust in the opinions of so-called “men of genius.” They are generally dreadful “cranks.” Give me one John Stuart Mill to a hundred Carlyles; for the reasoning of the one is as sound to-morrow as it was yesterday, while the reasoning of the other changes with his every mood. And so, I suppose, it was with Joseph Barker. Like Mr. Stead, he has his “Atheistic moods.” While the dark facts of life are most vividly impressed upon his mind he is an Atheist; but when the sun shines with all his effulgence and beauty, the clouds of doubt and unbelief lift and flee away, and his Theism returns.

But if the desire to live vicious lives is the supreme object to most Freethinkers—we may surely ask whether that was the chief motive that led Joseph Barker to pronounce himself an unbeliever? And if this were not the motive in his own case, why should he be so ungenerous and unfair as to attribute this motive to others? But let us examine this point a little more closely. If men become unbelievers from the desire to revel in vice, is it not a singular fact that unbelievers are not distinguished among their fellows for their vicious habits or unprincipled conduct? Besides, if men desire to live a bad life, surely experience shows that they can do that the more successfully under the dark cloak of religion, than in the bold light of pronounced unbelief? What does history say on this point? Have not wicked men, even according to Christian testimony, veiled their crimes with the cover of Christian profession? And is not the same fact apparent to-day? Have we not Pecksniffs and Chadbands among us innumerable? And is not the avowed Freethinker a marked man? Are not his daily actions constantly brought to the test and proved true?

Let it not be understood that all Freethinkers are models of virtue. In the name of Humanity I would they were. The circumstances of our lives, however, often crush out our noblest desires. I have a good deal of excuse for my erring brothers and sisters. I know my own faults and failings—I know what it is to live in unwholesome circumstances and fight the desperate fight of life; and I know how few can hope to come out of the battle scathless. But

when a man has fought a good fight in the cause of intellectual freedom, I fail to see how he makes himself better in the eyes of his fellows by laying bare all the infirmities of his nature, and setting aside altogether the good he has achieved.

This, however, is what men like Joseph Barker and Thomas Cooper and others find it necessary on their part to do before they can make themselves acceptable to good Christian society. Their constant cry is *Peccavi*—I have sinned; but I will be better for the future; please admit me into the society of the self-righteous, and I will be goody-goody for ever after.

As a matter of fact, however, Joseph Barker, Thomas Cooper, Dr. Sexton, and the others know perfectly well that their unbelief had nothing whatever to do with their desire either to live virtuous or vicious lives; that in point of fact, their unbelief was caused by their inability to accept as true things for which there was insufficient evidence to command their assent. In other words, their unbelief was an intellectual question first, and a moral one afterwards.

And if they really wished to win the respect of honest men and women they should first of all devote themselves to answering their own statements when they were Freethinkers, and not to quietly ignore them as though they were unworthy of reply. And I will ask my Freethought brethren, if ever again I declare myself a Christian, to deny my honesty if I do not at least attempt to answer my own speeches and writings in which I have sought to demonstrate, not only the intellectual, but the moral value of Freethought.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

FARADAY'S RELIGION.

FARADAY, the great scientist, is often cited by Christians as a witness to the truth of their creed. But if they were to read Dr. Bence Jones's *Life of Faraday*, they would see that his witness is worthless, since he absolutely refused to submit his faith to the test of reason. Faraday belonged to an obscure sect called the Sandemanians. One of his fellow-worshippers was the father of Mr. G. R. Sims, who wrote the following paragraphs in last week's *Referee* over the well-known signature of "Dagonet":—

"We knew the great man in a very peculiar way, and this week, when we are all honoring his name, seems to me a fitting opportunity to tell a story which will be new to a vast number of Faraday's admirers. I was brought up as a Sandemanian—my grandfather and my father worshipped every Sunday in a little meeting-house situated in Paul's-alley, leading out of Hare-court, Aldersgate-street, and I generally sat in the family pew. The Sandemanians were Bible Christians; their faith was simple, and their form of worship primitive in the extreme. Michael Faraday was one of the elders of our chapel; another was a butcher, another a gas-fitter, and a fourth, if I remember rightly, a linen-draper. I heard Faraday read the Bible and expound often during my childhood, and I remember I liked him best of all the elders because he didn't waggle his head and whine and tremble like some of the others.

"But in the year 1836 Faraday, on his own confession, was put away from us, not only from his office as elder, but from his membership of our body. His scientific researches had, he confessed, unsettled his simple faith as a Sandemanian. The gasfitter, the linendraper, and the butcher were shocked, but stern. We prayed for Faraday every Sunday. We asked that God would send the light to his darkened brain, and—I am giving you facts—the prayers of the gasfitter, the butcher, and the linendraper were answered in a very marvellous way. After a separation of some months, the great Michael Faraday—the man whom all the world delighted to honor—came back one day to the little meeting-house in Paul's-alley, and, standing up before the little congregation—the Sandemanians were a very small body in London—made full confession of his error, and, with tears in his eyes, vowed that never again would he allow any conflict in his mind between science and the simple, child-like faith of the Sandemanian Brotherhood. Everybody wept—weeping was a Sandemanian weakness—and the other elders, the butcher, the gasfitter, and the linendraper, fell one by one on the neck of the lost sheep who had returned to the fold; and a blessed peace fell upon the little meeting-house in Paul's-alley.

"The Paul's-alley worshippers stayed at the chapel all day, and had a love feast up stairs between the services,

because some members came from afar. Only members were admitted to these feasts, so I and my sisters used to spend the dinner-hour in our own pew and have sandwiches and cold baked batter pudding with raisins in it. The most delicious pudding I ever tasted in my life, it was, and I wish I had some now. When the railway swept down on Paul's-alley in 1864 we moved to a new meeting-house at Barnsbury, and then I went to Germany. When I came back from Germany I suppose I had grown out of Sandemanianism; at any rate, I never went to the meeting-house again, and gradually our connection with the body was entirely severed. But I have always remembered those strange Sundays, and the head-wagging, voice-trembling elders made a great impression on my childish mind. Faraday I remember best as an elder, though I met him often at my grandfather's house at Peckham. He had a very winning way with children, and we all liked him. The Sandemanians liked him very much as a man, but they preferred the butcher as a preacher, and they considered it a terrible thing for a good man to devote himself to such doubtful subjects as electricity instead of reading the Bible and being satisfied with things as they were."

PERSECUTION IN GERMANY.

