

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

"The ignorant call him a heretic whom they cannot refute."  
—CAMPANELLA.

## WOMAN'S WORST FOE.

MR. GLADSTONE'S manifesto on the great Woman Question has provoked a widespread discussion. Conservatives and Liberals have had their say about it as party politicians. Some declare the Grand Old Man to be a regular fossil, or a perfect fool, on this subject; others declare him to be a sagacious statesman who would save the British Constitution, and Society itself, from an awful disaster. Both sides, in our opinion, are mistaken. Mr. Gladstone is not, and never was, a man of ideas. He has no mental originality. His instincts are all conservative, and his practical intelligence only enables him to see the necessity of questions that must be dealt with—because they are ripe, and almost rotten—by the Liberal party, of which he is the recognised and nearly autocratic leader.

But it is not our intention to enter upon a political controversy. We shall therefore pass by the political journals, and fix our attention upon one of Mr. Gladstone's religious critics. The Grand Old Man is taken to task by the *Methodist Times*—whose editor, our readers will recollect, is the Rev. Ananias Hughes—for "his most deplorable defect." What is that? our readers will ask. Is it his inability to comprehend the real points at issue between Sceptics and Bibliolators? Oh no. The *Methodist Times* is at one with him there. His most deplorable defect is, "his inability to grasp the Christian idea of woman, and to understand that in the Providence of God the hour to realise that ideal in the social development of Christendom has at last struck."

Not being ourselves in the secrets of Providence, and not having seen God's clock, we are quite unable to criticise the last clause of this sentence. But so far as the "Christian idea of woman" is concerned, we venture to say that Mr. Gladstone is *not* unable to grasp it. He *has* grasped it perfectly. According to the Bible—and what else can the Christian appeal to?—man is the lord of creation, and woman's business is to play second fiddle. This is the Bible theory from Genesis to Revelation, and on the whole the New Testament ideal of woman is worse than that of the Old Testament; at least, the picture of a wife in one of the books ascribed (of course wrongly) to Solomon is superior to anything we find ascribed to Jesus, Peter, James, Paul, or the other inspired teachers of the Christian dispensation.

The Bible is not the charter of woman's emancipation. It is the charter of her degradation. When the Devil opens a branch business on this planet he begins with Eve, and when Adam is caught eating apples he exclaims, "The woman tempted me." *She* made me do it! All the burden was laid upon *her*. And why? Because *men* wrote the story. If women sit on the next Bible Revision Committee they will touch up that old Rib Story, and get original sin

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fairly shared out between "the grand old gardener and his wife."

The Bible tells us how old Adam lived to be. We look for the figures on Eve's coffin-plate in vain. Why is this? She was only a woman, and it didn't matter. She ate the apple, bore her children, and sat in the background. She was only in the front to do mischief. We only know that she died at all because she is not living. When the Bible mentions a woman's age it is for a special reason. Sarah, for instance, was ninety when she gave birth to Isaac, and the statement of her age was required to show the nature of her achievement.

In the tenth commandment wives are lumped in with houses, oxen, and asses, as the husband's property, which no other man is to covet. Bible-reading women should be proud of their place in the catalogue.

The *Methodist Times* steers clear of such things. It sails straight for the New Testament, and makes wonderful discoveries there—"anthropophagi and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders," or things quite as surprising. It informs us that "St. Paul has explained, in striking and much misunderstood phraseology," that "the great mission of man is to elevate woman into an absolute equality with himself." Well now, that *is* news. If Paul meant anything like that, he has been *very* "much misunderstood." You will never find such a meaning in his words without the aid of *Methodist Times* spectacles. The "striking phraseology" of this misunderstood Apostle is not indicated, nor are we told why God inspired a man to be misunderstood for eighteen hundred years. Couldn't he have got misunderstood as easily (or understood either) without the aid of the Holy Ghost?

According to *our* reading of his Epistles, there never was a more cock-a-doodle-doo teacher than "Saint" Paul. He taught that the man was not made for the woman, but the woman for the man; not understanding that the unit of the human race is neither man nor woman, but man *and* woman—husband and wife, father and mother, joint heads of the family, which is the centre of civilisation. He taught that the man is the head of the woman, as Christ is the head of the Church; whereas the woman has a head of her own, and should think for herself. He taught that wives should obey their husbands in all things; for which reason the Church of England marriage-service makes the bride promise to love, honor, and *obey* the gentleman who is fool enough to expect it. He told woman to keep silence. He suffered not a woman to teach. His ideas were oriental; in fact, he may be described (to borrow Mr. Meredith's happy simile) as having left Port Seraglio without rounding Cape Turk. Not in *him* is woman's charter to be found.

This nineteenth century has been one of emancipation, though it is only completing the work of the eighteenth. The *Methodist Times* says it will be honored as the century in which "the subjection of woman was brought to an end under the influence of Jesus Christ." Such words are easily written—or

mouthed. But where is their justification? What teaching of Jesus can Mr. Hughes touch with his finger as favoring the "divine equality" of the sexes? We defy him to find a single text in support of his monstrous assertion.

The "influence" of Jesus Christ is too vague for discussion. It means anything or nothing, according to individual tastes and prepossessions, and even individual interests. Surely the "influence" of Jesus Christ is to be discovered, if at all, in the great traditions of the Christian Church, from the days of the Fathers who railed at woman and denounced her very beauty as a fatal snare, down to the days of the clergy who carped and sneered at John Stuart Mill's noble book on *The Subjection of Women*.

Mr. Gladstone "grasps" the Christian tradition about woman's nature, place, and duties, far better than Mr. Hughes; and in this matter, at least, the Liberal leader is to be congratulated on not playing at intellectual and moral hocus-pocus. Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet may be "an attempt to arrest the progress of Social Christianity"—whatever that is (the adjective is distracting! and the substantive itself is sufficiently obscure!)—but it essentially upholds the Christian tradition. Jesus, if we mistake not, would look approval, and Paul would cry "Well done!" And all the chief Christian teachers of subsequent ages would cry "Yes!" in chorus.

What does the Catholic Church offer woman? Suffering and silence. What does the Methodist Church offer her? She may visit the sick, deal out doles to the poor, and help the ministers as much as she pleases. But the pulpit is reserved for men. Theirs is the glory, the power, and the profit. Not so in the Freethought party. We recognise no distinction of sex in thought, in teaching, in work for humanity. Let the Churches—even the Methodist Church—follow us in this respect, and we shall cease sneering at their pretended friendship for the sex that Christianity has hitherto treated with constant and profound injustice. G. W. FOOTE.

#### TO MY BRITISH FRIENDS.

DEAR FOOTE,—Will you kindly permit me to say just this in the *Freethinker*? A London Secularist writes me to know if I can recommend him to remove to one of the Australian colonies. In sending this to the *Freethinker*, I speak to all the Freethought party in Great Britain and Ireland, and I trust the friend who writes me will pardon this method of reply.

I have seen Melbourne in states of what would be deemed prosperity—plenty of work for most, plenty of money, reckless and extravagant living, sports *ad nauseam*, and no sort of oversight or restraint upon the sharpers in Government. But I had not been long in this colony before I publicly declared that, in my opinion, the chief thing here being manufactured was poverty.

I cannot go into details; but must just say that, to my intense disappointment, there are growing up here, in most ample profusion and vigor, the very worst evils of the old country, and some others of purely native production.

At present Melbourne is in an indescribable condition, and things are really getting worse and worse, and must continue to do so for perhaps over a year longer. We are now facing the winter, and most thoughtful and earnest people hold their breath as they contemplate the prospect. I am no pessimist, but confess to some awful feelings and anticipations when my work gives me time to reflect upon the immediate future of these colonies.

For, unfortunately, Victoria is not alone in her depression. New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia are nearly as bad, and Tasmania and New Zealand little better. Honest, industrious men

are about with positive despair on their faces; hundreds, probably thousands, of men are idle and existing upon charity, men of all classes, masons, carpenters, printers, clerks, wharf-laborers, etc. It is pitiable. Government works have been stopped, though the Exchequer is by no means empty, and relief works are merely talked of but not started. If you hear of bloodshed and riot here next winter, you need feel no surprise. I am doing my best, as becomes a Secularist, to prevent all that. But it seems atrocious to preach peace and good behavior to hungry men, whose wives and families too are hungry.

I do not despair of these colonies in the long run; but at present I should be guilty of crime to encourage anyone to come and settle here. Indeed, I have felt that from my arrival until now; and am happy to reflect that I have not encouraged immigration to these colonies.

When the people here have learnt the grand lessons of making haste slowly, of self-reliance and independence, they will begin to lay the foundations of solid and permanent prosperity. Up till now, they are like youths who have never felt responsibility nor were ever short of pocket-money. Of course, this was inevitable in a young country.

There are honest and honorable people here; but our rulers and "uppers," our business men, etc., are as destitute of honor as Christians in their dealings with Infidels—unscrupulous adventurers engaged in a scramble. Public spirit is almost absent.

But things will improve. Do not, however, let any of our friends visit these regions just yet. I am not quite so badly off as poor Dives, when anxious that his brothers should not follow him to that fiery region; but I certainly should feel sad to see even an enemy come hither just now.

And now a word as to myself. I have had eight years of battle, storm, and tempest since leaving England—hurricane, cyclone, and blizzard would perhaps better express it. Never mind. I am about as well as ever, and as lively. I am not yet disgusted with the animal *Homo sapiens*; and I probably enjoy life as much as any man. I am as poor as ever, and don't expect to be rich. But I can work as well as ever; I eat well, sleep well, and rise quite fresh and workish every morning. That, perhaps, is remarkable for such a changeable climate—roasting you in the morning till 3 to 4 p.m., and then suddenly making you shiver with cold.

My difficulties in Melbourne just now resolve themselves mostly into want of money. Hundreds of our friends cannot afford to attend the lectures; but still we get along, and there are no signs of collapse—unless we should fall in a general bankruptcy of the colony.

I am delighted to see from the *Freethinker* and *National Reformer* that my friends in England are neither discouraged nor paralysed by the death of our mighty leader. I am proud to see you so worthily filling his post, and wish you the greatest success and honor in it.

I do wish, though, that one or two of your earnest co-workers were here to work with me (or independently). You, my friend, can form no conception what it is to work alone, with no one to meet you on your own level with whom you could hold consultation—on whose strop you could sharpen your own razor while performing a like kindness for him.

Still, on we go. There must be no slackening in the work. I expect none till I run down, like "my grandfather's clock," and then I shall rest as soundly as any.

I resume my letter after five or six hours' absence in the city. One of the most provoking experiences I have here arises from the fact that I cannot visit other colonies more. I imagine how you would feel confined to London—no lecturer in the country to

assist you; the *Freethinker* depending alone upon you, and a lecture expected of you every week by the same audience. That is how it is with me—no other lecturer within 1,200 or 1,300 miles.

When you have a thoroughly reliable man to spare, one that will not be frightened at work, not too anxious for money, but devoted to the cause we seek to advance, kindly let me know. We need such a man here; and I think we could find him work enough. But we don't want the gingerly man, we don't want the greedy man, or the unreliable. I wish "providence" or some other gentleman would send along just the man we need.

