

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## SECULARISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

MR. FOOTE'S REPLY TO THE REV. W. E. BLOMFIELD.

[The following letter speaks for itself. It appeared in last Saturday's *Suffolk Chronicle*, and will be of interest to many of our readers.]

SIR,—A friend has favored me with a copy of your last issue, containing a long report of the Rev. W. E. Blomfield's sermon at Turret Green Chapel, apparently in reply to my lecture on "Secularism superior to Christianity." Mr. Blomfield declines to meet me in set debate, on the ground that I am not "a reverent Freethinker," which is indeed true; but I observe that he does not really mind arguing with me, only he prefers to do it where I cannot answer him.

Mr. Blomfield finds the pulpit a safe place for what can hardly be called the courtesies of discussion. He refers to certain remarks of mine (I presume) as "petty jokes and witticisms fit only for the tap-room of a fourth-rate tavern." I will not dispute the description. I defer to Mr. Blomfield's superior knowledge of taverns and tap-rooms.

I notice Mr. Blomfield's great parade of "reverence." I notice also that he speaks of Freethought arguments or objections as "short-sighted folly" and "sheer nonsense." I judge, therefore, that "reverence" is not intended by Mr. Blomfield to be reciprocal. He claims a monopoly of it for his own opinions.

If he would only take the trouble to think about the matter, it might occur to him that "reverence" is not, properly speaking, a preliminary but a result. Let us have inquiry and discussion first and "reverence" afterwards. If I find anything to revere I shall not need Mr. Blomfield's admonitions. I revere truth, goodness, and heroism, though I cannot revere what I regard as false or absurd. "Reverence" is often the demand that imposture makes on honesty and superstition on intelligence. Long faces are highly valued by the professors of mystery.

Mr. Blomfield did not hear my lecture. Had he done so he would have found an answer to many of his questions. It is all very well to bid the Ipswich people to "Beware of false prophets," but it is better to hear before condemning.

How much attention, Mr. Blomfield asks, am I to give to this world and how much to another? Just as much as they deserve. We know a great deal about this world, and may learn more. There are plenty of guesses about another world, but no knowledge. It is easy to ask "Is there a future life?" but we must die to find out. Meanwhile this life confronts us, with its hard duties and legitimate pleasures. It is our wisdom to make the best of it, on the rational belief that, if there should be a future life—which no one is in a position to affirm or deny—this must be the best preparation for it, whether our future be decided by evolution or by divine justice.

Mr. Blomfield's arguments against Utility as the test of conduct were answered in my lecture. He says the principle is of difficult application. So are all principles in intricate cases; why else have Christian divines written so many tons of casuistry? In any case the Utilitarian principle is the only one which is honored in practice. Other principles do very well on Sunday, but they are cast aside on Monday. The only question asked by statesmen, county commissioners, School Board members, or other public representatives, is "Will the proposal tend to benefit the people?" This can be debated and settled. "Is it according to the will of God?" is a question to set people by the ears and start an endless quarrel.

Mr. Blomfield says the fear of God saved poor Joseph, yet I dare say Potiphar's wife was a religious woman. The will of God sanctions many crimes. It tells the Thug to kill travellers; it told the Inquisition to torture and burn heretics; it told Catholics and Protestants to rack and slaughter witches; it told Christians and Mohammedans to fight each other on hundreds of bloody battle-fields; it tells Christians now to keep up laws against liberty of thought. There never was a time when these things would not have been denounced by Secularism as crimes against humanity.

Motives to morality do not come from religion. They come from our social sympathies. Preach to a tiger and he will eat you. Differ from a Torquemada and he will burn you. When one man wants another to help him, he does not judge by the name of his sect, but by the glance of his eye and the lines of his mouth. Some men are born philanthropists, others are born criminals; between these are multitudes in whom good and bad tendencies are variously mixed, and who may be made better or worse by education and environment. The late Professor Clifford was an Atheist, and one of the gentlest, kindest, and tenderest men that ever lived. Jay Gould was a member of a Christian church and sometimes went round with the plate. He left twenty millions of money, and not a penny to any charity or good cause. Lick, the Freethinker, built and endowed the great observatory which is one of the glories of America.