THE fact that men like Dr. Voelkel have to fly to Switzerland for safety from prosecutions for blasphemy, and that on account of but mild forms of heresy, may seem strange to those who have looked on Germany as pre-eminently the country of rationalism. That persecution for Freethought should go on in the country of Lessing, Goethe, Fichte, Humboldt, Strauss, Baur, Schopenhauer, Feuerbach, Buchner, and Hartmann, shows that the work has been inadequately performed. Mr. Symes, in his recent letter to myself, alludes to this. He says: "I am not at all satisfied with the outcome of Freethought in Germany. They have been most destructive in their processes, but they do not face the results. In Australia they call the forest 'the bush.' In some places you may see hundreds of thousands of 'ringed' trees as dead as a deal board, but still standing. A deep ring has been cut all around them to kill them. But the people still speak of this ghastly contiguity of dead trees as 'the bush,' just as if they all lived. German criticism seems something like that: it has killed the Bible superstitions, but still speaks of them as living; it does not speak out and say roundly, 'There we have killed, and now proceed to bury.' Some other people will have to give the finishing stroke, and logically close the process."

This observation seems to me very just. But there are, of course, other reasons leading to the outbreak of active persecution. There is the fear of Socialism. The ideas of Freethought are felt to be undermining, and Freethinkers may be persecuted with more impunity than Socialists. The attempted suppression of Freethought is gratifying to the Catholics of South Germany, who are an increasing and compact body. But the chief reason is that Christianity is considered part and parcel of the law of the land, Church and State being inseparable. The German is a much-ruled animal, and is supposed to take his religion as well as his military drill from the powers that be. Shelley spoke of "King-deluded Germany." The phrase is an expressive one. The Thirty Years' War, the wars of Frederick the Great, and those against Napoleon, left Germany with the necessity of subordination for national ends. During the last quarter of a century Germany has been losing its high position of leader of intellectual thought. Militarism has been so much in the ascendant that to it all else has been subordinated. Militarism carries despotism in its train, and Christianity makes a capital ally of absolutism. The German universities in the first part of the century were renowned for their poorly-paid but hard-working professors. Chairs were found for men of talent. Now orthodoxy is the *quâ non*. The German professor is wealthier and more respectable, but less a man of ideas, than his predecessors. He dare not move out of a narrow conservative circle under penalty of losing his place. All ministers are appointed for their orthodoxy. The Emperor, like his grandfather, considers orthodoxy as bound up with the stability of the throne, and would apparently, like his cousin of Russia, delight in dragooning all his subjects into conformity.

Success in war has brought with it arrogance. French works are now little read in Germany, and French thought, which, however contemned as superficial, is always suggestive

and fertile in ideas, has no influence there. In the republic of letters it is thought there is no nationality. But the bias of patriotism runs so deep that nations will refuse to accept the freest, cheapest and best of all goods—ideas—provided they are labelled French or German. French infidelity and French immorality are a constant theme of vituperation among German pastors. Yet the Protestant churches are left to the women. There is little vital belief in Christianity. All that the repressive measures do is to produce an outward show of religion and inward hypocrisy. Meanwhile Freethought thrives even when trodden upon. Some day the men will arise who will level to the ground the forest of superstition already ringed by rationalism. J. M. W.

ACID DROPS.

Londoners are familiar with the advertising placards of England, containing a picture of a rampant lion trampling on Atheism and Seditious. This journal was started during the heat of the great Bradlaugh battle. For several years the king of the forest has chewed his enemies. But he seems tired of the sport, or his fresh meat is running short. Anyhow the paper is in a bad way, and the directors have ordered it to be sold. We offer sixpence for the lion.

A special prayer was offered up for the Prince of Wales at Emmanuel Church, Eastbourne, on Sunday. This petition to the Almighty was drawn up by the Rev. C. B. Cooper, and had reference to the baccarat scandal. If the prayer takes effect, which is doubtful, we shall soon hear that Albert Edward has forsworn cards for the rest of his natural (or unnatural) life.

Mr. Spurgeon and a devoted following of Baptist brethren have signed a manifesto declaring that the Bible is the word of God from beginning to end; that reverence for the New Testament, accompanied by scepticism as to the Old, is absurd; that the two must stand or fall together; that Christ's verdict concerning "Moses and all the prophets" should be taken in preference to higher criticism, and also "the hopeless perdition of all who reject the Savior, according to the words of the Lord in Matt. xxv., 46, "These shall go away into eternal punishment." Finally they say, "Our hope is the Personal Pre-millennial Return of the Lord Jesus in glory." The *Echo* heads the manifesto "A Voice from Dark Ages."

The cause of religion is looking up in the City. At the church of St. Mary's Woolnoth there was on a recent Sunday as many as eight persons in the church. This unusually large attendance was occasioned by its being a wet day. The City churches make an excellent shelter for passing pedestrians.

Christian Life gives the following figures. In the common gaols of Ontario (Canada) 11,810 persons were locked up last year. No less than 2,448 were unable to read or write. The religious denominations were represented as follows:—

Roman Catholics	4,359
Church of England	3,631
Methodists	1,624
Presbyterians	1,498
Other denominations	698
	11,810

Apparently the whole lot of Ontario criminals belong to the Christian faith. Somehow the Freethinkers won't go to gaol, though they ought to go in shoals, according to logicians like the Bishop of Chester.

The managers of churches and chapels are at their wits' ends (not a very long journey, by the way) to attract audiences to their buildings. In Walworth-road, for example, an attempt is being made at a dissenting chapel to "boom" a black bishop, whom we will call Jawkins. In front of the chapel a large bill is being exhibited bearing the following lines:—

Come and hear Bishop Jawkins!
 Hear his Plaintive Singing!
 He will make you Laugh!
 He will make you Cry!
 —especially the latter, we imagine.

Last Saturday the Bishop of London held forth to the girls at Queen's College. Before the end of his address, the *Star*

says, half the audience, including the Bishop's wife, were sound asleep. A man ought to do better than that on £10,000 a year.

A young man cut his throat at the Imperial Hotel, Liverpool. He left a note, containing this sentence—"May the Lord forgive me, and have mercy on me, Lord God." Another fact for Talmage.

According to a Dalziel telegram a severe drought is afflicting the Province of Quebec, and the crops seem likely to fail. We are very sorry for the inhabitants, but we fancy they will derive little benefit from the Catholic prayers that are ordered by Monsignor La Flèche. Probably this clerical dignitary does not expect any change in the weather in consequence of his efforts, but the priests must appear to be doing something, or their business would simply collapse.