I do not know that I have anything further to say, except that, all things considered, I think we are making fair progress here. I am dearly hated by the parsons and their dupes and supporters, and slander precedes me wherever I go, and dogs my steps continually. A large proportion of the people here, especially in the country, are in the same stages of civilisation that prevailed in England forty or fifty years since. My name positively horrifies them, especially when garnished with holy slanders.

And yet probably no man has friends more devoted than I, friends of the most genuine types; and the probability is that I am getting more respected as the months fly, in spite of clerical scurrility, etc.

Let me, through the medium of the *Freethinker*, send heartiest greetings to all my dear old friends in England and Scotland. I sometimes indulge the hope that I may, at some unknown, some problematical date, visit the old land again. But I have no present prospect of doing so. In the meantime, accept my best wishes all round and the expression of my hope that our cause, the cause of humanity at large, may flourish and become consolidated in the old land, as well as here.

I am as I was, yours truly,  
JOS. SYMES.

Melbourne, Victoria, March 17, 1892.

#### LIFE AND DEATH.

How varied are the many associations recalled by the consideration of the conditions represented by the terms life and death! It reminds us of sunshine and clouds, freedom and serfdom, affection and persecution, friendship and isolation, wealth and poverty, success and disappointment, health and sickness, activity and repose. These indicate the mutations and changes of life until the hand of time produces a transformation, and then there are parting and sorrow, rest and decay, and finally cessation from all care and perplexity; still, in the words of Thomas Carlyle, each of us can say: "What went before and what will follow me I regard as two impenetrable curtains, which hang down at the two extremities of human life, and which no living man has yet drawn aside."

The diversities of life and the certainty of death are viewed from two very different standpoints by the Secularist and the Christian. For nearly two thousand years the Church has taught a radically false and wholly mischievous theory of existence; alleging that God has bestowed it on us as a trust or a pledge. No wonder, therefore, that men have, like the man in the parable, frequently buried their talents in the earth rather than wisely put them to the best uses for their own welfare and that of others. If the old theological hypothesis of human life were the true one, then living would indeed be a curse rather than a blessing. If the orthodox theory were correct; if we were environed by subtle, tempting devils; by lusts and passions knocking perpetually at the heart, demanding admission; and if the penalty of our yielding to these were to incur eternal damnation in hell—why, then, it were better ten thousand

times that we had never been born. Secularism discards such a degrading conception of existence, and proclaims a noble and dignified view of life. The Secularist admits that the world, dominated as it is with theological notions, is not entirely a paradise—a garden of pleasure, redolent of roses and all sweet scented flowers; but he believes that, with wise conduct, exalted ideas, and patient exertion; with the beauties of nature to cheer us, the treasures of science to enrich us, and the blessings of affection to comfort us, life can be made a source of love, freedom, peace, and happiness.

The orthodox view of life is indeed a gloomy one. What real happiness can be derived from the belief that the vast majority of the human race are to be "lost for ever"? That one of the sights of the few who are "saved" will be to witness the agonies of those in hell? That despite the fact that all mankind cannot believe "the one thing needful," there is no salvation except upon the assumption of uniformity of belief in the orthodox notion of the mission of Christ? No one, we are assured, can inherit heaven except through Jesus, and yet we are plainly told "No man can come unto me [Christ] except the Father draw him" (John vi. 44). This emphatic declaration deprives us of any choice in the matter, for if the Father were to draw us go we must. Let a person really believe that some were ordained to condemnation before they were born, and that a certain sin can never be forgiven either in this or in the next world (Mark iii), and then try to realise consolation from belief that these teachings are true. Surely it cannot inspire us with comfort to anticipate the task of having to give an account of every idle word we speak through life. What a dreary prospect the orthodox Christian must have before him. With such a person this "one thing needful"—which is to believe in "Christ and him crucified"—is of paramount importance, and should be considered before the study of virtue, honor, and the secular welfare of mankind. Without this faith it is said life is but an empty dream, and, as the Bible states, "all righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Thus we read in the articles of the Church of England: "Works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his spirit are not pleasant to God. . . . We doubt not but they have the nature of sin." And again: "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Christ by faith and not for our own works or deservings." Is not this degrading teaching a terrible libel on human nature; and is it not enough to rob life of its glory and to destroy the grandest hopes and sweetest joy of existence?

In the history of our race there is perhaps no page more truly horrible and revolting than that which narrates the conduct of Christian ascetics. They scourged themselves; they abstained from meats, they abandoned their families; they betook themselves, like wild beasts, to the caves and rocks of the desert; they shut themselves up by hundreds in strongly-walled monasteries; they lived on the bare, exposed tops of lofty pillars until, as with Simeon Stylites, their limbs were paralysed and the worms crept in and out of their loathsome sores and gaping wounds. One of them—this same Simeon—is said to have replaced a worm which had fallen from his body, exclaiming as he did so, "Take and eat that which God has provided for thee." Of course, the Protestant Christian will urge that these old ascetics totally misconceived the requirements of Christianity, and that they really sinned against God while also outraging human nature. But is this so? Did not Origen, the most learned (after Augustine) of the Christian Fathers, mutilate his person because he thought that Jesus Christ had in a manner sanctioned such an action in the words ascribed to him, "He that is able to receive it let him receive it." The plain truth is undeniable. Jesus distinctly held out a future

reward to the person who, for Christ's sake, should relinquish the comforts of this world. "There is no man," he said, "that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or wife, or children or lands for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time . . . and in the world to come eternal life."

Those Christians were at least logical, if they believed that "Whoever will save his life [that is to say, save his eternal life in heaven] shall lose it" [that is, shall lose his life on earth; or, in other words, sacrifice the world's happiness and comfort]; and this surely proves that the main, the chief purport of the Christian religion—ere it had been "explained away"—was to keep man subject to the belief that this life of ours upon earth was altogether a worthless one. Secularists accept no such barbarous teachings as are here set forth. They do not believe that we are merely human shuttlecocks, to be bandied about between God and the Devil—now inclining towards heaven, now sent spinning and whirling away in a straight line towards the gates of hell. Fortunately, science and reason have emancipated us from the rusty fetters and shackles of theological figments. At last we have learned to recognise that we are independent of all supernatural powers, if such there be; and with this recognition there have also come to us clearer, better, nobler, worthier notions respecting human life.

To the mind emancipated from old, worn-out superstitions, such a low, grovelling idea of existence is, or ought to be, an impossibility. What have we to despair of? As the old Roman poet says: "Nothing is to be despaired of: Teucer being our leader, and we being under his command." So, too, say we; nothing is to be despaired of so far as humanity is concerned now that we know that man is not a creature wholly corrupt and abominable, wholly incapable of good, prone to wickedness "as the sparks fly upward." On the contrary, we are possessed with the inspiriting conviction that within ourselves lie all the potencies that we need; that life is not a vale of tears, but a something capable of being made happy; that men and women have an opportunity to devote their energies to the task of removing evil and its causes out of their own individual ways, in the sure and certain hope of reaping a good harvest in their own proper persons, providing that good seed be previously sown.

Secularism seeks to realise the fulness and utility of life by making it an imperative duty devolving upon each person to do his and her best to rid the world of the evils of theology, and thus free society of many vices which now mar the happiness of the human race. The great drawback under theological influence is that society has not and does not adequately grapple with vice and criminality because it looks to a fictitious remedy to cure them and to render them impossible. If Secularism can open man's eyes to the fact that dependence upon alleged spiritual aid is a mistake, then society will begin to consider whether or not, by the exercise of human effort and material means, it cannot arrest the evils of life. Theology points men to the physician of souls; Secularism directs them to the scientific healer of bodies. Theology says evil is of divine predestination, and can only be conquered when the "elements shall melt with fervent heat." Secularism says that evil is too frequently the result of man's own wrongdoing in the past and in the present, and that it is a result which must cease when the acting causes are removed and altered. Theology says the poor shall never cease out of the land. Secularism says there need be but little poverty if men will learn self-reliance, act fairly and justly towards each other, and use wisely their own powers, morally, politically, and socially. Theology says, "Trust in God, in faith," and temporal blessings shall be added unto you

Secularism says: Trust only in mankind, in their potentialities. It is by earnest work alone that any blessings can be secured. Hercules does not take the cart out of the ditch; the driver himself must do that.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

SAMPSON ARNOLD MACKEY.  
(1764?—1846.)

WHEN the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes wrote of "The Atheist Shoemaker" there was an air of verisimilitude about the phrase to which he did not fail to call attention. The connection between leather and heterodoxy has frequently been adverted to, though its reason may not be easy to discover. I suppose it arises from shoemakers being a thinking class, their calling affording opportunities for thought and discussion.

Mystics and other heterodox Christians have frequently celebrated Jacob Bøhmen, the cobbler of Goerlitz, who, early in the seventeenth century, anticipated many of the views of Swedenborg, and whose profound speculations find a definite place in works on German philosophy. I wish to celebrate an English son of St. Crispin, whose work I think as notable even as that of Jacob Bøhmen, yet whose name and fame are unknown even in the little city where he lived and died, and where, both when compiling my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* and since, I have vainly inquired for further particulars than those I have there given.

I have before me a thickish volume of Mackey's tracts (all rare because issued by himself at Norwich), "From the Library of the late Charles Bradlaugh, M.P.," now the property of my friend Mr. Robert Forder. This volume and an article in *St. Crispin* (June 4, 1870) give nearly all that I can now discover concerning Sampson Arnold Mackey—a man remarkable as a Freethinker, and as an example of one who educated himself under difficulties to a standpoint in advance of many of the scientific men of his time. This is specially seen in his constant arguments for the great antiquity of the earth, its once gaseous condition, and for the remote antiquity of man, which he proved both from geology and from the evidence of ancient zodiacs.

The writer of the article referred to in *St. Crispin* gives a picture of the shoemaker-astronomer, with his workshop like a scientific studio or museum filled with diagrams, globes, orreries, etc.; and tells of his saying to his daughter, who was clipping papers, "O, you little puss; see what you have done! You've just clipped a constellation in two." This is the only glimpse I have been able to get of a man whose full-length portrait should adorn his native place.

Madame Blavatsky, who, in her *Secret Doctrine*, makes considerable use of the learning and speculations of Mackey, calls him in a note "the self-made Adept of Norwich" (vol. ii., p. 362). She cites him, moreover, without mention, as "an adept," and refers to his *Sphinxiad* as if it were a separate work from his *Mythological Astronomy*, whereas that is only the title of the plate to that work, whereby the learned Theosophist deluded myself, and set me on a vain hunt for a book I already knew. In another note (vol. ii., p. 431) she speaks of him as "a strangely intuitional symbolist and astronomer, a kind of a self-made adept of Norwich, who lived in the first quarter of this century." The last phrase seems to indicate that Madame Blavatsky was unaware that Mackey lived on till 1846. This self-made adept never pretended to any communications from Mahatmas, whether in Tibet or elsewhere, and the only learned person of whose acquaintance he boasted was H. J. Da Costa, the author of a *Sketch of the History of the Dionysian Artificers*. He was about the last person to suppose that power was to be

obtained by magic, Theosophy, or any other method than by thought and study.

