

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

"If you would wait to speak the truth until you can replace the old decaying formula by a completely elaborated system, you must wait for ever; for the system can never be elaborated until its leading principles have been boldly enunciated. Reconstruct, it is said, before you destroy. But you must destroy in order to reconstruct. The old husk of dead faith is pushed off by the growth of living beliefs below."

—LESLIE STEPHEN.

MR. HALL CAINE ON THE BIBLE AND A FUTURE LIFE.

"I am a writer of tales, and have no claim to be heard on a point of Biblical scholarship," said Mr. Hall Caine in his article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* for March 30 headed "A Reply to M. Renan." Mr. Caine spoke the truth. He is a melodramatic novelist, and his Biblical scholarship is that of the average Sunday School teacher. Why on earth then, or in heaven, or in the other place, did he rush into print to defend orthodox Biblical exegesis against the great French critic? From the depth of his admitted ignorance of the subject, Mr. Caine denounces "the second-hand imagination that fills the gaps of his [M. Renan's] scholarship." He also describes M. Renan as "this religious Rabelais," which shows a peculiarly exquisite appreciation of the various shades of Gallic wit. It is to be hoped, as a mere matter of charity, that M. Renan will not condescend to give his amateur English critic a lesson on this topic. As for the "second-hand imagination," it is perhaps within the truth to say that there is more imaginative art displayed in *Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse* than in all Mr. Caine's novelistic efforts.

The quarrel arose in this way. Mr. Sherard contributed to the *P. M. G.* an interesting interview with M. Renan. It was probably—almost certainly—somewhat inaccurate, but in the main it no doubt fairly represented the great Frenchman's conversation. Mr. Caine saw four leading errors therein, and proceeded to set M. Renan right by appealing to "that Book which is the chief authority on all the points in question."

Now in performing these strokes of correction Mr. Caine shows an ingenuous ignorance of some very important truths. First, the English Authorised Version is not the original Scripture. Second, M. Renan is a Greek and Hebrew scholar, while Mr. Caine is not. Third, the Bible, whether in Greek and Hebrew or in English, cannot be properly understood by itself. Had Mr. Caine recognised these truths, and felt their force, he would not have made an exhibition of himself, and showed the world how little is often known about the Bible, its history, its character, and its interpretation, by literary Englishmen.

M. Renan told Mr. Sherard, to put it briefly, that the Jews of the Old Testament had no belief in a future state. This is a commonplace of even orthodox criticism, but it strikes Mr. Caine as a monstrous new

heresy, hatched in the brain of the "religious Rabelais." He does not know, apparently, that Bishop Warburton maintained it through his bulky volumes on *The Divine Legation of Moses*; or that it was as firmly upheld in Archbishop Whately's *Scripture Revelations Concerning a Future State*; to say nothing of a host of other divines who are accessible in English. Mr. Caine advances against the French sceptic with all the assurance of unqualified ignorance, and triumphantly quotes the famous passage in Job (xix. 25-27), in which the patriarch declares that his "Redeemer liveth," and "though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God." Now a reference to the Revised Version would have shown Mr. Caine that Job said nothing about his "Redeemer." The Hebrew *goel* means *avenger*, literally *blood avenger*. Job was not thinking of a future life, but of *this* life; he denied that his calamity was the result of his sin, and told his plaguy comforters that his innocence would be vindicated, and that he would yet see God with a clean skin—as indeed happens before the close of the drama.

M. Renan said that the Jewish notion of heaven and hell only arose in the second century before Christ. Against this "error" Mr. Caine cites the passage in Daniel (xii. 2, 3), declaring that "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Here, he exclaims, we have the four ideas of a future life, a resurrection, everlasting reward, and everlasting punishment. Finally, Mr. Caine clinches his refutation with the remark that "Daniel lived in the time of the Captivity."

Well, perhaps Daniel did live in the time of the Captivity. Nobody knows, and there is no obvious reason why anybody should care. But the writer of the Book of Daniel did not live till several centuries afterwards. Curiously enough, this very theory was advanced by Porphyry the philosopher, one of the opponents of early Christianity, whose works were absolutely destroyed by the Church in the fourth century. Jerome tells us that Porphyry affirmed the book of Daniel not to be the work of the ancient prophet, but of some later writer who lived in the times of Antiochus Epiphanes. This damnable, mocking heresy, as the Christian apologists called it for fourteen centuries, is now approved by the best critics as the actual truth. Porphyry was right, and all the divines who "refuted" him, after burning his writings, were wrong. Such a cautious scholar as Canon Driver, who admits no more of the conclusions of "modern criticism" than he is compelled to, allows that "internal evidence shows with a cogency that cannot be resisted" that the book of Daniel "must have been written not earlier than about 300 B.C., and in Palestine; and it is at least probable that it was composed under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, B.C. 168 or 167." (*Introduction to Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 467).

Thus does modern *orthodox* criticism curve round to primitive *heterodox* criticism. Properly speaking, although the book of Daniel is included in the Old Testament, it is no part of the Scriptures of the ancient Jews. M. Renan is well aware of this, though Mr. Caine is not. The French critic, therefore, knows what he is talking about, while the English novelist illustrates the saying that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

M. Renan is reported to have told Mr. Sherard that Jesus regarded Hell as a place where the wicked were annihilated, and Heaven a place where the good lived for 400 to 1,000 years only, and that Jesus had no idea of eternal life for any being except the Almighty God. Now it is supremely difficult, if not impossible, to decide what Jesus *did* teach, if he ever taught (or lived) at all. In the circumstances M. Renan is entitled to his own opinion, and it is idle for Mr. Caine to pick out at his pleasure some "decisive" passages from Matthew and Luke. An ordinary acquaintance with even present-day discussions would have informed him that the phrases "everlasting fire," "everlasting punishment," and "eternal life," are warmly debated, and that every variety of opinion is upheld by Church of England and Nonconformist divines such as Archdeacon Farrar and the Rev. Edward White. Before Mr. Caine talks about M. Renan's "amazing blunder" (Mr. Caine's attitude is one of perpetual amazement) he should qualify himself to give an opinion.

Personally we have no objection to Mr. Caine's doing his best to persuade the British public that "Jesus taught the doctrine of future rewards and punishments," or that his Savior believed Hell to be full of literal fire where "sinners" are to burn without consuming for ever and ever, and a day over; for the more crude and brutal the teaching of Jesus is shown to be, the sooner will his authority be weakened over civilised men and women. Nor are we disposed to quarrel with Mr. Caine for saying that M. Renan is *not* in any sense a follower of Jesus; and so far as we are concerned, he may peg away to his heart's content at M. Renan's shadowy God as "a being without bowels." We have no interest in deities of any description, and we have a shrewd suspicion that (except for literary purposes) M. Renan has as little. Mr. Caine is too blunt an Englishman to understand the Frenchman's irony and sly humor.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS.


THE Rev. Mourant Brock has a little book on *The Cross, Heathen and Christian*, in which he proves "that Heathenism, not Christianity, is its original possessor." He gives numerous instances of the pre-Christian cross, the Maltese cross worn on the breast by Samsi Vul IV., king of Assyria, B.C. 825; the crossed buns, used in what he calls the Bacchic "orgies," found at Herculaneum, etc., etc. The book is worth looking at, but very superficial. Had Mr. Brock studied the typology of the cross in Mr. Gerald Massey's *Natural Genesis*, he perhaps would not have been so ready to have his sling at the Catholics in this matter. The Rev. S. Baring Gould, who devotes a chapter of his *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* to "the legend of the Cross," equally shows that "the Cross was a sacred sign long before our Savior died on it," but, with more astuteness in the interests of his craft, attributes it to an imaginary "primitive revelation." The Christian writer of an essay on "The Pre-Christian Cross" in the *Edinburgh Review* (Jan. 1870) says he has noted no less than two hundred instances of the pre-Christian cross, and, from its being often found with trees, etc., naively considers it a sign perpetuating the memory of Paradise! I do not think these gentlemen have

solved the mystery of the cross, nor shall I pretend to do so, though I may indicate where a student may learn for himself.

About the common cross or X there seems little mystery. As a sign or ornament it is about the easiest for anyone capable of making a straight line. Indeed, it is the signature of those who cannot write. But when we ask why it stands for multiplication, and the perfect number 10, a mystery begins, which may lead to a study of the whole symbolism of the cross. In the upright cross we have the four corners of 90° equal to a circle of 360°, the sign of the four quarters, and emblem of the elements, with their oppositions and equivalents, "as above so below." Within a circle it is the earth sign, and esoterically teaches Pantheism. Geometrically the Latin cross is the unfolded cube. With the foundation of the upright cross, or tau (T), we are on the firm ground of use.* Here is a measuring mark, and the form of many tools. As hammer it becomes a sign of power, in the chairman's hammer, or the gavel of the master of a Masonic lodge. The tau, or St. Anthony's cross, is a world-wide symbol of the maker. Sir Charles Warren found it on a Phœnician vase far down below modern Jerusalem.

The word *Tau* appears in the Old Testament, where it is translated "mark" or sign. In Ezekiel ix. 4 Jahveh commands a signa Thau (as the Vulgate has it) to be placed on the foreheads of the faithful,† and orders all others, whether old men, maidens, or little children, to be remorselessly slain. So in Exodus xii. the old savage deity needed the lintels and doorposts to be marked with blood to prevent his killing the wrong persons. Yet he did not always recognise the charm, and Job boldly complains, "Lo here is my Tau (sign), let Shaddai respond."‡

The early Christians used the cross sign as a charm against demons. See Lactantius (*Institutes*, iv. 27). Tertullian shows the mark was made on the forehead in the mysteries of Mithras. This is important. Rites precede doctrines, and the story of the crucifixion may have sprung from the sign of the cross.§

When under Bishop Theophilus (390) the temple of Serapis was destroyed at Alexandria, the ecclesiastical historians relate with wonder that the sign of the cross was found. Sir Gardner Wilkinson (*Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. iii., p. 34) says: "A remarkable fact may be mentioned respecting the hieroglyphic character—that the early Christians of Egypt adopted in lieu of the cross, which was afterwards substituted for it, prefixing it to inscriptions in the same manner as the cross in later times." This cross was doubtless the *cruz ansata* or *ankh*, the Egyptian hieroglyph  for life, found on monuments extending to 3000 B.C. It is on Cleopatra's needle, on most of the mummy cases, in the hands of the sculptured gods, and appears in the Papyrus Prisse, the oldest known book in the world. Many explanations were given of the *cruz ansata* before the hieroglyphs could be read. It was the altar and the mundane egg, the staff and sun, the Nilometer, the key of the Nile, etc. It is now known to be the symbol of life, which it comforted the Egyptian to hold in his hand or press to his lips, as now with the crucifix. We may

* The triple tau is the emblem of emblems in R. A. masonry. It has the motto, *Nil nisi clavus dicitur*—nothing but the key is needed—except, I add, how to use it. Of modern Masons, I know of but one, H. Melville, who tried this. So with the motto to Constantine's cross, *In hoc signo vinces*. To conquer in battle by a sign in the heavens is mere magical superstition; but every school-boy knows that with his T square and compasses he can conquer geometrical problems.

