

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

"What light is to the eyes, what love is to the heart, Liberty is to the soul of man. Without it, there come suffocation, degradation, and death."

—INGERSOLL.

## HUXLEY'S MISTAKE.

No one will suspect us of any prejudice against Professor Huxley. We have often praised his vigorous writings, and his admirable service to Freethought. We recognise him as a powerful fighter in the great battle between Reason and Faith. He is a born controversialist, he revels in the vivisection of a theological opponent, and it is easy to understand how the more placid Darwin could cry to him admiringly, "What a man you are!"

But for some reason or other it seems the fate of Professor Huxley, as it is the fate of Herbert Spencer, to be made use of by the enemies of Freethought; and it must be admitted that, to a certain extent, he gratuitously plays into their hands.

Mr. Herbert Spencer has been a perfect god-send to the Christians with his "Unknowable"—the creation of which was the worst day's work he ever accomplished. It is only a big word, printed with a capital letter, to express the objective side of the relativity of human knowledge. It connotes all that we do not know. It is a mere confession of ignorance; it is hollowness, emptiness, a vacuum, a nothing. And this Nothing, which Mr. Spencer adorns with endless quasi-scientific rhetoric, is used as a buttress to prop up tottering Churches.

Professor Huxley has been nearly as serviceable to the Churches with his "Agnosticism," which belongs to the same category of substantially meaningless terms as the "Unknowable." No doubt it serves the turn of a good many feeble sceptics. It sounds less offensive than "Atheism." An Agnostic may safely be invited to dinner, while an Atheist would pocket the spoons. But this pandering to "respectability" is neither in the interest of truth nor in the interest of character. An Atheist is without God; an Agnostic does not know anything about God, so he is without God too. They come to the same thing in the end. An Agnostic is simply an Atheist with a tall hat on. Atheism carries its own name at the Hall of Science; when it occupies a fine house at Eastbourne, and moves in good society, it calls itself Agnosticism. And then the Churches say, "Ah, the true man of science shrinks from Atheism; he is only an Agnostic; he stands reverently in the darkness, waiting for the light."

Nor is this the only way in which Professor Huxley has helped "the enemy." He is, for instance, far too fond of pressing the "possibility" of miracles. We have no right, he says, to declare that miracles are impossible; it is asserting more than we know, besides begging the question at issue. Perfectly true. But Professor Huxley should remember that he

uses "possibility" in one sense and the theologians in another. He uses it theoretically, and they use it practically. They use it where it has a meaning, and he uses it where it has no meaning at all, except in an *a priori* way, like a pair of brackets with nothing between them. When the theologian speaks of the "possibility" of miracles, he means that they may be expected. When Professor Huxley speaks of the "possibility" of miracles, he only means that we cannot prove a universal negative.

Let us take an instance. Suppose some one asserts that a man can jump over the moon. No one can demonstrate that the feat is impossible. It is *possible*, in the sense that *anything* is possible. But this is theoretical logic. According to practical logic it is impossible, in the sense that no rational man would take a ticket for the performance.

Why then does Professor Huxley press the "possibility" of miracles against his Freethinking friends? He is not advancing a step beyond David Hume. He is merely straining logical formulæ in the interest of the Black Army.

Now let us take another instance. In a recent letter to the *Times*, with respect to the famous letter of the thirty-eight clergymen who have given the Bible a fresh certificate, Professor Huxley is once more careful to point out that science knows nothing of "the primal origin" of the universe. But who ever said that it did? Atheists, at any rate, are not aware that the universe ever *had* an origin. As to the "ultimate cause of the evolutionary process," it appears to us as metaphysical jargon, as intolerable as anything in the sounding phraseology of the theologians.

But this is not all. Professor Huxley delivers himself of the following utterance: "In fact it requires some depth of philosophical incapacity to suppose that there is any logical antagonism between Theism and the doctrine of Evolution." This is food and drink to a paper like the *Christian World*. But what does it mean? Certainly there is no antagonism between the terms "Theism" and "Evolution." They do not fight each other in the dictionary. But is there not antagonism between Evolution and any kind of Theism yet formulated? The word "God" means anything or nothing. Give your God attributes, and see if they are consistent with Evolution. That is the only way to decide whether there is any "logical antagonism" between Evolution and Theism. The trouble begins when you are "logical" enough to deal in definitions; and the only definition of God that will stand the test of Evolution is "a sort of a something."

We leave Professor Huxley to present that highly edifying Theistic conclusion to his old theological opponents, and, if he likes, to flaunt it in the faces of his Freethinking friends. But is it really worth while for Samson to grind chaff for the Philistines? We put the question to Professor Huxley with all seriousness. Let him teach truth and smite falsehood, without spending so much time in showing that they harmonise when emptied of practical meaning. A

sovereign and a feather fall with equal rapidity in a vacuum; and if you take away fact and experience, one proposition is as "possible" as another. But why should a great man waste his energies in propagating such a barren truism?

G. W. FOOTE.

### FREETHOUGHT FIFTY YEARS AGO.

LOOKING back half a century, we find a considerable difference in English national life, but with all the elements of transition from the old to the new. Politically it was a period of great activity. Troubles in China and Afghanistan did not divert attention from the great question of removing the Corn Laws. The middle classes put in power by the Reform Bill of '32 were bent on Free Trade, and the Corn Law League was fast bringing their claims to the front. At Oxford Puseyism was in full career. In the provinces squire and parson still ruled the roost, sniffed at the Dissenters, and damned the Chartists and Socialists. In the towns these bodies were, in a smaller way, as active as the great League of Cobden, Bright and Villiers. Mechanics' institutes were spreading, co-operative societies begun, and even attempts at community life were being made.

Railways were beginning to "boom," but there was comparatively little travelling. Electricity, then recently let loose by Wheatstone's telegraph, was almost unused. Infant Science was still in its cradle, but the modern Hercules was beginning to grapple with the serpents of theology that sought to destroy it. In France, Comte was finishing his *Course of Positive Philosophy*. Here, Lyell had published his *Principles of Geology*, which already threatened the old cosmogonies. Though Darwinism was unknown and Darwin only beginning to settle down to his studies at Down, and even the *Vestiges of Creation*, by Robert Chambers, was not published till 1844, it is a most significant fact that the very first number of the *Oracle of Reason*, with the vicissitudes of which this chapter from my "History of Freethought in England" is mainly concerned, contained the beginning of a long series of papers on the "Theory of Regular Gradation," by William Chilton, in which the theory of evolution was distinctly championed in opposition to the theistic view of creation. The battle for an unfettered and cheap press, so long and gallantly fought by Carlile, Watson, Cleave, Hetherington, Heywood and others, was practically won; and Charles Knight, the brothers Chambers, and others, were ably supplying a rising demand for cheap and good literature. Carlyle had published his *Sartor Resartus* and now in London was preaching hero worship, and Coleridge, in his *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, had disturbed the question of Bible inspiration.

In 1841 appeared a second edition of C. C. Hennell's *Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity*, which first appeared in 1838, and which received the commendation of Strauss, and remains an able and candid work well suited to put into the hands of inquirers. It was through Hennell that Miss Evans ("George Eliot") was led to make an English translation of Strauss's *Leben Jesu*, published by Chapman in 1846. They were possibly unaware that an English translation, also anonymous, appeared in 1842, being printed and published by J. Taylor, Smallbrook-street, Birmingham, and with Hetherington's name as London publisher. This work came out in parts. Philip Harwood, afterwards editor of the *Saturday Review*, had in his little book on *German Anti-Supernaturalism* (1841) called attention to the merits and works of the German rationalists.

Henry Hetherington (whose *Poor Man's Guardian*, the first penny newspaper in this country, issued unstamped in defiance of the Newspaper Act, was mainly instrumental in sweeping away the taxes upon knowledge) was in business as printer and publisher

in Kingsgate-street, Holborn, issuing various Free-thought and Radical publications. In 1840 he had been arrested for selling the bold and incisive *Letters to the Clergy* of Charles Junius Haslam—a veteran who still remains on the stage in quiet retirement at Benton. Abel Heywood, the original publisher, was also prosecuted, but he having influential friends, the case did not go to trial. Mr. Heywood had previously suffered in the cause of free publication; and he too remains, having long enjoyed the utmost consideration from his fellow citizens of Manchester, where he has occupied the highest dignity of the city.

To test the impartiality of the law, W. J. Linton and some other of Hetherington's friends instituted prosecutions against four high class publishers, Moxon, Frazer, Richardson, and Saunders, of Saunders and Otley, for the publication of *Queen Mab*. The law was clear. Shelley's poem was a blasphemous libel. Despite an eloquent defence from Serjeant (afterwards Judge) Talford, Moxon was declared guilty. It remained for the prosecution to call him up for judgment, which of course was never done, the object of the prosecutors simply being to call attention to the state of the law and to advertise *Queen Mab*. The other publishers were not proceeded against. This course obtained for Hetherington a more lenient sentence than he would have otherwise received, and the most moderate expression of the law was then given from his judge. Hetherington defended himself with eloquence and moderation, in spite of a bitter and unfair personal attack of Attorney-General Campbell. Lord Denman, who stated that he had listened to Hetherington's defence with feelings of great interest and with sentiments of respect, laid it down that even the fundamentals of religion might be criticised so long as it was done in moderate language and in a serious reverential spirit.\* Hetherington was sentenced to four months' imprisonment in the debtors' prison. While in "durance vile" he wrote his *Cheap Salvation*, a capital tract, in which he showed that all the best things of religion could be retained while dismissing priests and their theology.

Haslam's *Letters to the Clergy* was followed by the *Letters to the Bishop of Exeter*, who had attacked Owen and the Socialists in the House of Lords, and by some tracts on *Who are the Infidels?* etc. All were continued in open sale by both Hetherington and Watson, Thomas Powell acting for Hetherington while he was in prison. The prosecutions stimulated a revival of Freethought literature. James Watson then issued numerous pamphlets by Robert Dale Owen, Frances Wright, T. Cooper, and Rowland Detrosier, and Voltaire's *Important Examination of the Holy Scriptures*, ascribed to Bolingbroke, a new edition of Robert Taylor's *Diagnosis*, and the important written discussion between R. D. Owen and Origen Bachelor on the Authenticity of the Bible.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued.)

Spain shows the characteristics of a country where theological considerations have been all-controlling for centuries. Down to the interference of Napoleon with that kingdom, all sanitary efforts were looked upon as absurd if not impious. The most sober accounts of travellers in the Spanish peninsula until a recent period are sometimes irresistibly comic in their pictures of peoples insisting on maintaining arrangements more filthy than any which would be permitted in an American backwoods camp, while taking enormous pains to stop the pestilence by bell-rings, processions, and new dresses bestowed upon the local Madonna; yet here, too, a healthful scepticism has begun to work for good; the outbreaks of cholera in recent years have done some little to bring in better sanitary measures.—Prof. A. D. White.

\* I have not the report of the trial before me, so only state the purport, not the words, of this important judgment.

## THE REV. PRICE HUGHES AT IT AGAIN.

WE Atheists are a fearful trouble to the Rev. Price Hughes. While continually pretending to despise our insignificance, and perpetually affirming that we as a party are played out, he can't let us die in peace, but must needs be occupying himself hastening our funeral by indulging in oratorical hysterics which would bring tears into the eyes of a stone dog.