Turkey, it seems, is ready to receive the unfortunate Jews who are being driven out of Russia. Throughout their history the chosen race have had more mercy shown them from Mohammedans than from Christians.

Hugh Price Hughes and others among the Forward Wesleyans, with good congregations, are very anxious to abolish the time-limit, whereby Wesleyan ministers have to move from station to station every three years. But this can only be done by Act of Parliament, for the Wesleyan endowments are by law established. There is no fear of the Methodists resigning their claim to trust-money for the sake of freedom, though they urge the State Church to emancipate itself from the taint of worldly wealth.

The Catholics think Mr. Calderon's picture of the nude St. Catherine detrimental to their faith, and put up Mr. De Lisle, M.P., to protest against the picture being purchased for the National Gallery. Mr. De Lisle described the picture as "obscene, blasphemous and ridiculous," but his strong language did not move the Government to interfere.

The Rev. C. A. Berry, of Wolverhampton, rebuked Mr. Foote for crowing over the secularisation of the Churches. But here is the *Christian Commonwealth* declaring that "the present tendency towards secularising religion must be regarded by all true Christians with the gravest apprehensions of danger."

By the way, the *Christian Commonwealth* is apt to be ill-tempered when dealing with aggressive sceptics. "It is refreshing," says this organ of Christian sentimentalism, "to turn from the coarse Bradlaugh-Besant series of pamphlets in which English 'Freethought' has attacked Christianity to the literature in which Renan shows how regretfully, affectionately, and courteously an unbeliever can feel and write about the Bible." Of course we are ready to admit Renan's politeness. He fights Christianity with a highly polished and scented sword. But we cannot allow that Charles Bradlaugh was "coarse." He was only honest and outspoken.

A fire broke out on Mount Athos and entirely destroyed the celebrated monastery, where the monks practised the old method of meditation by centering their gaze on the pit of the stomach, which used to be considered the seat of the soul.

At Chatham the Rev. T. Webber has been discoursing on "Is Christianity Profitable?" It all depends. Let Mr. Webber tell us the amount of his salary, and we will answer his question.

"Is Christianity Profitable?" Most people find it so. The Pope, Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, ay, and thousands of other disciples of the poor Nazarene, could honestly answer "Yes" on the spur of the moment. There are Nonconformist ministers, even, who get thousands a year. All these find that Christianity is profitable, very profitable; or, in Scripture language, that godliness is great gain.

"The *Freethinker* of London announces that Mrs. Besant will soon lecture upon 'Freethought in America.' As Mrs. Besant consorted entirely with Theosophists the few weeks she was in this country, finding time to pay but a few minutes' visit each to the *Truthseeker* and *Investigator* offices, and as the Theosophists here are about as strongly opposed

to Freethought as the preachers, it would seem that, able, intelligent, and eloquent as the lady is, she is hardly prepared to enlighten the English upon the subject chosen. She could tell much more about Theosophy in America. But we trust her lecture will be reported, so that the American Freethinkers whom she did not see may know what she thinks about them."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Six Jews have been converted by the Scottish Mission at a cost of £5,858, or under £1,000 each. Although these purchases are of the most inferior description, they may be considered dirt cheap at the price. At Jerusalem conversions average about £10,000 a head, and the quality is no better.

A book entitled *Among the Holy Places* has been put out by the Rev. J. Kean. Speaking of the alleged Sepulchre of Christ, he says it is "from this little porch that the fire issues at Easter, on which occasion unseemly scuffles have been known to take place." The man of God puts it as mildly as his brother who spoke of "the removal of Uriah." On one of these occasions no less than three hundred pilgrims were killed in an unseemly squabble.

The *Natal Advertiser* reports the execution for murder at Pretoria of two Christian Kaffirs. On the gallows they openly confessed their guilt and said: "We have sinned and committed murder, and our condemnation is a just one. We are going, we go to heaven, we go to the Lord; you that remain here on earth see that your path of life is clear." Eternal glory in heaven above is becoming the recognised sequence of murder and capital punishment.

From this world a poor victim is sent
By a bloodthirsty murderer's hand;
For his sins not a chance to repent—
He is plunged in the flames of the damned.

But what of the merciless wretch
Whose hand dealt the terrible blow?
He repented before he was hanged,
And is happy in heaven you know.

So beware of assassins, my friend,
If your sins are not surely forgiven,
Or you'll find yourself frying in hell.
While your slayer is "happy in heaven."

The Bishop of Lichfield has addressed a long letter to the clergy of his diocese, telling them how dreadfully grieved he is to leave them and take the Archbishopric of York, and how nothing but the sternest sense of duty makes him accept a higher post and a bigger salary. We feel for the poor prelate. Yea, we could mingle our tears with his—with the assistance of an onion—for ten per cent. of his first year's income.

In Neish's "History of Newport," just issued (that is, Newport in Fife, for there are fifteen other Newports), there is a good story of a pious ferryman who "couldna tak' siller on the Lord's Day," but who added, as the passenger was about to pocket his sixpence, "My son Jock's forrit there; you can see what he says about it."

The Rev. R. P. Willock, incumbent of St. Matthew's, Hyde-road, Manchester, has been fined a guinea and costs, or, in default, a month's imprisonment. It appears that the man of God keeps two valuable dogs, worth about £80, and while a gentleman named Randles was walking along Kirkmanshulme-lane these canine pedestrians committed an assault on his legs. Mr. Randles put his foot out to fend them off, and the clerical owner of the dogs struck him a heavy blow on the nape of the neck. This led to a spirited conversation, in which Parson Willock expressed a great tenderness for his dogs and an utter indifference about Mr. Randles' calves. The magistrate, however, took a different view, and Parson Willock must pay up or go to "quod." Probably he has paid up, for gentlemen of his cloth usually have more money at their disposal than persons of the same mental calibre in other avocations.

Blasphemy is spreading. Here is a sample from a nigger oration in a London music-hall:—"Solomon had 700 of 'em. Perhaps this may not prove his wisdom, but it shows his pluck. Good old Solomon!"

"Yes," said a minister, referring to a recent clerical scandal, "there are black sheep in every fold"; whereupon the person addressed rejoined, "Quite true, but black sheep are not so bad as a black shepherd?"