One little fact about Mackey is sufficient to prove him a remarkable man. He constructed an orrery of pasteboard and leather. Think what that means. He not only studied the motions of the sun and planets with their respective satellites, but constructed a workable representation of them in the material he had at hand. The ingenuity of James Ferguson, the astronomer, in constructing a celestial globe while tending sheep has been celebrated in the *Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties*. Ferguson found patrons and became a member of the Royal Society. The equally creditable and wonderful feat of Mackey was disregarded, for in his native place he was contemned by the mass as an almost insane "infidel," and controversies which he had with sundry Christian ministers left him in bad odor with the pious.

One chance Mackey did have of entering "respectable" society, and he nobly refused it. In 1824 he published his *Mythological Astronomy of the Ancients*, in which he shows that many of the Greek fables and those of the Bible were astronomical symbols, and in particular that the heroes Adonis, Hiram Abif, Hercules, Samson, etc., referred to the sun. Certain Freemasons had the nous to perceive that the poor shoemaker-astronomer knew more of the mysteries of the Royal Arch than their craft had ever taught them. They solicited him to become a brother, and offered to pay all expenses. Mackey made several objections. He says: "The narrowness of my circumstances would not allow me to associate with men far above my rank in life." He objected, moreover, to the mystery and mummery of Freemasonry. "Another reason," he says, "as powerful as both the other, is, that I might not be at liberty under their exacted oaths of secrecy to promulgate my own Theory of Time, the kernels of whose fruit so exactly fit the shells which have been preserved and handed down through a long run of ages by the ancient Society of Masons, that all are convinced that the kernels which I have found grew in the shells which they have preserved." Mackey's refusal was not considered final, and it was even proposed to him "that a new order of Masonry should be established, and be called The Order of Urania, into which none should be admitted but those who could solve such questions as might be thought proper to be asked. Then, Brother Mackey, this science which you have brought to light would be preserved by a respectable body of men." "This," says our author, "was conclusive. I would not consent to bury my knowledge under their Tyler's sword. And thus I remain Deputy Grand Master of my own Lodge, the Lodge of Urania, into which all may be admitted, male and female, who possess genius and learning." "For," he asks further on, "why should not ladies be instructed in the science of the ancients?"\*

Mackey was also invited to come to London and set up a scientific bookstore, but this too he declined. He never desired anything better than to earn his living at his trade, while devoting his leisure to congenial studies. So he stuck to his last and continued to make and cobble shoes while criticising the views of Sir William Drummond, Sir R. Phillips, and Dupuis, or tackling the opposition to the science of sky-pilots, who knew nothing even of the sky. On one occasion, in 1832, he delivered a lecture at Dean-street, Soho, on Astronomy, in answer to Sir Richard Phillips, the opposer of the Newtonian theory, in which he shows the agreement of astronomy with what he calls, "its dependant science, geology." This lecture was published, edited by William Devonshire Saull, a gentleman who did much for the

cause of Freethought in those days. In his own city of Norwich, Mackey had several controversies with the men of God, who denied the evidence of the antiquity of the earth and of man.

One of the most curious of Mackey's little books is entitled *Urania's Key to the Revelation*, in which he explains many Bible incidents by the pictures of the astronomical constellations. As a motto to one of his pamphlets Mackey put the following quotation from Volney: "If at some future period some one endowed with talent unites to Astronomical Science the erudition of Antiquity too much separated from it, that man will instruct his age in many things, which the vanity of ours has no notion of." Mackey deserves all credit for his attempt to unite these two requisites for the solution of ancient myths, but it is evident to a scholar that he was deficient on the side of the erudition of antiquity. Not that he makes any more glaring blunders than Jacob Bryant or other classical scholars of his time. But, like too many of them, he was fond of etymologies without sufficient acquaintance with philology. Sometimes his etymologies are suggestive, as when he makes Hiram-Ab-If, Hiram, father of the serpent, and Maha-ben-ach, the great son of light, the Sun. But philology three-quarters of a century ago was a different thing from philology now.

In the last published work by Mackey, *The Age of Mental Emancipation*, written in reply to the famous Quaker J. J. Gurney, who sought to show the accordance of geology with natural and revealed religion, our author speaks of himself as "old and almost blind, and frequently without the common necessities of life." This little pamphlet of 28 pages is put as No. 1, but I find no sign that any No. 2 was ever issued. Whether in his extreme old age he had the support of any friends or had to resort to the too common refuge for aged workmen, the poorhouse, I have not discovered. But this is certain—to the last he must have retained the satisfaction of having contributed, in his day and generation, his little item to the great cause of truth, science and Freethought. It is a proud boast to be able to say, as Mackey truthfully could say, in his own words:

To the throne of Truth I add another prop,  
And to the Sea of Science one more drop.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### A TIMELY DISCLAIMER.

ACCORDING to the newspaper reports of the Field case, the prosecuting counsel, Mr. Geoghegan, attributed the prisoner's immorality to his study of Secular literature. It occurred to Mr. William Simons, a member of the Ball's Pond Branch of the National Secular Society, to write to Mr. Geoghegan, asking if the report were correct, and inviting him, if it were so, to point out any Secular book or pamphlet which countenanced, much less instigated, the prisoner's alleged offences. Mr. Simons received the following reply:

"Fountain-court, Temple, E.C.  
"April 27, 1892.

"DEAR SIR,—The report is also totally incorrect. I in no way attributed the prisoner's conduct to any Secular publication. During the trial it was mentioned that the prisoner had, if I mistake not, alluded to some passages in the *Elements of Social Science* as bearing on his case, but although I read the book through, I could discover nothing thereof. Pray acquit me of any such intolerance as your letter would indicate.—In great haste, faithfully yours,

"W. Simons.

"GERALD GEOGHEGAN."

Readers of the *Freethinker* should keep this copy of Mr. Geoghegan's letter for use against malicious Christians.

\* *Man's Best Friend; or, the Evil of Pious Frauds*. By S. A. Mackey, Princes-street, Norwich; 1826. This little book of 82 pp. has for motto, "He is man's best friend who undeceives him."—Voltaire.

† In his pamphlet on *The Original Design of the Ancient Zodiacal and Extra-Zodiacal Constellations*, 1834, he says, "I'll turn school-boy at 70."

## RELIGIOUS LIES.

HAVING learned by experience that meeting the Free-thinker face to face and proving him in error is not an easy task, and that often the result is the reverse of that desired by the defenders of Christianity, different tactics are adopted by these gentlemen in broadcloth. Unable to gain their point in straightforward argument, they resort to the methods of the hired assassin, and stab those they detest in the back when a favorable opportunity offers. Witness in proof of this the mendacious vilification the memory and character of Thomas Paine have been subjected to, with the result that the very mention of his name raises a shudder of dread in the popular mind. And although increasing efforts have been made, from Cobbett's time up to the present, to expose these slanders, it is only now—nearly a hundred years after Paine's death—that the truth is beginning to gain ground on the flood of religious falsehood. Nearly every prominent Freethinker, both living and dead, has been treated more or less in the same fashion, and these lies are continually being served up in obscure local periodicals belonging to religious bodies, so that, had the friends of truth a hundred eyes each, they could not even then see and destroy all these calumnies.

Two incidents in this connection may be of service to those anxious to help in the extermination of these malicious falsehoods. An early edition of the *Popular Encyclopædia*, published over forty years ago, in the article on Thomas Paine, repeats the stalest and most impudent of the lies told commonly of the author of the *Age of Reason*. A new edition of the same work is being published at present by Messrs. Blackie and Son, and the life of Paine in this latter edition does not contain a single one of the silly lies printed before. Surely comment on this is unnecessary. But this tardy justice unfortunately does not undo the mischief already done, and so the lies continue to be circulated by the ignorant and the prejudiced.

A very popular piece of fiction is—for the story is still alive, and has been told within the past few weeks about a living lady Freethinker—that Mr. Bradlaugh held a watch in his hand during a lecture and dared God to prove his almighty existence by striking the challenger dead inside five minutes. Mr. Bradlaugh's denial of the truth of this story does not always reach the pious circles where it is received as genuine and awful; so this good old religious lie crops up again and again in the most unexpected quarters and in spite of the unceasing vigilance of the few who are interested in substituting truth for misrepresentation. A friend recently gave me an extract from an old religious monthly which throws some light on the origin of this watch story. The *Orthodox Presbyterian* for November, 1830, says: "One of the French Atheists thought he proved the non-existence of a God by alleging that if he did exist he would take vengeance on him as being his greatest enemy." Here we have clearly the parent of the watch story; and, no doubt, a larger acquaintance with theologic literature would reveal the original ancestors of most of these religious lies.

The Methodists of Belfast run a Sunday Mission in St. George's Hall, and profess a great desire to improve the condition of the poor. One of the means adopted for this purpose is to attract a large number of poor, children to a Sunday service by means of buns given gratis, which is very good in its small—very small way; but when the poor laborers are goaded into resistance by the mercenariness of very Christian merchants and employers, neither Methodists, nor lack of method-ists, are ever by any chance found on the side of the men, or doing anything to help them to get a decent return for their work. The Methodist mind cannot see any means beyond Sunday buns for the relief of poverty. One of the clergymen who preach in St. George's Hall recently delivered a special review of the year's work; and among other good things for which he was particularly thankful, and patted himself complacently on the back, was the wholesale conversion of infidel families. "Looking," says the Rev. Grubb, "from the platform on a Sunday evening, he could see whole families, some of whom had been regular visitors to the Abercorn Rooms (an infidel centre) but never to the house of God, who were brought to St. George's Hall and converted there." Thus Mr. Grubb, who would probably consider it beneath his dignity to attend a meeting at the infidel centre and avail himself of the opportunities given to oppose infidelity, has no hesi-

tation in deliberately pretending that his exertions have brought back a host of Freethinkers to the fold of the Church. I have had exceptional opportunities of coming in contact with the visitors to the Abercorn Hall during the four years that the Ulster Branch of the N. S. S. met there, and I have not the slightest hesitation in denying the accuracy of the Rev. Grubb's assertion. If by "whole families" he means some casual visitor who dropped into the hall once or twice, and got converted, he may be right, but beyond that his statement is without the slightest foundation. If Mr. Grubb will come down to our present "infidel centre" any Sunday we will be happy to show him a roomful of people who have been Christians, and who will be very glad to see him, and will listen attentively to anything he has got to say, but who object most strongly to misrepresentation, and are determined to pursue to death every religious lie that has ever been preached or written.

W. M. KNOX.

## ACID DROPS.

Christianity is not happy in those who volunteer to champion it against "infidelity." Their steps seem to be dogged by a terrible fate. With rare exceptions they become morose, malicious, and reckless. Their controversial tactics become such as confirm the saying of Herder that "Christian veracity" deserves to rank with "Punic faith."

One of the vilest of these creatures is a person named Mitchell. Hearing of the projected debate between Mr. Charles Watts and the Rev. Dr. McCann at Birmingham, this fellow wrote a scurrilous letter to the local *Gazette*, in which he stated that the only object of "infidels" in entering into public debates with Christians was to obtain money. He also stated, as a positive fact, that "the infidel shared half" the profits of the recent Bristol debate. This falsehood was at once contradicted by Mr. Watts, who, in a letter to the *Gazette*, explained that the profits of the Bristol debate went to a local charity, and that the profits (£20) of his own recent debate with Dr. McCann at Sheffield were disposed of in the same way.