The effect of the proverbial red rag on the bull is nothing compared to Mr. Hughes scenting an Atheist from afar. "'Sblood and 'sdeath," says he, as he sets his false teeth firmly, girds up his loins and buckles on his rusty armor; "lend me my trusty wooden sword and tin shield, saddle me my swiftest jackass, sound a blast on the penny trumpet; let the jacks be 'Hugh Price Hughes and God,' and I will smite the Atheists with a great smite; yea, hip and thigh will I smite them even from Dan to Beersheba." (It is hardly necessary to add here that the Rev. Price Hughes's desperate onslaughts on the Atheist ranks always occur when the said Atheists are far enough away). Did he not, Goliath-like, bring down the mighty Parnell, with the aid of his trusty comrade, Maiden Tribute Stead?—at least he says so; and is he not an honorable man and the writer of "The Atheist Shoemaker"? And has he not declared, by God's help and W. T. Stead's, that he'll do the same to Sir Charles Dilke, unless he clears his character or do atonement—to Hugh Price Hughes and William Thomas Stead coupled, I presume?

Moreover, has he not firmly taken his stand on the education question, and declared that purely secular education "shall never be introduced into this country." "Away with it," shouts Mr. Hughes; the oracle has spoken, the fiat has gone forth. A picture of Mr. Hughes striking an attitude, and brandishing a mop in the most approved Partingtonian style, would come in well here. The flowing tide is with us, Mr. Hughes; and sooner or later you and the rest of the bigots like you will be engulfed in its waters as Pharaoh's army was of old.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Hughes' words are a great deal braver than his actions. He and Dr. Lunn some time ago "raised Cain" over the Wesleyan Missionary Society and its funds. Mr. Hughes was going to be exceedingly brave in the matter, he wasn't going to budge an inch, not he; he was going to stand to his guns; but like a certain young lady Byron tells us of, who vowing she never would consent—consented, so he, vowing he never would give in—gave in, and withdrew everything.

In a recently published sermon by Mr. Hughes, there are some things which will amuse if they do not edify Freethinkers. It is always well to see ourselves as others see us, and a few extracts will act as a corrective to those among us who happen to have the bumps of self-esteem too largely developed.

"No one," says Mr. Hughes, "except an ignorant fool, avows himself an Atheist." Mr. Hughes is very brave here as he risks the danger of hell-fire in order to be vulgar, but we will let that pass. So Charles Bradlaugh was "an ignorant fool," was he, Mr. Hughes? You took good care not to cross the Titan's path when he was among us, or you would have had a warm quarter of an hour Mr. Hughes. How small you would have appeared, how utterly insignificant you would have been in the intellectual grip of the great Iconoclast! The psalm-singing David would most assuredly have gone down before the Secularist Goliath. As a terrier would shake a rat, so would he, metaphorically speaking, have picked you up and dropt you down an unrecognisable mass.

Secularists who are almost to a man "avowed Atheists," will be a little reassured to learn that

Mr. Hughes defines an Atheist as one who says, "there is no God." As Atheists don't say so, his polite language is misapplied. But, pray Mr. Hughes, what is the man who says, "there is a God?" I'm not going to call names Mr. Hughes, although the Holy Ghost hasn't given me a "clean heart" like you, because I think it's bad manners. The difference between you and us Mr. Hughes is, that you affirm an "existence" without evidence, and when we ask for the evidence you get mad: Don't you see Mr. Hughes that if you produce sufficient evidence we can't help being convinced? You want a verdict for your client before we hear the evidence, which is absurd. It's all a matter of evidence and common-sense, sir: You believe your God answers prayer; then you organise prayer-meetings throughout the land to induce God to manifest himself in some form or other as evidence of his existence, and if he only exhibits that part of his body which he displayed to Moses, we Atheists will turn Methodists right away. Considering that he is represented to us as continually answering all sorts of ridiculous prayers, this is but a modest request to make and its importance is tremendous. The sun shines, we see its rays and feel its warmth. We know it exists. We couldn't believe it didn't exist if we tried. Even you yourself Mr. Hughes, say that you "gravely doubt whether it would ever be possible by purely intellectual argument to prove the existence of God to anybody." Then why are we to be condemned for not believing that which cannot be proved? Don't you see that you are making an ass of yourself, Mr. Hughes?

Again he says, "It is a remarkable fact that no man has ever undertaken philosophically to deny the existence of God who has not simultaneously undertaken to deny his own existence." Perhaps Mr. Hughes will kindly give us the names of some of the men who *have* undertaken to prove the non-existence of God and themselves "simultaneously." We pause for a reply. We could give the name of one man who undertook to *assert* the existence of God, and simultaneously succeeded in making a fool of himself.

"Have you ever reflected," asked Mr. Hughes—and we fancy we can see his long, straight, black hair standing straight up on end—"have you ever reflected that such a thing as an atheistic city has never existed? Have you ever reflected that this is an experiment which the human race has never tried; that from the beginning there has never been an organised community which has absolutely ignored the existence of God and moral considerations arising from the existence of God?" Have you ever reflected, Mr. Hughes, or rather are you capable of reflecting, that superstition takes a deal of killing; that it is a noxious weed which grows luxuriantly in the garden of the human mind, especially when well watered with ignorance and fear, which you and your order have always taken good care there should never be lack of? Have you ever tried to reflect that our Christian cities are not absolutely perfect in their morality, that they do not attain the highest ideal of what cities should be, that there is still some *little* room for improvement? Have you ever heard of prostitution in our cities, Mr. Hughes; or of drunkenness, or sweating, or of fever dens, or of Christian rack-renters, or of reeking slums? Go to, Mr. Hughes; go to. Take credit for all the good in society, and, ostrich-like, bury your head in the sands as regards the evil, and Atheism will stand but a poor chance.

"It is always a surprise to me," he continues, "that a handful of Atheists remain here. Why should they prefer to remain in Christian lands? They say that we are ignorant and reactionary, and that the sooner we get rid of belief in God the better. Why do they not go away? Why do they not go and

establish a Secular State in some far-away little island? The fact is, these Atheists, talk as they may, know which side their bread is buttered. Every blessing which the Atheists enjoy to-day they owe to the toils and sufferings of Christian men." Shades of Hetherington, Carlile, and the other fighters for a free press, look down on Ananias Hughes! Spirit of good old Robert Owen, founder of our infant schools and co-operative societies, return and confront your unworthy countryman!

You wonder, Mr. Hughes do you, why we don't go to "furrin parts?" We often wonder why you don't go to Jericho. You see, Mr. Hughes, we happen to have been born here, and having a sort of liking for the "old sod," in spite of the existence of such slimy creatures as you in our midst, prefer to remain here, rid the country of such things, and make it healthier to live in. It wouldn't be brave to run away from such crawling reptiles, we'd sooner stop and kill them. We know which side our bread is buttered, do we? And how are you fixed in that respect sir? You who live on the fears and ignorance of your fellow Christians. You who induce your dupes to invest in a concern that never issues a balance sheet, and has never paid a dividend. You who ride first-class in special trains when on your Master's business, and cross the ocean in magnificent saloons to preach the gospel of him who made his remarkable journey into Jerusalem on two donkeys, and crossed the sea in a fishing boat. The apostles, Mr. Hughes, were to go through the world preaching, with "neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in their purses." Do you dispense with the gold and silver, Mr. Hughes? The brass, we know, you carry in your face.

"There is not a noble idea," he exclaims, "in politics or in anything else that we owe to the Atheists. Every noble idea they utter is but an echo of Christianity. All the successful philanthropies are carried on by Christians. If all the Christians were to come out on strike and say, 'We will not give any more money or service to anything,' every philanthropic and charitable institution in the kingdom would be bankrupt in a month. The Christians support them under the love of God."

"If all the Christians were to come out on strike" is exceeding good. Who would they strike against, Mr. Hughes, but against themselves? Are not the philanthropic institutions for the benefit of *themselves*. And don't they exist, and our gaols and workhouses too, as a part of our beautiful Christian civilisation that you boast so much of? Aren't they parts of the blessings we enjoy through Christianity? Christianity, whose glorious mission it was to regenerate mankind, which brought tidings of great joy, finds it necessary after nineteen centuries of preaching, to dole out flannel petticoats and loaves to its starving Christian paupers, and build gaols and lunatic asylums for its Christian criminals and Christian idiots. Assuredly this is something to boast of.

"However," adds Mr. Hughes jauntily, after he has spent the whole of his time girding against Atheism—"however, we need not trouble ourselves about any purely and positively atheistic movement. Such a movement, in this country at any rate, is on its last legs. It never was of any real importance, and now it is quite a negligible quantity in our universities and among the masses of the people." Readers of the *Freethinker* will perhaps remember that Secularism has been on its last legs a long time; in fact, it is wonderful what lasting properties those Secular legs have—ordinary legs aren't in it with them. Perhaps readers will also think that Mr. Hughes has been on his last, or rather hind, legs long enough by the amount of braying he has done. So we will dismiss him with a friendly poke to browse on his native

hills, where thistles are plentiful and troublesome Atheists are at a corresponding discount. H. J.

## PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS OF SECULARISM.

1. Secularism teaches that man, in all his actions and aspirations, should follow the sole guidance, and acknowledge the supreme and undivided authority, of Reason. The Secularist, therefore, walks in the light of science, and takes social utility as the spring of his conduct.

2. Knowing nothing of any supernatural guidance or interference, either in the affairs of human society or of the universe at large, Secularism refuses to postulate the supernatural in any form or shape whatsoever.

3. Secularism, therefore, excludes supermundane hopes and fears, regarding them as neither necessary motives nor essential incentives to virtuous conduct.

4. Secularism, accordingly, regards the pursuit and enjoyment of present or prospective happiness in this life as man's only wise and useful aim, not because it objects to posthumous bliss *per se*, but because it looks upon our secular salvation as the only realisable goal of human effort.

5. Secularism posits social utility—or the principle which seeks the highest happiness of the many, whilst procuring the least possible injury, if any, to the few—as the only safe, sound, and sensible basis of all private and public morality.

6. Secularism, therefore, appraises man's actions as good or bad only in proportion as these conform or conflict with the utilitarian criterion of moral conduct, as before defined.

7. Secularism affirms that liberty of thought and speech is the necessary precursor, and invariable accompaniment, of all true social progress.

Secularists, therefore, assert the right, and claim as the duty, of every individual to exercise by himself, and vindicate the equal exercise by all others, of untrammelled liberty of thought and expression on all subjects of human interest.

8. Secularism further seeks to remove all political, social, and economic conditions that may or do operate in any way prejudicially to the enjoyment by each and all of equal opportunities of reaching the highest attainable degree of material and moral well-being realisable by man as a social animal.

9. Secularism regards theology as the product of ignorance and credulity, immoral in the ideal it adores, in the creed it exacts, the ethical theory it propounds, and in its general tendencies of thought and action.

Secularists, therefore, discard and denounce theology as by nature and necessity the implacable foe of man's highest mental and moral progress.

10. Such being the principles of Secularism, its objects are as follows:—

(a) To remove all barriers to the fullest equal freedom of thought, speech, and action.

(b) To dispel the fog of Supernaturalism by exposing the superstitious source from which it springs, and the pernicious influence to which it always tends.