I do not propose to follow Mr. Blomfield in his excursion into ancient history. I will only remark that if he thinks there was any lack of "religion" in the worst days of the Pagan world he is very much mistaken. Coming to more modern times, I decline to accept his present of priests and popes who were "atheistic." Whatever they were is a domestic question for the Christian Church. Nor need I discuss Luther's "fresh vision of God." He was a great man, but a savage controversialist, who called his opponents asses, swine, foxes, geese, and fools; which, I suppose, is worthy of the tap-room of a *first-rate* tavern. As to the "awful collapse" of "unbelieving France" I do not know when it occurred. It was certainly not France that collapsed in the Revolution. The monarchy, the aristocracy, and the Church collapsed; but France inaugurated a new epoch of modern history.

With respect to prayer, on which Mr. Blomfield is very hazy, I would like to discriminate between its "objective value" and its "subjective benefits." Prayer as a means of inducing patience when you do not get what you ask for, is outside my province. I leave it to the clergy. Prayer as a means of obtaining what you require is my concern, and I defy Mr. Blomfield to prove a single case. Yet if prayer is not answered objectively, the Secular principle holds the field that science is man's only providence. I am aware that Christians employ doctors, insure their houses, and put lightning-conductors over their church steeples. They leave as little to God as possible. Mr. Blomfield says this is quite right, and I agree with him; but I will give him, if he cannot find them, twenty texts in support of the honest old doctrine of prayer from the New Testament.

Mr. Blomfield tells me I do not understand the Bible. Well, as I am not exactly a fool, the fault may be in the book. Why was it not made plainer? Why did God write it so that thousands of gentlemen get a fine living by explaining it—in all sorts of different ways? I am reminded that the Bible is not a handbook of physical science. But did the Church think so when it imprisoned Galileo and made him swear that the earth did *not* go round the sun? Mr. Blomfield says that "Genesis gives

an account of the origin of matter, and of life, and, finally, of man, which science has not disproved, on the admission of her most eminent sons." The Bible is a handbook of science after all then! But what has science to do with the origin of matter? The origin of life is still an open question. The origin of man is *not* an open question. Genesis gives us a piece of mythology; Darwin gave us the truth. Among the eminent sons of science who is greater than he? Yet he has utterly exploded the Adam and Eve story. Darwin has left it on record that he rejected all revelation, and that for nearly forty years of his life he was a disbeliever in Christianity. He did subscribe to a Missionary Society that was attempting to reform South American savages, but he never subscribed a penny for the propagation of Christianity in England. I myself might think Christianity good for savages.

If I understand Mr. Blomfield rightly, God was unable to teach the Jews any faster than he did, although he is both omnipotent and omniscient. Were I to imitate Mr. Blomfield I should call this "sheer nonsense."

In my lecture I stated that the Old Testament sanctioned slavery, and that there was not a word against it in the New Testament. Mr. Blomfield replies that "the principles of the New Testament sapped the foundations of that system." But let us deal with one question at a time. Let the reverend gentleman indicate the text which I say does not exist. As for the "generous spirit" of the Old Testament laws about slavery, am I to find it in the texts allowing the Jews to buy and sell the heathen, to enslave their own countrymen, to appropriate their children born in slavery, and to beat them to death providing they did not expire within forty-eight hours?

My point is not that the Jews held slaves. That was common in ancient times. I merely take objection to the doctrine that God laid down the slavery laws of the Old Testament.

With regard to Jesus Christ, I am not aware that I have spoken of him as a "trickster." Renan, however, whom Mr. Blomfield appears to admire, suggests that the raising of Lazarus was a performance arranged between him and Jesus. This is a line of criticism I have never attempted. I do not regard the New Testament miracles as actual occurrences, but as the products of Christian imagination.

Mr. Blomfield is angry with me for saying that the books of the Bible are mostly anonymous, yet he declares that "their anonymity is little against them." I leave Mr. Blomfield to settle the point of fact with Christian writers like Canon Driver and Professor Bruce. With respect to the New Testament, I am told that my statement is "palpably incorrect." But what are the facts? With the exception of four of Paul's epistles, and perhaps the first of Peter, the whole of the New Testament books are anonymous, in the sense that they were not written—as we have them—by the men whose names they bear, and that no one knows who *did* write them. This is practically admitted by Christian scholars, and I am ready to maintain it in discussion with Mr. Blomfield.