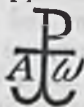
† See Rev. vii. 3, ix. 4, xiii. 16, xiv. 9, xx. 4, xxii. 4. The Apocalypse was certainly based on Hebrew writings, in which *Alph* and *Tau* would take the place of Alpha and Omega. Origen and Jerome say the Samaritan Tau had the form of a cross.

‡ Job xxxi. 35. Of course, this meaning is obscured in the Authorised Version, but it may be detected in the margin or in the Revised Version.

§ See *Antiqua Mater*, p. 204.

guess a more concrete and sensuous notion was at its basis. The loop is a common gesture sign. It is given by Nazdecabre with the Tau to Panurge and Pantagruel gives the explanation.* The form is also seen in the earliest clothing the menstrual band, the Hittite apron, and the priest's pallium, with the loop round the neck and the cross on the breast. The masonic cable tow should be a cable tau. Mr. Gerald Massey says, "The most sacred cross of Egypt that was carried in the hands of the gods, the Pharaohs, and the mummied dead is the Ankh, the sign of life, the living, an oath, a covenant, and a pair, or to couple and duplicate. The top of this is the hieroglyphic Ru, set upright on the Tau-cross. The Ru is the door, gate, mouth, the place of outlet."† This was continued in the Ro P which with the Chi X formed the Greek cross said to be the monogram of Christ, and depicted on Constantine's Labarum. M. Mortillet says it has been found on a vase designed perhaps a thousand years B.C. This monogram is found on coins of Herod and of the Ptolemies.‡

The form of the *cruæ ansata*, known as the Venus looking-glass, typifying biunity and reproduction, is the astronomical sign of the planet Venus and the emblem of Friday (*dies Veneris*). It was a symbol of Astarte, the Phœnician form of the Assyrian Ishtar, whence we get Easter. Reversed it forms the dome and cross of architecture. Sometimes we find the feminine down-pointed delta substituted for the oval or circle. Among the first appearances of the cross on Christian tombs it is combined with the anchor, whether as a symbol of stability, hope, or of the fish business.§ Clement of Alexandria



bears witness to the use of this emblem. Sometimes it is combined with the mystical Ro and Iao. These forms are not, as Christian archæologists have contended, *cruces dissimulatæ*, but independent symbols. As a seal the tau and anchor is found with the dolphin *ichthys*.

One of the widest spread and most important crosses is the footed cross known as the *swastika* and *fyfot*. It is found on prehistoric remains in Cyprus, Herculaneum and Peru, and was discovered by Dr. Schliemann on the breast of the goddess Nana at Troy. M. Senell, in his *Notes sur le Swastika*, considers it a solar symbol, which proves the solar cult was practised by Aryans before their dispersion. It was Mjolnir the storm-hammer or lightning of Thor, which always struck what it aimed at and returned to Thor's hand. It is sometimes found as four boomerangs.

According to Longfellow, King Olaf, while keeping Xmas at Dronthoim,

O'er his drinking horn the sign
He made of the Cross Divine,
As he drank and muttered his prayers,
But the Berserks evermore
Made the sign of the Hammer of Therr
Over theirs.

The only difference being that Olaf used the simple cross and the Berserks added the *fyfot*. Bells being supposed to ward off evil spirits and thunder, the *swastika* is a favorite device on them.

In India the *swastika* is a symbol common to Buddhists, Vuishnavas, Jains, and some other faiths, including even the materialists. It has been called the fire-cross. It shows the four corners of the world,

and, with the feet as segments of a circle, denotes a sun-wheel and the Buddhist wheel of the law. In China the mark is the badge of the Pon, the strictest sect of Buddhists. Morally it is an emblem of humble resignation and Nirvana calm. Possibly the Gothic and heraldic term *fyfot* means foldfoot. The term *Swastika* is used in India as a sign of assent, equivalent to "So mote it be." As the only cross found in the Roman catacombs, its appearance there is strong evidence of Buddhist influence.* Indeed Mr. Lillie argues that Gnosticism was nothing but Western Buddhism. The *Swastika* being a badge of Buddhist mendicants may explain why Jesus says, "He that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 38). "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross" (xvi. 24), and "Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 27).† In the old Buddhist zodiac, the *swastika*—perhaps two fishes crossed—takes the place of Pisces.‡ In Freemasonry it is the Hermetic Cross used by the governing body of the Order of Ishmael. Various occult meanings are attached to the *swastika*, which includes the positive and negative, matter and spirit, male and female, action, reaction, and ceaseless revolution of the universe. In none of the crosses is there any indication of Christ and him crucified.

The cardinals, as their name shows, are founded on the cross at the cardinal points of the circle. Their symbol is the patriarchal cross, in which a second and wider bar is beneath the upper one. This is also the sign of the higher officers in Freemasonry. The Pope has a triple cross, also claimed by 33° Freemasons. Perhaps the Prince of Wales, as head of the order in England, could explain this.

In King's *Gnostics and their Remains* may be found this terminal talisman, which links the cross with the Greek Hermæ, or sacred boundary marks, which were worshipped by women as conducive to fecundity. The crosses erected at cross-roads and at wayside shrines of Catholic countries perpetuate in new form these Hermæ. In my forthcoming work, entitled *Bible Studies*, other crosses will be found depicted and described.



J. M. WHEELER.

SCIENCE THE CIVILISER.

In one sense it may be said that science is as old as mankind. As long as man has been able to use his eyes and his other sense organs, he has been able to gather a sort of knowledge of the things by which he has been surrounded; and further, as long as he has possessed the faculty of recollecting his perceptions, and in some simple way classifying them, it may be said that his knowledge has been to him a kind of science.

For after all, what is science but common knowledge classified and rendered exact by repeated verification? It is obvious, then, that in this lowest sense science has been in the world as long as man has been able to think and to reason. But knowledge, to be of any great value to man, must be exact. When man came to make observations of the heavens and to record them, he began to lay the foundation of the noble science of astronomy, the study of which has been of such incalculable importance to mankind. When he compared his knowledge of this subject with his knowledge of other subjects, such as the study of the earth's strata, or what is called geology,

* Rabelais iii. 20. The phallic view of the cross is held by Jablonsky, Nork, Uhlemann, Ghillany, Lacroze, Payne Knight, Inman, Forlong, etc.
† *Natural Genesis*, vol. i., p. 423.
‡ M. G. Mortillet, *Les Signes de la Croix avant le Christianisme*, p. 171. Madden, *Hist. Jewish Coins*, p. 82. Rev. J. P. Lundy, *Monumental Christianity*, p. 65.
§ See "A Fishy Faith," *Freethinker*, March 20.

* One *Swastika* seems identified with the two Z Z', the incipit being Zotiko Zotike—life of life. The Z as final letter is equivalent to the Hebrew Tau.
† Paul has been supposed to refer to the cross in Eph. iii. 18, but this rather refers to the Pleroma of the Gnosis.
‡ Plate iv. of Lillie's *Buddhism in Christendom*, p. 119.

he really opened up a wide field of study which has since been broken up into sections, and constitutes the body of facts belonging to each branch of our scientific knowledge of to-day.

Common knowledge, then, consists of unorganised facts; science, of organised facts. A clever writer—John Wilson, M.A.*—has given several illustrations which are worth remembering. He says: "Lumps of iron are of little value in an unorganised state, but they become invaluable in the form of machinery—that is, when brought into a state of organisation. An army and a mob are both collections of individuals, but one is organised, the other is not. A confused, unarranged heap of books differs from a library. So common knowledge differs from science. Science makes use of separate facts as her raw material; they serve her only as means to an end; her object is to arrange them under the laws of nature by which they are governed."

Although unorganised knowledge has been in the world as long as man, systematised knowledge is of comparatively recent origin. True, the Egyptians studied the heavens thousands of years ago, and collected a valuable body of knowledge respecting astronomical phenomena; the Greeks and the Romans, too, four or five hundred years before the Christian era had seriously devoted themselves to the study of nature's operations, and collected a multitude of important facts; but subsequent experience has demonstrated that the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans were not always exact in their observations and frequently wrong in their deductions; that, in point of fact, they always set out with a preconceived theory of the universe, with which they were perpetually endeavoring to harmonise their facts.

According to Dr. Draper, the Museum of Alexandria was the birthplace of modern science. Astronomical observations had been carried on long before in China and Mesopotamia, while in India mathematics had been cultivated with success. But, to use Dr. Draper's words, "In none of these countries had investigation assumed a connected and consistent form; in none was physical experimentation resorted to. The characteristic feature of Alexandrian, as of modern science, is, that it did not restrict itself to observation, but relied on a practical interrogation of nature."*

To the western world, however, science is of much more recent development. The advent of Christianity into Europe soon put an end to the little knowledge of science that existed among the various races that came under its disastrous influence; and after the destruction of the Alexandrian Library, philosophy and science may be said to have been practically put to rest for fifteen centuries in Europe. While Christianity dominated the world science had no chance of development; for the priesthood held the keys to the study of science and philosophy, and successfully prevented the dissemination of knowledge among the people that was likely to conflict with their narrow views of the origin and destiny of man. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the dawn of science in Europe; while the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have seen its rapid development, as well as its practical application to the affairs of the world.

Copernicus, Galileo, and Bruno did great work in advancing knowledge on astronomical questions in the sixteenth century; and early in the seventeenth century—1666—Sir Isaac Newton made the important discovery of the law of gravitation. Further important results were reached in the study of astronomy through the use of large telescopes designed and used by Sir William Herschel. In the eighteenth century biological science was assiduously studied in Europe, and many important discoveries made which threw grave doubts upon the biblical

account of the origin and development of mankind. To the nineteenth century belongs the great merit of applying science in every department of life.

Consider for a moment what a free press has done towards the advancement of intelligence and the promotion of well-being among the masses. It has enabled them to form opinions on all kinds of subjects, and opened to their minds the vast emporium of knowledge contained in the great libraries of the world. "Consider," says Emerson,* "what you have in the smallest chosen library. A company of the wisest and wittiest men that could be picked out of all civil countries in a thousand years have set in best order the results of their learning and wisdom. The men themselves were hid and inaccessible, solitary, impatient of interruption, fenced by etiquette; but the thought which they did not uncover to their bosom friend is here written out in transparent words to us the strangers of another age." All the best ideas, solid facts, the loftiest fancies, the most brilliant wit, accessible to the poorest. He who has brains enough to extract the honey from the flowers of literature, and resolution enough to put it to good use, may become a benefactor, however humble his position. A free press has placed the people of England in touch, so to speak, with all the civilised nations of the earth not only in respect to commerce, but in regard to social life also.

A free press has enabled us to compare our civilisation with that of other peoples; in short, has enabled us to "see ourselves as others see us," and improve ourselves accordingly. Then again, see what a knowledge of science has done for us in the way of improving upon our dwellings. Our Christian ancestors lived in huts, shielded very imperfectly from the clemency of the weather. We live in decent houses; with carpets on the floors, pictures on the walls, books on the shelves—with many additional artistic comforts which we cannot value too highly.