(c) To promote a widespread knowledge of the laws or conditions which govern the material and moral well-being of individuals and societies.

(d) To abolish all State patronage and support of any form of theology, whether by subsidisation, political privilege, or protective legislation against heresy, or otherwise.

(e) To liberate morality from the bonds of theology, and thereby place ethics upon a purely rational, human, or social basis, independent of supernatural props or supports.

(f) To promote universal goodwill amongst men by establishing such healthy social conditions as

may tend to harmonise the welfare of individuals with the larger welfare of society.

(g) And, finally, to teach the world, and to practice before mankind, the common-place but salutary, much needed lesson, that the affairs of this life are of paramount importance beyond those of any other imaginary existence, that life is abundantly worth living, and especially worth living well; that there is an enormous mass of preventible and quite unnecessary misery in the world to-day, with which Secular methods can alone successfully grapple; that it is the duty of every man to do all he can to reduce this mass of misery, and that there is before the race a boundless vista of possibilities of happiness, not only for the generations yet unborn, but even for us here, and to-day, if only we will wisely pursue the path of science and social sympathy, and not walk, as hitherto, in the darkened councils of the godly.

W. HEAFORD.

### BOOK CHAT.

A German work on the question of a personal God and the immortality of the soul, by Albert Markus, is published at Verlag's Magazine, Zürich.

In his new volume of *Souvenirs*, Renan tells how a pious believer of the orthodox type, who resides at Nantes, sends him every month a letter containing only these words: "There is a hell." Renan is not angry with his sour correspondent. "I should be very glad," he writes, "to feel sure that there is a hell," for he would prefer hell to annihilation. He looks with the most serene complacency on the unknown future. Hell has no terrors; for, says he, "I imagine that if, in his severity, the Eternal were to send me to that unpleasant place I would manage to get out."

The manuscripts of Jeremy Bentham at the University College are to be edited by Mr. Thomas Whittaker, author of many notable articles in *Mind*. In the British Museum there are also manuscripts of Bentham of a Freethought character well worth attention.

*Horæ Sabbaticæ* is the title chosen by Sir James Fitzjames Stephen for his interesting paper on Froissart, Montaigne, Hooker, Chillingworth, Taylor and Clarendon, because reprinted from the *Saturday Review*. Many years ago Godfrey Higgins put out an excellent little book on the Sunday question with the same title.

It is the experience both of English and American book-dealers that the day of the family Bible is over. Teachers' Bibles, paragraph Bibles, and limp backs still sell; even the Revised Version is still sometimes asked for. But the demand for the family Bible is becoming year by year smaller by degrees and beautifully less. A large number are supposed to find their way to pawnshops.

Principal Cave, in the current number of the *Homiletic Review*, as guardedly as possible admits that as a matter of fact "absolute inerrancy" does not exist in the Holy Scriptures. Put plainly, this means that the Holy Ghost made a few mistakes. But then, urges Dr. Cave, they are quite unimportant.

An Austrian professor has discovered that the soul is simply the natural perfume of the hair. Now we can understand the unaccountable depravity of bald-headed men.

"Mr. Smith, you seem to be evolving that translation from your inner consciousness." "Well, Professor, I read in my devotions last night that 'by faith Enoch was translated,' and I thought I would try it on Horace."

A story is told of Philip Phillips, "the sweet singer." He wrote Myron W. Whitney, of Boston, asking him if he would aid him in some service of sacred song, and seemingly, as if to give him a half-smothered hint that no sordid pecuniary consideration should be expected or desired, the writer signed himself "Philip Phillips, singing for Jesus." The implication meant to be given was taken, and in reply Mr. Whitney wrote his terms, and asking if the Lord was not as fully able to pay his price as was a poor human, he signed himself "Myron W. Whitney, singing for stamps."

### CHRISTIANITY AND PERSECUTION.

The Vedas and the Shastas—the writings of the Buddhists and those of the Parsees and the Chinese—contain nowhere such a justification of wholesale murder, as do the scriptures of the Jews and of the Christians. From these have been drawn the power to persecute, and, if possible, to exterminate those who worship God in a different fashion to those in power. Calvin was as bad as Torquemada; and, even at the present time, it is only public opinion that prevents fanatics, like the early New Englanders, from reducing their Christian hate to practical torture. Everywhere the professed followers of Jesus assume the power to torment their opponents, whenever they can do so without breaking the civil law, and there are few pulpits from which the voice of revilement, contumely and denunciation is not repeatedly heard. The Romans abuse the Anglicans; the Establishment sneers at Dissent; Non-conformists censure all churches; and all libel those whom they call Free Thinkers and Atheists.—*Dr. Thomas Inman, "Ancient Faiths and Modern,"* p. 62.

### THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT NOT TRUE.

The records of nature have now been found to reveal an orderly and progressive system of the development of matter and mind into its present forms, extending through vast ages, proving the Mosaic story of creation to be untrue, and placing it among the myths of earlier days of the human race, which are found to abound in the traditions or literature of all people. This orderly progress of nature reveals an unvarying method, which makes every effect the result of preceding natural causes; and the violations of its methods, called "miracles," are unsupported by sufficient evidence to warrant their belief. Every miracle of which circumstances have permitted a scientific examination has been disproved, and shown either to be a fraud or to be the result of a law of nature known or fairly supposed. The miracles of our days are now on the eve of solution by the discovery of the laws of psychology and animal magnetism, which many learned men believe will in time solve all that is not fraudulent in the phenomena of Spiritualism. . . . The Christian scheme of theology must therefore take its place in the order of the development of human thought, and in time give place to the next system which the advancing mind of man evolves; that, in turn, to be improved upon as knowledge of nature and the control of her forces increases.—*Robt. C. Adams.*

### THE FREETHINKER'S TASK.

The disciples of Secularism should learn to value the right of Freethought as the palladium of their faith, as the basis of all other blessings, moral and material as well as intellectual. They should learn to revere the memory of the martyrs of their faith, and recognise the importance of their services to the cause of modern civilisation and its sacred principles; but they should also recognise the magnitude of the remaining task. It is no trifle that the prevalent system of ethics and the temporal and eternal hopes of millions of our brethren are still based on a lie. It is no trifle that the health and happiness of millions of our fellow-men are still sacrificed on the altar of that untruth by the suppression of public recreations on the only day when a large plurality of our working men find their only chance of leisure. It is no trifle that men are still branded as "infidels," "renegades," and "scoffers" for refusing to kneel in the temple of a nature-hating fanatic.—*Felix Leopold Oswald, "Bible of Nature,"* p. 135.

We may differ in this world, but when we get to the cemetery we are all on a dead level.

This curious advertisement appeared in the columns of a contemporary: "If the lady who pocketed the china cup from the little tea service set when my furniture was on view at — will return it, I shall be obliged, and will hand a donation to the funds supporting the place of worship she makes use of."

A propos of Bradshaw culture, this story is quoted about the Bishop of Oxford. Dr. Stubbs was addressing an audience of Reading High School girls on the occasion of their prize distribution, and expressed his regret that he no longer had leisure to devote to general literature. "Indeed, my dear young friends," the worthy prelate continued, "there is but one book which I now find time to dip into at all. Its name commences with a 'B.' Perhaps you can guess at the title." "Bible!" volubly exclaimed all the school, seeing only the bishop and not knowing the man. "No, Bradshaw," came the solemn correction; whereupon the girls blushed in a body, and Dr. Stubbs smiled his own characteristic smile.

## IN CHURCH.

I feel a solemn sanctity,  
Sweet rest of soul is mine,  
My heart abides in pious peace,  
My bonnet sets divine!  
Grace, like a river, fills my soul,  
In chastened joy I sit.  
I feel religion's deepest power,  
My sacque's a perfect fit.

A holy fervor penetrates  
My soul's remotest nooks,  
An earnest, chastened, fervid joy—  
How neat that ribbon looks!  
The good man tells of Christian peace,  
The organ's anthem swells,  
I bathe in streams of pure delight,  
My dress cost more than Nell's!

O holy rest! O Sabbath calm!  
O chastened peace serene!  
I feel thy deep abiding spell.  
How dowdy is Miss Green!  
I feel a pure religious glow,  
O rapture undefined!  
I know my bonnet looks so nice  
To those who sit behind!

—Yankee Blade.

## ACID DROPS.

The Rev. Ananias Hughes held forth at St. James' Hall last Sunday afternoon on the London County Council. His object was to show that Christianity, and especially the Wesleyan species of it, was mixed up with the business of governing the metropolis. His method was delightfully simple. He took a list of Progressive demands, and put them forward as if he or the Wesleyan Church had invented them. Nay, he almost suggested that they might be found in the New Testament—perhaps in the Ananias edition.

One of Hughes's proposals was that the docks should be controlled by a public trust; and then, according to the *Daily News* report, strikes and casual labor would disappear, and London pauperism would pass away for ever! Such was the incredibly foolish talk of a Christian minister on a Sunday afternoon! And the worst is, thousands applauded the folly.

"General" Booth's travelling secretary, Mr. A. M. Nicol, contributes to the *Christian World* a glowing account of his tour. "Agnostics, Jews and representatives of almost every phase of religious thought," he says, "have occupied his platforms or presided at his meetings, or in some other way testified to the admiration of the man; while more than one have admitted that religion, as exhibited by the Salvationists, is an almost unanswerable reply to the negativism in which they have sought shelter."

The last part of the sentence we may be sure is a piece of Nicol fiction. Freethinkers are not so foolish as Booth's travelling secretary imagines. They cannot become Christians because some Christians are actively benevolent. Religion is true or false irrespective of the character of its votaries.

It appears from the vote taken last week that there are 5,331 householders of Eastbourne who desire the maintenance of the Local Act against bands and processions, as against 738 in favor of repealing the Act. The Army advocates Local Option, but not in regard to itself.

"We claim the streets for God" was inscribed on a conspicuous banner at the Salvationists' Hyde Park demonstration. Persons whose horses are frightened by the bands need not send in claims to General Booth. They must be sent to the headquarters in heaven.

"General" Booth seems to have attracted some attention in Rome. The *Tablet* correspondent says that "driving about in his rather striking uniform he was taken for a precursor of the Carnival!"

"General" Booth encourages confession in "the Army." The *War Cry* exhorts the soldiers to "tell their sins" to their captains. All these religious systems come to the same thing in the end.

*Answers* is the name of one of those penny olla-podrida papers that are so numerous on railway bookstalls. A recent number of this journal contains an article "To Those About to Marry," in which the writer says that, "Without the grace of God a husband or a wife is not likely to cultivate domestic virtues or restrain a bad temper." We suspect this is a generalisation from a limited experience. It is rash on the part of any writer to suppose that the vices of his own home are common to all others.

The Bishop of Rochester excited much ire in Churchmen by attending Spurgeon's funeral. Many wrote to the *Church Times*, and "A Rural Dean," says: "Either the service was schismatic or not. If the former, then are there any Broad Church principles broad enough to shelter the action?" Another writer, signing himself "Pro Ecclesia Dei," asks: "Are such proceedings consistent with loyalty to the Church of England—nay, rather to the Catholic Church of Christ? Would the blessed Cyprian have blessed the followers of Novatus or Novation? Would St. Augustine have blessed the Donatists?"