Mr. Blomfield talks very freely, in conclusion, about the "fruits" of Christianity and Secularism. He even condescends to personal comparisons, which I warn him are dangerous. He compares Spurgeon with Bradlaugh. Well, the one swam with the stream, and the other against it; the one lived in the world's smile, the other in the world's frown; the one enjoyed every comfort and many luxuries, the other was poor, worried, and harassed into his grave. Spurgeon was no doubt a good man, but Bradlaugh was the more heroic figure.

Jesus Christ said some good things. Among them was the injunction not to let one hand know the other's charity. Mr. Blomfield disregards this. He challenges Secularists to a comparison. He asks where are our Secularist hospitals. We do not believe in such things. Sectarianism in charity is a Christian vice. On the other hand, our party is comparatively small and poor, and Christian laws prevent our holding any trusts for Secularism. Still, we do attend to our own poor as well as we can. Our Benevolent Fund is always sufficient for the relief of those who apply in distress. We cannot build "almshouses," but "Atheist widows" are not neglected. On the whole, however, we are not so loud as the Christians in praise of "charity." Much of it is very degrading. If we had justice in society there would be less for "charity" to do.

It is obvious that Mr. Blomfield picks his fruits of Christianity with great discrimination. Is it logical to

select all you admire in Christian countries and attribute it to Christianity? The same process would prove the excellence of Buddhism, Brahminism, and Mohammedanism. There are almshouses and hospitals in Christendom, but there are also workhouses, gin-palaces, brothels, and prisons. Drunkenness, prostitution, and gambling, are the special vices of Christian nations. It is Christian countries that build ironclads and make cannon, gatling guns, deadly rifles, and terrible explosives. It is Christians who do most of the fighting on this planet.

Mr. Blomfield may or may not consider these things. I scarcely expect him to reply. He prefers the "humble, obedient heart" to the "curious intellect." At any rate he preaches the preference to the young men of Ipswich. For my part, I hope they will reject the counsel. I trust they will read, inquire, and think for themselves. Their "intellect" should have enough "curiosity" to be satisfied as to the truth of what they are asked to believe.—

G. W. FOOTE.

### THE IDEAL CHRIST.

ANYONE who will compare the notions of Jesus held by, say, Renan or Farrar, or indeed any two different minds, will find that the character is mainly an ideal one, depending largely on the idiosyncrasy of the holder. During the palmy days of Christianity the ideal Christ was a monkish ascetic. Jesus renounced his family and lived a life of poverty and celibacy. This was the ideal of all the saints of the great Catholic Church; and St. Francis of Assisi, who went about preaching as a barefooted mendicant, was perhaps the best realiser of the Christian ideal. This, however, is unsuited for the present age, and Jesus is transformed from a wandering beggar into a philanthropic nineteenth-century gentleman.

Dr. Momerie, in his article on "Religion: Its Future," in the December number of the *Fortnightly Review*, shows that although he has got rid of almost the entirety of dogmatic theology, he is still an idolator of the ideal Jesus. He says, for instance:

"The New Testament, more often than not perhaps, misrepresents him. Even the first three gospels, as we have them, are quite untrustworthy. Nor do the MSS. help us much, for sometimes they support what we feel sure he did not say, and fail to support what we feel sure he did say. There is but little authority for the story of his conversation with the woman taken in adultery, and yet we know instinctively that it is true. There is very strong authority for the cursing of the barren fig-tree, yet we know instinctively that it is false."

With sincere respect for Dr. Momerie, who in coming out of the Church has given a much-needed example of integrity to his Broad Church brethren, I consider this attitude entirely uncritical and unsound. For what are the facts? The gospel writers, whoever they were, manifestly sought to exalt their hero. They extol him as a greater than Solomon, and describe him as speaking as never man spake. In the case of such evidently partial biographers it might be a safe rule to admit whatever they unconsciously told to his disparagement; as, for instance, cursing the fig-tree, and to reject any unsupported story that would redound to his credit. But Dr. Momerie reverses this process, which I do not pretend is an infallible, but only a comparatively safe one. Although the story of the woman taken in adultery (John vii. 53, viii. 12) is wanting in all the earliest Greek manuscripts, is absent from the Syriac, Peshito, and Gothic versions, and unmentioned by the earliest fathers; although the writer cannot have been a Palestinian Jew at all, for the Talmud makes strangulation and not stoning the punishment for adultery; although the story is absurd on the face of it, for the scribes and Pharisees dare not allow an adulteress to escape, simply because a teacher said, "Let him that is without sin among you first cast a stone," a doctrine which strikes at the root of all law—Dr. Momerie instinctively pronounces its truth because the