During this nineteenth century we must remember that steam and electricity has been applied in a thousand ways to promote the well-being of the masses. The steam-engine has done more in fifty years for human advancement and happiness than any religion has been capable of performing in thousands of years. It has brought people together in communities; enabled them to co-operate in a thousand useful occupations; it has carried in its train peace and prosperity wheresoever it has gone. On the other hand, the progress of religions has been marked by strife, misery, persecution, bloodshed, and often by the destruction of inoffensive and well-meaning nations off the face of the earth.

Then, again, see what machinery has done for agriculture and other handicrafts. The nation that turns from war and hunting to agriculture is on the high road to success. Our Scandinavian forefathers taught the value of this step in the following fable: There was once a giantess who had a daughter, and the child saw the husbandman ploughing the field. Then she ran and picked him up with her finger and thumb, and put him and his plough and his oxen into her apron, and carried them to her mother, and said: "Mother, what sort of a beetle is this that I found wriggling in the sand?" But the mother said, "Put it away, my child; we must begone out of this land, for these people will dwell in it."†

Agriculture is the oldest art of man; Adam "dugged," as the clown in *Hamlet* tells us; but science, and not Christianity, gave us all the improvements in agriculture, without which many of the races of the earth must have perished. While Christianity taught us to "take no thought for the morrow, what we should eat," etc., necessity caused us to use all the appliances of science to increase the produce of the earth to meet the requirements of an ever-increasing population.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

* *Thoughts on Science, Ethics, and Theology*, pp. 7 and 8.

† *Conflict between Science and Religion*, p. 33.

* *Society and Solitude*, p. 158.

† Emerson, *Civilisation*, p. 19.

THE MESSIAH IDEA.

BY HENRY MACDONALD.

(From the "Twentieth Century.")

THE idea represented by the Hebrew word Messiah, translated Christ in Greek, and reappearing in the Soudan as Madhi, was the child of hope, born of oppression. When conquering Rome, with omnipotent arms, crushed the aspirations of the East, misery made a suggestion, which became a hope, that some day one of their own race, a just ruler, a conqueror, would arise, who would reassert their claims and annihilate their oppressors. This idea has been a bloody scourge to those who from helplessness and misery have acted on it. It has crimsoned the annals of the Jews until as late as the fifteenth century; with the Mohammedan tribes it has wetted with gore the desert sands of Africa, and among our own American Indians it is the pathetic, last ray of hope for salvation from sordid drudgery and starvation.

It is now admitted by theologians that there is no allusion to a Messiah by any of the prophets, except it may be in Isaiah xiv. 1, in which Cyrus is explicitly named. The texts that were once adduced as far-fetched allusions are now admitted to be references to local events then in view. Among the Hebrews the idea originated after the failure of the Asmonæan princes, but was not even then entertained by the cultivated, but by much the same class as believe in the millenium among ourselves.

During this period a class of books appeared, which are called Apocrypha, that while dwelling on the past glories of Israel—which never existed—(much like patriotic Irish writings) painted a Bellamy-like, ideal future for the Jews, when the "Great Conqueror" should appear like a roaring lion. His approach was to be heralded by convulsions of nature, and Moses, Elijah, and Elias were to appear to introduce him. Swords should appear from the midnight sky, and blood trickle from the rocks. Nation should war with nation. As Enoch says, "From the blush of morning till sunset will they kill one another. And the horse shall walk up to its breast in blood, and the chariot sink up to its top." When he had conquered the enemies of the Jews and his own, then poverty and injustice would be unknown. Wild beasts would subject themselves to man, and niggard nature would pour out her bounties spontaneously. "On one vine shall be a thousand branches, and on one branch shall be a thousand bunches, and one bunch shall produce a thousand grapes, and one grape shall produce a measure of wine." "Wheat shall grow as tall as a palm, each grain as large as two kidneys of the largest ox." Men shall live a thousand years.

It may be objected that intelligent people would scarcely believe in such rhapsodies, but it is only necessary to point to numerous historical instances of equally absurd ideas that were firmly believed in by far more intelligent people than the ancient Jews. The Christians had a prophecy that the Turks would enter Constantinople, but when they reached the church of St. Sophia an angel from heaven would appear and drive back with slaughter the followers of the false prophet. Under that impression, the *élite* of Constantinople: men, women, and priests, sought the shelter of the holy dome, and fastened the doors from the inside. When Paris was invested by the Germans, the Bishop of Orleans proclaimed, "God will strike a blow. God will work a great miracle," and 50,000 copies of a prophecy to that effect were eagerly bought up at once.

Was Jesus a Messiah, or did he ever exist? Was he a total myth, or was he the germ of impossible ideas, afterward grasped by metaphysicians and made respectable by Greek philosophy?

It is never safe to assert the existence of a person not vouched for by contemporary evidence. Paul states that he never saw Jesus, although if Paul were a pupil of Gamaliel, it must have been during the active period of Jesus in Jerusalem. Philo, born sixteen years after Jesus, a voluminous Jewish writer on the history and sects of that very period, apparently never heard of him. Justus of Tiberias, writing of the same time, never mentions him. Josephus, born thirty-seven years after Jesus, it is admitted now, makes no reference to him, although he is describing that very time minutely.

Had there been at that time a person with the blood of David, the Jews would not have been his accusers. The Magi from the east, who saw his star to the east,

would not have had to journey west to Bethlehem to find him. He would have occupied a throne or a grave.

It was a bright literary age. If Herod had massacred 144,000 children—afterward reduced to 14,000—or the dead walk the streets, would no contemporary writer mention it? Pliny writes a treatise on eclipses and earthquakes, but neglects to mention the three-hour eclipse and earthquake of the crucifixion, although the greatest the world has known.

The Jesus of the gospel certainly never existed, but through the ever growing legends of early traditions we can dimly discern some probable facts, viz.: That there was a Jesus, a man of the laboring classes, without influence enough to attract official notice in his own day, who taught community of property and passive Anarchism. Tempted by some petty successes, he probably attempted the rôle of Messiah and fell a humble, unknown victim, to the stern majesty of Rome and the orthodoxy of Judaism. Numerous fanatics had assumed the rôle of Messiah before. The most conspicuous one, Judas the Galilean, raised a revolt when Jesus was about twelve years old. Judas taught a high morality and much similar sentiments to those ascribed to Jesus. The followers and sympathisers of these Messiahs probably formed the party of Jesus. Were all these Messiahs afterward idealised under the name of Jesus?

The followers of Jesus were first named Nazarenes and Ebionites—that is the poor—he was betrayed for about twenty dollars) were dumbfounded at the downfall of their expectations, but some suggested he would soon appear again from heaven, and judge the world. At first a spiritual resurrection was suggested, as Peter puts it: "Put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit." Afterward the story grew to a natural resurrection. Leaders of parties, hard pressed, are not liable to contradict well-meant exaggerations of valuable adherents. After the death of Jesus, the authorities troubled his followers but little. A doctrine of a Messiah from heaven would not be thought dangerous by men of the world. Their belief in a resurrection would conciliate the Pharisees. The little society grew and became well organised, but was scarcely distinguishable from the other Jews. The fall of Jerusalem scattered them widely. Paul had turned his attention to Gentiles, and Jewish ceremonies were abandoned. The Gentile converts brought in the refining influence of Greek philosophy and ideas imbibed from their mythology. In the clash of sects the Nazarenes and Ebionites—the original Christians—were excommunicated, and disappeared back into Judaism or were assimilated into the more progressive faith. As to what Jesus really said, we know nothing, but whoever inspired the sayings: "Take no heed of the morrow;" "Love your enemies," never said: "He that believeth not shall be damned;" "I come not to send peace, but a sword."

Theologians now admit that our gospels are not the most ancient ones. There was a primary cycle of gospels, such as the Gospel of the Ebionites, Gospel of the Nazarenes, Gospel of the Egyptians, Gospel of the Hebrews, etc., of which only fragments remain. Our own are the result of evolution, compromise, and trivial accommodation to texts of Jewish books.

The cult of the Virgin is an example of the growth of belief. Even our gospels readily admit her as the mother of other children. When her perpetual virginity was first broached, it was regarded as heretical, and the "Protevangelium Jacobi," written in the second century, was placed on the prohibited index for claiming it. The council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) decreed her as Ever-Virgin, and another council (A.D. 1854) decreed her the Immaculate Virgin.

The conquering hero foretold was far different from the poor, crucified malefactor, but enthusiasm has often experienced the sad fact that the cross is more readily attained than the crown.

THE SHAMELESS CHURCH.

BY CLINTON LOVERIDGE.

When'er I see a splendid untaxed church arise,
With tower or steeple reaching for the skies—
I know the holders of its restful pews
Crowd thrice their number into slums and "stews."
—*Twentieth Century.*

THE BISHOP AND THE IDIOTS.

THIRTY-EIGHT inmates (not keepers) of the Western Counties Idiot Asylum, at Starcross, have been confirmed by the Bishop of Exeter. This is the first time the establishment has ever been so favored, and the proceeding has excited a good deal of comment. In view of this fact an enterprising pressman sought and obtained an interview with the Bishop. The lucky day happened to be very appropriate. It was the first of April. His lordship said that the criticisms he had seen and heard had made no impression upon him. He had no doubt about the appropriateness of the course he had taken. The confirmation was conducted in the presence of the Earl of Devon, who "took a great interest in the proceedings"—for what reason was not stated. The Bishop had only condescended "to the weakness of those who are weak in intellect," which we dare say he had little difficulty in doing. "I have no doubt in my own mind," he added, "that these imbeciles had sufficient intellect to know what they were doing, and it is known that those who are weak in intellect lean very much more strongly to religion than others. This is one of those outward signs with which it has pleased God to bless those whom he has afflicted."

What on earth induced the Bishop of Exeter to let the cat out of the bag in this fashion? *Those who are weak in intellect lean much more strongly to religion than others!* We always thought so, and our suspicions are confirmed by episcopal authority. Religion is particularly adapted to the weak-minded—imbeciles are the best devotees, and the thirty-eight confirmed idiots in Starcross Asylum are the most natural Christians in the West of England.

We thank the Bishop of Exeter for this candid confession. Truth has a double force and charm from the lips of such a witness. His lordship's words should be painted up conspicuously in every place of worship and printed on the title-page of every volume of sermons. We always doubted the utility of Bishops, but his lordship of Exeter has earned his salary; and the best of it is, the Church pays him, while Freethought profits by his investigations and discoveries.

ACID DROPS.

Colonel Ingersoll, like other Freethought leaders, has been the object of much orthodox calumny. Hitherto he has treated his libellers with silent disdain. For the most part they have been persons with everything to gain and nothing to lose. But the Rev. Dr. A. C. Dixon, pastor of Hanson-place Baptist Church, is in a good position, and having libelled Ingersoll he will have to defend himself in a court of justice. The Colonel has commenced a suit for slander against him, and New York society has no doubt as to the result. Mr. Dixon referred to Ingersoll as a defender of impure pictures and publications, and as "paid to pollute the minds of the young of this generation." Probably a stern lesson to *this* libeller will terrify the whole mob of Ingersoll's enemies.