Talmage has been lecturing on the Creation, which he knows all about, from the time of God waking up and setting to work one "Monday morning" to his making of man "one Saturday afternoon." Woman came in after man, and God had a little rest over Sunday.

A Mr. St. John has been diligently inquiring of the American Postmaster-General whether the "Holy Bible Abridged" might be sent through the mails. Having received permission, he sent out the following advertisement on a postal card:

"HOLY BIBLE ABRIDGED.

"A book of 160 pages containing choice selections from the Holy Bible, highly recommended by the Postmaster-General and other high officials, and also by leading clergymen. Sent post-paid to any part of the United States on receipt of price, fifty cents. A liberal discount made to the trade.

"This is a splendid book to have on the centre-table.

"As sample of the contents of the book see Genesis, chapters xvi., xix., xxx., xxxviii.; Leviticus, chap. xxi.; Numbers, chap. xxxi.; Deut., chap. xxiii., xxv.; Judges, chap. xxi.; 2 Samuel, chap. xi., xii., xvi.; Ezekiel, chap. xvi.; 1 Cor., chap. vii."

A subscription is being got up for the widow of the late Archbishop Magee. One of the strong grounds for it is that Dr. Magee had to pay £4,000 in fees to the ecclesiastical harpies on his elevation to the Archbishopric, which he did not hold long enough even to receive that sum. Another £4,000 has been screwed out of Dr. Maclagan. Of this the government exchequer only received £330. The rest goes to church dignitaries, proctors and doctors, of uncertain functions.

This has made a considerable fuss about bishops being obliged to pay fees on getting good berths, but the church papers make none about the heavy bishops and archbishops salaries drawn from a nation not half of whom belong to the Church.

Dr. Samuel Kinns, the "harmoniser" of Science and the Bible, has published a new volume entitled *Graven in the Rock*. A week or two ago we drew attention to a severe criticism of this book in the *Academy*. We now draw attention to an equally severe criticism in the *Athenæum*. "Dr. Kinn's compilation," this review says, "is full of blunders—the blunders which a man makes who only knows a little about the subject upon which he writes." Poor Kinns!

Lord Norton, at the recent meeting of the National Society, sneered at the introducer of the Free Education Bill as "a Secularist." As this is by far the best idea the present Government has ever had, although it is half spoiled by concessions to the clergy, we are glad to hear that its sponsor is a Secularist.

There are many cures for Atheism in the religious pharmacopœia, but the strangest cure has only recently been discovered. We notice in *Ashore and Afloat*, conducted by Miss Weston—a lady whose romantic powers are extraordinary—the following headline:—"Atheism Cured by a Loaf." We cannot ascertain whether the loaf was a penny, a twopenny, or a threepenny one. But put it at the highest figure—threepence, and 'tis a wonderfully cheap cure for the worst disease that flesh (or spirit) is heir to. Supposing the remedy to be always efficacious, all the Atheists in the world could be cured for threepence apiece. Behold a short and easy way with Atheism! A few thousand pounds, judiciously laid out in loaves, will cure all the goats and turn them into sheep. Miss Weston should really start a fresh society on this basis.

Turning to the story under this remarkable headline, we find one of the usual yarns about a nameless evangelist, in a nameless town, who converted a nameless Atheist by bringing him a loaf when he was in want of bread. The argument is addressed to the stomach, which Miss Weston or the evangelist appears to regard as the seat of as much reason as a Christian requires.

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.

R. COGGING.—We remember him well. He was a true gentleman.

W. A. NORTHOVER, 34 Duke-street, Manchester-square, London, sells this journal and exhibits a content's-sheet.

LIVERPOOL FRIEND.—Your letter with signature, having gone astray, we reply to you under this heading. Thanks for the trouble you have taken in reporting the discourses on Theosophy by Mr. Judge and Mrs. Besant at Liverpool. But we have neither time nor space to give to a further criticism of oriental moonshine. It is not surprising that no questions were allowed after these wonderful discourses.

F. A. DAVIES.—Shall appear.

JAMES HOOPER.—There must be a misunderstanding. The matter shall be seen to.

J. MOFFAT.—We are obliged. See "Acid Drops."

J. PARTRIDGE (Birmingham).—The date is booked.

T. DUNBAR says the *Freethinker* can be obtained at a news-agent's opposite the Board School in the North-end-road, Fulham. This correspondent promises to join the N. S. S. shortly.

J. R. WILLOCK.—Date booked; subjects in due course.

G. ARMITAGE.—Your notice should be addressed to our office, 14 Clerkenwell-green.

VERAX.—Webster's is an American dictionary. Many Americanisms are old English, but if they have lived abroad so long they require to be re-nationalised before dwelling in a current English dictionary. We note your interesting statement that "spukes" was familiar to you in Devonshire forty years ago.

W. BRADBURN.—The lecturer says the matter has been exaggerated. Christians will make a noise until they see we mean to hold our ground, and we must be as patient as possible.

J. THURGOOD.—We scarcely understand the complaint. Anyhow, it is not a matter in which we could intervene.

J. HOYLE.—Shall appear.

J. W. GOTT.—We cannot possibly insert notices unless they reach us on Tuesday. Owing to our increased circulation we go to press earlier than ever.

UNSECTARIAN (North Shields).—Glad to hear that you, although a Christian, enjoyed reading our article on Talmage, and found it quite justified after perusing one of his "flashy" sermons.

E. PARKER.—Your captain seems to be less bigoted and arbitrary than other officers. The regulation only exempts secretaries, not Freethinkers, from "divine service." No doubt, in the course of time, it will be more liberally interpreted.

W. T. LEEKEY.—Cuttings are always welcome.

JOHN SMITH, 45 Bridge-street, Swinton, near Rotherham, writes to contradict the story of the evangelist who spoke after Mr. Foote's lecture at Wolverhampton. Mr. Smith has lived in the neighborhood for forty years. He has made inquiries and cannot find any trace of such a person, and no Freethinker named Hare has been known there. Mr. Smith thinks it his duty to rejoin the N. S. S., which he belonged to many years ago. So much for the Wolverhampton evangelist.

BATTERSEA FREETHINKER.—The steamer is engaged and must be paid for, by the Federation, and if any Branch gets up an independent party it will be acting fractiously, and doing its best to spoil a good institution.