narrative conforms to his ideal. Falstaff well says "instinct is a great matter." Dr. Momerie is a critic, as Falstaff was a coward, by instinct. He evolves a Jesus of his own from the same material from which the German philosopher evolved the camel, his own inner consciousness. He is quite welcome, but he should not write as if this ideal had objective reality or historical value.

I heartily agree with Dr. Momerie that the first three gospels are quite untrustworthy, and the fourth even more so. But for this very reason I urge that the attempt to construct an historical Jesus is making a rope of sand. We have no sufficient authentic materials. To me the story of the cursing of the fig-tree is as unhistorical as that of the woman taken in adultery. The cursing thaumaturgist is just as false as the amiable Anarchist. The latter is the later and better ideal. It is good that men should have ideals, better that they should have worthy ones, and I am quite sure the ideal of Dr. Momerie is a worthier one than any held by the gossellers. But he should frankly confess it is an ideal and then it would be admitted to be beyond the range of criticism.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### MISERY IN HEAVEN.

MR. ST. GEORGE MIVART informs us that there is an eternity of happiness in hell, and that "the loss of heaven is an infinite loss." He does not, however, define what he means by happiness, although he asserts that it differs in degree, and that some persons "no more desire the supernatural state than fishes can desire to become birds or oysters sigh because they are not butterflies." If hell exist, and it is such a place as orthodox Christians generally describe it, we fail to understand how it is possible for any degree of happiness to be found there. But what of heaven? Let us endeavor to ascertain the nature and state of affairs "in another place," as they say in the House of Commons. If the information given in the Bible concerning heaven be reliable, misery, not happiness, is its chief characteristic. Those, therefore, who prepared themselves for "above," expecting to find comfort and enjoyment, took the wrong road; they should have gone "below," where they would have a warm reception, and a brilliant and prolonged entertainment prepared for them.

Happiness is understood in this world as being associated with agreeable sensations. It is not a thing, but a state in which our wants are supplied; a condition of the mind that is in possession of what it desires. Felicity expresses great happiness, and bliss is its highest form. Happiness furthermore implies an absence of conflicting influences. It depends on conditions, which of course vary with individuals. A clown and a philosopher may be both equally satisfied, but they cannot be equally happy when surrounded by the same conditions. Happiness, great or small, can be secured only by experiences congenial to the tastes of individuals, and which meet the requirements of their varied capacities for enjoyment. An "eternity" of happiness, that can only mean a continuous state of joy. The common conception of eternity, "swallowing up time," or "when time shall be no more," is only symbolical. Applying eternity to a future state is like speaking of a rope with one end cut off. Eternity is neither future nor past. It cannot begin after the one or before the other; hence entering on an eternal future is inconceivable to the human mind.

Now do heaven and its arrangements, as depicted and recorded in the Bible, comply with the requirements necessary to happiness? In the first place, it seems paradoxical to speak, as some theologians do, of the happiness of heaven, and at the same time to assert that the senses through which all sensations

enter are not present. They speak of immaterial souls enjoying bliss, which is as unphilosophical as it would be to talk of dissolving moonshine or carving a shadow. Attributing agreeable sensations to a soul without senses is as grotesque as ascribing the darkness of the Middle Ages to the result of the Pope's uncorking bottles of Egyptian darkness. To experience any sort of happiness necessitates our possessing senses that enables us to feel, see, and understand. Immaterial souls can enjoy only immaterial happiness, and it is quite immaterial to us whether we experience such enjoyment or not, for it could make no material difference to such souls as we are supposed now to possess.