Bishop Jayne, of Chester, has never had the courage to defend or the honor to withdraw his charge of cruelty to children against working-class Secularists. In common honesty, however, he should preach a sermon on the case of Mrs. Montagu, who has just been sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for the manslaughter of her little daughter Helen Mary, aged three years and five days. Mrs. Montagu does not belong to the working classes and she is not a Secularist. She is a "lady" and a devout Christian. Her brutal ill-usage of her children was prompted by what the jury, in recommending her to mercy, called "a mistaken sense of duty." She was often heard to declare that she did not care about her children's bodies, her anxiety was about their souls. So she wielded the rod as the Bible orders, dragged them upstairs by the heels, and locked them up for hours in dark cupboards. The last

punishment she inflicted once too often, the victim being a poor little thing of *three!* The child was locked up for hours in a black hole, then she was tied up, and finally she was found dead of strangulation. Such are the tender mercies of a Christian mother with "a mistaken sense of duty." The case is a very striking one, and we invite Bishop Jayne to give it his serious attention.

Our leaderette on "the Bishop and the Idiots" may be supplemented in this column. It is stated in the *Devon Evening Express* that one of the idiots confirmed by the Bishop of Exeter at Starcross Asylum gave as his creed "I believe in death," which after all, perhaps, was the best thing he could believe in. Another looks forward to heaven as a place where he will have bread and water to eat, and no washing to do. Altogether the Bishop has struck oil. We hope he will persevere at Starcross. In the course of time the Asylum may become a Training College, to supply pulpits with sufficiently religious ministers.

Judges are very slow to recognise a law which interferes with their privilege of playing the bigot on the bench. Mr. Bradlaugh's Act, making Oath or Affirmation optional, is still treated with flagrant contempt by the men who are paid—and often *too well* paid—to administer the law. At the recent Essex Assize, held at Chelmsford, a jurymen whose name is not given in the report asked to affirm. "On what grounds do you affirm?" asked the Clerk of Assize. "I affirm on the ground that I have no religious belief," was the reply. On this the Clerk of Assize, after speaking with the Judge, said, "Leave the box, please."

Mr. Justice Mathew was the judge. He must know that he grossly violated the spirit of the Oaths Act. The trick he played is all too common with the judges of the superior courts. They take care not to *refuse* to let a Freethinking jurymen affirm, for that would be absolutely illegal. They rob him of his legal right, and at the same time insult him by taking another jurymen. By this means they keep the Freethinker uselessly waiting, and gratify their insolent bigotry without incurring any danger. It is a paltry trick, and every time it is played the occupant of the bench—be he Justice Mathew or another— forfeits his right to be considered a just judge or an English gentleman.

Mrs. Spurgeon is anxious to assure the world that Spurgeon only left £2,000 worth of actual property. The other £9,000 represents his house, furniture, library, and copyrights. All right. But doesn't the lady's assurance indicate that she feels a disparity between amassing a fortune and preaching "blessed be ye poor"? It is good to see the consciences of Christians growing sensitive on this point.

Celestine Edwards, the black champion of Christianity, is now evangelising in Liverpool. Until quite recently, at any rate, he advertised himself, or allowed himself to be advertised, as the negro preacher. Now, however, he seems to be growing sensitive on the point, and inclined to treat any reference to his color as an insult. For instance, he complained at a Liverpool meeting that Mr. Foote had described him as "an image of God cast in ebony." Mr. Foote does not remember doing so. The black champion should say when and where. Certainly no such silly phrase as "cast in ebony" ever came from Mr. Foote's lips or pen. Ebony is not *cast* but *cut*.

Were the black champion decently well-read, he would know that "God's image cut in ebony" is an expression that was applied to negroes by the witty and famous Thomas Fuller, a Church of England divine of the seventeenth century. Fuller used it pathetically, not reproachfully; and genial Charles Lamb picked it out as one of old Thomas's best sayings. The black champion must therefore settle accounts with Fuller and Lamb instead of Mr. Foote.

A correspondent writes to the *New York Herald*, from the City of Mexico: "Priests can keep mistresses with impunity. From a church to a gaming-table is but a step, and the priests gamble with the rest. The rentals of houses of ill-fame, of gambling-houses, of bull-pens, all go to a church which is supposed to teach religion. Because Diaz, a Catholic himself, will not tolerate such crime under the guise of religion, he is fought by the church and is the recipient of their anathemas. Take the leading church

in Monterey, outside of the cathedral; you step from the church door to a plaza owned by the church, and in which stand fifty tents in which are conducted monte, roulette, and other games of chance. Behind this stands the bull-pen, and the profits and rentals go to the church."

The Rev. Hudson Taylor says: "After laboring thirty years in China, I am profoundly convinced that opium is doing more evil in China in a week than the missionaries are doing good in a year. After eighty years' contact with England there are 32,000 Christians and 150,000,000 opium smokers. The opium curse is the sum of villainy."

The S.A. knows how to draw its patrons. At the Grecian Theatre it announces—

CAPTAIN C. MITCHELL

(Not Charlie),

THE GREAT FIGHTING MAN.

Booth's posters of organisation have been compared to those of John Wesley and Ignatius Loyola, but we don't think either of these would have thought of evangelising the world by the aid of sensational posters and a matrimonial agency.

It appears that a number of the applicants for relief in Bethnal Green attribute their poverty to the operations of Booth's match-making industry. Booth put out hopes of grappling with the poverty of East London if only he got a hundred thousand pounds to start with. Now he has the money, those in a position to know say he has only made matters worse.

Happy Sunday Evenings are held at Dorcas House, Carr-street, East London. Among the attractions on the bills we notice "Good Fires." Hades! Once upon a time they frightened us with "Good Fires," now they entice us with the same article.

Godly Scotland comes out very badly in criminal statistics. In all countries women commit fewer crimes than men. The percentage in Scotland, however, is far higher than in any other nation's record. In England the percentage is 20, while in Scotland it is 37. Is this to be attributed to whiskey, or is it because the women are so repressed? Any way, the Scotch should look to the results when boasting that its girls as well as boys are all well drilled in the Bible and the Shorter Catechism.

Chicago means to "do" its World's Fair on a big scale. Among the attractions is to be a "World's First Parliament of Religions." People of all creeds are invited to come from east, west, north and south, and sit down in Abraham's bosom. Our old friend Lazarus with the sore legs will take a holiday just then, so as not to embarrass the company. We suppose the polyglot Parliament will wind up with a proclamation of the universal religion; and as it is hopeless to expect agreement on articles of theology, we suppose Humanity will carry the day.

The old Scottish Puritans would not allow markets to be held on Saturday or Monday, because both were too near the holy Sabbath. The same principle, though it shows itself in a somewhat different form, seems to animate the Rev. Nicholas Rafferty, of Thurles, who has just been fined £1 for assaulting a parishioner. It appears that the plaintiff left church and met a friend with whom he entered into conversation, both of them lighting their pipes by way of accompaniment. This provoked the ire of the man of God, who thought they were smoking too near his gospel-shop. Hence the assault, and the poor sky-pilot's tribulation.

At the inquest on Emma Elizabeth Rogers, a lady's maid to Lady Stirling, it was stated that she had been studying the scriptures. Her last letter to her parents said "God is good." And so the poor girl jumped into the Thames.

The Pawnee Indians have again declared their intention of dancing till the Messiah comes. This will be the most protracted dance on record. Prophet Baxter should get his disciples to follow suit.

M. Mazaroz, a once wealthy French upholsterer, has been placed at his wife's suit under a judiciary council. He devoted much money to evangelising the world, and believed

that, like a true Christian, he could heal and restore speech and hearing to the deaf and dumb. Not long ago he bought £28,000 worth of religious paintings, and borrowed £40,000 to pay for them.

Mr. J. Upshon, secretary of the Madras Secular Society, points out in *Modern Thought* that Lieut. A. Milne was buried with Christian rites, despite desiring in his will that there should be no religious ceremony. Freethinkers should not only request non-Christian burial, but give some Free-thinking friend absolute disposal of the funeral arrangements.

Some difficulty was caused at the Southwark Police-court in respect to the manner in which a Parsee should be sworn. After some delay the witness said that he had the seal of his prophet on his watch chain, and he was allowed to swear by that. No doubt it was quite as efficacious as kissing the much-beslobbered book.

A correspondent of the *Jewish Chronicle* boldly proposes that the Jews should give up their denominational schools and hand them over to the London School Board.

Principal Brown, of Aberdeen Free Church College, has delivered himself of two columns of raving against Modern Scepticism. His audience thought it fine, and applauded it lustily, but it was only "sound and fury signifying nothing." There was just one flash of common sense, when Principal Brown declared that "all our Churches are honeycombed with the mischievous tendency to minimise and evaporate all that is repulsive in Divine Revelation to the natural man, and present rather its attractive features." True enough, and it will not be altered by Dr. Brown's ravings. The Churches have no alternative. They must fish with attractive bait. Even then their baskets are half empty.

Famine still threatens the Deccan districts of Bombay and Madras, and the upper districts of Bengal and Rajputana. In Russia famished children have been trying to eat earth. Let us, then, with gladsome mind, Praise the Lord, for he is kind.

The new Catholic Archbishop, whom the Pope would like to convert into a kind of Papal Nuncio, has already proved his activity in propaganda. He went to the opening of a new R.C. cathedral at Portsmouth, and preached on "The Child and his Mother." He recommended them to imitate St. Joseph, and then they would take the Child and the Mother. Yes, St. Joseph is a beautiful model of credulity.

The Annual Conference of the International Christian Police Association directs attention to the farcical character of Christianity. Jesus said if any one stole a coat he was to have a cloak also. We keep a strong police force to put down thieves, and then Exeter Hall tries to convert the policemen to true Christianity.

"R. Davey" writes to the *St. James's Gazette* attributing the dynamite outrages in Paris to anti-Christian teaching and godless education. He might as well attribute them to the influence of the stars. There are some people who scent Atheism wherever mischief is afloat. Formerly they used to ascribe it to the Devil.

Mr. H. R. Fox is glad he has left Sunderland. He used to speak now and then in favor of Freethought, and Sunderland would no longer afford him a living for honest work. He applied for a situation at Hedley, Swan, and Co.'s drapery establishment, and received a reply from S. M. Swan, who wrote—"Your influence would destroy what by example I try to do, namely, to impress upon my employees that this life is not the end but only the beginning of 'ALL.'" This was a compliment to Mr. Fox, inasmuch as it admitted his influence to be more powerful than Mr. Swan's. On the other hand, it was no compliment to Mr. Swan, who appears to think that he buys his employees "body and soul." The time will come when such insolence will be universally laughed at.