H. J. WARRINGTON.—Renan is not a professed Atheist. His position is that of the Agnostic. He admits that man knows nothing about a personal God or a future life, but where knowledge ends he is apt to let imagination begin. Still, he must not be taken too literally when he talks of the Eternal and immortal souls. If he were asked to explain and defend, he would reply, "My friend, it is my dream."

C. NAIWIGER.—Delighted to hear that the Hull Branch is engaging in open-air work. The people will not come to us in the summer, and we must go to them.

W. R. H.—It will hardly do. The child might take C. for G., but there is the possessive at the end of one word.

JOHN GRANGE.—Your able letter would occupy more space than the subject is worth. It is unlikely that the Theo-

sophic discourses at Bradford will pervert a single Freethinker. The men and women who were helped to think by Charles Bradlaugh are not so weak-headed as to be turned by the lady's eloquent but empty rhapsodies. In our judgment Theosophy and its advocates should now be left severely alone. Its high-priestess is dead, and we believe it will soon perish of inanition.

A. LORD.—We have addressed and posted your letter to Mr. Watts, and affixed a stamp, which you omitted to do.

R. SHAW.—Shall appear.

W. FINEDON.—Mrs. RAYNER, Holly Mount, Avenue-road, Southampton, may give you information. There are no regular meetings of our party there. A Secular Song Book has been talked of, but it is still among the "things to be."

T. DETCHON.—You have certainly hit upon a vital point. The "inspiration" of the Bible is gradually, but most surely, coming to the same level as the "inspiration" of all other literature.

T. PHILLIPS.—J. H. Mitchell's pamphlet has not been "dealt with" in the *Freethinker*, though the substance of it was alluded to when appearing in the *Christian Commonwealth*. The observation that we made was that there was nothing about the Bible in it. For the rest, it is almost beneath contempt. Citing the names of scientists who profess to be Christians is utterly useless. The point to be discussed is this—Are the plain statements of the Bible consistent with the plain teachings of science? Every one knows they are not. They are "harmonised" by torturing the language of the Bible in the most infamous fashion. You cannot do better than consult Huxley's *American Lectures*, and his articles in reply to Gladstone in the *Nineteenth Century*.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Menschentum—Echo—Neues Frereligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Freidenker—The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—La Vérité Philosophique—Progressive Thinker—Truthseeker—Flaming Sword—Loyal American—Better Way—Redruth Independent—Portsmouth Evening Chronicle—Chat—Nationalisation News—Portsmouth Evening News—Nelson Chronicle—Modern Society—Open Court—Nelson and Colne Chronicle—West Sussex Gazette—Cosmopolitan—Der Lichtfreund—Twentieth Century—Thanet Advertiser—Spennymoor Chronicle—Shields Daily Gazette.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention. CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

For the first time in many years Mr. Foote is giving his voice a rest. For the next three Sundays (June 28, July 5 and 12) he will do no lecturing. This will explain the absence of the usual top-line in the first column of our seventh page.

Mr. Foote did no open-air lecturing last year. This year, however, he has resolved to visit a few of the outdoor stations. His lectures, as before, will be given gratuitously; but he stipulates for a collection on behalf of the London Secular Federation, which is much in need of funds. Application for the Sunday mornings Mr. Foote may be able to give should be made immediately.

London Freethinkers should remember that the Secular Federation's Annual Excursion takes place on Saturday, July 5. It will be a steamer party up the Thames. Tickets (1s. 6d. for adults, 1s. for children) are now in the hands of all the Branch secretaries. They can also be obtained of Mr. Forder, at 28 Stonecutter-street. Mr. Foote intends (D.V., etc.) to join the party.

The steamer leaves Old Swan Pier, London Bridge, at 9 a.m., calling at Westminster, Chelsea, and Hammersmith, and proceeding to Kew and Hampton. The return is timed from Hampton 5.30, from Kew, 6.30. A band will be engaged, and refreshments will be supplied on board.

Mr. S. Standring reports a good business meeting of the North Middlesex Secular Federation on Sunday. Twenty-five delegates were sent by the various Branches. The Federation is thankful for pecuniary assistance from the N. S. S. Executive. During the summer outdoor meetings will be held on Sunday evenings; but in consequence of Christian bigotry (to give it the mildest name), the Branches will assemble in force alternately at North Finchley and Old Southgate. Disgraceful pressure has been put upon the landlord who granted the Secularists the use of a piece of

land attached to his licensed premises, and efforts are being made to deprive Secularist working men of their living. But this spirit of persecution will be resisted. The Secularists will hold together and oppose a united front to the enemy.

Freethinkers in the neighborhood of Notting-hill are requested to note that after July 3 (on which date an adjourned general meeting of members will be held) there will be a meeting of members and friends of the West London Branch for discussion, etc., punctually at 8.30 every Friday evening, at the Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon-road, Notting-hill, except on the first Friday in each month, which has been fixed for members' business meetings.

Mr. Charles Watts is expected to land at Liverpool on Saturday, July 4. He is to lecture the next day (Sunday) in the Oddfellows' Hall for the Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S. We hope he will have good audiences and a hearty welcome.

Mr. Watt's lectures at the London Hall of Science on July 19. We understand that all the Sundays of his stay in England are engaged.

Mr. Naewiger, the energetic secretary of the Hull Branch, informs us that the "saints" of that busy and populous town are going in for outdoor propaganda. Last Sunday afternoon a beginning was made on the Corporation Field, where the veteran N. B. Billany addressed a splendid, orderly meeting. Some discussion (of a sort) followed, and Mr. Naewiger pushed the sale of the *Freethinker* and Secular pamphlets amongst the crowd. This afternoon (June 28) at 2.30, another meeting will be held at the same place.

The Leeds Branch will have a waggonette excursion on Sunday, July 5. The destination is Harrogate, and a public meeting will be held there on the "Stray" at 2.30. Freethinkers desiring to join the party should communicate at once with Mr. J. Judge, 6 Coburg-street, Leeds.

The Glasgow Branch meetings are suspended during the summer months, but on Sunday, July 5, the members will go on a walking excursion to Millerston Wood, the rendezvous being the main entrance of Alexandra Park. Time, noon. All who have legs are expected.

Chat, of Portsmouth, gives insertion to a letter on cremation from our indefatigable friend Mr. J. E. Brumage.

The Rev. Mr. Diggle, chairman of the London School Board, is no friend to Secular education, but he is a shrewd man, and his opinion upon the Free Education Bill is worth noting. He expects its result will be by no means what the promoters desire, viz., to maintain the voluntary schools and denominational teaching as long as possible. Mr. Diggle holds that not in intention, but in effect, the Bill is one to enlarge the powers and responsibilities of School Boards in districts where they now exist; in other districts to render their establishment necessary, and within a measurable time to make them universal.