With respect to the Bristol debate, that this Mitchell could only have learned of in the *Freethinker*, of which we hear he is an assiduous student; with respect to this debate, we say, it was again and again announced in our columns that the profits were to be paid over to the Children's Hospital. When the accounts were made up we again announced that the Children's Hospital had benefited to the extent of £43. Mr. Logan and Mr. Foote derived no profit whatever from the debate. What Mr. Foote did derive from it was a bad cold, which laid him up, and cost him about £10 in loss of earnings and out of pocket expenses through breaking engagements.

Mr. Foote's last debate previous to the one with Mr. Logan was with the Rev. H. B. Chapman at Camberwell. Neither disputant took a single farthing. The £10 or so of profit (it was only one night's discussion) was shared between a local charity and the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.

So much for Mitchell, or rather for his published lies. The fellow himself—an ill-looking, illiterate boor—is beneath notice. He is only worth replying to when he crawls into the columns of a respectable newspaper.

The *Church Reformer* for May gives a manifesto for Labor Day, issued by the Council of the Guild of St. Matthew. It calls especially attention to the feast of Labor falling on "the day of the Apostles S. S. Philip and James"—which should suffice to make that Sunday outing quite a Christian institution. The Guild of St. Matthew must not forget that in advocating the claims of labor they set themselves in opposition to the whole practice of the Church, even though they quote apostolical authority.

What a lot of Jesuses there are to be sure. Here is *Freedom* speaking of "the revolutionary Anarchist of Nazareth." Curiously enough Mr. J. Vickers, the anti-anarchical author of *The Real Jesus*, treats him in the same light, and uses almost exactly the same expression.

Sabbatarianism is retiring towards the North Pole. Only at Aberdeen did the trade unions refuse to take part in the May Day labor festival because it was held on the Sabbath. But even Aberdeen is moving slowly, and in another dozen years Sabbatarianism may be expected to have receded to Wick and Thurso.

The Bootle magistrates have had the sense to dismiss the summonses issued against various persons for Sunday trading. At Worcester recently the solicitor for the defence pointed out that by the 5th and 6th Edward VI., cap. 3, which still remains on the Statute-book, all shops and works are required to be closed on saints' days and holy days, so that many of the magistrates on the Bench, together with one and all the tradesmen of Sabbatarian Worcester, are law-breakers every bit as bad as the Sunday traders whom they are persecuting.

Mr. Balfour moved the second reading of the Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill, and got it carried by an overwhelming majority. He was assisted by that devout churchman, the Grand Old Man. The Bill establishes an agency for unfrocking and expelling drunken and profligate clergymen, who are now free to damn themselves all the week and save other people's souls on Sunday. That such a Bill is required, and has to be introduced by the Government, shows that sky-pilots are no better than other folk, and that black sheep are as common in the fold of faith as they are outside it. For our part, we have never asserted that Freethinkers are more moral than religionists. We leave that sort of Pharisaism to them. Our contention is that religion is absolutely no security for morality—that the two things have really nothing to do with each other. There are good and bad men in all creeds precisely as there are outside them.

The *Record* takes pleasure in pointing out that, according to its own statistics, "Methodism is not advancing with the population." But is the Church advancing either? Not if we take the statistics of confirmations, which are steadily declining in number.

The number of confirmations in the Church of England is dwindling despite increase of population. In 1889 there were 225,000; in 1890, 197,000; and in 1891, only 186,000, the larger portion always being girls.

Some curious figures, which they who run may read, have been published by the German *Statistische Correspondence*. For every 1,000 persons professing Protestantism in 1871, there were in 1890, 1,190; and for every 1,000 Catholics in 1871, 1,240 in 1890. But for every 1,000 Atheists in 1871, there were in 1890, 14,355! That is to say, Freethought has increased sixty times more than religion.—"*Mont Blong*" in "*Clarion*."

Thomas Cooper, who is now in his eighty-eighth year, receives £200 from the Tory Government in recognition of his services to literature and morality. We do not begrudge him the money, although we cannot see that the "services" in question are remarkably eminent. Had Mr. Cooper remained a Freethinker, instead of turning a Christian, his deserts would never have excited the benevolence of a Tory Government.

What are the Christians about that they leave Mr. Cooper's last days to be eased by a Government grant? It seems to show a sad want of gratitude. For a whole generation they have boasted of him as a "converted infidel," and he has labored for them industriously. They should at any rate smooth his path to the grave, and not let it be done by national money, which comes out of the pockets of Atheists as well as Christians.

The Bishop of London says he wants £21,000 to put the Church schools of London on a good footing "to face the necessary competition between the Church schools and the Board schools," and in asking for the money he was obliged to admit that the Church schools are lagging behind.

The *Church Times* calls for support to "A Crusade Against Divorce" upon which it says the English Church Union has entered. It finds divorce growing alarmingly. From 1858 to 1889 no less than 6,381 decrees were made absolute. It hints, but gives no evidence, that morality is therefore declining, and that we are worse than they were in the days

when married people had to live a cat and dog life without any remedy, whatever the guilt of the person with whom they were linked.

What the *Church Times* does is to show the incompatibility of Church ideas with modern conditions. It says: "The law of God, which is 'from the beginning,' forbids divorce. The Church forbids it. The State allows it. The religious idea of marriage, through the action of the State, is in danger of becoming extinct." Since the religious idea of marriage is based on the notion of the woman being the chattel of the man, as much as his ox or his ass, or anything that is his, we think the sooner it becomes extinct the better.

The American ministers have also been giving their voices against divorce as contrary to the word of God. When they have found out a divine way to prevent all matrimonial mistakes, their talk may be worthy some attention.

An Australian matrimonial agency advertises that a clergyman is kept on the premises to perform the marriage ceremony. This scandalises the well-conducted, as offering dangerous facilities for bigamists, minors, and others, and it is hoped that government will inquire into the matter.—*Daily News*.

Dr. Page-Smith has been laughing at the notion that so many professional men are suffering from overwork. "Modern ailments" are not much due to "industry, energy, and intellectual activity," but are rather the "obvious results of habitual idleness and gluttony." Commenting upon this, the *Methodist Times*, which should speak with authority, states that it has "known of several cases where ministers have fondly persuaded themselves that they were prostrate with 'overwork,' whereas, as a matter of fact, the only part of their system which had been really overworked was their alimentary canal." "Great simplicity and moderation at table," it continues, "would have a surprising effect upon not a few ministers of religion who are now morbid with dyspepsia and with imaginary nervous disorders."

As a comment on Christian peace and goodwill, taxpayers should notice the estimate for this year's expenditure on the Army and Navy is £34,922,650.

Commenting on the recent "testimony to the Deity of Christ" passed by resolution at the Baptist Union, the *Church Times* says: "It is a mystery to us that any body of Christians can be content with a belief of so uncertain a character, that from time to time it should be necessary for them to reassert that they are Christians" and speaks "the helpless drifting of creedless Christians down a tide which they cannot stem." Yet the *C. T.* knows well enough that the spurious "Athenasian" creed is a dead letter among many of the clergy, and that all the creeds combined do not suffice to keep heresy out of the Church any more than out of the Baptist Union.

The Lord's hand is heavy again upon Japan, giving it a fresh earthquake and taking off 900 by deaths from small-pox. And the worst of it is, these heathen can never hope to meet him in the Christian heaven.

God is always more ready to give than we to pray. Yet though they are praying for rain in New South Wales, sheep are dying in large quantities for want of water.

Another instance of the efficacy of prayer is reported by the Helsingfors correspondent of the *Daily News*. A young woman treacherously murdered her husband, giving him strychnine instead of quinine. She told the court that temptations had been too strong for her notwithstanding her prayers to heaven to strengthen her to overcome them. The Christian prayer "Lead us not into temptation" would be most appropriately addressed to the Devil.

A correspondent of the *Church Times* (April 29) considers that the prominence now given in the new edition of Murray's *Palestine*, 1892, to a new site for Calvary at some distance from the traditional one "a most distressing fact." It must, indeed, be most distressing to clericals to find their traditional sacred places based on nothing better than fraud and imposture. And the worst of it is there is even less evidence for the new Calvary than for the old one.

"Peter Lombard," writing from the Holy Land to the *Church Times*, finds Nazareth uninteresting and dirty. A dead dog and a dead horse lay in an open sewer, where they had been a considerable time. A new house was being built at Nazareth, and he saw "women carrying heavy loads of stones, and, if I am not mistaken, working the trowel." If Jesus takes any concern in the affairs of earth, he would surely look to the improvement of matters in his native town.

"Peter Lombard" saw the "alleged house of Joseph and Mary"; "but I was not impressed with it, and do not believe that it was genuine." What we should like to see is some evidence that there was any town of Nazareth in the time ascribed to Jesus. We have a suspicion that "Jesus the Nazarene" has developed from Jesus the Nazarite—the Nazarites being an old sect of Jews given to asceticism and special taboos.

In the *Atlantic Monthly*, Mr. Severn, the artist, tells how when Mr. Gladstone was presented to the Pope in 1864 the conversation happened to turn on railways. The Pope declared he never would permit railways in his dominions, as he believed they would injure the health of his subjects. Mr. Gladstone, thinking the Pope was not serious, pressed him more closely, and the Pope then said seriously that he was "sure the English people were subject to consumption from passing through the air so rapidly in railways." "This," adds Mr. Severn, "Mr. Gladstone told me himself." Pío Nono may have been infallible in matters of religion, but he evidently had little acquaintance with physiology.

The Boston police are on the track of the Rev. J. Arthur Simpson, a Baptist preacher, otherwise Julian McArthur, who is wanted for horse theft and murder. He is said to have been powerful in prayer and energetic in baptismal regeneration by immersion.

—The *Rock* of April 22 gives circulation to the tale of a Bible colporteur in Spain, who says that a village priest said in his presence, "He who kills a Protestant commits no crime in the sight of God." There is ample evidence that this was the old doctrine of the Church, though it is generally carefully suppressed nowadays.

Parson Mitton, of Markgate, near Dunstable, is very anxious about the "soul's welfare" of one of his parishioners, a Mr. Beck, who has taken a seat in a Wesleyan chapel. The solicitous sky-pilot appears to think Mr. Beck has taken the first step on the road to hell, and his warning epistle is addressed to Mrs. Beck, who is implored not to lose her "Church privileges." Once upon a time, in a place called the Garden of Eden, the woman tempted her husband, after being tempted herself by the devil. At Markgate, however, the case is altered. It is the man who is tempted by the devil, and the woman is begged to save him from "a great sin."

The epitaph on a tombstone formerly in St. Thomas's Churchyard, Salisbury, ran:—

"Here lie three babies dead as nits  
God took them off in agie fits  
They was too good to live wi' we  
So he took 'em off to live wi' ee."

Christian Scientist: Have you ever tried the faith cure for your rheumatism? Christian Patient: Yes, I'm trying it now. I've got in my pocket the left hind foot of a graveyard rabbit that was killed in the dark of the moon, and I'm blamed if I don't think it's helping me.

"Dodo" in *Reynolds' Newspaper* quotes this quaint piece on Noah's Ark from Michael Drayton, and adds the following reflection:—

"And now the beasts are walking from the wood,  
As well of ravine, as that chew the cud.  
The king of beasts his fury doth suppress,  
And to the Ark leads down the lioness;  
The bull for his beloved mate doth low,  
And to the Ark brings on the fair-eyed cow, etc.