Spurgeon was alleged to have died with the good old text "I have fought the good fight" upon his lips. It transpires, however, from his secretary, that the actual words uttered were the equally significant ones, "Let them find out." This curt expression was in answer to a suggestion that his flock wanted to know their shepherd's condition.

Of all the panegyrics on Mr. Spurgeon the most extraordinary is that of the Rev. W. Lockhart of Liverpool. This gentleman pointed out that Mr. Spurgeon died at the same age as Calvin, Dickens, Jeremy Taylor, Whitfield and Shakespeare; and "who would say that he had not graven his work as deeply as any of them?"

Mr. Lockhart is out in his chronology. Shakespeare died at the age of fifty-two. Then as to the comparison. Could anything be more utterly absurd? Only a man in a pulpit could think of mentioning Spurgeon and Shakespeare in the same breath. One was a popular preacher, whose sermons betray the genius of commonplace; the other was the greatest poet and mightiest mind that ever adorned the earth. Shakespeare will delight and edify millions of men and women centuries after Spurgeon is only a name in the Dictionary of National Biography.

How the Ritualists and Evangelicals love one another! The *High Church Times*, in its current issue, speaks of the *Low English Churchman* as indulging in "the foolish calumnies of reckless critics." The *English Churchman* speaks in similar terms of "the Ritualists' organs."

The Rev. Athelstone Riley, who has lived much in the East, laments that Englishmen want short sermons, while among Eastern Christian religions, services of fifteen hours duration are by no means unusual. The more backward a place is, you are sure to find more attention given to God and less to man.

There is no end to the nonsense a Christian will write in eulogy or defence of his ridiculous creed. Here is the *Christian World*, for instance, in an article on "Ministering Women," declaring that "Among the secondary claims of Christianity, nothing, perhaps, is more striking or obvious than the service it has rendered to the emancipation and elevation of woman." Now if Christianity had done this, it would constitute a primary, not a secondary claim; for the emancipation and elevation of the mothers of mankind implies the emancipation and elevation of the whole race, male and female. Christianity, however, did nothing of the kind. It degraded woman instead of raising her, and plunged her back into the position of inferiority and subordination from which she had been rescued by the Roman law. This is not a theory, but a fact, known to every student of history and jurisprudence.

Our pious contemporary is obliged to modify its eulogy with "reservations." The Christian Church "gave to women

an equal footing with men in its fellowship." At the same time "it is clear that St. Paul did not like to hear women speak in the church." This is a very mild way of stating the apostle's contempt of the sex. He told woman to keep her place, and the Church has always told her the same thing. And what is "her place," according to Christian teaching and history? Simply this—to play second fiddle to man, to follow his lead, to accept his lordship, to obey him as her divinely-appointed master. All the Church has allowed her is suffering and silence. So long as she sacrificed herself she was acting rightly, and the fruits of her sacrifice were always reaped by men—if priests may be counted as men, instead of a third or neuter gender.

There are plenty of poor and destitute people in South Lancashire, and a man with £25,000 could do a lot of good with it. But the Rev. J. G. Haworth and his aunt Nancy, having this sum to dispose of, chose to build a gospel-shop with it; and the new house for God being erected at Walsall, near Bury, they had it consecrated by the Bishop of Manchester—for the usual consideration. The Bishop gave off a supply of the Holy Ghost, and the place is now sacred.

In the course of his professional harangue the Bishop of Manchester was good enough to praise his own religion. Great is Diana of the Ephesians! There never was such a goddess! All the other deities are dregs and scum in comparison! Such was the Bishop's clamor, only he didn't say Diana, he said Christ—who was not half as good looking, nor perhaps half as chaste.

Bishop Moorhouse said, among other things, that Christianity had "established a common brotherhood which contrasted strangely with the heathenish gladiatorial shows of the past." Verily the Bishop is hard pressed when he has to go back fifteen hundred years for his illustration. No doubt the gladiatorial shows were bad enough in their way; but what about the gigantic gladiatorial shows of modern Europe? What about our huge standing armies and our colossal wars? Are they not a strange result of that "common brotherhood" which Christianity boasts of establishing?

A clause in the French Bill dealing with Associations provides that all establishments in which persons live in community may be inspected by authorities specially deputed to do so. This clause will give the civil authorities power to inspect convents. Many think these establishments as much demand inspection as lunatic asylums.

A pastoral letter has been read in all the Catholic churches in Canada, enjoining parents not to send their children to any schools where the one true faith is not taught or where there are children of different religions. Thus are religious hatreds perpetuated.

The Pope has officially sanctioned the festival of the "Apparition of Mary the Immaculate at Lourdes." Surely the 'cute Leo must have winked the other eye when he signed this decree.

The Greeks are usually tolerant, but the spirit of religion manifested itself in Athens last week, when the mob pillaged the Protestant church, and maltreated the ministers and worshippers.

An insane clergyman at Berlin interrupted the Cathedral service in the presence of the emperor by shouting "The millennium is coming." The old Bible prophecies are responsible for a deal of mental derangement.

The Dean of York objects to the performance of the "Vicar of Bray" on the London stage as representing holy things in a very irreverent manner. He says, ten or twelve years ago, such a play would have called forth strong remonstrance. We remember E. T. Smith being threatened with a prosecution for having on a pantomime bill, "Miraculous draught of fishes."

Says this reverend Dean, by his own experience he was convinced that the Bible is nothing else, and can be nothing else, than the word of Revelation. Well, the Bible says, "sell that thou hast and give to the poor," and that it is next to impossible for a rich man to get to

heaven. Yet the Dean takes some two thousand a year. No doubt his experience confirms the Bible.

The old saying that "when thieves fall out," etc., is amusingly illustrated by the advocates of the rival Christian missions to Japan. The *Catholic Mirror* asserts that the Protestant mission work in Japan has been a failure, and that the only hope for the future is in the native girls and boys who are being educated for teachers. The *New York Independent* answers in this style: "This is sad news; but if Protestant missions are a failure, what shall we say of the Catholic missions in Japan, which have less than half as many converts as the Protestants, and less than one-fifth as many adherents in the Japanese Parliament?" Well, we should imagine that, if the Protestants have done no good, the Catholics must have succeeded in doing a rather large minus quantity of good, or, in other words, a great deal of harm. Which result we might have expected.

The missionaries have been crowing over the result of the census in India, as compared with that of '81, since it shows that the Christian population is increasing in a greater ratio than either the Hindus or Mohammedans. But the explanation is simple. There remain in India still above ten millions of almost savages, hill and forest tribes, who are neither Hindus or Mohammedans, and who readily embrace the Christian faith. Christianity may be expected to gather up most of these, but success with them only brings contempt from the higher races.

The test of a religion, as of a race, is how it succeeds when in conflict with advanced competitors. Now it is a striking fact that while Christianity does overcome the faiths of savage races, it does not succeed with the more civilised ones. Shanars and Karens are converted, while Confucians, Buddhists, high-caste Hindus and Mohammedans are unconvinced. When it is remembered how many in Christian lands are non-Christians, it seems likely that if Christ defers his second coming till all the world is Christian, even Baxter's grandchildren will never witness the event.

Christians have been much horrified to hear that throughout China their religion is known as the pig-devil religion; and still more shocked at the blasphemy which continually speaks of worshipping the hog Jesus Christ. It appears, however, that these appellations have arisen entirely through the missionaries themselves. In Chinese the words for "pig" and for "lord" are both sounded alike, and represented by the character *chu*. Now owing to this, "*chu*" is never used as an appellation. But in the scriptures, as well as in the widely circulated Christian tracts, there is constant reference to *Chu Yeh-su Chi-tu*—meaning the Lord Jesus Christ, but which the Chinese naturally read as Pig Jesus Christ. Of course the *literati* know the meaning, but use it as a good pun against the Christians, much as a sceptical Frenchman may mispronounce *chrétien* as *crétin*.

Professor Drummond has made the discovery that "most men are Atheists," because "their conception of God is wrong." Of course the Professor is right. He has the straight tip.

In the thirteenth century arose a virulent Christian heresy known by the name of its most celebrated production as *The Everlasting Gospel*, a work attributed to Joachim di Flora. According to this doctrine, the first revelation was that of the Father to the Jews. This was superseded by that of the Son to the Christians; but this would in turn be superseded by the doctrine of the Spirit. The dominion of the Father extended to the advent of John the Baptist, who announced the Son; that of the Son to Saint Benedict, who announced the Spirit. The world was divided into three ages—for the first the Old Testament, for the second the New, and for the third and final age the Eternal Gospel. This final age was to have three manifestations—first, that of the letter of the Eternal Gospel; second, that of its spiritual intelligence; third, that of the full manifestation of God.

The bold spirits who embraced this doctrine, chiefly monks inclined to mysticism, were everywhere hunted and persecuted. Many were burnt as Atheists. The heresy was stamped out, but some smouldering remnants occasionally burst out.

Heine, the German poet, declared that, while he had given up Father and Son, he was still a knight of the Holy Ghost; and a living German poet has recently published some lines which have led to our observations. They may be translated—

Father and Son may get them gone,  
I neither need nor merit  
Their services; but this I know,  
I cannot want the spirit.

Some of the most "blasphemous" poetry ever published may be found in the *Cherubischer Wandersman*, the work of a Roman Catholic mystical priest, Johann Scheffler, who wrote under the name of Angelus Silesius. He was what Novalis called Spinoza, "a God-intoxicated man." He boldly declares himself, what on the Theistic theory he was, a part of God. He says, "I cannot do without God, nor He without me; He is as small as I, and I as great as He."

God in my nature is involved  
As I in the divine;  
I help to make his being up  
As much as he does mine.

As much as I to God owes God to me,  
His blissfulness and self-sufficiency.

I am as rich as God, no grain of dust  
That is not mine too—share with me he must.

A mass of rock weighing forty or fifty tons, which overhung the Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, at Nantlle Dwycoed, Carnarvonshire, fell without the slightest previous warning on Wednesday night, and completely demolished the chapel, which is buried beneath the *debris*. The chapel-house adjoining, in which were six persons, fortunately escaped injury. The rock fell about an hour before the time for service, when the little chapel would have been filled and many lives would have been lost had the fall occurred then.

"Love not the world nor the things of the world," is an injunction to all good Christians, and they obey it about as much as other people. The Rev. J. Ingle, incumbent of St. Olave's, Exeter, felt age creeping on him, and sent in his resignation to the bishop as unable to continue his duties. When too late he wished to return owing to the smallness of the pension which it was proposed to give him.

A man named Wood, a laborer at Kingston on Thames, when at church on Sunday, heard something that riled him from the pulpit. He shouted out, "That'll do, governor; it's all rot." For this the Christian magistrates have sentenced him to twenty-one days' imprisonment in default of a fine of twenty shillings and costs, which he could not pay. It was very impolite of Mr. Wood to thus express his sentiments concerning the reverend gentleman's sermon, but if everyone who had similar thoughts was imprisoned our gaols would not be so empty as they fortunately are.

The Rev. John W. Richardson, of Chanty, Dallas County Missouri, deserted his wife and child, and eloped with a fourteen-year-old daughter of a prominent farmer in the neighborhood who attended his Sunday school. So far from religion curing a sensual nature, it rather acts otherwise, as furnishing the means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done.

Many a magnificent church is nothing more than a millionaire's penance.