Jesus, in speaking of children, said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." We cannot, however, imagine a child being happy without his toys or even with always having the same. Fancy a boy without his top, or a girl with no doll—where would be their happiness? Is it not also a fact that children begin to wonder why they do not continue to admire their old sources of enjoyment when they have acquired tastes for new ones? It is similar with children of larger growth, whose happiness consists greatly in change of scenes and occupation. Literature is the heaven of some minds; but the most devout student looks out for new books. To be compelled to read the same for ever would not be the happiest occupation. Everything is mutable, changes are interminable through all nature, absolute quietude is unknown, and without constant change life itself would cease to be. These essentials to the happiness of existence are not to be found in heaven, and therefore to intellectual persons it would be a place of misery.

We are not now dealing with the questions whether there is a heaven or not, or if there is where it is located. These are no doubt important points, but our present object is to ascertain whether the Christian's heaven, as described in the Bible, is an abode of happiness or of misery. It may be urged that the language of the Scriptures upon the question of heaven is figurative, which we do not deny; but what is it figurative of? Language should make the subjects to which it refers clear to the reader, and not obscure their meaning. Christ on several occasions refers to the kingdom of heaven in parables, but from these we obtain very little information as to its real nature.

This is not at all surprising when we are told that he spoke in parables, so that those who heard him should not understand. (Mark iv. 11. 12). It is true that on another occasion, Jesus located heaven by saying that its kingdom was "within you," but this is as difficult to understand as the parables are, since he also states: "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you." For persons to get these mansions within them would be a greater performance than that of the whale swallowing Jonah! There is, however, one parable about heaven (Luke xvi. 19. 31.) which tells us of "a certain beggar" and of "a certain rich man," the one was in heaven, and the other in hell, and both were within hearing, seeing, and speaking distance of each other. From heaven the rich man is seen being tormented in hell. Now to think that anyone could be happy while contemplating such suffering would be an outrage against our common humanity. Such a horrible heavenly spectacle would be worse than a Spanish bull-fight, or than bishops warming their hands before the fires that consumed the martyrs of old. Brutal as those scenes were, they lasted only for a time, whereas this heavenly scene consists of everlasting torture, where all help to lessen the cruelty is denied. If any person with a spark of humanity in his or her nature should get into such a heaven, it is to be hoped that blinds will be there that may be drawn, for such sights are only fit for monsters who die

on the gallows, and whose exit from earth was a blessing to those left behind. The Christian's heaven, as here described, must be a place of misery indeed for every loving heart.

One great source of our happiness on earth is the liberty to select our companions, to refrain from attending exhibitions of torture, and to be permitted to relieve the victims of injustice and cruelty. To be shut up, therefore, in heaven with those who can look on others being tortured in flames of fire and who will not or cannot relieve them must be a source of indescribable misery. This parable receives confirmation from St. John, who states (Rev. xiv. 10) that a certain person "shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb." And this is the Christian's idea of ultimate happiness. When a wish is expressed to be with Jesus and the angels, as it frequently is by orthodox believers, they cannot understand the sights and experiences that are in store for them. Let us hope it is true that "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard . . . the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Milton says, "It's better to reign in hell, than to serve in heaven"; but in our opinion it would be still better to do neither. Both institutions deserve to be lost in total oblivion, for the belief in their existence is no factor in the progress and elevation of mankind. Humanity would have two evils the less to overcome if hell were to cease from troubling, and if the preachers about heaven were to be at rest.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

## CHRISTIANITY AND PERSECUTION.

(Spoken at Baskerville Hall, Dec. 11, 1892.)

FILLING the place of Mr. Lord, of Nottingham, among others, I pointed to this aspect of the teachings of Jesus. Christians, and some who are not, point to the loving, kind, and merciful character of Jesus. He is the pattern man, a brilliant example of a benevolent disposition—an ideal specimen of what humanity should be. With all due respect to everybody, I deny the truth of this position in its relation to liberty, to freedom of opinion and the rights of conscience.

It is not necessary to set him down as the most narrow-minded bigot in history, but only to show that the spirit of persecution, of exclusive dealing, can be brought home in his own words to the founder of the faith.

He starts his first batch of missionaries with "He that believeth not shall be damned," and if any city should refuse them, they are to shake off its dust from their feet. Moreover, in addition to this ceremony which has much significance in eastern countries, he said the fate of that city would be sealed at the day of judgment. At that day the sheep and goats are to be divided, but why the latter should be placed "on the left hand" is not clear, unless they became goats contrary to the wishes of their parents. To them on the left, he said, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire"—their doom is "eternal punishment."