Is it not time that the teaching of all this rubbish should be stopped in schools receiving the State grants? Anyone who believes the Jewish story of the Creation, as told in the Bible, of the Flood, the Passage of the Red Sea, the Witch of Endor,

Jonah in the Whale's Belly, Balaam and his Ass, Daniel in the Lion's Den, and a thousand other absurdities, is fitter for a lunatic asylum than for the office of teacher."

The *Church Review* says the working man has too many doctors. "There is the Socialist with his red pill; the Atheist with his black draught; the Agitator with his effervescent mixture; the Anarchist with his violent purgative; and others, too numerous to mention." Among these, we should say, were the Churchmen with their sacramental soporifics; and the revivalists with their blood pills.

There is a certain Vicar of Stanton who is very pompous. One day he saw a laborer who did not put his hand to his hat, so he thus accosted him. "My man, do you know who I am?" "No, sir, replied the man." "Well, I am the Vicar of Stanton." "Well," said the man, "you have got a good job, and if I were you I should keep it."

When God came to earth in the days of old,  
Christ spoke with the Jewish doctors, we're told;  
But back to the earth were he once more enticed,  
No Christian doctor would speak to Christ.

Catholics and Protestants have been fighting as to who have the best rights to christianise the natives of Uganda. The natives are likely to come badly off whatever other result may come from militant Christianity.

The *Daily Telegraph* recently told a good tale of African natives who had received many gifts of blankets, etc., from the missionary. The supply from home failing, the chief called on the man of God to inquire the reason. It was explained that blankets became expensive, whereupon the chief gave the ultimatum—"No more blankets, no mere hallelujahs."

The Wesleyan Missionary Society reports a deficit of £4,068. But a deficit is considered good business by those who believe "Owe no man anything" to be a divine command. It gives point to the appeal for more subscriptions.

The Church Missionary Society, despite its exposure by Canon Taylor, boasts an income of £269,377. This sum might be put to far better use at home than in giving the heathen abroad a better chance of damnation by rejecting the gospel.

#### FLO'S LETTER TO GOD.

"Dear God,—The baby you brought us  
Is awful nice and sweet,  
But 'cause you forgot his toofles  
The poor little thing can't eat.  
That's why I'm writing this letter  
A-purpose to let you know.  
Please come and finish the baby.  
Yours truly, Little Flo.

"General" Booth had occasion the other day to register a trade mark. This is how the entry appears in the registration form: "158,697. William Booth, trading as the Salvation Army, 101 Queen Victoria-street, London, E.C., merchant. Paper (except paper hangings), stationery, printing, and book-binding." The description is amusing and instructive.—*Clarion*.

The *Clarion* man has been interviewing Mr. Baker, the Secretary of the National Union of Firewood Cutters. Mr. Baker complains that the Salvation Army and the Church Army have entirely ruined their business. "What chance," asks Mr. Baker, "has our poor little union against a hundred thousand pound capitalist, who saves one profit in purchasing by getting a ship load of timber from Sweden; and sweats his labor by making each member of the submerged tenth—who cannot pay 1d. for the luxury of sitting all night on a bench in his doss-house—chop four-penn'orth of wood?" Mr. Baker knows this is done, for he has been to the shelter to see for himself.

#### OBITUARY.

We regret to notice in the *Liberator* of March 26 an announcement of the death of Matilda, the wife of our old friend Mr. Joseph Symes, to whom we tender our sincere sympathy.



MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, May 8, St. Anne's Hall, Donegall-street, Belfast: 11.30, "Who Wrote the Bible?"; 3, "Why I am an Atheist"; 7, "The Way to Heaven."

Tuesday, May 10, Oddfellows' Hall Buildings, Crooked-lane, Aberdeen: at 8, "Why I Cannot be a Christian." Wednesday at 8, "Is there a God?"

May 15, Edinburgh; 22 and 29, Hall of Science.  
June 5, N. S. S. Conference; 19, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—May 8 (m. and e.), Hall of Science; 15 and 22, Birmingham; 17 and 31, debate at Birmingham; 29, Liverpool. June 5, N. S. S. Conference; 14, debate with Dr. McCann; 19, Bristol; 26, Birmingham. July 3 and 10, Hall of Science; 17, Birmingham; 24, South Shields; 31, Newcastle. August 7 and 14, Birmingham; 21, Manchester; 28, Sheffield. September 4 and 11, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

H. E. DAUNCEY.—Would it not be better to get your own side to be a little more gentlemanly towards Freethinkers? Remember the text—Physician heal thyself.

T. WOOTWELL.—A somewhat similar story has already appeared.

H. R. CLIFTON.—Your notice did not appear last week in consequence of your envelope being addressed "63 Fleet-street." It reached us after going to press. Please note our proper address, 14 Clerkenwell-green.

J. TAYLOR.—See Mr. Gough's disclaimer, printed in another column. Newspaper reporters like to spice up their narratives, and Christians have little scruple in defaming Freethinkers.

H. PASKEY.—The Bible is far more modern than the historical monuments of Egypt and Assyria, and much of it even later than the Greek historian Herodotus.

W. SIMONS.—You were happily inspired in writing to Mr. Gough, whose reply we publish in another column. Many thanks.

S. HULME.—You probably refer to Byron's lines on the death of his Newfoundland dog. You will find it in any edition of his poems.

T. MAY.—It does not appear to require further notice.

J. N. SPRAGUE.—Order passed to Mr. Forder. There is only one way of defeating Sunday prosecutions, namely, tiring out the prosecutors.

A. B. HITHERSAY.—Shall appear in our next.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Next week. Always pleased to see your handwriting.

E. SMEDLEY.—Professor Draper gives "not less than a quarter of a million years" as the time elapsed since the last glacial epoch, and man's existence antedated that. Civilisation existed in Egypt before the supposed creation of Adam. Lyell's *Antiquity of Man* is a standard work. We cannot go into all the details in this column. It would require a volume.

OWING to Mr. Foote's absence from London much correspondence stands over till next week, with a good deal of matter falling under the head of "Sugar Plums."

LECTURE NOTICES not marked as such on envelope have been forwarded to Mr. Foote.

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—Twentieth Century—Clarion—Church Reformer—Modern Thought—Moralist—Morpeth Herald—Suffolk Chronicle—Reading Observer—Denver News—Library Review—Bristol Mercury.

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.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

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, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

It being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL FUND.

TO THE SUBSCRIBERS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

This Fund was originated, as you will remember, by the Executive of the National Secular Society, whose officers and members collected it, and under whose control it was always intended to remain.

In view of the present situation of affairs, which we assume to be more or less familiar to all of you, since it has been sufficiently discussed in the Freethought journals, the above Executive has passed the following resolution:—

"The Executive of the National Secular Society, considering that a number of subscribers to the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund are anxious that their subscriptions should not be indefinitely locked up, resolves that the said subscribers shall be allowed to decide for themselves, and as far as possible individually, whether their subscriptions shall be invested by the N. S. S. in the National Secular Hall Society, or held over by the N. S. S. until the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company puts forward a practical proposal for carrying out its object; and this Executive further resolves to leave the Trustees of the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund to ascertain and give effect to the wishes of the subscribers."

We therefore, being the three trustees in whose joint names the Fund is banked, now invite you to tell us how we are to deal with your subscriptions. Our addresses are subjoined, and a letter to either of us will suffice. The earlier we receive your directions the better, as we are anxious to relieve ourselves of this responsibility before the date of the National Secular Society's Conference.

According to the terms of the above resolution, the total amount of subscriptions intended for the Hall of Science scheme will be immediately invested in shares in the National Secular Hall Society (Limited), the shares being held by the National Secular Society, either directly or through trustees. Subscriptions as to which we receive no instructions will be dealt with by the Executive. The remainder of the Fund will continue on deposit at the Birkbeck Bank.

P.S.—Please say plainly: "I wish my subscription to go to the Hall of Science Scheme." Or,

"I wish my subscription to be still held over on the terms of the resolution."

G. W. FOOTE, 14 Clerkenwell Green, E.C.

GEO. ANDERSON, 35A Great George-street, S.W.

W. H. REYNOLDS, Camplin House, New Cross, S.E.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote had first-rate meetings on Sunday at Glasgow, and a most enthusiastic reception. The morning audience was very good, the afternoon still better, and people were turned away from the doors in the evening. Next time Mr. Foote visits Glasgow (it will probably be in the autumn) a larger hall will be obtained for his lectures.

Glasgow used to be a great place for discussion, and there was a little after each of Mr. Foote's lectures on Sunday, but it was not of the highest character. One noisy opponent, in the afternoon, after several times interrupting the lecture, did his best in a five minutes' speech to cause an uproar. A more agreeable feature of the proceedings was a good collection on behalf of the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.

The *Freethinker* has an excellent and improving circulation in Glasgow. Old Mr. Ferguson, who was prosecuted a few years ago for selling this "blasphemous" journal, disposes of 180 copies weekly in his little shop. Of course, there are other newsagents who sell it in various parts of the city.

The Glasgow Branch's annual report, which is just issued, is a very wholesome document. There has been a material improvement in the size and character of the meetings and a "substantial accession to the roll of members." Another gratifying item is a balance of £34 2s. 7d. on the right side of the account. We congratulate the Glasgow Branch, and we hope to see it represented at the Newcastle Conference.

On another page we print a long, but very welcome, letter from our gallant old friend Joseph Symes, who is fighting for Freethought like an Achilles in Australia. We have not time at present to send our far-off colleague a letter, though we hope to do so shortly; but if this meets his eye, as we presume it will, he may take our assurance that he still occupies a warm corner in the hearts of hundreds of English Freethinkers. Out of sight is not always out of mind. It is not in Joseph Symes's case. And if ever he revisits his native land he will have a hearty reception.

We hear that Mr. Symes is likely to stand as candidate for the constituency of Colingwood at the coming general election in Victoria.

Branches of the National Secular Society, and also individual members, are hereby reminded that notices of motions for the Annual Conference *agenda* must be sent in to the general secretary by next Saturday (May 14). Branches should lose no time in appointing their delegates. We earnestly hope that every Branch that is not absolutely too straightened to bear the expense will send a delegate to Newcastle. We expressly appeal to the Scottish Secularists, who have not been represented at N.S.S. Conferences for some years, to send *bonâ fide* delegates from their own Societies. Newcastle is near to them, and it will do them no harm to cross the border and clasp hands with their English brethren.

Despite the great counter attraction of the "May Day Demonstration" in London last Sunday, Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience at the Hall of Science in the evening. The various points in his lecture on "Free Will and Responsibility" were received most enthusiastically. After the lecture Mr. Watts made a special appeal on behalf of the National Secular Hall Society, which resulted, we are glad to hear, in many of the audience taking shares. Mr. Watts lectures again to-day (Sunday, May 8), morning and evening, at the Hall of Science.

We see that Mr. Charles Watts is devoting a portion of his time to social and political subjects. He has recently been lecturing for the Birmingham Liberal Association, and the local press reports that his speeches were "able and much applauded."

Mr. Coppock, who is lecturing for the first time on Thursday evening at the Hall of Science, is a well qualified scientist, and we trust he will have a good reception. His subject is the "Reincarnation of Stars."