Mr. Wallace Nelson, writing in the *Liberator* on Spurgeon, says: "If the creed of John Calvin be true, it would be the duty of the whole human race, at one sublime act of courage and despair, to curse God and die. Yet this was the creed entertained by Spurgeon; the God of this creed was the God he worshipped. The fact that, while accepting this doctrine,

he was a good man, and strove, in his way, to serve his fellows, proves that his deeply-rooted moral instincts were stronger than his theological convictions."

Christians sometimes think there is a gloomy prospect for Secularism since science shows that the sun's heat must diminish and this world at length become a globe of ice. Wherefore turn to God. Sir R. Ball, however, calculates that the sun's heat will suffice for five million years to come. The human race may have learnt how to get to the other planets before that.

A more pressing question is substitutes for coal, since the supply in Britain, it is calculated, will be exhausted in 170 years.

The well-known indisposition of Scotsmen to break the Sabbath for nothing is illustrated by the story of a cyclist published in the *Glasgow Evening News*. His machine broke down, and there was nothing for it but a new link, so he hunted up the local smith, who reluctantly did the job. His charge was "seevin and sax," and on being offered five shillings he said, "D'ye think I wud come in here, break the Sawbath an' a' thegither for five shullins?" The two-and-six was insurance against Jehovah.

Secular Thought, of Toronto, gives the annual report of the Inspector of Prisons, Ontario, showing the religious persuasion of criminals. The total commitments for the year 1891 were 10,423, made up as follows: Roman Catholics 3,744, Church of England 3,134, Methodist 1,413, Presbyterian 1,368, other denominations 770.

How large a proportion of Atheists, Secularists, etc., are included in that 770, may be judged by the return of the Central Prison. Of 674 commitments in 1891 there were Church of England 229, Roman Catholic 216, Methodist 108, Presbyterian 86, Baptist 20, Lutheran 10, Congregational 5, Hebrew 1, Salvation Army 1, Atheists 0. Yet Christianity is said to be the great deterrent from crime, and Atheism its great incentive.

In a *Christian Herald* account of a Bethshan "Divine healing" meeting occurred the following—"Mr. Foley wrote: 'The little girl for whom I asked you to pray on Dec. 9, when she was very bad (suffering from lung disease, and the doctor giving little or no hope of her), was so much better the following day that the doctor, when he came, said there was a wonderful improvement in her, and that he could not account for it. When he sounded her lungs he said they were all right. I want you to return thanks for this wonderful recovery of this little girl.'

One of our readers, wishing for a little more information, obtained from the secretary of Bethshan the address of this Mr. Foley and wrote him, asking for the name and address of the doctor who attended the case mentioned, enclosing an addressed postcard for reply. This was three weeks ago, and, as might have been expected, no reply is to hand.

Prophet Baxter is still holding forth on the approaching end of the world, which is to come off in 1901. Antichrist is to be a Napoleon, but the prospect of one arising in France is far from bright. There are said to be only four Bonapartist journals left in the whole country. Three years ago there were fifty. A Napoleon, therefore, seems out of the question; and when Prophet Baxter sees that little game is entirely played out, he will no doubt recast the horoscope, and present the world with a brand new Antichrist; that is, if he lives long enough, but of course he may die or retire from the prophetic business, leaving a free field to an enterprising successor.

Thomas Hill, gardener at Checkley Rectory, near Leek, and lay preacher, has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for concealing the birth of a child which he has by a widow, and which he put into a tank.

The Rev. S. G. Cotton has been found guilty of illtreating the children at the Carogh Orphanage, co. Kildare.

Mr. Turnbull, in *Open Court*, speaks of Mr. Spurgeon as having the chief weight of his head south of the equator, or nose line. He says: "According to his religion, belief

was the key of heaven; not belief in reasonable things, for there is no religious merit in that, but belief in the impossible, and in the Sacred History of that which never happened. In his theology the soul's danger lay just behind the forehead, and therefore the smaller the facial angle the larger the chance for heaven."

The *Cosmopolitan*, of Calcutta, says the Indian census shows how little progress has been made by Christianity. That the gospel is, however, spreading appears from another item in the paper: "Twice a year a padre (missionary) goes to Kaira from Ahmedabad, and gives the inhabitants of the former place a service in the old cantonment church. On the last occasion the monkeys, which infest the whole district, stole his books from the pulpit, so there was no service that day."

A Russian named Ivan Ivanovic Ivanoff has been arrested at Naples. He is said to have commenced the publication of an atheistic journal entitled *Prometeo* on the 13th ult., the first number of which was sequestered by the police.

"Carillon," of the *Kensington News*, says: "With reference to a paragraph in last week's *Freethinker* (the writer of which confounds him with the Rev. R. F. Clarke, of the Society of Jesus). Mathetes desires me to say that he does not believe the resemblances between Lamaism and Latin Monasticism to be accidental; and that he considers that the origin of eremitism and monasticism in general is to be sought for, not in Thibet or in India, but in Northern Syria and Asia Minor."

"Carillon" should compare the articles of "Mathetes" in his paper with those by the Rev. R. F. Clarke in the *Weekly Register*. Rather than accuse either of these gentlemen of plagiarism, we took them to be one and the same. Perhaps, like the evangelists, they are equally inspired, and while their unanimity is wonderful in some instances, in others their contradictions are extraordinary.

Like "Mathetes," we do not believe the resemblances between Lamaism and Latin Christianity to be accidental, though we cannot say precisely how they came about. What is certain is that Buddhism was a monastic movement which sent missionaries to all parts of Asia in the third century before Christ. This is proved by the rock inscriptions of Asoka.

The *Sunday-school Magazine* would fain suppress the vendors of ice-cream on Sundays. It laments that pennies intended for the missionary box find their way to fair and fruitful Italy instead of to Greenland's icy mountains and India's coral strand.

Another device of Satan in his malice against Sunday-schools is football. Even when played on Saturday this diabolical game demoralises its devotees, and they do not get up in time for church and school, or they furtively play the match over again instead of going to the service of the Lord.

Mr. Theodore Watts is a decent sort of critic from a purely literary standpoint, but his judgment on a writer like Whitman is hardly worth the space given to it in last week's *Athenaeum*. Mr. Watts is especially severe on Whitman's "indecent," or rather his "amazing indecency," and accuses him of "fouling with excrement the doorstep of Civilisation"—which is an exceedingly dirty metaphor, such as the "indecent" Whitman never descended to. Mr. Watts is confident that in England the poet of *Leaves of Grass* would have been promptly "run in." Perhaps so, but that is only a judgment on England.

Mr. Watts is a great admirer of the English Bible. Why doesn't he denounce the "amazing indecency" of this book, which is thrust into the hands of little children? Why doesn't he propose to "run in" its publishers? The answer to this question would throw a good deal of light on the character of Mr. Theodore Watts.

Voltaire records that on June 20, 1751, he was waited upon by Professor Sturff, who wished to read him a German poem on the subject of the Messiah. He desired him to wait till he received a Danish poem on the Holy Virgin, which he expected.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 10, Hall of Science, Old-street, E.C., 11.15, "Joseph Chamberlain: Past, Present, and Future"; at 7.15, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?"

April 17, Sheffield; 24, Hall of Science.

May 1, Glasgow; 8, Belfast; 22 and 29, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—April 10 and 17, Birmingham; 24, Rochdale. 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.

W. MESTON.—See paragraph.

A. GUEST.—Our version insufficiently explains the prophet's repugnance. If you turn to the Douay version of Ezekiel iv. 12, you will see the cakes had to be covered. Evidently not an ordinary method of baking is implied. See also 2 Kings xviii. 27.

A. DAVIDGE.—(1) You will receive a certificate signed by the President. (2) Mr. Symes's article, "Why Should the Atheist Fear to Die?" would not go on a two-page tract.

H. PROCTER.—The Rev. T. Ashcroft is evidently not inclined to debate his creed. When such men are invited to do so they often give rude replies. We are used to the species, and do not share your astonishment.

D. WAUDBY.—The joke has already appeared.

NORTH EASTERN SECULAR FEDERATION.—Joseph Brown, hon. sec., acknowledges the following: Spennymoor Branch, 10s.; Crook Branch, 12s. 6d.; Bedlington Branch, 10s.

H. G. SHEPHERD.—Dean Gregory's speech was noticed last week. You do right. Every Freethinker should withdraw his children from religious instruction. Always pleased to hear from you.

J. W.—We don't intend to invest the penny. The paper isn't worth it.

J. KEAST.—He has not yet served us with that writ. We mean to take no more notice of the fellow. Treat his libels on Freethinkers with contempt, as we do. Voltaire, Paine, Bradlaugh, and Ingersoll, have all been the object of such infamous attacks by the champions of the gospel of charity. Nor can their slanders be killed by contradiction or exposure. They only die of old age. Meanwhile they defeat their object in the case of decent-minded people, who are sure to be disgusted with such tactics.

J. R. C.—C. Southwell is claimed as a Christian convert, but friends at Auckland, New Zealand, where he died August, 1860, questioned the reality of the conversion. (2) The incident referred to is in the Apocryphal gospels. (3) Mark xvi. 17, 18, promises that believers shall cast out devils, speak with new tongues, and take up serpents, "and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them."

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) We have a rooted dislike of metaphysics, although—or perhaps because—we have read all the principal metaphysicians of ancient and modern times. The superbly subtle Berkeley, in one of his lucid intervals of practical common sense, exclaimed that metaphysicians raised a dust and complained they could not see. (2) We know nothing of *substance*, in the metaphysical sense of the term. If an owl-faced gentleman tells us, "You know nothing about an orange but its qualities—size, color, weight, taste and smell," we answer "Quite so, and that is all we want to know." Those who want to know more are like the monkey, who searched behind the looking-glass for his own image. (3) Your definition of "living" matter is simply "not dead" matter, and *vice versa*. Living matter (we speak practically, not metaphysically) is matter in a certain form, capable of self-preservation by appropriating and assimilating other matter. Dead matter (though the phrase is arbitrary and misleading) is matter without this property. (4) As to "one existence," etc., we cry off the discussion. A phenomenalist, bound in by the rigorous law of the relativity of knowledge, gives up the quest of ultimates.

NORTH LONDON.—Mr. Woffendale has been told again and again in the *Freethinker* that he can have a platform debate with Mr. Foote. The reverend gentleman's recent correspondence with Miss Vance, as she informs us, arose out of a letter from him to her, offering to lecture on the following Sunday at Milton Hall, and asking her to get Mr. Foote or Mr. Watts—whom he knew to be engaged in the country—to come and oppose him. Miss Vance had to decline the offer, but she asked if he were willing to hold a set debate with Mr. Foote or Mr. Watts. This he caught up as "a challenge from Mr. Foote," and sent Miss Vance a long list of "conditions." She applied to Mr. Foote, who told her he would discuss Atheism if Mr. Woffendale would discuss Christianity; each disputant would then have something to defend as well as attack. As to "conditions," Mr. Foote told Miss Vance he would not discuss them with Mr. Woffendale, but only through a joint-committee, exactly as he did in arranging the recent debate with the Rev. J. M. Logan. From this

position Mr. Foote will not budge. He only bargains for two things, (1) the discussion of *both* sides, Atheism and Christianity, (2) the formation of a joint-committee, without which correspondence can neither be useful nor dignified—especially when one of the correspondents is Mr. Woffendale.