The Lord has sent some rain to Southern India too late to benefit the crops, and something like a famine still threatens. A severe epidemic of small-pox has now broken out in Bombay. Small-pox is also raging with severity at Corfu.

The vicar's rate war still continues at Coventry. The vicar is bent on having his pound of flesh, but it is certain he will not get it unless he incurs the odium of distraining on the goods of his parishioners, and thereby occasioning riot and tumult. The City Council and Boards of Guardians have passed resolutions to oppose the collection of the rate on their property.

Michigan has a pious sensation that probably is without a parallel in the history of the world. About a year

ago an old man 75 years old was shot and killed by his son. The murderer was tried, but was acquitted. The matter was nearly forgotten, when about a week ago the man "experienced religion," and under the excitement of the moment made a full confession of his horrible crime. He closed with these words:—"Thank God, I'm saved. I'm ready to go to state prison or to hang, but I know my sin will be pardoned. 'Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow,' has been my prayer, and it is answered, praise God! I'm going to get to heaven if I have to go through state prison to do it. I'm saved, but a murderer." It looks as though the Free Methodists who conducted the revival meetings where this murderer was converted had got more than they bargained for. We presume no other church wants to take their convert off their hands.—*Boston Investigator*.

A ghost story worthy the investigation of Mr. Stead is that of the conscientious spook who, after being dead ten years, returned a borrowed umbrella. He had taken up the interval in considering the question whether after death the umbrella might be taken from his legatees in order to return to the rightful owner, and whether his discomfiture at seeing a ghost with an umbrella would be greater than his gratification at its return. It was a gingham made in 16 pieces, and with its ribs shaky. But the ghost returned it. He felt he could never meet Abraham, Isaac and Jacob face to face unless he restored that umbrella.

Mr. Acland, lecturing on village life at Manchester, pointed out the deplorable position of the village schoolmaster. He finds himself, for the most part, the servant of one man—that is, of the parson of the parish; and the questions which are put to him are generally such as "I want a really good organist; are you such? When have you accompanied Gregorians? What psalter was it you used? Have you accompanied a choral celebration?" Upon his answers to such questions depends the engagement of a man who is practically a public servant, paid to educate the children of the nation.

"Why do you support the Unitarians?" asked a sky-pilot of an indifferent. "Well, you see, they give you less religion than anybody else for the same money," was the reply.

Says the *Glasgow Weekly Herald*: "A Greenock clergyman the other day wrote to a local tobacconist pointing out that the snuff-boxes surmounted with donkey heads which lay upon his counter were calculated to lower the morals of the people."

Dr. Chapman, who has been examining the brains of gorillas, declares the gorillas to be lower in the monkey tribe than the chimpanzee and ourang, and that man, instead of coming in direct descent from any one of these orders, descended with them from a more remote and common ancestor, probably the lemurs, whose fossil remains have been found in the Rocky Mountains. Man and monkey possess certain things in common and differ in certain things, pointing to a common ancestry rather than a collateral line of progressive descent.

The sooner the Ball's Pond Hall Company is wound up the better. Its premises are now rented by the Mildmay Radical Club, which has passed a resolution that no more Freethought meetings shall be held there. Two lectures advertised by the London Secular Federation have had to be cancelled.

The Newcastle Board of Guardians was asked by Canon Franklin to consent "that candidates for appointment be not questioned as to their religious persuasion." This was seconded by Mr. Hopper, but lost by 14 votes to 7. Bigotry still reigns at Newcastle.

The Watch Committee of Newcastle likewise refuses to interfere with the police prosecution of Mr. Loader, on the absurd ground that it has "no right to interfere in the matter." Evidently there is still need in "canny Newcastle" of a vigorous Freethought propaganda.

Captain Nichols, the head constable, got up and said in presence of the Malthusian Defence Committee's deputation, that he was the responsible party. Yes, but the Watch Committee are his masters—or should be.



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

*Sunday*, Feb. 28, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C., at 11.15, "The Eight Hours' Question"; at 7.15, "The President of the Royal Society on God."

*Thursday*, March 3, Workmen's Club and Institute, High-street, Walthamstow, at 8, "Why I cannot be a Christian." Admission free.

March 6, Merthyr; 13, Wolverhampton; 20, Manchester; 21, Warrington; 27, Hall of Science.

April 3, Hall of Science.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—February 28, Birmingham. March 6, Birmingham; 7 and 8, Mechanic's Institute, Nottingham; 13 and 20 (morning and evening), Hall of Science; 27, Birmingham; 29 and 30, Newcastle-on-Tyne. April 3, Manchester; 10 and 17, Birmingham; 24, Sheffield. May 1 and 8 (morning and evening) Hall of Science; 15 and 22, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

L. FRANCE.—Ward Lock and Co.'s edition of Gibbon is doubtless all it professes to be. Murray's edition of Milman's Gibbon is re-edited by Dr. Smith, and printed in a superior manner in 8 vols. octavo.

JOSEPH BROWN acknowledges 10s. from the Newcastle Branch for the North Eastern Secular Federation fund.

W. M. (Liverpool).—We find your signature undecipherable. You will find all you want in Sale's edition of the Koran, which can be bought for a few shillings. Sir William Muir's large work on Mahomet is very valuable. The small volume issued by the Religious Tract Society is good in its way, but somewhat biased.

S. H. ALISON.—Thanks for cuttings.

A. T. STEVENS.—We do not know the address of any news-agent at Cambridge who sells this journal. Perhaps one of our readers can tell you. If a news-vendor cannot get his wholesale agent to supply the *Freethinker* he should transfer his custom to a more accommodating house.

T. W. W.—It is an old sermon of Talmage's, we believe. His remarks on Jonah are ineffably silly. The Bible does say that the prophet lodged in the whale's mouth, but in its belly; and the gullet of a whale will only accommodate a small fish. Read Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances*.

FIGHT ON.—You can join the N. S. S. by paying one shilling, and you can increase your subscription at any time afterwards. Delighted to hear that we have been instrumental in freeing you from the incubus of superstition. Thanks for your cordial good wishes.

G. JOHNSTONE.—We are quite aware of the Catholic doctrine of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. It is dealt with in *A Virgin Mother*, by Mr. Foote. The "Acid Drop" referred to the immaculate conception of Jesus, who is said to have been born, not only without sin, but without the assistance of a human father.

J. GIBBONS.—We fancy not. Some regulation of open-air meeting places in London seems desirable. The County Council has set apart certain portions of the parks.

R. UTTIN, hairdresser, Beaver-road, South Ashford, Kent, sells this journal and all secular publications.

MANY correspondents remain unanswered in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence at Bristol to debate with the Rev. J. Moffat Logan.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaron—Truthseeker—Lichtfreund—Freidenker—Liberator—Two Worlds—Western Figaro—Boston Investigator—Freedom—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Progressive Thinker—Cosmopolitan—Flaming Sword—Better Way—Echo—Ironclad Age—Lucifer—Crossbearer—Modern Thought—Liverpool Echo—Joker—Portsmouth Evening News—North Eastern Daily Gazette—Fur Unsere Jugend—Answers—Yorkshire Herald—Southern Echo—Bournemouth Guardian—Bristol Mercury—Burton Chronicle—Dundee Advertiser.

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.

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.

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.

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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.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

St. James's Hall, Bristol, was crowded to suffocation on Monday night, and a great many people were unable to gain admission. The occasion of the assembly was a public debate on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, between the Rev. J. Moffat Logan and Mr. G. W. Foote. The chair was taken by Mr. B. Bedell, a local gentleman in the legal profession, who made a brief introductory speech, in which he drew attention to the odious legal restrictions on speech and opinion, and expressed a hope that all sections of the meeting would try to get them swept out of the statute-book and the common law.

Mr. Logan's supporters were of course in the majority, and when he rose he was enthusiastically applauded. He is a short man; he told the meeting his height—five feet four. He is self-confident, fluent, and highly rhetorical. Probably he is an excellent preacher. Some of his periods smacked of the pulpit, and sounded as if they had done service on many a Sunday.

Mr. Logan never lost sight of his own side of the audience; in fact he spoke to them, and to them only. His object appeared to be to say what would satisfy the Christians and win their applause. Not a single observation of his was addressed to the Freethinkers or to persons in a state of uncertainty. From the first, in fact, Mr. Logan has been anxious to take good care of himself. He positively declined to discuss the simple, plain question, "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" He would only discuss the question of how we are to account for Christians believing that he rose from the dead. It was a clever move, but not a very brave one; and Mr. Foote only consented to Mr. Logan's conditions, in this as well as other respects, because he strongly desired to bring the reverend gentleman on the platform.

Mr. Logan chose the easiest course, and then made it still easier. The only witness of the Resurrection he produced was Saint Paul. Stripped of all its rhetorical adornments Mr. Logan's argument came to this:—Paul said he saw Jesus; Paul was not a liar; Paul was not a man to be deceived: therefore Paul did see Jesus; *argal* Jesus did rise from the dead. The argument, if it may be called so, is so essentially childish, that Mr. Logan, who is no fool, must be aware that it would never have the slightest weight with anyone but a Christian—that is, a person who already believes what Paul is adduced to prove.

Mr. Foote was obliged to follow Mr. Logan, and he talked about Paul till he was sick of the very name. In vain did he beg Mr. Logan to go back to the *original* story of the Resurrection, and give the testimony of persons who saw Jesus living, saw him dead, and saw him risen from the dead. Mr. Logan would not budge. He knew he might go farther and fare worse. He clung to Paul with the tenacity of a drowning man. So the first night's debate ended with this "proof" of the Resurrection—one man said he saw Jesus ten or twelve years after the Crucifixion; and that one man's uncorroborated and unsupported "testimony" is sufficient to establish a miracle! Really, it is enough to make one ask if this is, after all, an age of science and Board schools.

A word as to the conduct of the meeting. Mr. Logan was listened to attentively. The Freethinkers gave him fair play. But the Loganites, as the *Mercury* calls them, were not so civil and patient. Mr. Foote's second and third speeches were delivered amidst great interruption. More than once he had to shout down the opposition, and the chairman had to appeal for order. On the whole, however, it might have been a great deal worse. We cannot expect Christians to learn all at once how to listen to both sides.

The Bristol dailies noticed the debate. A column report appeared in the *Mercury*, which described Mr. Foote as "a powerful orator." It also complimented Mr. Logan on his "eloquence." Our own impression is that Mr. Logan could do better if he only got away from his Christian friends.

Perhaps he would take part in a *written* debate. If so, the columns of the *Freethinker* are open for the purpose. We will also reprint the debate in book form at our own expense, and place a thousand copies at Mr. Logan's disposition.

Tuesday evening's meeting was, if possible, more crowded than Monday's, and a larger number of persons vainly tried to get inside the building. The chair was taken by the Rev. J. MacIldowie. Mr. Foote opened the debate, and the *Mercury* says that he was "treated not altogether generously, for now and again taunts utterly irrelevant to the particular point under notice were directed against him with a bluntness calculated to disconcert many men. But Mr. Foote was never put out; he had a direct answer for some of his adversaries; others he did not trouble to notice, but went on with his speech without once losing the context." Mr. Logan spoke extremely well, and was listened to with attention by the Freethinkers until the close of the evening, when, having the last speech, he threw debating aside and indulged in what the *Mercury* calls "a brilliant and impassioned sermon." The Freethinkers resented this sermon; it was not what they came for; but Mr. Logan went on, quoting Christian hymns by the way, and sat down amid the wild cheers of his followers, who afterwards sang a well-known chapel tune with great gusto.