Hence, refusing to believe or listen, is placed on the same basis as neglecting the hungry and naked. The hair-splitters and word-spinners maintain that unbelief in this is visited only as other unbeliefs in other things. If we refuse to believe that the earth is round, we should be condemned by philosophers. That is not so; they only condemn the opinion, not the person. To make the case parallel, it should be—He that believeth not that the moon always presents the same face to the earth,

shall be moonstruck. I have known some persons unable to believe in antipodes, or understand the laws of motion, but it never occurred to me that for that reason they should be hurled from the third storey, much less into a pit of fire.

Jesus did not understand the first principles of thought, of believing. He said all things were possible to him that believeth, and seems to have had a notion that people could believe anything. He said, love your enemies; but what did he do, even with opponents not necessarily enemies? He said anyone that denied him on earth he would deny before his Father in heaven. He could not have uttered anything more revengeful if he had been King of the Cannibals; in short, he sent everybody to hell who did not agree with him—he that is not for us is against us.

Anybody ashamed of him here in this generation he would be ashamed of when he got into power with his angels. Being a poor man himself, he shut all rich men out of his kingdom. He will be fairly puzzled when he has to deal with one of the bishops of his own Church who has got the belief "and the money too."

But being a carpenter, it is inconceivable that he should make the gate to heaven so narrow that few could find it, and many be unable to get in at it, if he intended otherwise. He must have meant something by his illustration concluding "But those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them bring them hither and slay them at my feet." He is reported as saying that his mission was to set at variance every member of the family.

Neither is there much ground for complaint of his want of success in that direction. Yet it seems a queer sort of love and mercy that spreads discord wherever it appears. St. Paul seems to have caught the true spirit of his master, for he says, if an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed.

There can be no doubt that this teaching lay at the root of that movement which was carried on by fire, sword, and chains for centuries, till that Freethought in which we glory to-day arose and shamed the Christian world, and bid it stay its murderous hand.

CHARLES C. CATTELL.

## SECULAR PRINCIPLES AND THEOLOGY: THEIR EFFECTS COMPARED.

IT has been asked, What has Secularism done for the world? and the idea involved in the query is, that, though Secularism professes to be the one necessary initial factor in any permanent salvation of society, it has hitherto produced no good works to compare with the charities of Christendom. Secularism, indeed, as an organised institution, is but a creation of the last half-century, and it would be absurd, even in this age of rapid progress, to expect to see it rival its opponent in beneficent works. And still less will such rivalry be expected when it is remembered that it is a fundamental orthodox doctrine that the good works of unbelievers are sins, and that it is a fatal offence for the faithful ones to in any way render them help in such works. Secularism may, indeed—and this is not by any means a trifle—claim a total absence of those malevolent influences which have marked the records of the theology with so many horrifying scenes; and that its principles are such that similar scenes can never be enacted under any circumstances by its followers. But it may be fairly claimed that, during even its brief existence, it has done immensely more than Christianity (taking it as the best known sample of theological influence) achieved in a similar period after its foundation, or, indeed, for many centuries afterwards. More useful and educational and charitable institutions have been founded and endowed by Freethinkers and opponents of orthodoxy during the last half-century than are known to have been founded by Christians for more than a thousand years.

Among the many large bequests by rich men which have distinguished the present century, the gifts of Freethinkers have figured conspicuously. The founder of Girard College, in addition to the 6,000,000 dols. required for the establishment of that college, gave during his lifetime and at his death 30,000 dols. to the Pennsylvania Hospital, 20,000 dols. to the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, 10,000 dols. to the Orphan Asylum, 10,000 dols. to the Lancaster Schools, 10,000 dols. to provide fuel for the Philadelphia poor, 10,000 dols. to aid distressed sea captains, 20,000 dols. to relieve poor Masons, 50,000 dols. for city improvements in Philadelphia, and 300,000 dols. for canals in the State. When, in 1814, the Government needed help, Girard at once advanced 5,000,000 dols.; and when, in 1793 and 1797, Philadelphia was afflicted with the yellow fever, and but twelve persons could be induced to nurse the sick and bury the dead, Stephen Girard, the Freethinker, was one of these.