M. Taine has an article in the *North American Review* on Napoleon's Views of Religion. Napoleon put the matter very briefly for himself. He said: "I am nothing. In Egypt I was a Mussulman; here I shall be a Catholic for the good of the people. I do not believe in religions." Napoleon, however, did believe in religion as an instrument of authority, and he used it for his own ends with the same indifference with which he used everything else.

The *Truthseeker*, of New York, gives a cartoon representing Science and Dogmatism. The latter has fitted up for the former a Procrustean bed labelled "The Pentateuch," and with the inscription, "You must fit this bed. If you are too long, we will cut you off; if too short, we will stretch you out."

We are getting a good many subscribers in America. This week we have received an order from William Richter, Cullman, Ala., to send sample copies of the *Freethinker* to a score of addresses in that part of the United States.

The Presbyterians claim six of the American Presidents. There were five, however, without any creed—namely, Jefferson, Monroe, Taylor, Lincoln and Johnson; two were

Unitarians—J. Q. Adams and Fillmore. Washington is classed as Anglican, but he was little more than a Deist.

De Dageraad open with a strong onslaught on Christian teachings under the title of "Het Beleg voor Rome" (The Siege of Rome) by Petrus Apostatus Junior. The section of the journal entitled "Universal Review," gives several extracts from the *Freethinker*.

In Calcutta a set of debates have been going forward between a missionary, named Perkins, and Mr. Kavyabishayad, the editor of the *Cosmopolitan*, a monthly Freethought journal. The subjects comprised "Sin and Punishment," "The Christian Scheme of Atonement," and "The Bible."

Mr. S. M. Peacock, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, is always doing good service. We see from the *Newcastle Daily Leader* that he has been stirring up the South Shields School Board. One of the members of this body, Councillor Imrie, who is a grocer on week days and a Presbyterian on Sundays, declared at a recent public meeting in the town that he knew of three Board School teachers who gave Atheistic teaching to the children. Mr. Peacock denied the truth of this statement at the last Board meeting. He said that Secularists were opposed to religious or irreligious teaching in public schools, and as Mr. Imrie's statement was an imputation on the whole body of teachers, Mr. Peacock called upon him to name the three offenders. This brought a number of pious friends to Mr. Imrie's assistance. One of them, Mr. Lawson, who is an Evangelical though the son of an old Freethinker, had the impudence to say that Mr. Peacock's action was unmanly, and that he should have asked Mr. Imrie a private question on the matter. Mr. Peacock is justly of opinion that a public statement calls for a public question, and his honor is far too sensitive to need any lessons from Mr. Lawson or the other Christians on the School Board.

Dr. Allinson has induced a neighboring newsagent to display a *Freethinker* placard. He also orders six copies weekly, which the newsagent will try to sell, on condition that the unsold copies are taken off his hands. Dr. Allinson's example should—at least, that's our opinion—be extensively imitated. Reader, whoever thou art, go thou and do likewise!

It is gratifying to see that Freethought sentiments are extending to the extreme south-west of England. The *Cornubian and Redruth Times* has a couple of columns of editorial "Notes and Comments." In the number for June 16 the writer refers to Mr. Foote's recent *Freethinker* article on "Where is Hell?" After paying Mr. Foote a handsome compliment, he proceeds to give a summary of the article, and quotes the Secular passage about the real hell on earth. "This," the writer says, "is beautiful teaching by a so-called infidel."

Mr. Foote has in the press a small volume entitled *The Grand Old Book: a Reply to the Grand Old Man*. It is an exhaustive answer to Mr. Gladstone's book in defence of the Bible, and is very carefully written. The price is to be one shilling, and the volume will probably be on sale next week.

A HISTORICAL PARALLEL.

It is proverbial that "there is nothing new under the sun." It seems to me that even for the lamentable connection of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales with a gambling clique a precedent may be found—though those goody-goody souls who, with thinly-veiled cant lift up their hands and eyes as they fervidly denounce and unctuously pray for the royal sinner—may possibly not relish the historical parallel.

Referring to John xix., 23, 24, we find that, on the occasion of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, the soldiers cast lots for his coat, which appears to have been of a somewhat unusual pattern. Now this, I submit, was a gambling transaction, pure and simple; and would have been obviated entirely had Jesus conformed to the prevailing fashion of the day in a mere matter of tailor's work. He, being omniscient, must have known the regrettable incident which would follow his persistence in wearing the eccentric garment alluded to—indeed, the inspired narrative tells us that it had been the subject of prophecy—and, being almighty, he was certainly quite able to prevent the occurrence.

What do the good folks say hereon? What higher example of morality do they offer to the Prince of Wales than the Prince of Peace?

J. H.

GOD AND NATURE.

GOD is a mysterious, inconceivable being, but only because Nature is to man, especially to religious man, a mysterious inconceivable being. "Dost thou know," says God to Job, "the balancings of the clouds? Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? Hast thou seen the treasures of the hail?"

Finally, God is that being which is independent of the human will, unmoved by human wants and passions, always equal to himself, ruling according to unchangeable laws, establishing his institutions unchangeable for all time. But this being again is nothing but Nature, which remains the same in all changes, never exhibiting the vacillations of an arbitrary, wilful ruler, but subject in all her manifestations to unalterable laws: inexorable, regardless Nature.

Although God, as the author of Nature, is imagined and represented as a being different from Nature, still what is implied and expressed by this being, its real contents is nothing but Nature. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," we read in the Bible, and the apostle Paul points expressively to the world as to the work wherein God's existence and being can be understood, for what one produces, that contains his being and shows what he is able to do. What we have in Nature, that we have in God, only imagined as the author or cause of Nature—therefore no moral and spiritual, but only a natural, physical being. A worship founded only upon God as the author of Nature, without attributing to him any other qualities, derived from man, and without imagining him at the same time as a political and moral, *i.e.*, human lawgiver—such worship would be a mere worship of Nature. It is true that the author of Nature is thought to be endowed with intellect and will; but what his will desires, what his intellect thinks, is just that which requires no will nor intellect, but only mechanical, physical, chemical, vegetable and animal forces and impulses.