J. G. FISHER.—See "Sugar Plums." We hope Mr. Standing's efforts will be successful. He is certainly working hard.

J. COLINSON.—Thanks for the batch of cuttings, etc.

F. GOUGH.—Pleased to hear of Mr. Watts's success at Manchester. We hope you *will* be able to get some minister to debate with him.

R. O. SMITH, hon. treasurer of the London Secular Federation, acknowledges:—J. M. Tomkins, 5s.; Mrs. Foote, 10s. 6d.

S. H. ALISON.—Your "Freethought Marseillaise" has decided merit, but it would be all the better if you kept it by you for some time and submitted it to careful revisions.

L. SPURGEON.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. NEATE.—Coroners are more respectful to the Oaths Act than the judges in the superior courts. Pleased to hear that another jurymen affirmed as well as yourself, and for the same reason.

C. J. STEINBERG.—See our paragraph on the Victoria Park incident. You do well to stand by Mr. Cohen in the exercise of his legal rights. Nothing that Mr. Grattan-Guinness says is entitled to the least credit without corroboration. Mr. Proctor, the astronomer, never professed to be an Atheist. As to his crying out for someone to pray for him, it is the usual foolish story about dying Freethinkers. Mrs. Proctor is still living, and we believe in England, though we have not her address. If she should hear of this nonsense about her husband she will no doubt give it an authoritative denial.

M. ANDREW.—The term "sky pilot" did not originate at Nelson. It came from America in all probability.

BASKERVILLE HALL FUND (Birmingham).—Mr. Watts acknowledges with thanks £1 from C. Shuffbotham.

SALFNEY.—"Private and privileged" on a letter does not make it so in a law court.

E. COX.—The "full details" you refer to are garbled.

J. NICHOLSON.—(1) Mr. Foote is not quite himself yet. His throat and chest are still tender. (2) Mr. Wheeler had an article on Pre-Christian Hospitals, etc., in the *Freethinker* Sept. 4 and 11, 1887.

W. HOLLAND.—Ask the lady yourself. You will have an opportunity.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—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—Clarion—Saturday Blade—Christian Weekly—Wolverhampton Express and Star—Burton Chronicle—Monist—Manchester Telegram—Wesleyan Methodist Church Record—Western Times—Echo—Hucknall Morning Star—Portsmouth Evening News—Kensington News—Devon Evening Express—Woolwich Herald—Open Court.

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.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office post, free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

(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.)

SUGAR PLUMS.

Despite the sudden remarkably fine weather Mr. Foote had excellent meetings at the London Hall of Science on Sunday. There was some discussion after the morning lecture on "Poverty, Old Age, and State Pensions." Prior to the evening lecture on "Spurgeon: as Man, Preacher, and Theologian," Mr. Foote gave a reading from Walt Whitman, which was highly appreciated, and performed the ceremony of naming an infant—Charles Watts Taylor. After the lecture, the old gentleman who opposed on the previous Sunday evening mounted the platform, but the audience could not stand his diffuse, irrelevant talk, and he had to resume his

seat. This farcical episode rather spoiled the effect of the lecturer's appeal on behalf of the Hall of Science scheme.

The Hall of Science platform will be occupied again to-day (April 10) by Mr. Foote. His morning subject is "Joseph Chamberlain: Past, Present and Future." In the evening he lectures on the seasonable question, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" There will be the usual supply of music, vocal and instrumental, and a reading from Robert Browning.

The Rev. C. L. Engstrom attended Mr. Foote's last Thursday lecture at the London Hall of Science, and offered some courteous opposition. Mr. Engstrom could not come without inconvenience; the meeting, therefore, did nothing very *outré* in according him a hearty vote of thanks.

Mr. Charles Watts had a most successful day in Manchester last Sunday. In the evening the hall was crowded with one of the finest audiences that ever assembled to hear Mr. Watts, nearly one half present being ladies. Some discussion followed the afternoon and evening lectures, which called forth immense applause. Several new members were added to the local Branch of the N. S. S.

On Monday evening last Mr. Watts addressed about seventy of the Freethought friends in the Secular Hall, Hanley. He was very pleased to meet many of his old friends, some of whom had walked six and eight miles to be present. The Hanley Branch of the N. S. S. appears to be doing some good work, and it is pleasant to learn that the Society is in a sound position financially.

The National Secular Society's Almanack for 1892 has sold better than the one for 1891, which had a better sale than the one for 1890. The extra copies of this year's are not exhausted however, and we beg to recommend the purchase of a copy to the new members who are being enrolled. The Almanack is the property of the N. S. S., and the profits thus swell the fund for carrying on Secular work.

The London *Star* writes as follows about the greatest American Freethinker:—"Colonel Robert Ingersoll—the funeral orator over the remains of Walt Whitman—is *facile princeps* among the 'stump' speakers of the States. Wit, brilliant fancy, great power of condensed and epigrammatic statement, faultless elocution, and a peculiarly magnetic personality are the qualifications which have kept him for ten years without a rival on the hustings of the Republican party. He is also the favorite speaker of the Grand Army men of the North, and his speech at their rally in Indianapolis in 1880—in which occurs the passage beginning 'The past rises before me like a dream'—shares with Lincoln's second inaugural address the honors of latter-day American political eloquence. Ingersoll, who is a lawyer by profession, is an Agnostic and a Freethinker; and some of his lectures on religious themes, notably that on 'The Mistakes of Moses,' have greatly incensed Christian people in the States. But his private life is above reproach, his disposition singularly amiable, and his charity unflinching. No American knew the 'good grey poet' so intimately."

This is good as far as it goes. But in one respect the *Star* writer is behind date. Colonel Ingersoll has done scarcely any political "stumping" for several years. He evidently thinks his Freethought work more important, and perhaps it is more congenial.

Col. Ingersoll's oration on Liberty has been translated into Dutch. It appears in *De Dageraad* for April, and is also printed in cheap pamphlet form for distribution. We hope it will have as large a circulation as *Dominee Pastoor of kabbi De Dageraad* also has an article on "The Burial of Freemasonry," which threatens to become as unprogressive in Holland as in England.

East London Freethinkers must support the Secular platform in Victoria Park. Last Sunday afternoon Mr. Cohen lectured on "Freethought." After the lecture the Rev. J. Grattan-Guinness—the person who used to organize meetings to protest against Charles Bradlaugh's admission to Parliament—spoke twice in opposition. Before Mr. Cohen's last speech he was surrounded by a howling Christian mob, sticks were lifted against him, and he was with great difficulty protected from

violence. The Park Inspector threatened to prevent Mr. Cohen from lecturing there again, but he has no power to do anything of the kind, and if he tries to do so he must take the consequences. As a matter of fact, Mr. Cohen's meeting was perfectly orderly; the disorder was caused by the Christians, who broke up their own meeting and joined his. Mr. Cohen is booked to lecture in Victoria Park again to-day (April 10), both morning and afternoon, and he will fulfil his engagement. He is advised to this effect by Mr. Foote, who will go to Victoria Park himself if necessary to vindicate the right of Freethinkers to speak on the ground set apart for the purpose by the County Council.

Mrs. Louisa Samson lectured for the Bethnal Green Branch on Sunday evening. Her subject was "Prayer." The secretary speaks in the highest terms of her easy manner, earnestness, and persuasive power.

At the request of the National Sunday League, the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colors have arranged to open their galleries at Princes' Hall, Piccadilly, on Sundays, April 10 and 17, from two till five p.m. Tickets may be had by forwarding stamped addressed envelopes to Mr. Henry Mills, Secretary, 221 High Holborn, and stating the date and hour for which they are required.

On Good Friday the East London Branch holds a Tea and Concert at Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road. Tea on the table at 6. Tickets tenpence each.

The Westminster and West London Branches were to have co-operated with the Battersea Branch for the purpose of holding a Tea and Soirée on Good Friday at Chatham Hall, but at the last moment it was discovered that only sacred music could be played there. As Freethinkers cannot very well dance to sacred music, the gathering had to be abandoned—no other large hall in Battersea being obtainable.

The Battersea Branch will, however, hold a Tea and Soirée at their own hall on Good Friday, and friends visiting Battersea Park will find it very convenient. A good entertainment will be provided—all for sixpence.

Easter Monday is the date of the Newcastle Branch's social gathering. To prevent disappointment the tickets should be applied for as early as possible. A big party is expected, despite the prolonged strike in the district.

The Liverpool Branch closes its financial year without debt. This is an improvement. For the third time the Branch property has escaped "so as by fire," a joiner's shop having been burnt out at the rear of the Oddfellows' Hall.—By the way, Liverpool friends will please note that the Branch is *not* represented in the discussions at the so-called "Anti-Infidel Crusade."

The visit of Mr. Sam Standing to Leeds has at least fulfilled the expectations of the Branch, and will probably lead to important results. The two indoor meetings at Gladstone Hall were well attended, and in addition a short open-air meeting was held at an adjoining street corner, which attracted a good many hearers. In his evening lecture Mr. Standing appealed to Freethinkers to participate in the fighting which is to culminate in the triumph of Secularism; and at the members' meeting he explained his plans for assisting to federate the Lancashire and Yorkshire Branches. It was decided to co-operate as warmly and energetically as possible in this desirable project, and it is hoped arrangements can be made for Mr. Standing to inaugurate open-air propaganda in Leeds early in May.

The renovated Bradford Branch held its first annual meeting on Sunday. During the year 23 lectures have been delivered at a cost of £29. Income and expenditure just balance. The Branch begins again without debt, and means to do double work during the second year.

The Chatham Branch of the N. S. S. will open its own Hall on Good Friday. Mr. Foote and Mr. Holyoake will officiate at the ceremony. Full particulars appear in one of our advertisement pages. Freethinkers living in Kentish towns within reach of Chatham will probably want to be present. They will find a hearty welcome. But as the accommodation is limited they must apply early for tickets.

to W. B. Thompson, Grosvenor Villa, Nelson-road, New Brompton.

According to a *Star* paragraph the Rev. C. F. Aked, the Baptist minister of Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, who got into trouble over exchanging pulpits with a Unitarian, is a disciple of Matthew Arnold and has "an intense admiration for Ingersoll." "His theology," it is said, "is broad and widening, and will soon prove too wide for confinement within any sect in the Christian Church."

The new Bristol Branch already numbers 46 members. What a strange result of a debate which was to extinguish Secularism in Bristol! Mr. Charles Watts has been engaged to lecture for the new Branch, and Mr. Foote will follow as soon as possible.

We are glad to hear most favorable reports of Mr. G. H. Martin's lectures at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday last. He spoke exceedingly well and gave evidence that he had carefully studied the subjects of his addresses. The audiences were thoroughly pleased with his efforts, and in the evening by a unanimous vote invited him to again visit Birmingham.