James Smithson left 500,000 dols. to found the Institution named after him at Washington. Peter Brigham gave 3,000,000 dols. to establish hospitals in Boston. John Redmon gave 400,000 dols. to support free beds in the Boston hospitals.

James Lick gave 1,000,000 dols. to found an astronomical observatory; William McClure gave half a million dollars to aid the working men of Indiana; A. T. Tilley gave 30,000 dols. to build a school at Northampton, Mass., for the scientific training of women without theology.

In Glasgow, Scotland, the Mitchell Library was established at a cost of £70,000 (350,000 dols.) by a Freethinker; and in the same city Mr. George Baillie left £18,000 (90,000 dols.) to establish unsectarian schools, reading rooms, etc.

Many other similar acts could be named, one of them being a bequest of 50,000 dols. by the late Mr. Butland to the Toronto General Hospital.

But, if organised Secularism is of such a recent growth that it has not yet been able to exert its influence to the full extent of its actual ramifications throughout society, it may fairly be claimed that the greatest portion of the best work of the world has been the direct result of its principles. The persecution of Galileo, the martyrdom of Bruno, and the persecution and martyrdom of hundreds of other investigators and sceptics, are but the evidences of the working of those anti-theological principles which practically were the fountain-heads of Secularism, and of the disastrous results to humanity which would have followed had not Freethought finally asserted its influence in opposition to theology.

It must be remembered that nearly all modern discoveries and inventions have been perfected by heretics in defiance of the most determined opposition of the Church; and that the humane treatment of criminals in gaols, of lunatics in asylums, of the sick in hospitals, and of the aged poor, has been brought about by anti-Church influences after centuries of horrors perpetrated under ecclesiastical control.

It is, indeed, or should be, within the knowledge of many of the present generation, that after Christianity has had control of all such agencies for near upon two thousand years, the treatment of lunatics and criminals, until very recent years, has been of the most barbarous nature; and has only been reduced to somewhat humane methods by the influence of more civilising secular forces—of scientific knowledge, and of an improved moral tone resulting from it.

But if Secularism, as an organisation, cannot lay claim to having done a very great deal towards civilising the world, let us ask, What has theology done for it?

The world, at least in historical times, has never been without gods, though some few tribes have been blessed enough to get along without one. One instance was found only last year by the British and Foreign Bible Society, the agents of which, in translating the Bible into one of the native languages of Asia, found it impossible to get an equivalent for "God." But, in the main, the gods of the ancient world do not appear to have been excessively savage. It has been reserved for the God of Christendom to set the world an example of ferocious cruelty such as might be expected only in the breast of a tiger.

For over a thousand years, when Christian theology reigned supreme in Europe, the minds of men were crushed and history became almost a blank. The priests and chiefs together destroyed society, and reduced the masses to slavery and beggary. Almost the only literary works known were the forgeries of the monks; and when not drained by the Crusades and other wars on a large scale, the whole continent was a scene of the wildest disorder, of the most bestial brutality and licentiousness, of vice and crime unchecked, of filth and pestilence, without one word of restraint from the leaders in the saturnalia, the popes and the priests.

Under theological influence in Spain alone, during three centuries, the Inquisition burnt alive over 32,000 men and women and tortured and imprisoned over 300,000 more. Many of these were horribly tortured with the most fiendish cruelty, and were often mutilated. Torquemada himself in seventeen years burnt over 10,000 heretics. With a savage delight in the destruction of everything that could in any way tell against the power of the gods, every book at all likely to be of use to mankind was ruthlessly burnt. As Ingersoll says, when the public executioner had a short breathing-spell from his ordinary occupation, he was employed in burning books. The invaluable records of history were falsified or destroyed because they were found to be inconsistent with the supposed revelation of a mythical deity, and their places filled with misleading forgeries. The discoveries of science were denounced as false, because they conflicted with the teachings of a degrading and soul-destroying theology; and philosophers and scientists were imprisoned or exiled, tortured or murdered, because they struck at the roots of a system the only foundations of which were ancient myths, but which it was necessary to maintain in order to prop up the institutions of a corrupt Church.