As little as the formation of the child in the womb, the pulsations of the heart, digestion and other organic functions are effects of the intellect and will, so little is Nature in general the effect or production of a spiritual being, *i.e.*, of a being that wills and knows or thinks. If Nature was originally a product of mind, and therefore a manifestation of mind, then also the natural phenomena of the present time would be spiritual effects and manifestations. A supernatural commencement necessarily requires a supernatural continuation. For man thinks intellect and will to be the cause of Nature only where the effects defy his own will, and surpass his intellect, where he explains things only through human analogies and reasons, where he knows nothing of the natural causes, and therefore derives also the special and present phenomena from God, or—as for instance the movements of the stars which he cannot understand—from subordinate spirits. But if nowadays the fulcrum of the earth and of the stars is no longer the almighty word of God, and the motive of their movement no spiritual or angelic but a mechanical one: then the first cause of this movement is also necessarily a mechanical, or, in general, a natural one. To derive Nature from intellect and will, or in general from the mind, is to reckon without the host, is to bring forth the savior of the world from the virgin without the co-operation of a man, through the Holy Ghost—is to change water into wine—is to appease storms with words, to transfer mountains with words, to restore sight to the blind with words. What weakness and narrow-mindedness does it betray to do away with the secondary causes of superstition, such as miracles, devils, spirits, etc., in explaining the phenomena of Nature, but to leave untouched the first cause of superstition!

Several of the ancient ecclesiastical writers assert, that the Son of God is not a product of God's will, but of God's nature; that the product of Nature is earlier than the product of the will, and that, therefore, the act of begetting, as an act of Nature, precedes the act of creation as an act of will. Thus the acknowledgment of Nature and her omnipotent laws prevails even within the sphere of the belief in the supernatural God, although in the plainest contradiction of his own will and being. The act of begetting is presupposed to the act of the will; the activity of Nature is considered as preceding the activity of thought and will. This is perfectly true. Nature must necessarily exist before anything exists which distinguishes itself from Nature, and which places Nature, as an object of the act of thinking and willing, in opposition to itself. The true way

of philosophy leads from the want of intelligence to intellect; but the direct way into the madhouse of theology, goes from the intellect to the want of intellect. To base the mind not upon Nature, but, *vice versa*, Nature upon the mind, is the same as to place the head, not upon the abdomen, but the latter upon the former. Every higher degree of development presupposes the lower one, not *vice versa*, for the simple reason, that the higher one must have something below it, in order to be the higher one. And the higher a being stands and the greater its value or dignity is, the more it presupposes. For this very reason not the first being, but the latest, the last, the most depending, the most needful, the most complicated being is the highest one, just as in the history of the earth's formation, not the oldest and first works, such as the slate and granite, but the latest and most recent products, such as the basalts and the dense lavas, are the heaviest and weightiest ones. A being which has the honor of presupposing nothing, has also the honor of being nothing. But it is true that the Christians understand well the art of making something out of nothing.—From Feuerbach's "Essence of Religion."

OBITUARY.

I beg to record the death of Mrs. Maria Waters, at the age of 83. The old lady was well known among South London Freethinkers, and when in her prime took an active part in Freethought propaganda. She died suddenly, as she always expected she would, those who were with her at the time being scarcely aware of it. She was buried on June 19 at Woodgrange Cemetery. Mr. Haslam (who had known her for 40 years) conducted the burial service.—V. ROGER.

Died at Raunds, May 31, Owen Hasseldine, aged 48 years. He had lived for many years a consistent Secularist, and died as he had lived. He was for some years an active member of the Wellingboro' Branch of the N. S. S. His conduct in all the relations of life had gained for him the love of his friends and the respect of his opponents. By his death the cause of human liberty loses a loyal soldier and each local Secularist a sincere friend. His grave was made beautiful with the floral offerings of those who loved him. Wreaths were sent by the Raunds Productive Society (co-operative) and the Raunds Radical Association, he having been secretary of both these societies. The local Secularists also sent a fine wreath, and with it the following lines from Ingersoll: "The record of a generous life runs like a vine around the memory of our dead, and every sweet unselfish act is now a perfumed flower." The Radicals sent as a motto: "With loving heart and with the purest hands he faithfully discharged all public trusts."—ROBERT COGGIN.

We regret to notice in our Dutch Freethought contemporary the death of Dr. Hartogh Heys van Zouteveen, a distinguished scientist and pronounced Freethinker of the Netherlands. Born at Delft, 13 Feb., 1841, he graduated at Leyden, both as Doctor of Law and Doctor of Natural Philosophy. He was a friend and correspondent of Darwin, whose *Descent of Man and Expression of Emotions* he translated into Dutch, giving valuable annotations of his own. He also translated and annotated some of the works of Dr. L. Büchner and Carus Sterne. Dr. Hartogh Heys van Zouteveen had travelled widely, and held a distinguished position in Holland. He was an Atheist, and was at one time President of the Freethought Society De Dageraad, contributing many articles to the journal of the Society *De Dageraad*. In 1881 he edited the journal *Isis*. He was elected member of the City Council of Assen, where he stayed, but refused to take the oath. Among his important works are *Jewish Reports Concerning Jesus of Nazareth*, dealing with the *Sepher Toldoth Jesu*, etc., and a work on mythology, entitled *The Origin of Religious Ideas*. For some years past he suffered from extreme ill-health, but never faltered in his opinions.

All hail to those bold and fearless natures—the heretics and innovators of the day—who, rousing men out of their lazy sleep, sound in their ears the tocsin and the clarion, and force them to come forth that they may do battle for their creed! Of all evils, torpor is the most deadly. Give us paradox, give us error, give us what you will, so that you save us from stagnation. It is the cold spirit of routine which is the nightshade of our nature. It sits upon men like a blight, blunting their faculties, withering their powers, and making them both unable and unwilling either to struggle for the truth or to figure to themselves what it is that they really believe.—II. T. Buckle.

CORRESPONDENCE.

AN OLD LIE NAILED DOWN.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I think the following will be of interest to our members who take part in the outdoor propaganda. On Sunday, the 14th inst., Mr. N. Johns, the chairman of the Christian Evidence Society at Hammersmith, whilst dealing with the usual kind of evidence, *i.e.*, abuse of the N. S. S., thought it would amuse his audience to hear how "the Secularists were hunted out of a certain town." This appeared to be news. I listened, and heard from him such a wild, abusive, and lying account of our part in a thirteen years' old scandal, Mr. J. Symes, his school, and the party generally, that, as an officer of the Society, I felt it to be my duty to demand an apology. He invited me to his platform. I promptly accepted, and challenged him to prove that Mr. Symes or any members of the N. S. S. were in any way responsible. After contradicting himself several times, and fixing the affair as having happened somewhere between Hammersmith and Newcastle, I located him at Leeds, and with some hesitation got him to sign his statement "That at a hall in Leeds such behavior took place by members of the Secular party and Mr. Symes, that when an inquiry took place, and the case came before the magistrate, their solicitor threw up the brief."