The *Freidenker* of Milwaukee gives a translation of Mr. Foote's article "Gone to God," dealing with the case of the murderer Stockwell. The translation is made by Mr. H. Hennings.

The *Progressive Thinker*, of Chicago, reprints with acknowledgment Mr. Wheeler's articles on Prayers, Ancient and Modern.

N. S. S. Branches are desired to take steps at once for being represented at the Newcastle Conference on Whit-Sunday. It will be the most important gathering of our party for many years. Notices of motion for the Agenda must be sent in to the Secretary by May 14.

Ann Hatheway's cottage has been purchased for £3,000, and will be preserved as long as possible. William Shakespeare, when a lad of eighteen, waited outside it for the girl he courted and married. The same sum of money is wanted to buy the place where Charles Bradlaugh lectured for twenty-three years. Will the Freethinkers of England raise the amount or let the opportunity pass them? They will have to answer the question by Midsummer. At that date the directors of the National Secular Hall Society, who have paid a deposit of £300, must take possession or forego the contract. We appeal to the Freethought party to lose no time in applying for shares.

A DEFENDER OF THE FAITH.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

It may interest some of your readers to know that I recently had some correspondence with the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale, with a view to bringing about a discussion either with Mr. C. Watts or yourself and this "valiant" defender of the faith; but in the last number of his paper (in which I find nearly the whole of that gentleman's letters to me published, and my own most carefully edited), after commencing his discreet if not honest lucubration by stating that "a fair discussion between two able and courteous antagonists is one of the finest intellectual treats," he later discovers the fact that "he has no high opinion of Mr. Foote's intellect, literary capacity, controversial ability, or valor." Therefore the "two able and courteous antagonists" are reduced to one, and that one the rev. gentleman. Carefully disguising the facts, this man of God would make it appear that he was quite ready to meet an antagonist on the platform; and after laying down certain conditions, which he insisted must be accepted by the other party, he dares to declare—to use his own beautiful phrase—that the Freethinkers have "jumped back"—because, forsooth, they wished to have something to say in the matter! Such a sorry exhibition of meanness should be a warning to honest Freethinkers to have nothing to do with a gentleman whose only object appears to be to get a cheap advertisement—no matter at what sacrifice of honesty, candor, and truth!

EDITH E. M. VANGH.

ON TRUTH.

It is often possible to convince a man by reason that his views on a particular subject are erroneous, yet he clings tenaciously to the old creed. He dislikes parting with it. It has grown with him, and become almost part of his being, and he cannot shake it off without some great effort, and very often some great pain.

The most common subject in which this apathy to throw away the worn-out mental dress is shown is religion. People will hang on to religion after they have lost all real belief in its inherent truth, or even plausibility. The average intelligent man in the street to-day, doesn't believe that Joshua stopped the sun or that Jonah took that famous excursion, nor does he believe that his friend who goes to chapel on Sunday, while he goes to church, will be "damned" for ever—yet he is a "Christian." Perhaps after all this is not to be wondered at. The mass of mankind never runs—it crawls. Evolution on the mental plane is as slow as evolution on the physical plane, and enthusiasts should always remember that the world will never be converted in a day.

Take an ordinary Christian. You show him some of the absurd and illogical foundations of his creed. He replies, "Well, yes, perhaps so; but I have always believed it, and I can't bear to relinquish it." If he is a self-satisfied bigot, he may tell you to go away; he is afraid of your arguments. But such a man forgets that if his creed is false to-day 'twas false yesterday, and no amount of belief or profession of belief will make it true. For, after all, what is Truth? Merely the recognition by us of what is—of fact. A lie, as Carlyle says, is no-thing—a chimera. Hence, whether we recognise it or not, the fact remains. Suppose a man agrees that Christianity is false—well, the world will go on just the same as before; his belief will not affect the thing believed.

Why, then, should anyone be afraid to submit his opinions to any test? If his creed is false, then 'tis better to be rid of it; if it is true, if it is grounded on the solid granite of fact, then it will remain unshaken by the fiercest storm. Who is there, for instance, that would not listen to a man argue that the earth was flat, lest his belief in its rotundity be shaken? And why even hesitate to believe it flat if there is clear and overwhelming evidence for so believing? There is no infallibility on earth, and there is no position which can claim freedom from criticism. "Truth loves open dealing," says Shakespeare, and the creed which is afraid of discussion is insincere; for if it believed in itself, it would dare discussion, confident in its own strength.

It should never be forgotten that one should only follow a particular "cause" in so far as it is thought to be the expression of the higher cause of Truth. Many men forget Truth, and become so engrossed in the fortunes of their particular creed that they become blind to the fact that it is to Truth they primarily owe their allegiance.

If I were convinced to-morrow that Christianity was true (it is extremely unlikely), I should simply regret that I had been mistaken, and I should point out to those whom possibly I might have influenced where the fallacy lay in my previous position.

When one grasps the fact that Truth is above mere creeds and causes, that Truth by its very nature is immortal—for while you can kill Falsehood, you cannot kill Truth, which will live down a thousand and a thousand lies—then one never loses hope; one knows that it must ultimately triumph; for while creeds may come and creeds may go, Fact, and therefore Truth, remains—the same yesterday, to-day, for ever.

F. RYAN.

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

A TRUE STORY.

I WAS in Naples. After dinner, at the Hotel des Etrangers, I stepped into the smoking room to enjoy the fragrant weed. There were some dozen gentlemen similarly employed—one, a middle-aged American, was the only one talking. He was going to the Holy Land. It was evidently his first visit to Europe. He was describing all where he had been in the churches and what he had seen, and moralising on the superstition and idolatry of Roman Catholics—their worship of images, and other unsound criticisms usually indulged in by Protestants; and, moreover, he told us he was going to the Holy Land by the next steamer.

None of the other gentlemen having made any remark, I thought it a pity that he should do all the talking. So, after one of his remarks about the superstition of Roman Catholics, I said quietly: "Ah! it's easy to see other people's faults and weaknesses; but probably other people might see in some of your own beliefs things quite as ridiculous as you have been describing." "Oh, no," he said, "that's impossible; I don't believe in anything but what is rational: I don't believe in the nonsense of these poor people." I thought here is a fit subject; and as none of the others spoke, I said, "Well, you are going to the Holy Land to meander in the footsteps of Christ and the apostles?" "I am," he said with emphasis. "Well now," I said, "you believe that Christ was born of a virgin—now is that rational?" "Oh," he said, "I can prove that from the Bible." "Oh, my friend," I said, "that is not in question; it is the rationality of your beliefs." "Oh," he said, "if you don't take the Bible there is an end of it." I replied: "I would be sorry to pin my judgment to a literal reading of the Bible; for even high Christian authorities admit that it is not to be understood literally in some places; and philosophers go even farther than that." He was getting slack in retort, so I continued: "Now as you are a family man, I would like to bring this belief of your's home to every-day life. Suppose your wife were to say to you, 'My dear, I don't like the look of Mary; she is growing very stout lately,' you would reply, 'Dear me! do you say so? I shall speak to her,' and you had Mary into a private room, and you said, 'Well, Mary, your mother has some suspicions of you, and really I fear there appears ground for them. What have you been about?' Of course Mary knows too well what you are hinting at, so she only hangs her head and blushes. You say, 'Now, Mary, you must tell me all about it. Who is it?' 'Well, pa,' Mary would say, 'it was a ghost.' Would you believe her? He seemed too much dazed to reply. I saw the conversation was concluded, so I merely added, 'Yet you believe an extraordinary story told of a Jewish girl of two thousand years ago, and you wouldn't believe your own daughter.'" Burns said—

"O wad some pow'r the giftie gie us
To see ourselves as ithers see us,
It would frae mony a blunder free us
And foolish notion."

I hope the conversation sank into the minds of the other gentlemen, who only grinned, but said nothing. A.

IGNORANT BOOTHITES.

At Wellington the Salvation Army captured one of the enemy's outposts; in fact, a drunken sentinel, and, contrary to the usages of barbaric warfare, they treated him kindly and ingratiated themselves into his good graces, drunk and all as he was. After two officers had chatted with him and become friendly, one of them, a "kurnal," asked him if he ever read the Bible. He answered in the affirmative, and asked them if they ever cracked Bible conundrums, when they replied "Yes." "Well," said the "drunk," "I will join your army if you answer the following correctly." "All right" was the reply. Said he: "If Solomon was the son of David and Joab the son of Zeruah, what relation was Zeruah to Joab?" Simultaneously they answered, "Why, of course, father," when he assured them, on the word of a drunken man, they were all wrong. The "kurnal" said, "State that again, friend." He did, and there was another roar of laughter, and the two officers assured the drunk that, as sure as he was alive and drunk, Zeruah was Joab's daddy. "No, my lovely angels," said the boozed one, "how could that be, when Zeruah was Joab's mother? I won't go with you, you pair of frauds, because you don't read your Bible." The onlookers say they both sneaked away with curvature of the tail. Zeruah was a woman's name, which the Boothites didn't know.—*Liberator*.

PROCUL ESTE PROFANI!

"I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious."
—Acts xvii. 22.

Tell me no stale old story
By orthodoxy wove,
Of Yahveh and his glory,
Of Jesus and his love.
Tell me no Bible story,
Or please to draw it mild,
The filthy *lot* would sicken
The very youngest child.

Tell me no bloody story
Which takes so many in.
That wonderful redemption
Is, in this age, "too thin."
Tell me no wee(a)kly story,
And don't forget it soon,
That faith in early morning
Is often gone at noon.

Tell me no Sabbath story
With pulpit tones so suave,
Remember I've some reason
If parsons do not have.
Tell me no Talmage story,
No tale of Trinity,
Whose "three in one" palaver
Is worse than Greek to me.

Tell me no "next world" story,
Because I neither fear
Any Gehenna hoary
Nor long for heaven drear.
Therefore, when this world's glory
Has faded from mine eyes,
Out of me—hunky dory—
Don't hope to take a rise.

—*Secular Thought*.

ANDREW W. HERDMAN.

EASTER IN GREECE.

Mr. J. G. Frazer, author of *The Golden Bough*, says in *Folklore*: "Easter candles and colored Easter eggs were exhibited for sale in large quantities in the streets on Good Friday; and live lambs were to be seen, which the peasants had brought in from the country to sell. Each family, as a rule, buys a lamb, kills it and eats it on Easter Sunday. On Saturday, in various parts of Athens, I observed the gutters running with the blood of the lambs which had thus been killed. I am told that in some country districts the blood of the lamb is smeared on the threshold of the house. On the night of Good Friday the *sikones*, or holy pictures representing the dead Christ, were carried in solemn procession through the streets. During Easter Saturday and Easter Sunday firing went on almost continuously all over Athens. The object of the firing is said to be to kill Judas. Formerly effigies of Judas used to be burned at this season, but in Athens the custom is now forbidden by the government."