In reply to a communication from Mr. J. Samson, the Liberal candidate for North Hackney, sent the following letter:—"2 Tanfield Court, Temple, Sept. 1, 1891,—My dear Sir,—I have pleasure in replying to your favor of the 28th ult. If elected for North Hackney, I should (in case such a measure were introduced) support the repeal of what I understand to be the Blasphemy Acts, which, in strictness, appear to forbid controversy of any kind on many important religious topics. These acts are, of course, in many cases, mere dead letters and their repeal would and could so far be objectionable to no one. As far as their repeal would go to support the principle that the state should have no concern with the private religious views of any citizen I should support such repeal.—Faithfully yours, THOMAS A. MEATES." Mr. Meates reply seems a very satisfactory one, and it may induce Freethinkers in that constituency to record their votes in his favor.

A new society of Secularists was inaugurated at Forest Gate last Sunday, May 1. It is to be called "The South Essex Secular Society," and its primary object is to "protect and forward the interests of Secularists in local and parliamentary elections." The subscription is one guinea per annum, and Mr. E. Anderson is the secretary.

During the month Mr. Cohen is giving a series of free Thursday evening lectures at the Workmen's Hall, High-street, Walthamstow, on the relation of Christianity to Civilisation, Missions, Slavery and Women.

Huddersfield needs waking up, and we are pleased to see that Mr. Henry Smith, of Farsley, is giving some attention to the work. He lectures to-day at the Labor Club, Early Fold,

Slaitwhaite, both in the afternoon at 2.30 and evening at 6.30. We hope the lectures will be well attended, for what Mr. Smith has to say is sure to be worth hearing.

The annual meeting of the Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S. will be held on Friday, the 6th, at 8 p.m., at the Oddfellows' Hall. The first of a series of summer excursions will be held this day. The President will act as *cicerone*, and point out items of scientific interest.

Mr. Joseph Brown, secretary of the North-Eastern Secular Federation, reports the following subscriptions:—Executive of N.S.S., £5; for Conference Guarantee Fund, Cramlington Branch, 10s.

Mr. Brown reports a most successful tour by Mr. C. J. Hunt, who has lectured at Morpeth, Bedlington, Ashington, Blyth, Spennymoor, Crook, Ebchester, Chester-le-Street, Newcastle, and Sunderland. In the course of his tour he had two debates, before very large audiences, with Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh; and one with the Rev. W. Bromley, one of the ablest representatives of Christianity in the district. Mr. Hunt acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his supporters, who do not scruple to boast of his victories. The *Morpeth Herald* gives a fair account of Mr. Hunt's work in the district.

Mr. Hunt will be followed by Mr. Stanley Jones, who lectures at Chester-le-Street on May 7, Newcastle on Sunday, North Shields on Monday, and Houghton on Tuesday. This is Mr. Jones's first visit to that part of the country, and we trust he will have a good reception.

*Modern Thought*, of Bombay, reflects credit on Mr. Balfour, the enterprising editor. The number before us reprints Mr. Watts's paper on "The Origin, Nature and Destiny of Man," and Mr. Wheeler's on "A Fi-hy Faith," from our columns. It gives in addition a variety of interesting matter.

We regret to notice that the ex-Rev. Hugh O. Pentecost is ceasing his connection with the *Twentieth Century*. The paper has been bought by the Humboldt Library Publishing Company, and will in future be under the joint editorship of Mr. J. Fitzgerald and Mr. J. W. Sullivan, the last of whom has acted as sub-editor for some eighteen months.

It is nineteen years this 8th of May since John Stuart Mill died at Avignon. The progress made in that time may be tested by the obituary notice which appeared in the *Church Herald*, and which plainly stated that he had gone to the place in which he disbelieved and to which he had led many. Even the *Christian Herald* would hardly be capable of this now.

Captain Robert O. Adams, president of the Canadian Secular Society, is the son of a very conservative divine, the Rev. Nehemiah Adams, author of a *South Side View of Chattel Slavery*, in which he defended slavery as a Bible-sanctioned, divine institution.

*Open Court* has a noticeable article on German politics by the distinguished scientist and Freethinker, Dr. Ernest Hæckel. He says that, though they are not yet out of the wood, he does not believe that the counter revolution will ever sweep through the whole fatherland. Prussia is not Germany.

Alluding to the denunciation of the clerical party, Prof. Hæckel says: "We should feel disconsolate over the loss of our temporal and eternal salvation if we had not fortunately come into good company. Goethe, Lessing, Kant, Spinoza, Shakespeare, Newton, Humboldt, Darwin, Frederick the Second of the Hohenzollerns, and Frederick the Second of the Hohenstauffens, they all roast eternally in the hell of hopeless Atheism."

In the last number before us the *Boston Investigator* enters upon its sixty-second year volume. 'Tis a goodly age for a Freethought paper and a guarantee that our veteran contemporary has met the wants of its age.

The *Moralist*, now published at Byron, Illinois, gives a portrait of Otto Wettstein, a thoroughgoing Atheist, who is a constant contributor to the American Freethought journals.

RATIONALISM LENGTHENING OUR LIVES.

(From the "Truthseeker," New York.)

[CONCLUDED.]

INTELLIGENT house-drainage, by properly constructed plumbing, has done its part in reducing the death-rate. Boston, at a time when her water-supply and sewers were satisfactory, instituted a reform in this point which brought down her rate of mortality from 28 to 13. Croydon, England, in the same way produced a falling-off from 28 to 13. Improved construction of tenement-houses has vastly lowered the mortality of every city. In the one-room mud hovels of Ireland the average life-term was only twenty-six and a half years, but in the model homes for London laborers lately built it is fifty and over. Houses in the worst localities of Glasgow were found to produce a death-rate of 42 in the thousand, but sanitation has reduced it to 28. In similar neighborhoods in London the rate has been lowered to 17 or 18.

By improved methods of mining coal, and equally improved means of transporting it, our houses are kept warm equably and continuously.

Just what benefit we have received from abandoning burial of the dead within the precincts of cities is not known. Consideration of the porosity of the soil, and the deadliness of putrefied matter, and especially of the newly discovered fact that many diseases are propagated by bacteria—consideration of these things leads one to estimate the immunity derived as considerable.

When we come now to the medical means of combating disease which we have lately obtained, we find them too numerous to recount. Antiseptic surgery, or surgery accompanied by the use of chemicals excluding blood-poisoning, has alone saved countless lives. There die now but a moderate percentage of the patients who formerly perished under surgical operations. Myriad lives are saved in our handsomely appointed hospitals which would have been lost in the wretched and unenlightened homes of the poor. The opportunities for studying disease in these institutions are such as to have given physicians an understanding of and control over many maladies. Contagious diseases as soon as discovered in any neighborhood are limited by isolation and disinfection. Vaccination, if we accept what its defenders say of it against the anti-vaccinationists, has saved even more lives than any of the foregoing processes. Macaulay says that in London two centuries ago an unpitted face was the exception, while the numbers made blind, deaf, or unsightly were pitiful to think of. But in that city in 1890 there was but one death from small-pox.

One cause of our lengthened lives is the decrease in the consumption of alcoholic liquors. Notwithstanding the declarations of certain exaggerators to the contrary, intemperance is on the decline, and has been for nearly a century. Public opinion is setting in more and more strongly against it. The "three-bottle," "two-bottle," and "one-bottle" men of former England have gone out of fashion. Three or four generations ago gentlemen at a banquet were thought disgraced if they did not get drunk; now they may lose the title of gentleman if they do. One important means of weaning the working men from the saloon has been Sunday opening of art galleries and museums.

The saving of lives through the lighting of our streets and a well-organized police deserves notice. "When the evening closed in," says the historian Macaulay in describing old time England, "the difficulty and danger of walking about London became serious indeed. The garret windows were opened, and pails were emptied, with little regard to those who were passing below. Falls, bruises and broken bones were of constant occurrence. For, till the last year of the reign of Charles II., most of the streets were left in profound darkness. Thieves and robbers plied their trade with impunity; yet they were hardly so terrible to peaceable citizens as another class of ruffians. It was a favorite amusement of dissolute young gentlemen to swagger at night about the town, breaking windows, upsetting sedans, beating quiet men, and offering rude caresses to pretty women. Several dynasties of these tyrants had, since the Restoration, domineered over the streets. The Muns and Tityre Tus had given place to the Hectors, and the Hectors had been recently succeeded by the Scourers. At a later period arose the Nicker, the Hawcubite, and the yet more dreaded name of Mohawk. The machinery for keeping the peace was utterly contemptible. There was an Act of Common Council which

provided that more than a thousand watchmen should be constantly on the alert in the city, from sunset to sunrise, and that every inhabitant should take his turn of duty. But this act was negligently executed. Few of those who were summoned left their homes; and those few generally found it more agreeable to tiddle in alehouses than to pace the streets. . . . The street which now affords to the artisan, during the whole night, a secure, a convenient, and a brilliantly lighted walk was, a hundred and sixty years ago, so dark after sunset that he would not have been able to see his hand; so ill paved that he would have run constant risk of breaking his neck, and so ill watched that he would have been in imminent danger of being knocked down and plundered of his small earnings." John Graunt, a writer of Queen Elizabeth's time, is proud that in London not more than one in two thousand was murdered yearly. At this rate the murders now would be 2,500 for the whole city. But there are, on the average, only 12 for the whole population—which is five million, equal to that of all England in Elizabeth's day.

Remodelled ventilation and plumbing in our schools preserve numberless children every year.

The army and the navy afford us valuable opportunities of demonstrating the value of our modern hygiene and medicine. In 1858, says a writer in the *Popular Science Monthly*, "public attention was directed to what had been called the 'British Juggernaut in India.' It was shown that without war or famine a regiment of a thousand men dissolved away at the rate of 125 a year, so that in eight years not a man of the original thousand remained. A sanitary commission was appointed, and they investigated among other things a series of distinguished preventive sanitary works in the town of Boufaric, in Algeria. It was found that the death rates had been reduced among the military from 80 to 13 in the thousand; while the children, of whom it had been believed, as in India, that a third generation could not be raised on account of the deadly nature of the climate, were as healthy as those in the most healthy towns of France. Of course, sanitation under military authority can be very efficiently carried out, and every fruitful idea, whether from France or America, was acted on, with the result of reducing the death-rate for the decade preceding 1878 to less than twenty in the Indian army and twelve in the home army. In the entire British army—home, colonial, and Indian—the saving of lives in the decade under consideration was more than forty thousand."

In the navy the production of pure distilled water has done much. Dampness, one of man's deadliest foes, is when aggravated by heat far worse, and the damp heat between decks in the tropics has ravaged crews till lately; when, by a less frequent washing down of decks, and a drying of the vessel with artificial heat, the old-time fevers have been made comparatively rare. When the first emigrant ships went to Australia one-third of the passengers died; but upon sanitarians forcing an alteration of the terms so that the shippers were paid only for the passengers landed alive, the death-rate was brought below that of the same classes ashore.