As I knew this to be a deliberate falsehood, and having several times lately heard of our members being annoyed at their open-air meetings by similar statements and black-guard pamphlets, I determined to confront him and his friends the following Sunday. During the week I turned up the newspaper reports, and armed with these and matter kindly lent by Mr. Forder, I sallied forth to meet my valiant slanderer, who had also undertaken to bring "most convincing evidence," when, lo! instead of overwhelming me, he requested to be allowed to retract! He had written to the head-quarters of the Christian Evidence Society, and they had done us the justice to inform him "that the affair could not be said to have happened under the auspices of our party," as he had asserted. I thought the retraction should be as public as the charge, and at my request Mr. Johns publicly apologised after his lecturer had finished, and promised to be more careful in the future. Will Mr. P—— and the gentleman (?) hailing from Woolwich, who circulates a filthy, slanderous leaflet on the same subject in that town, and recently in Regent's Park, please note? To either of them I would say, "Go thou and do likewise."

EDITH E. M. VANCE.

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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.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 3, quarterly meeting; 5.30, tea and soiree (6d.). Monday at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 7.30, dramatic class. Thursday, at 8, discussion class.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. H. Snell, "The Childhood of Religion."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.: 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Civilisation and Human Happiness."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Charles Bradlaugh." Collection in aid of Liability Fund. Thursday, at 8, open debate.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Great Heaveafter": 6.30, Mr. G. Shambrook, "Moses, the Conjuror." Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, Mr. Stanley Jones, "The Soul Idea."

Camberwell—Station Road: 11.30, Mr. H. Snell, "What is Divine Authority?"

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Difficulties of Christianity."

Edmonton (corner of Angel Road): 7, Mr. J. Fagan, "Miracles." Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, Mr. W. Norrish, "Noah's Flood: a Watery 'Tail'"; 3.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Hereafter."

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "The Jews' March out of Egypt."

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "The Kingdom of Heaven."

Kilburn—Salisbury Road (close to Queen's Park Station): 6.30, Mr. W. Norrish, "Christianity and Progress."

Kingsland Green: 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "Science and Myth." Lambeth (corner of Belvedere Road, opposite St. Thomas's Hospital), Westminster Bridge: 6.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christ's Teachings."

Leyton (open space near Vicarage Road, High Road): 11.30, Mr. E. Toleman-Garner, "Life's Best Guide—Christianity or Secularism?"

Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge Road): 11.30, Mr. H. Courtney, "The Three-headed God."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Life and Times of Charles Bradlaugh."

North Finchley—Birkbeck Road, Woodside Park: 7, several Freethought addresses.
 Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "God, where art Thou?"
 Plaistow Green (near the Station): 11.30, Mr. R. Rosetti, "Russian Gods."
 Regents Park (near Gloucester Gate): 3.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Philosophy of Secularism."
 Tottenham (corner of West Green Road): 3.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed."
 Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "The Design Argument"; 3.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "What think ye of Christ?"
 West Ham—Matthew's Park Estate, Ham Park Road: 3.30, Mr. R. Rosetti, "Russian Gods."
 Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill: 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "How I Became a Freethinker."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street: Mr. F. Millar, 11, "What is Agnosticism?"; 7, "The Dream of Immortality."
 Hull—Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room: 6.30, a meeting.
 Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street: 11, Tontine Society; 11.30, committee meeting; 7, Mr. Booth, "Mind, Matter, Body, and Soul."
 Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints': Mr. S. Standring, 11, "Freethought Outpost Duty"; 6.30, "The Higher Life of Secularism."
 Newcastle-on-Tyne—25 Nelson Street: 3, annual meeting, election of officers, etc. Debating Society: 7, Mr. G. Selkirk, "The Search for Truth."
 Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea: 7, a meeting.
 Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone Road: 6.30, members' business meeting, picnic party to Whalley.
 Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street: Mr. H. Smith, 3, "Are Christians Christians?"; 7, "The Hidden Wisdom." Tea at 5.
 South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street: 7, business meeting.
 Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street: 6, Mr. T. R. Fox (of Sunderland), "Is God Good?"
 OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.
 Bradford—Shipley Glen (near Ariel Flight): 3, Mr. Wakefield, "Historical Sketch of Freethought."
 Hull—Corporation Field: 2.30, a lecture.
 Leeds—Woodhouse Moor (near the fountain): 6.30, Mr. Smith (of Farsley), "Bishop Jayne and Secularism."
 Manchester—At the corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road: Saturday (June 27), at 8, Mr. S. Standring, "The Elements of Secularism." Sunday, at 3, Mr. S. Standring, "Love, the Basis of True Secularism."
 Newcastle—Sandhill, Quayside: 11.30, Mr. Thomas Thompson (of South Shields), "Christianity and Secularism."
 Spenton Market: Mr. J. Hooper will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.
 —June 28, morning, Battersea; afternoon, Finsbury Park.
 July 5, morning, Clerkenwell; afternoon, Victoria Park; 12, morning, Woolwich; 19, morning, Westminster; afternoon, Leyton. July 26 to Aug. 9, Holiday Tour. Aug. 16, morning, Battersea; 23, morning, Westminster; 30, morning, Woolwich. Sept. 6, morning, Clerkenwell; 13, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; 20, morning, Westminster.
 C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley Road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—
 June 28, morning, Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith. July 5, morning, Kingsland Green; afternoon, Regent's Park; 12, morning, Pimlico; evening, Kilburn; 19, morning, Clerkenwell; evening, Lambeth; 26, morning, Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith. Aug. 2, morning, Kingsland Green; afternoon, Regent's Park; 9, morning, Pimlico; evening, Kilburn; 16, morning, Clerkenwell; evening, Lambeth; 23, morning, Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith; 30, morning, Camberwell; evening, Lambeth.
 STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.—July 5, morning, Plaistow Green; 19, morning, Kingsland Green; 26, morning, Battersea.

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