Mr. Ernest Gardner, director of the British School of Archaeology at Athens, gives the following account of the Easter ceremonies at Thebes, in Bœotia. "On Good Friday the sacred picture of the dead Christ was laid on a sort of bier or structure resembling a fourpost bed. The picture itself, the fourposts, and the overhanging canopy were covered with flowers and green leaves. Every person came up to the bier, kissed the sacred picture, and carried away a flower or a leaf from it, with the intention of keeping it until the Easter of the following year." Mr. Gardner's account strongly suggests that the real meaning of the spring festival is the continued life and resurrection of dead vegetation.

Said Louis XIV. after the battle of Ramillies, "Can it be possible that God has forgotten all I have done for him?"

The pious Louis XI. declared the Blessed Virgin, sovereigna of Boulogne, whereupon a monk dedicated a book to "Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and countess of Boulogne.

Henry IV. after his victories and his abjuration of Protestantism, deeming Paris well worth a mass, caused a cross to be erected in Rome, with the following inscription, "In hoc signo vinces." But he gave a further direction that the cross should be made out of the carriage of a cannon.

SCRIPTURAL PROOFS THAT PEOPLE POSSESS NO BRAINS.

THE word brain is nowhere to be found in scripture. The words heart, mind, spirit, and soul are not to be considered synonymous with what was unknown, any more than the seven candles of the Apocalypse mean seven electric arc lights. These four words were employed to express a sort of something located somewhere in close proximity to the human lungs, and it was universally supposed that out of this sort of something proceeded all such emotions as fear, love, joy, hope, grief, greed, hatred, good or evil thoughts or desires, knowledge, etc. As the sacred writers were all inspired by the Holy Ghost, we consider that brainless functionary is responsible for all the absurdities perpetrated by his historical, prophetic, poetical, evangelical, and epistolary catspaws.

We will content ourselves with citing about a dozen texts of scripture, all clearly indicative that neither the bibliographers nor the ghostly dictator himself had the least conception that there ever existed such an organisation as the human brain. Therefore people do not possess brains. "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad"; "Because thou hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; I have given thee a wise and understanding heart" (1 Kings iii. 9, 11, 12).

- "For as he thinketh in his heart."—Proverbs xxiii. 7.
"A wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment."—Ecclesiastes viii. 5.
"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked"—Jeremiah xvii. 9.
"And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord."—Jeremiah xxiv. 7.
"Blessed are the pure in heart."—Matt. v. 8.
"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."—Matt. vi. 21.
"For I am meek and lowly in heart."—Matt. xi. 29.
"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, false witness, blasphemies."—Matt. xv. 19.
"Why reason ye these things in your hearts."—Mark ii. 8.
"Oh fools and slow of heart to believe."—Luke xxiv. 25.
"For with the heart man believeth."—Romans x. 10.
"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared."—1 Cor. ii. 9.
"The word of God—is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."—Hebrews iv. 12.
The above fourteen examples, taken out of more than a hundred, evince most unmistakably the fact that the Bible writers had no notion whatever that the mental faculties were produced solely in and by the brain. The sympathetic palpitations of the heart in cases of mental embarrassment probably gave rise to the supposition that the heart was the seat of all physical and mental emotions. But Christians, who still maintain the scriptural theory of cordial intellect, are worthy only of the inane doctrines of the leader whose followers they have elected themselves to be. But people have discovered that they do possess brains, and this discovery is the dawn of mental freedom and the evening of superstitious humbug. P. W. BALDWIN.

HALL OF SCIENCE CHILDREN'S PARTY.

The committee have pleasure in stating that, after all expenses have been paid, there is a balance in hand of 18s. 8d., which will, as in former years, be handed to the Benevolent Fund of the N. S. S. The thanks of the committee are tendered to the donors, both of money and goods, whose generosity enabled them to provide an evening's entertainment to the little ones.

The following further subscriptions have been received: Per Mr. H. Courtney, 4s. 6d.; Stanley Jones, 2s.; H. Olifton, 2s.; Mrs. Cottrell, 3s. 9d.; Mr. A. Watkin, 1s. 6d.; Mr. A. Wheeler, 1s.; Mr. J. Fagan (H. H. Heles), 5s.; Mrs. Nicholson, 2s. 3d.; Mrs. Guest, 1s.; Mrs. Slough, 4d.; Mr. Lecky, 1s.; Mrs. Santen, 1s. R. FORDER Treasurer. E. POWNCEBY, Secretary.

If we were to glean from the later Jewish writings; from the beautiful aphorisms of other oriental nations, which we cannot fairly trace to Christian sources, and from the Platonic and Stoic philosophy their more striking precepts, we might find perhaps a counterpart to almost all the sayings of Jesus.—Dean Milman's "Hist. Christ," bk. i., c. iv., sec. 3.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President, G. W. FOOTE.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS:

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

MEMBERSHIP.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

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St Peter: "You can't come in." Dynamiter: "Give me a front seat and a harp or I'll wreck the place!"

"Johnnie, why did not the lions eat Daniel?" "'Cause they didn't know he was so good."

"What made Samson weak?" asked the Sunday-school teacher. "A home-made hair cut," promptly replied a boy in the front row."

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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, 36 Newington Green-road: 7, A. Horsman, "Have we been Deceived by the Bible?" (free).
 Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, H. Snell, "Lay it all on Jesus" (preceded by dramatic recital). Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic class. Good Friday, at 5.30, tea, entertainment, and dance (tickets 6d.).
 Bethnal Green — Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 6, tea; 7, music; 7.30, J. Rowney, "Holy Moses and Company"; 9, free concert. Friday, at 5.30, public tea (tickets 6d.); 7.30, free entertainment and dance.
 Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11.30, debating class, Mr. Hartmann, "Poverty"; 7.30, Dr. Allinson, "Number One, and how to keep him well."
 East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road: 8, C. J. Steinberg, "Miracles." Friday, at 6, tea and concert (tickets 10d.).
 Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, G. W. Foote, "Joseph Chamberlain: Past, Present, and Future" (free); 6.45, music; 7.15, G. W. Foote, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" (3d., 6d., and 1s.). Thursday, at 8, R. Forder, "Did God Die To-morrow?" (3d., 6d., and 1s.).
 Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, R. Forder, "God and Immortality—a Reply to Prof. G. Stokes."
 Walthamstow—Workman's Hall, High-street: Wednesday, at 8, debate between Mr. Hoarsman and C. Cohen on "Is the Bible a mere Human Production?"
 West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, W. H. Smith will lecture. Thursday, at 8, open debate.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, W. Heaford, "The Christian Hell."
 Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, H. Snell will lecture.
 Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, J. Rowney, "Huxley on Miracles"; 3.30, C. J. Steinberg, "Christ and Christianity."
 Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, W. Heaford, "Pious Bogies and Bogiemen."
 Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, W. Norrish, "The Devil: who is he, and what is he?"
 Kilburn—Salisbury-road (near Queen's Park Station): 3.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Bible God."
 Mile End Waste: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "What does the Bible Teach?"
 Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Christianity and Slavery."
 Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, J. Rowney, "The Resurrection."
 Tottenham (corner of West Green-road): 3.30, Lucretius Keen, "Christians and Christianity."
 Victoria Park (near the fountain): C. Cohen, 11.15, "The Fate of Christianity"; 3.15, "The Devil."
 Wood Green—Jolly Butchers-hill: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus and what did he Teach?"

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 7, Charles Watts, "Materialism and Spiritualism."
 Chatham—Old George Inn: 6.30, E. Calvert, "John Howard and Prison Reform."
 Derby—Mr. McGuinness's, 20 Newland-street: 7, Mr. McGuinness, "Humanity's Debt to Thomas Paine."
 Edinburgh—Labor Hall, 50 South Bridge: 2.30, reading circle for young members; 6.30, J. D. Crawford, M.A., "Evolution and Immortality."
 Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: noon, annual business meeting; 6.30, social re-union.
 Hull—Cobden Hall, 6 Story-street, Albion-street: 6.30, a special important meeting.
 Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 3, philosophy class, Mr. L. Small, "Bain's Mind and Body, chap. iv."; 7, Mr. Booth, "Faith and Reason."
 Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "Giordano Bruno: his Life and Works"; 3, "Theosophy and Modern Science"; 6.30, "The Deluge Stories" (3d. and 6d.). Monday, at 8, Sam Standring, "Modern Christianity" (front seats 3d., rest of hall free).
 Newcastle-on-Tyne — Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, fortnightly financial meeting; 7, G. Selkirk, "The Absence of Design in Nature." Monday, at 7.30, meeting in Bath Lane Hall on the Malthusian Prosecution — speakers: Dr. Drysdale, Miss Ada Campbell.
 Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, a meeting.
 Portsmouth — Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 7, Mr. Hore.
 Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 3, members' quarterly meeting; 5, tea; 7, social gathering.
 South Shields — Free Library Hall, Ocean-road: Miss Ada Campbell, 3, "Labor and Poverty"; 7, "Truth and Christianity."
 Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, W. R. Stan-sell will lecture.
 Wolverhampton—Coffee Tavern, Bilston-street: 7, committee meeting; 8, discussion, "Agnosticism or Atheism."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—17, Hall of Science; 24, Milton Hall.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—April 10, Kilburn; April 17 to May 1, Annual Tour. May to Sept., all mornings booked.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich. — April 10, morning, Bethnal Green; evening, Battersea; 24, morning, Victoria Park; evening, Camberwell. May 1, morning, Victoria Park; evening, Battersea.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E. —April 10, morning, Mile End; 17, morning, Westminster; evening, Woolwich; 24, morning, Hornsey. May 1, morning, Camberwell; 8, Clerkenwell; 15, morning, Westminster; 22, morning, Mile End. June 5, morning, Camberwell; 12, Clerkenwell; 19, morning, Hornsey. July 3, morning, Camberwell; 10, Clerkenwell; 17, morning, Westminster.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E. — April 10, morning and afternoon, Victoria Park; 17, morning, Mile End Waste; evening, Libra Hall; 24, afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Plaistow. May 1, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Finsbury Park; evening, Edmonton; 8, morning and afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Edmonton; 15, morning, Mile End Waste; afternoon, Regent's Park; evening, Edmonton; 22, morning, Lambeth; afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Leytonstone; 29, morning, Clerkenwell Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Edmonton.

SAM STANDRING, 2 Morton-street, C.-on-M., Manchester. — April 10, Wigan; 11, Manchester.

C. J. STEINBERG, 103 Mile End-road, E.—April 10, afternoon, Finsbury Park; evening, East London. May 15, June 19, and July 17, mornings, Lambeth.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—April 15 and 17, Chatham; 24, afternoon, Tottenham. May 1, morning, Clerkenwell Green; evening, Walthamstow; 8, Newcastle; 9, South Shields; 10, North Shields; 15, evening, Battersea; 22, morning, Old Pimlico Pier; 29, morning, Wood Green. June 5, Conference; 12, morning, Kingsland Green; 29, morning, Battersea. July 17, morning, Kingsland Green. Aug. 7, evening, Hammersmith; 28, morning, Lambeth.

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