To conclude, we repeat that all these benefits have been produced by the superseding of ecclesiasticism by secularism, of Christianity by Infidelity, of theology by science, of other-worldliness by this worldliness. The Christian Church retarded these advances as long as it had the power. The clergy did this partly out of belief that investigations into nature were of Satan and perilous, and partly out of trade jealousy of any other class and method than their own. They persecuted investigators, execrated their researches, turned public attention the opposite way, and taught cure by supernatural means and foisted off pretended remedies of prayer, relic, pilgrimage and miracle. They not only forbid the curing of diseases, but took means to produce them. They preached that the neglect of the mortal body contributed to the advancement of the immortal soul—that God loved best him who treated his sinful body worst—and under this belief multitudes eschewed bathing, fasted and weakened their constitutions, and stifled in unventilated cells. Scrofula and consumption reached a pitch of devastating power which we are but now beginning to abate. In the ages when the clergy ruled, the human life was miserably short; as their power has diminished our lives have lengthened to the extent recounted; what life-term we may attain under the all-conferring reign of Science need not be conjectured here, but we assuredly may look

to the future with hope. Christianity promised, but failed to give, life—immortal life. Science promised, and has given, life. Immortal life? This is much. Some, and to be sure, reply: Yes, Science can give us immortal life; what she has done to some degree she can do more; to her nothing is impossible. But others doubt this; logicians affirm that finities, however lengthened, are still no infinities, and physicists also pronounce antagonistic axioms. Be that as it may, the human race can at least, as we have said, look to the future with warmest encouragement and brightest hope.

#### THE CROSS AND THE CRUCIFIX.

As a history of the symbol of the cross would be a large item in the history of religion, I may perhaps be pardoned for reverting to this subject. The striking and most suggestive thing to any student of the history of the symbol is that, whereas the cross is long pre-Christian, the crucifix never appears in Christian symbolism until at earliest the seventh century. Even this late date is disputed by Mr. E. Johnson in his *Rise of Christendom*. In the catacombs and other tombs we find the Buddhist and Gnostic swastika and the X and P, which I have shown is neither a monogram of Chrestos, Chris, nor Christ, being found in reversed and other forms, and being traceable to the Egyptian *Ru*. This sign, moreover, is certainly pre-Christian, being found on coins of Herod and the Ptolemies, and on monuments of Isis and of Pallas. The apparent meaning of the sign, as of the *crux ansata*, is that of life triumphant over death. A reference to a Pagan cross with a man on it is indeed made in the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix, assigned to the early part of the third century, who says the Romans in their trophies exhibited not only the sign of the cross, but with a man on it. Possibly he alluded to the arrangement of the helmet and armor of the vanquished upon the standard, this being the nearest approach I have been able to discover. The general meaning of so-called early Christian crosses is evidently victory over death, and with no reference to the crucifixion. In the Roman and Byzantine empire it became a military symbol, which it long continued. To take up the cross against the infidels meant to put opponents to the cruciform sword. This explains the military enthusiasm aroused by the preaching of the cross by Peter the Hermit and other instigators of the crusades.

Earlier than the figure of a crucified man, we find the cross borne by the lamb of Aries, as may be still seen on the gates of the Temple, London. Sometimes the lamb is shown with cross on an altar, "as it were slain," for the Paschal feast. This is evidently symbolical. The history of the Christian cross is indeed a history of priestly fraud in assigning literal meaning to symbols. The lamb and cross are evidently astronomical. And so are the earliest crucifixes. In one of the very earliest, the ivory Diptych of Rambona in Picenum, we have the crucified figure with a cruciform nimbus, with an eye for his navel, two figures of a young man and a young woman labelled SOL and LUNA, that there shall be no mistake as to their meaning sun and moon, while underneath are the Gemini, Romulus and Remus. Above are the words, *Ego sum I.H.S. Nasereus*. In another, assigned to the time of Charlemagne, "The crucified is clothed in a long tunic, and bears a crown of radiating bars, closed at top, rising from the circlet. A chalice is at its feet, and A.O. on the title overhead."\* A common inscription on early crucifixes is *Phos* or *Lux mundi*. The usual inscription, I.N.R.I., it should be known, does not stand for *Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judæorum*, but for *Jamim, Nour, Kouach, Ibishauh*; Water, Fire, Air, Earth. The cross symbolises the equation of the four elements. Some Rosicrucians give also the later interpretation, *igne Natura Renovatur Integra*. Some French Freemasons render it *Je ne reconnais Jesus*.

One early, so called crucifix, has attracted much attention since discovered by a sharp-eyed priest in 1857, rudely scratched on the Palace of the Cæsars at Rome. It shows a figure with an ass's head and outstretched arms holding a T. Underneath are the letters ALEXAMENOS CEBETE THEO (N?) Alexamenos worships God. The dearth of evidence for the *cruci-fiction* may be imagined when this schoolboy caricature was seized upon and made much of as a corroboration of the gospel story. It might, with greater reason, be cited as a figure of Anubis at the equinoctial crossing, or as proving that Tacitus knew what he was writing about when he said the Jews worshipped a god with the head of an ass.

J. M. W.

\* Smith and Cheetham, *Dictionary of Christian Antiquity*, vol. i., p. 514.

#### DRUMMOND'S "ŒDIPUS JUDAÏCUS."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I see my old friend, Mr. Forder, is uncertain about the date of the original edition of the above named book. I think Mr. Wheeler's date, 1811, is right; for in my copy I find this note: "Sir W. Drummond, in 1811, privately printed 250 copies of the original edition for circulation amongst his friends. If he had published it the police would have seized all the unsold copies—as the King's chaplain, the Rev. D'Oyle, asserted to the authorities, that the work contained blasphemous teachings." R. SHAW.

[The date given to Sir W. Drummond's *Œdipus Judaicus* in my *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* is accurate. A copy of the first private issue with that date is in the British Museum. On the general question Mr. Forder is quite right. Drummond did not apply the solar theory openly to Christianity. The first to do so in England, as far as I am aware, was Julian Hibbert, in the *Republican* of 1824. Some of his MSS. are in my possession. Taylor followed with his *Syntaxma* in 1828, *Diegesis* in 1829, and *Devil's Pulpit* in 1831, and Logan Mitchell in his *Christian Mythology Unveiled* 1840.42. Volney issued his *Ruins* in 1791, and an English translation soon followed. Dupuis's great work *Origine de tous les Cultes* appeared in 1795, and his abridgement in the following year. I am unaware of any complete English translation, or that the chapter on Christianity was translated previous to the version by Southwell about 1856.—J. M. W.]

#### AN OATH INCIDENT.

A BURLY digger advanced with a document carefully folded up in his hands.

"Are you the gen'lman as takes the hafferdayvs?"

"C-c-certainly; all I can g-g-get."

"Well, Mr. Cramp said as I was to make my hafferdayv afore you, where you see my mark here, as I was owner of these town allotments in Rathurst."

"All r-r-right, s-s-swear away."

Here he looked around for the official Bible, which ought to have been within reach, but which was probably buried under some of the piles of papers, books, forms of summons, warrants, informations, etc., which lay around as if in upheaval a corner of a stationer's shop had fallen in just then.

Not seeing it, he continued: "This is your signature, and the contents of this affidavit are t-t-true, so h-h-help your God. Half a guinea!"

The man looked rather confused and uncertain, but produced the coin, and then said, "I didn't see no Bible, sir?"

"N-n-never mind. K-k-kiss the book when you g-g-get home!"

Overawed by the authority and impressiveness of Mr. Bagstock's manner, the miner, not one of the pestilent educated sort, departed; and we only awaited his safe clearing out to laugh heartily.

"Allow me to congratulate you on your savior-faire," said the Mayor with much politeness; "for a newly-landed official I don't recollect seeing your equal."

Bagstock confronted us with a face of absolute gravity.

"Where do you s-s-suppose I should be if I d-d-didn't cut short these f-f-fellows' trifling objections? C-c-can't waste the G-g-government's time, you know."

There was a humorous twinkle in his eye as he said this, which nearly set us off again; but his command of features was perfect. . . . We took our leave.—"The Miner's Right," *Rolf Bolderwood, author of "Robbery Under Arms," p. 144, ch. xiv.*

#### ANCIENT AND MODERN MYTHOLOGY.

The human mind has long suffered an eclipse and been darkened and dwarfed in the shadow of ideas, the real meaning of which has been lost to the moderns. Myths and allegories, whose significance was once unfolded to initiates in the mysteries, have been adopted in ignorance, and re-issued as real truths directly and divinely vouchsafed to man for the first and only time! The earlier religions had their myths interpreted. We have ours mis-interpreted. And a great deal of what has been imposed on us as God's true and sole revelation to man is a mass of inverted myth, under the shadow of which we have been cowering as timorously as birds in the stubble when an artificial kite in the shape of a hawk is hovering overhead.—Gerald Massey "Natural Genesis," vol. i., p. 13.

BOOK CHAT.

The Buchanan Ballads (London: Haddon and Co.; 1s) is a bold title, in keeping with Robert Buchanan's robust egotism. The volume is dedicated to Mr. S. B Bancroft, the ex-actor, who, "at a moment when the intellectual Scribes and Pharisees hung back, gave a practical answer to General Booth's great Appeal," in the form of a £1,000 cheque. After this it is not surprising to find a long ballad on "Hallelujah Jane," and a satirical ballad on Professor Huxley. "Hallelujah Jane" is vigorous but crude. Compare it with Mr. Meredith's "Jump-to-Glory Jane," and you may see the difference between subtle poetry and sturdy rhetoric. The "Good Professor's Creed," as Disraeli said of Salisbury's gibes, lacks finish. It is strong and hot, and there its merit ends. On the Professor's face it will raise nothing but a smile.

In one point of this brutal satire the old Robert Buchanan comes out in full glory. Professor Huxley is made to soliloquise in this fashion—

Be clean, be calm, be thrifty! These are  
My chief injunctions to the Poor,  
Give Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar,  
Don't even begrudge a little more!  
Be very careful in your reading,  
Avoid imaginative stuff;  
Study the rule of cattle-breeding,  
And when you pair, cry "quantum suff."

Very good advice too, Mr. Buchanan. *Quantum does suff.* in most things, families included. But Mr. Buchanan is still of his old opinion to the contrary. "We move to multiplicity," he wrote many years ago, in a grandiose passage ending with the declaration, "The whole earth breeds, and God glories." Mr. Matthew Arnold seized upon this passage and made it the theme of his delicate banter in *Culture and Anarchy*. "How inspiring!" said Mr. Arnold; "These beautiful words I carry about with me in the East of London, and often read them there." Then followed five pages of Anodesque satire, a very different thing from Buchanan's; concluding with the serious declaration—"Yet surely, so long as these children are there in these festering masses, without health, without home, and without hope, and so long as their multitude is perpetually swelling, charged with misery they must still be for themselves, charged with misery they must still be for us, whether they help one another with a cup of cold water or no; and the knowledge how to prevent their accumulating is necessary, even to give their moral life and growth a fair chance."

Mr. Buchanan should ponder this before he has another fling at Professor Huxley on the population question. Of course "the earth breeds"—it has a great faculty in that line—but it is hard to see how "God glories" in squalor and misery.

"Fra Giacomo" would make a good reading, but how immeasurably below Browning's "A Confession," in which the same theme is treated! Good reading too are "The Wake of O'Hara," "The Wedding of Shon Maclean," and the old favorite of reciters, "Phil Blood's Leap"—the best of all, although it is run hard by "The Ballad of Magellan." It is in such work as this that Mr. Buchanan, at least in this volume, is seen at his best.