Mr. Foote's lecture at the London Hall of Science this evening should be interesting both to Freethinkers and Christians. Sir G. G. Stokes, president of the Royal Society, etc., etc., is made much of by such bodies as the Christian Evidence Society. He appears to be one of their oracles and authorities. Unfortunately for them he has written a book on Religion, and his Gifford Lectures on Natural Theology will be the subject of Mr. Foote's discourse. Mr. Foote thinks he will have little difficulty in showing that this "eminent scientist" is a poor, broken reed for Christians to rest upon.

Mr. Pownceby informs us that the sum of £2 10s. was collected for the Children's Party after Mr. Foote's lecture last Sunday evening. Mr. R. Fordor acknowledges the following:—E. J. Tierney, 2s.; per Mrs. Foote, 9s. 9d.; per G. Ward, 10s.; per Mrs. Cookney, 11s. 2d.; per Miss Robins, £1 13s. 10d.; per Mrs. Fisher, 3s. 2d.; per Mrs. Standing, £1 5s. 6d.; per Mrs. Sleigh, 3s. 6d.; per Mrs. Santen, 4s. 6d.; R. Side, 5s.; W. Leckey, 4s.; W. C., 4s.; C. M. Jacob, 5s.; E. Shepherd, 1s.; Miss Barlow, 1s.

The London Secular Federation has arranged two courses of Free Lectures for March—one at the Workmen's Club and Institute, High-street, Walthamstow (near St. James-street station), in connection with the Leyton Branch N. S. S.; the other for the West Ham Branch at Forest Gate. Mr. G. W. Foote opens at Walthamstow on Thursday evening, March 3, subject, "Why I Cannot be a Christian," and will be followed by Messrs. Standing, Stanley Jones, and C. Cohen. The Forest Gate lectures will be by Messrs. Cohen, Touzeau Parris, H. Snell, and Mrs. Thornton Smith, commencing on March 10. As Freethought propaganda is new to both these districts, it is hoped that the lecturers will be well supported by friends in the neighborhood.

At the half-yearly general meeting of the West London Branch, held last Friday, arrangements were made for a vigorous propaganda in Hyde Park, Hammersmith, and Kilburn, during the season now commencing. Final arrangements were also made for a concert to be held at the Hall of the Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Hammersmith, on Thursday evening, March 3, at eight o'clock, when all friends will be cordially welcomed. The concert will be followed, at the same place, by a course of Thursday evening free lectures. On Thursday, March 10, Mr. Stanley Jones will open the course. Notwithstanding the increased amount of work done by the Branch during the past half-year, the balance-sheet showed an improved financial position.

Our friend, Mr. Touzeau Parris, is a candidate in Hammersmith for the London County Council. We hope all Freethinkers will give him their hearty support, and that all voters will go to the poll next Saturday.

Mr. S. H. Alison, the secretary of the West Ham Branch, sends a well-written and temperate letter to the *Stratford Express* in answer to some recent Christian calumnies.

West Ham readers are desired to read the letter from the Branch secretary, which appears in another column. We earnestly hope the West Ham friends will not get into the muddle that did so much harm in East Lambeth. In any case we trust that they will support Mr. Ivatts, a veteran worker for Freethought, who deserves well of our party.

A meeting will be held in the Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, E., on Sunday, Feb. 28, at 8 p.m., in support of Mr. Charles Ivatt's candidature for West Ham School Board. Mr. Ivatts is president of the West Ham Branch, and all Secularists in West Ham are earnestly requested to attend and support Mr. Ivatts, who will address the meeting on the subject of "Secular Education."—S. H. ALISON.

N. S. S. Branches should look at the list of Mr. Stanley Jones's engagements, and see if they cannot engage him on the unoccupied dates. Mr. Jones is the N. S. S. paid secretary, and his services are available to the Branches for lectures on the easiest possible terms.

The Manchester Branch of the N. S. S. has issued a circular calling attention to the necessity of guaranteeing the expenses of Mr. Sam Standing in exclusively devoting his time to the work of the party in that district. The committee desire to raise a guarantee fund of £100. Donations will be gratefully received by Mr. S. King, treasurer, 12 Dorset-street, Hulme; Mr. T. Gough, financial secretary, 13 Harper-place, Chapman-street, Hulme; Mr. Hemingway, 25 Higher Chatham-street, C-on-M; or Mr. J. R. Willock, 2 Morton-street, C-on-M.

Queen's College, Birmingham, was originally devoted to the education of students in theology and medicine respectively. Year by year the medical school has increased and prospered, and year by year the divinity classes have dwindled and declined. Man has become more, and God less; science has advanced, and theology declined. The medical department has to go to larger premises in connection with the Mason secular College of Science, while the theological department is threatened with total extinction. Which things are an allegory.

The late Mr. H. Wardle, M.P., was cremated at Woking last week. Cremation is largely on the increase. The crematorium at Woking was opened in 1885. In the first three years only 26 were cremated; in 1888 there were 28; in 1889, 46; in 1890, 54; and last year there were 99. A crematorium is being set up at Manchester, and a movement is on foot for establishing one at Liverpool and other places, as well as a second one for London at Kensal Green.

*Modern Thought*, of Bombay, is going on well in its second year. It reprints from our columns Mr. Wheeler's article on "Women and Freethought," and some other items.

Prof. W. M. Salter, founder of the Ethical Society in Chicago, has gone to minister to a congregation of Ethical Culturists at Philadelphia. He is succeeded at Chicago by M. Mangassarian, who has been the assistant of Prof. Adler in the New York Society.

Mr. M. D. Conway will in the autumn resume his old position as lecturer at South-place Institute, Finsbury, and an effort will be made to induce him to make it a permanent one.

When the Church Building Acts (Compulsory Powers Repeal) Bill comes on for second reading Mr. John Ellis will move the amendment of which he gave notice last session, declaring that compulsory powers for the acquisition of land for the erection of places of worship now possessed by one religious denomination should be impartially extended to all. We trust he means to include Secularists.

The movement for opening art galleries and museums on Sunday has found voice at Exeter Hall. In the headquarters of Evangelicals certain members of the Exeter Hall Literary Society brought forward the question, and made a good show despite the indignant opposition of the majority.

At the recent census at Cape Colony, South Africa, seven hundred thousand persons classified themselves as "Of no religion." The *Standard and Diggers' News* says, this shows the tendency of the colony is towards freedom of thought.

The *Boston Investigator* refers to the *New York Telegram* as instancing that Colonel Ingersoll is the most popular writer in the United States. Never was he more read than to-day. Whatever he says is read by millions of persons, all of whom are eager to get his opinion on any subject.

Moncure D. Conway, in his address on Thomas Paine in New York, Jan. 29, claimed that Paine was the first person in America to favor the abolition of negro slavery; that he was the first person who proposed arbitration to take the place of war; that he was ten years ahead of Fitch in advocating steam-power for the propulsion of steamboats; and that he was the first to invent the iron tubular bridge.

Colonel Ingersoll's great oration on this occasion is now on sale at our publishing office, price twopence. It is entitled *Humanity's Debt to Thomas Paine*.

Says the *Freethinkers' Magazine*: "The *Freethinker*, of London, has been enlarged to sixteen pages, and every page is worth the price of a copy. There is no dross in it, all mental gold 22 carats fine. Send ten cents for a sample copy."

#### MR. WATTS IN SCOTLAND.

MR. WATTS opened his round of engagements in Glasgow under most discouraging circumstances. About a week before the time for his visit he sustained a slight accident to his leg, and it was only with the grudging and guarded permission of his medical adviser that he came north. But being naturally anxious to keep his appointments, especially with a debate in hand, Mr. Watts ventured on the journey, happily without untoward consequences; and what threatened to become an attack of erysipelas yielded to simple treatment. In the next place the weather, which had been behaving decently for some days previously, suffered a disagreeable relapse on Sunday morning, the 14th inst., when a piercing wind and frequent heavy showers of rain and sleet foreboded ill for the meetings. As the day wore on, however, the sky cleared, and the result was that all the lectures were well attended by cordially appreciative audiences. On Monday evening, as the train crept slowly over the snow-covered country to Hamilton, the prospects for the meeting there sunk almost as low as the thermometer, for many of the friends have to walk in long distances from the outlying parts. Here again we were agreeably disappointed to find a very fair gathering, who followed with close and sympathetic interest Mr. Watts's lecture on "Unbelief and Modern Thought." Hamilton is a garrison town, and we were glad to greet Sergeant Taylor and a party of comrades from the barracks. To the former, an intelligent and earnest Freethinker, we handed a bundle of pamphlets to dispose of at his discretion. The Hamilton Branch, which has not been quite so active recently, is certain to experience some accession of strength through Mr. Watts's visit.

On Tuesday night the four nights' debate between Mr. Watts and Mr. H. A. Long opened in the Brunswick-street Hall, before a numerous audience. For the first two nights the question was "Is Christianity Superior to Secularism?" and on the remaining nights "Is Secularism Superior to Christianity?" The attendance was well maintained throughout, and the behavior of the people, if not a pattern of propriety and philosophic equanimity, was on the whole orderly and dignified. Hitherto I have used the term "debate" to denote the encounter between Messrs. Watts and Long, but I have grave misgivings as to the appositeness of the word other than as a courtesy title, inasmuch as Mr. Long's notions of dialectics are peculiar, if not unique. It never seems to occur to him that there is any need for argument, and he treads the platform with a glow of self-satisfaction, often amusing one portion and saddening or sickening another portion of his auditory by a series of flippancies, vulgarities and fatuities that would demean a circus clown. That this is no travesty of the facts will appear from the following "flowers of rhetoric" which I have culled from the garden (kitchen) of his eloquence: "I will bet my whiskers to a twopenny scone that it is false." "I'm a man, not a gun, and don't want gunpowder"—deprecating applause. "You needn't tell me that they [Secularist principles] are the real Jock Mackay." "I ain't got corkscrew ears." "There's a man named Long will laugh at you all the way down his face." "Get ready to laugh." "If I don't disprove it, laugh

at me." "Good judge you are. I know you" (to young man in the audience). "How horribly clever you Secularists think you are." "All you're good for is to make Chinese faces at our Holy Book." "Ridiculous rot," "pure drivel," *ex his disce omnes*. The misfortune is that Mr. Long is the only available defender of Christianity in Glasgow, from which circumstance the pitiable strait of that religion may be surmised. In affirming that Christianity is superior to Secularism, Mr. Long imagined that he had established his case by this model syllogism: "The world is more civilised and moral now than it was when Christianity appeared. But Christianity is the only cause of amelioration. Therefore, Christianity is the cause of the world's progress since its advent." The proofs for this are to be found in the names of our days, months, etc., all of Pagan origin, and of former religious significance. But "Great Pan is dead," and the pale Galilean has conquered. Slavery, moral corruption, inhumanity—attested by the total absence of hospitals in pre-Christian times—all existed nineteen centuries ago. Now, what a contrast! Freedom, benevolence, purity, all hail to Christianity! It was in vain that Mr. Watts insisted that sound logic required that first of all it must be shown that the influences ascribed to a system really have a causal connexion with its structural elements and potentiality. That Christianity from its very nature, from its standard of morals, and its authority, the Bible, cannot possibly be the parent of progress. Equally futile in their effect on Mr. Long were Mr. Watts' trenchant refutations of the assertions as to slavery, etc. He passed them over in silence, and spent his time in reading extracts from what he led the meeting to believe were Mr. Watts' own writings, in testimony of the failure of Secularists in certain points in which Christianity is a success. On the second night this gave rise to a rather painful incident. When Mr. Long quoted the passages on the first night, Mr. Watts did not recognise them as his own; on the next night he asked for an inspection of the paper which Mr. Long was using, when, to his astonishment, he discovered that Mr. Long was actually citing passages from signed articles in some old numbers of the *Secular Review* (of the joint-editorship period) and foisting upon Mr. Watts the opinions of contributors to the journal. This was bad enough, but the manner in which it was done aggravated the offence immeasurably. Repeatedly Mr. Long exclaimed, as he was reading the extracts: "This is Watts on paper in cold blood. Here you have Watts on the platform. I prefer to take Watts in the cold-blooded condition." Mr. Watts was justly indignant at this scurvy and dishonorable tactic, as were the bulk of the meeting. But, instead of apologising, Mr. Long actually endeavored to justify himself by insisting that an editor was morally responsible for the opinions of his colleague and contributors. On the fourth night Mr. Long once more reverted to this odious device, when Mr. Watts challenged him to submit the question as to editorial responsibility to a committee drawn from the meeting, or by reference to the editors of the local newspapers, and offered to forfeit £10 to Mr. Long's £5 for any Glasgow charity if the decision should support the latter's contention, but the "Umble Missionary" dismissed the proposal with a scornful laugh and a grandiose "We don't tremble in Glasgow for a paltry stake of £10." We can quite understand his unwillingness for such an arbitrament, when we remember that some years ago he lost £50 to the late Dr. Glancy, a Roman Catholic priest, who denied certain allegations of Mr. Long's then *protegee*, Brother Aloysius, *alias* Widdowes, a rascally adventurer, whose word against papists, the "Director of Missions," with that "charity which thinketh no evil," swallowed with avidity—not for the first time his confidence was misplaced—and his enemies triumphed. "Once bitten, twice shy," and although Mr. Long is still cocksure about everything, he shrinks from submitting points touching matters of fact to any tribunal or test, save that of his faithful partisans in public meeting assembled.

In opening on behalf of Secularism on the third night, Mr. Watts gave an admirably clear, concise and forcible exposition of Secularist principles, teachings and objects. Having first pointed out the impossibility of uniformity of belief and the consequent necessity for Secularism and allied systems to meet the case of the heretical classes, he went on to define the term and to enunciate the sanctions of Secularism. Then in turn its catholicity in respect of the full recognition of the rights of others, and the absence of all threats of penalty for nonconformity were indicated. The superiority of its authority—Reason aided by Experience—

demonstrated, and the fundamentals in its moral code, in the inculcation of the knowledge and practice of virtue briefly but pointedly sketched. Coming to the teachings of Secularism Mr. Watts dwelt especially upon such points as that Secularism places actions before beliefs, contends that prevention is better than cure, that self-reliance is preferable to blind dependance; that physical, moral and intellectual culture are of immediate and supreme importance and utility; that it is incredible that honest belief or unbelief can incur the displeasure of any just God; that persecution is a crime; that whatever is good and useful in all creeds or systems is deserving of acceptance and of application in conduct; that a well-spent life is the best preparation for any conceivable future existence, and that in the home and between the sexes perfect equality should obtain. Mr. Long conceived that he was exposing the emptiness and worthlessness of Secularism by demanding "Where is your authority?" Where is your model man? We have the Lord Jesus. Where is your book? We have one, the Holy Bible. You can't have law without a law-giver. You can't have duty unless you are obligated to some superior Being." When Mr. Watts mildly suggested that everyone is surely beholden to Society, Mr. Long exultantly retorted, "What is Society?—an ideal expression. How can you be beholden to an ideal?" He also stultified himself in a whimsical way on the question of free will, for having vociferated derisively, "How can there be responsibility when you are all necessitarians?"—he admitted a few minutes later that God had foreknown from all eternity what he was going to say that night, although he hastened to add, "That does not interfere with my free will"—a piquant reservation which the audience relished amazingly.

In his first speech on the fourth night Mr. Watts, after summarising his previous night's exposition of Secularism, entered upon a spirited and powerful vindication of our movement from the charges of moral impotency and sterility which Mr. Long had profusely preferred against it. He showed how Secularism was proscribed by law, and scored a strong point in reference to the illegality of bequests for Freethought purposes; how all avenues of preferment and fortune were closely barred against the heretic, so that he was repressed, harassed, or neglected during life, and that actually Christian malignity often followed him to the grave, and over his dead body struck a dastardly blow at those who had been near and dear to him in life. Mr. Long was significantly silent in regard to this counter-indictment, although he continued for the rest of the time to taunt Secularists upon the non-existence of distinctively Secularist institutions; to impeach them for having the meanness to share in the benefits of *Christian* hospitals, etc., with much to the same effect. He refused to accept Mr. Watts' correction that benevolent agencies existed long before Christianity. He read for the second time Mill's eulogy of Christ and Huxley's tribute to the more excellent part of the Bible, calmly disregarding the latter's recommendation that certain of these parts should be excised for the use of children. He proved that Mr. Watts must be a praying man, a preaching man, and a hymn-singing man, because in his pamphlet on Secularism he stated that, even on the hypothesis that there is a God, the Secularist is not worse off than the believer, and can only pray that he may have light, and because the *Secularist's Manual* contains a "Hymn to Common-sense" and "Abou Ben Adhem"—that limpid crystal of Leigh Hunt's genius—which speaks of an angel and a golden book and God. "Argal, if a man come to the water, he drowneth himself; but if the water cometh to the man, it drowneth him." Young debaters, please copy. In his last speech Mr. Watts made an eloquent and inspiring appeal to his hearers to divest themselves of prejudice and passion, and to conscientiously weigh and judge the relative values of his own and his opponent's opinions. He also propounded four questions to Mr. Long, who only found time to answer two of them. To the first, "Do you think a just God will condemn an honest sceptic?" he replied "I deny that there are any honest sceptics. If you are honest you will be led to a belief in God." Then, admonished perhaps by the emphatic protests of the meeting, he added, "They may be sincere, but they cannot be honest." The second question was, "Can morally good persons exist apart from Christianity?" Mr. Long vouchsafed no direct reply, but quoted the words of Christ, "He that is not with us is against us," with which enigmatical deliverance the disputation ended. If I may venture my personal judgment upon the character and immediate result of the debate, I am obliged to pronounce it a travesty of, and an

outrage upon, fine and honorable controversy. This sinister issue was due entirely to Mr. Long's incompetency, disingenuousness, and coarse buffoonery. Concerning Mr. Watts' demeanor throughout, there can be but one opinion among sensible people on both sides. Under the acute provocation to recrimination, he exhibited a self-control and dignity which did much to redeem the proceedings from utter despicableness—no small achievement when you are fighting with a man who tries his "level best" to pull you down into the gutter and roll you in the mire. As to the ulterior results of the debate, my strongest hope is that many of the young men—who not only attended night after night, but gathered outside and eagerly canvassed the various issues raised—may be favorably disposed towards Secularism, not so much by the contrast in the ability and demeanor of the two disputants in this instance, as by the strenuous and convincing advocacy of the claims and evidences of the great truths which it is our privilege to hold and to teach. J. P. GILMOUR.

### WAS CHRIST CRUCIFIED?

BY A MEMBER OF THE CHICAGO BAR.

(From the "Truthseeker," New York.)

THE believer who takes the New Testament for inspired, or the declarations of the Church for infallible, will of course not doubt Christ's crucifixion. Both the scriptures and tradition clearly teach that Jesus was crucified. Those, however, who critically examine the evidence, without a belief in the supernatural, and take the scriptural and ecclesiastical accounts with no more credence than other ancient accounts similarly verified, must, if they critically examine the subject, raise the question whether there is adequate evidence of the crucifixion. The unbeliever who rejects the miracles must reject much else that is in the Bible, because it is inseparably connected with the miraculous. The same evidence is relied on to establish both, and if it is false as to the miracles it may be false as to the natural events. The latter are often related simply as parts of miracles—their circumstantial details—and if the essential story is false, the details may be false, even if natural. I shall accordingly in this paper examine the question whether there is adequate evidence of the crucifixion of Jesus.

This question is to be solved, as already intimated, by an examination of the evidences that lie outside of the scriptures, and by using the scriptures simply as ancient documents entitled to such credit only as other documents similarly circumstanced are entitled to. The question accordingly is, have we sufficient evidence, without calling on our faith, to establish the crucifixion of Christ?

The chief difficulties in the way of accepting the common belief that Jesus was crucified are that the Jews could not have crucified him, and that the Romans would not have crucified him for the offence charged. The Jews were a subject people, who did not administer the laws in their own country, and were especially deprived of jurisdiction over capital offences. A conquering people rarely allows another to exercise the power of life and death. The Jews, accordingly, could not have crucified Christ unless it was illegal (as the act of a mob), which, according to all accounts, it was not.

Nor would the Romans have crucified Christ for the offence charged. The infliction of capital punishment was regulated by law, and heresy to a foreign religion, which the Romans themselves did not accept, was not a capital offence. It is difficult to believe that any people would have executed one for an offence against a religion which they believed to be false.

The circumstances of the crucifixion, also, as related in the gospels, were not in accordance with the customs of either the Jews or the Romans, but in several essentials were in direct violation of their laws; so that, whether a crucifixion occurred or not, it could hardly have occurred in the way related.

These are the difficulties stated in a general way. Before considering them, however, let us inquire what affirmative evidence we have of the crucifixion of Christ, and whether it is sufficient to overcome such improbabilities.

There is no contemporaneous evidence of the crucifixion at all, at least, none outside of the New Testament. No writer who lived at the time or in the country of Christ makes any mention of him, much less of his death. Not a word written near his time has come down to us that even

touches on the subject. The gospels themselves, according to the most critical estimates of the unbelievers, were not written till one hundred and fifty years after Christ; at least, there is no evidence that they existed before that time. The story that they were written by his disciples, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, is generally discredited. The common opinion of unbelief is that they date between one hundred and fifty and one hundred and eighty years after Christ, and that they were then composed by collecting floating reports and working up a few fragments now lost. The vast number of miracles and other stories in these gospels, which are incredible to unbelievers, also tends to make them nearly worthless as evidence. Books which tell so many falsehoods about the supernatural are not reliable when speaking of the natural; but an untruthful person will be untruthful about a natural thing as well as about a supernatural one.

Several of Paul's epistles are perhaps of earlier origin than the gospels. They certainly are if the gospels were written as late as A.D. 150. These epistles speak of Christ as having been crucified, and they are the only evidence which dates near the alleged event. Paul, however, was not a contemporary of Jesus—at least, so far as we can judge from authentic history. He did not attach himself to the followers of Christ till after the death of Christ. How long after this he wrote we cannot say. His letters in which he refers to the crucifixion may have been written in his old age, when he was removed a whole generation from Jesus, and when legends of Christ's death had begun to spring up from unreliable sources. The same is true of the epistles ascribed to several other apostles, which are generally acknowledged to have been written, if not by the persons to whom they are ascribed, at least near their time.