Before concluding, we must really ask the author of "Buchanan Ballads" why he indulged in a piece of bare-faced plagiarism. His last lines in the *Envoi* to "Annie" are these—

Thou art the Eye with which Eternity  
Surveys itself and knows itself divine.  
Now did not Shelley write in the "Hymn of Apollo"—  
I am the Eye with which the Universe  
Beholds itself and knows itself divine.

Mr. Buchanan has a poor opinion of Shelley as a man, but that does not justify stealing from him, and adding defacement to the theft.

The *Quarterly Review* opens with a eulogistic notice of the late Archbishop Thomson of York. There is an interesting review of Seyed Ameer Ali's *Life and Teachings of Mohammed*. It is admitted that the result of the investigation has been to give a more favorable view of the prophet of

Arabia than that formerly held by Christians; but polygamy is pointed to as the damning blot of his whole system. Nothing is said of the endorsement of polygamy in the Old Testament.

The *Edinburgh Review* has a tardy and disparaging notice of Prof. W. Robertson Smith's Lectures on the Religion of the Semites. It refuses to credit that the Bible could have come from "a polyandrous race worshipping savage beasts." What, however, the *Edinburgh Reviewer* cannot do is to wipe out the evidence in the Bible itself, that the Jews were once little better than savages.

The *Edinburgh Reviewer* thinks it says sufficient against the position of Professor Smith when it points out that "In Biblical criticism he is the disciple of Wellhausen, in philosophy of Herbert Spencer, and in social archæology of J. F. McLennan." We think this sufficient to show Professor Smith has studied under very good masters. As for his critic, there are sundry indications that he is a disciple of the late Father Anderledy.

EXPLAINING HIS THEORY.

The Stevenson-street colored church held an informal Bible meeting last Friday night, and the minister—a recent "call"—gave a talk on the thrilling story of the Exodus. To account for the safe passage of the Israelites over the Red Sea the minister submitted a theory that the Red Sea was frozen over, and thus afforded the people of God a means of escape from the cohorts of Pharaoh.

"You see, brudden," said the preacher, smiling affably from his rostrum at the congregation, "de charrots ob Pharaoh war so hebby dat dey sank troo de ice an d woned de riders."

At this juncture a long-necked brother arose and said: "I beg t' su'mit dat I have studied de gografy, and de gografy say dat dat place am de tropics, an de tropics am too hot fur ice, an I want to hab dat pint about de ice 'splained!"

A dense silence ensued. The worshippers looked at each other with panic-stricken eyes. The minister finally straightened up, the light of a new idea in his face, and addressing the inquisitive brother, replied:

"I am deeply grateful dat de brudder bez asked dat questchun. I puced t' answer it wid feelin'. You see, dose times war a great many years ago, befo' dey hed eny gografies, and befo' dey hed eny tropics!"

The worship went on smoothly after that, and at the next meeting of the trustees the minister's salary was raised to 4 dols. 75c. a week.—*San Francisco Wasp*.

PROFANE JOKES.

"Brudders," remarked the Rev. Poindexter Granberry, "nebber judge udder folks by yourself, but judge yourself by udder folks."

"Have you a surplice choir?" asked the visitor on the way to church. "No," answered Mr. Trotter in a low voice, so that his wife would not hear him; "but we have a surplus choir—there are sixteen women in it."

Tommy (parsing grammar at school): "Father—singular number, neuter gender—" Teacher: "Stop; neuter gender means those things which have no life." Tommy: "That's so, sir; father died last week."

"Dress, deah breddern, doan count for nuffin in dis yar world. Many a man wot wears a six hundred dollar sealskin ovalcoat ain't half ez respectable in de sight ob de Lawd ez de po' African savage wot doan wear nuffin but a happy smile."

"I understand that our minister is to have a young assistant, who must be unmarried." "What is the object of the last clause?" "Well, that is to make the young men jealous and induce them to come to church so as to keep an eye upon their lady loves."

Whatever may be the nature of the deity, and whether there be a future life or not, the great moral laws can be in no way changed. God is a purely scientific question. Whether he be personal or impersonal, definable or undefinable, our duties and responsibilities remain the same.—*Reade's Martyrdom of Man*.

## SUNDAY MEETINGS.

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

## LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Miss Eliza Hammond Hills, "Liberty Chained at the Foot of the Cross"; preceded by Trial Scene from *The Merchant of Venice* (3d. and 6d.) Thursday at 8, committee meeting.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7, music; 7.30, T. Thurlow, "Paganism and Christianity v. Death"; 9.15, free concert and dance.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 5.30, debating class, Mr. Brace, "Temperance"; 7.30, B. Hyatt, "The Crucifixion of God"; preceded by Gravediggers' Scene from *Hamlet*.

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road: 8, H. Snell, "Is the Bible Inspired?"

Finsbury Park—Tobaccoist's facing Rock-street, Blackstock-road: 6.30, important business meeting.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Charles Watts, "Bellamy's *Looking Backward*" (free); 7, music; 7.30, Charles Watts, "Christ and Buddha: which was the greater Light?" (3d., 6d., and 1s.) Thursday at 7.30, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Life History of a Star."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove: Thursday at 8, W. Heaford, "Secularism and Christianity."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, T. Crisfield, "Some Important Points in Hypnotism."

Walthamstow—Workmen's Hall, High-street: Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Missionaries" (free).

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, a lecture.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, W. Heaford, "The Consolations of Religion."

Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, S. H. Alison, "Atheism or Christianity?"

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, B. Hyatt, "The Raising of Lazarus."

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Bible and Modern Thought."

Columbia-road (near Columbia Market), Hackney-road: 11.15, T. Thurlow will lecture.

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen, "The Evolution of the Devil."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, F. Dowdall, "Gods: Ancient and Modern"; 3.30, F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus and what did he Teach?"

Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, H. Courtney, "The Apostles' Creed."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Bible God."

Kilburn Salisbury-road (near Queen's Park Station): 6.30, W. Heaford, "The Ten Commandments."

Kingsland Green (near Ball's Pond-road): 11.30, W. Norrish, "What does the Christian Believe?"

Lambeth (corner of Hercules-road, Westminster-bridge-road): 11.30, J. Rowney, "The Exodus from Egypt."

Leyton (open space near Vicarage-road, High-road): 11.30, J. Marshall, "God, Nature Personified—1."

Midland Arches (near Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, a lecture.

Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Behold, I bring Glad Tidings."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Civilisation and Progress."

Plaistow Green: 11.30, C. J. Steinberg will lecture.

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed."

Tottenham (corner of West Green-road): 3.30, debate between Lucretius Keen and Job Williams on "Has Man a Free Will?"

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15 and 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

Walthamstow—Markhouse Common: 6.30, R. Rosetti, "When and Where was Jesus Christ Born and Crucified?"

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers-hill: 11.30, H. Snell, "Is the Bible the Inspired Word of God?"

## COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings, Crooked-lane: 12 noon, John Harkis, "The Logic of Secularism." Tuesday at 8, G. W. Foote, "Why I Cannot be a Christian" (3d. and 6d.) Wednesday at 8, G. W. Foote, "Is there a God?" (3d. and 6d.)

Belfast—St. Anne's Hall, Donegall-street: G. W. Foote, 11.30, "Who Wrote the Bible?"; 3, "Why I am an Atheist"; 7, "The Way to Heaven."

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 11, members' meeting; 7, W. F. Carter, "The Cowardice of Orthodoxy."

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: J. M. Robertson, 11, "The Religion of Shakespeare"; 3, "Christianity and the Social Question"; 7, "The Meaning of Atheism."

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, a lecture; 7, C. J. Hunt, "Evolution and Design."

Derby—20 Newland-street: 7, H. N. McGuinness, "Christianity and Slavery."

Farsley—Stanningley Baptist School Room: Monday at 8, Miss Ada Campbell, "Labor in Australia, America, and England: why do men Starve?"

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: important general meeting

Huddersfield—Labor Club, Early Fold, Slaithwaite: Henry Smith, 2.30, "Secularism v. Supernaturalism"; "Modern Christianity: what is it?" Admiss on 2d. and 4d.

Hull—Cobden Hall, 6 Story-street, Albion-street: 6.30, musical entertainment.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: Excursion to Leasowe Castle, Landing-stage, 2.30 boat to New Brighton; 7, Harry Smith, "A People Robbed and Spoiled."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': 6.30, James Cooper, "God's Commandments and how they are kept" (free).

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Lovaine Hall St. Mary's-place: Stanley Jones, 11, "The Creation"; 3, "Man and his Relations"; 7, "The Soul Idea and Immortality." Admission, 3d., 6d., and 1s.

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

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 7, Mr. Googe, "Anthropology."

Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone-road: a Reading, "Secularism v. Christianity."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, musical and other recitals.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: annual report.

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, W. R. Stansell will lecture.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Hull—Corporation Field: 3, N. B. Bilany will lecture.

Manchester (corner of Denmark-road and Oxford-road): 11, James Hooper, "Bible Saints and Sinners"; in Stevenson-square, at 3, James Hooper, "Eden and Calvary."

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## LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—May 29, Milton Hall. June 5, Hall of Science.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk street, Woolwich.—May 8, m., Wood Green; e., Swaby's Coffee Palace; 15, m., Battersea; a., Finsbury Park; 22, m. and e., Camberwell; 29, m., Salmon and Ball; a., Regent's Park. June 5, e., Camberwell; 12, m., Wood Green; a., Finsbury Park; 19, m., Battersea; a., Kilburn; 26, m., Camberwell.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—May to Sept., all mornings booked.

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

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—May 8, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 12, Walthamstow; 15, m., Mile End Waste; a., Regent's Park; e., Edmonton; 19, Walthamstow; 22, m., Lambeth; a., Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow; 26, Walthamstow; 29, m., Clerkenwell Green; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton. June 5, m., Bethnal Green; e., Edmonton; 12, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 19, m., Mile End; a., Regent's Park; e., Edmonton; 26, m., Battersea; a., Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow.

SAM STANDRING, 2 Morton-street, C-on-M., Manchester.—May 8, Nottingham; 9, Manchester; 15, Falsworth; 16, Manchester.

C. J. STEINBERG, 103 Mile End-road, E.—May 8, m. and e., Plaistow; 15, m., Lambeth; 24, m., Bethnal Green; a., Tottenham; 29, m., Columbia-road. June 5, m., Victoria Park. 12, m., Columbia-road; 19, m., Lambeth; 26, m., Victoria Park. July 10, m., Columbia-road; 17, m., Lambeth; 24, m., Bethnal Green; 31, a., Finsbury Park.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Chant-street, Stratford, E.—May 8, m., Bethnal Green; 22, m., Victoria Park. June all mornings booked. July 3, m., Hackney; 10, m., Bethnal Green; 24, m., Leyton; 31, m., Victoria Park.

T. THURLOW, 34 Wetherell-road, South Hackney.—May 8, e., Libra Hall; May 15, June 19, July 3, Aug. 14, Sept. 11, mornings, Kingsland Green; May 29, e., June 12, e., and June 26, m., Walthamstow.

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