It must, however, be said of the credibility of the epistles of Paul and of the other apostles, that in the same writings in which they speak of the crucifixion of Jesus they speak of his miracles and of other matters which are universally rejected by unbelievers; so that nothing more can be inferred from them than the crucifixion was then a tradition, or beginning to become one. There were reasons, of which we shall presently speak, why such a death should be ascribed to Jesus even if false, and why the report of it should rapidly spread. Among such an illiterate people, and in a country with limited means of inter-communication, strange stories arise easily, spread rapidly, and are never disproven.

Outside of the New Testament there are no writings composed anywhere near the time of Christ that refer to him at all; so that all that we know of Jesus or his death at the beginning of the second century, is what we gather from the few letters mentioned. We depend wholly on the New Testament for a knowledge of Christ and of Christianity for a hundred years after Christ. Not a word from any writer known to be written in the same century in which he lived refers to him. No Roman, Greek, or Jewish author mentions him. His history is in complete isolation and obscurity, except for the few gleams of light that come from the letters mentioned. Never was a man so shut off from the world which he has influenced.

Josephus, indeed, makes two references to Jesus, if we take the passages as genuine; but most writers, Christian and unbelieving, now repel those passages as spurious. The first Christian writer who mentions Christ is Clement of Rome, but none of his writings are known to be of earlier origin than one hundred years after Christ, and some historians place them as late as one hundred and fifty years after Christ. The next who mentions him is Ignatius, whose epistles were written between 107 and 116 A.D. Polycarp, Barnabas, Hermas, and the unknown author of the Epistles to Diognetus may have written their extant relics anywhere between one hundred and one hundred and fifty years after Christ. Besides these there is no Christian or other writing referring to Jesus that dates earlier than the middle of the second century, except a few fragments of Quadrato and Aristo written somewhere between 117 and 138 A.D.

It will thus be seen that we have not a scrap of literature about Christ or Christianity outside of the Bible that dates earlier than one hundred years after Christ.

We are shut up wholly to the New Testament and to a small part of that—several epistles—and what we cannot prove from that source we cannot prove at all. Pliny and Tacitus, indeed, have several short passages

referring to Jesus, but their date is uncertain. Both of these men died about one hundred and fifteen years after Christ. Suetonius, who mentions the Christians, wrote still later. The first century of Christianity is a blank in history. We know nothing that occurred in it except through writings produced long subsequent to that time. We are two generations removed from Christ before a single word appears about him outside of the books of the New Testament. All this passed over to us across two generations came by legend or unverifiable tradition, and everybody knows how unreliable this is. The stories that should now come to us from such a distant time, handed down through so many mouths, from a country remote from civilisation and among a people steeped in ignorance, would gain little credence; so that the weight of the evidence of tradition to the crucifixion is practically nothing. Few critical historians, even among Christians, give tradition any credit on a disputed point. The capacity of men for lying, and their incapacity to hand down correctly what they attempt to hand down truthfully, are too well known.

Such being the difficulties in the way of proving that Christ was crucified, and such being the materials from which we must prove it, if at all, let us betake ourselves to the task of determining whether it is certain, or even probable, that he was crucified.

As we are shut up to the New Testament accounts, in the inquiry, we have chiefly to determine whether from the details of those accounts the alleged transaction is in accordance with the laws and customs of the people who are alleged to have crucified him, and with other facts that are known to us in history.

And first as to the condemnation of Jesus by the Jews. We have said that the Jews had no power to condemn to death at the time of the alleged crucifixion. The Talmud says: "Forty years before the destruction of the temple the judgment of capital causes was taken away from Israel." Only the Roman authorities could exercise jurisdiction in capital cases. And yet according to the gospel accounts, the Jews tried, convicted, and sentenced Jesus in their own court, and they did this without consultation with or authority from the Romans. It was not until after they had adjudged him worthy of death that they brought him to Pilate, or in any way sought a ratification of their action. According to the gospels the Jews took the initiative, as if the Sanhedrim had original jurisdiction in such matters.

(To be continued.)

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### WEST HAM SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I notice in your last issue an announcement regarding the impending West Ham School Board election, which, being incorrect, is calculated to cause confusion. It is stated that the two candidates on the "Secular" ticket are Charles Ivatts and Maurice Russell. Now, there are no less than four "Secular" ticket candidates in the field, and, as you will see from enclosed address to the electors, our President, Mr. Charles Ivatts, is a joint candidate with Messrs. Charles Remnant and Arthur Bignell, these three gentlemen having been selected by the District Labor Societies, to which we sent a delegate. These three candidates are pledged to work in unison, and five votes were to be given to each. The mention of Mr. M. Russell would cause the votes to be split up even more, and I am afraid that the result would probably be that by endeavoring to support too many, the Secularists would not succeed in getting even one candidate elected. Of the bad tendency of this we have seen a recent instance in Finsbury. I would therefore urge it as an important duty for all Secularists in West Ham to vote high and strong for Charles Ivatts, the worthy President of the West Ham Branch, and thus secure his return.

S. H. ALISON, Hon. Sec.

No doubt all of us have something to be thankful for, but the question is: Is God the person to whom to be thankful?  
—H. O. Pentecost.

Jesus taught no important original doctrine—not one. He gave to the world no new discoveries, no useful inventions. He furnished no new light to the understanding on any of the doctrines which he taught second-hand.—B. F. Underwood.

## PROFANE JOKES.

Jack—"Why has Miss Bonpoint gone in for Theosophy?"  
Alice—"Never tell, Jack; but I've heard that she imagines her astral body may be a little less—er—robust."

Resident—"You're looking rather blue, Ebenezer; what's the matter?" Rev. Ebenezer Shadbone—"I's in trouble, sah; I preached a sermon las' Sunday agin' chicken-stealing, an' de congregation am gwine to try me foh heresy, sah."

A "fish-jolter" called at the rectory one day with fish for sale. "What have you to-day?" "Sole and plaice, your riverence; the foinest iver swum the say." Rector (after examining them for some time): "Damn your sole, leave the plaice."

Mrs. Liszt (soliciting subscriptions)—"Can't I rely on getting your name for five dollars to send a missionary to the heathen?" Mr. Scadds—"Nope; but if your parson will admit 'em to his church, I'll go down town to the slums and spend five dollars car fare in sending a hundred heathen to the missionary!"

Mrs. Brown (to parson's wife): "Why, what in the world are you making so many expensive purchases for? I thought your husband had given up his church and you were to leave town." Parson's Wife: "Yes, we were going to leave. They thought of shutting up the church, as hardly anybody attended the services. But that is all changed now. The church is full every Sunday. My husband has had his salary raised, and everything is in the most prosperous condition." Mrs. Brown: "You don't tell me! How in the world did it all come about?" Parson's Wife: "My husband has been charged with heresy, that's all; and it has given the cause of religion such an awakening as it hasn't had for years."

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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.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 38 Newington Green-road: 7, concert for members and friends. Admission by program, 1d.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, entertainment and dance (free). Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic class.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7, musical entertainment; 7.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity as an Ethical Guide"; 9.30, free concert and dance.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11.30, debating class, readings and recitations, etc.; 7.30, debate between Rev. Dr. Duffy and Mr. Millar on "Does Darwinism Prove the Bible to be False?"

Deptford—Lecture Hall, High-street: 7.30, W. H. Lawrence, "A Freethinker's View of the Bible."

Finsbury Park—Rock-street Hall, 1 Rock-street, Blackstock-road: 11.30, Mrs. Louisa Samson, "Capital Punishment"; 7, S. J. Capper, "The Duty of England at the Present Moment in Relation to the Opium Trade." Admission free.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, G. W. Foote, "The Eight Hours Question" (free); 6.45, music; 7.15, G. W. Foote, "An Atheist's Reply to Professor Stokes' Gifford Lectures on God" (3d., 6d., and 1s.). Thursday, at 8, social gathering.

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove: Thursday, at 8 soiree, for members and friends.

Lambeth—New Nelson Hall, 24 Lower Marsh: 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Man and his Relations"; members' meeting after lecture. Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, Thomas Crisfield, "Hypnotism: what is it?" with illustrations.

Tottenham—Lecture Hall (corner of Seven Sisters'-road): 3.30, F. Dowdall, "Lives of some Christian Saints." Admission free.

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, C. Ivatts, "Secularism and Education." Thursday at 8, committee meeting.

West London—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon-road (close to Latimer-road Station): Friday, at 8.30, Mr. Harrigan, "God and the State."

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter-street: 7, F. Haslam, "The Struggles for Religious Freedom—History of the Covenanters."

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, R. Rosetti, "Science and the Bible."

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, J. Rowney, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

### COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 7, Charles Watts, "Social and Theological Shams."

Derby—19 Bridge-gate: 7, Mr. Whitney, "Christianity and Civilisation."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: J. M. Robertson, 11.30, "The Meaning of Atheism"; 2.30, "Christianity and the Social Question"; 6.30, "What has Christianity Done?"

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden-street: 3, philosophy class, L. Small, B.Sc., "On Boundaries in General"; 7, Mr. Booth, "What is Secularism?" (preceded by a reading).

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': A. B. Moss, 11, "Voltaire and Paine"; 3, "Delusions of Theosophy"; 6.30, "Christianity: how it began and why it lives."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, members' monthly meeting; 7, G. Selkirk, "The Christian God an Impossibility."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck-street: 7, A. Lord, "The Curse of Creed."

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, a meeting.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 2.45, reading circle; 7, meeting. Wednesday, an "at home."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: R. Bert Law, F.G.S., 3, "Flint and Flint Tool Makers"; 7, "The Mammals that were the Rulers of Earth before Man"; tea at 5.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 3, mutual improvement class, Mr. Bowe, "Prohibition"; 7, Mr. Keppell will lecture.

Wolverhampton—Exchange Hall: Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "Crucified Saviors"; 3, "Christianity and Woman"; 7, "What is Theosophy?"

### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Quayside (near big crane): 11, a meeting re the Loader case.

## LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Feb. 28, Manchester. March 6, 13, 20, 27, Deptford. April 24, Hornsey. May 1, Camberwell; 8, Clerkenwell. June 5, Camberwell; 12, Clerkenwell; 19, Hornsey.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—March 6, Southampton; 13, Woolwich; 20, Westminster; 27, Camberwell. April 3, Hyde Park; 10, Kilburn; April 17 to May 1, Annual Tour. May to Sept., all mornings booked.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—March 6, Westminster; 20, Camberwell; 27, evening, Newington Reform Club. April 3, Southampton; 10, morning, Bethnal Green; evening, Battersea; 24, morning, Victoria Park; evening, Camberwell. May 1, morning, Victoria Park; evening, Battersea.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Feb. 28, Libra Hall. March 6 and 13, Libra Hall; 20, morning, Battersea. April 3, afternoon, Victoria Park; 10, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; 17, morning, Mile End Waste; 24, afternoon, Victoria Park.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Feb. 28, Lambeth. March 6, morning, Battersea; 10, Hammersmith; 13, Nottingham; 17, Walthamstow; 20, Woolwich; 27, West Ham. April 3, morning, Finsbury Park; 17, morning, Battersea. May 1, morning, Clerkenwell Green; 8, Newcastle.

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