And when, by such means as these, theological influence was supreme in Europe, what was the condition of things? Ignorance, misery and corruption were universal, and the priests were leaders in every kind of vice and crime. The judges were as cruel as they were corrupt, and were unchecked by one word from priest or king. The palaces of king and prince and noble were dens of prostitution; and were supported in their wantonness and debauchery by the heartless extortions of brutal tax-gatherers. The masses were slaves. The men were forced to labor at the beck and call of noble and bishop; and women were fortunate who escaped the most barbarous ill-usage from the same men. Both by the Church and by the civil power the torture of witnesses was commonly practised; and there was not the slightest security for property or life from the avarice and vindictiveness of priest and noble.

The world was full of theology—of gods and ghosts, saints and angels, of bishops and martyrs, priests and nuns, of Bibles and creeds, relics and miracles, of anathemas and dispensations and stories of heaven and hell; but it was also full of misery and distress, vice and crime, of famine and pestilence, war and murder, of ignorance, and superstition, and mental death.

Did theology help to raise humanity out of this condition? No! If one thing is certain, it is this: That all ameliorating influences have come from outside the Church through secular and humanitarian agencies. Belief in gods has utterly failed, and men are beginning to find out, that if they are to be saved, they themselves must work out their own salvation.

—*Secular Thought.*

J. SPENCER ELLIS.

A minister was once preaching about heaven, and, to show the absurdity of Swedenborg's ideas, drew a graphic picture of the Swedenborgian's heaven, with its beautiful fields, fine horses, cows, and pretty women, when, in the midst of this glowing description, one of the sisters went into raptures and shouted, "Glory, glory, glory." This so disconcerted the preacher that he paused, when an elder cried out to the shouter, "Hold on there, sister, you're shouting over the wrong heaven."

A missionary society last year sent 5,000 pairs of trousers to Burmah. The natives tied up the ends and used them to hold rations in.

## REMARKABLE FEOUNDITY OF ANCIENT JEWESESSES.

THE enormous numbers of the Israelites who come out of Egypt (600,000 armed men, besides non-combatants) are not due to textual errors, because they are again and again reiterated, verified by repeated footings, and that in two complete censuses, besides agreeing with many of the representations in the story itself. Colenso showed that these numbers are not only incompatible with the account of the seventy persons who, only four generations before, had come into Egypt, but make the account of the Exodus incredible. To mobilise an army of 600,000 armed men in a single night is an incredible feat, even if we leave entirely out of account the women and children, the aged and infirm, the "mixed multitude," and the "flocks and herds." But supposing all this done and the whole company—numbering necessarily between two and three millions—provided with the tents we find them occupying immediately afterward, why should 600,000 armed men run away from Pharaoh, or cry out from fear of the detachment of troops sent in pursuit? Why did an armed force ten times as numerous as the allied army of Waterloo need to submit to intolerable oppression? How could the petty desert tribe of Amalekites hold them in check and for a time "prevail" against them?

Again the human millions are supported by manna in the "waste, howling wilderness," but what supported the great numbers of cattle and flocks and herds of which we hear repeatedly? If the Israelites had these flocks and herds, why did they complain of having no flesh to eat and twice require a miracle to provide it? If they did not have them, whence came the innumerable beasts for sacrifice, so carefully specified, and the Passover lambs, for forty successive years required to be males but one year old? Again, the male Levites of the first census were 22,000; thirty-eight years afterward, 23,000. But in Moses's own generation there were only sixteen all told. These 23,000 Levites were substituted for 22,273 first-born males of all Israel. If we make the total male population only 900,000 (600,000 bore arms) every mother in Israel must have then had at least forty-two male children.

## ACID DROPS.

Andrew MacRae, the Althorp murderer, in a letter to his brother Edward, says "I am in God's hands." He refers to his children, and exclaims, "God bless and keep them all." Of course he protests his innocence. Altogether the spectacle is extremely edifying, especially from a religious point of view. Andrew MacRae promises to make as good an end as other pious gentlemen who have passed through the hangman's hands to glory.

The London *Star* prints half a column of copy about Parson Curling's persecution of Charles Penny, of Hamble, near Southampton, who fourteen years ago married his deceased wife's sister, by whom he has four children. Parson Curling says they are living in sin, and wants them to separate. This is all very fine for the parson, but what about the children? Charles Penny seems cut up by the vicar's action. We advise him to tell the vicar to go to Hades. It is a pity to worry so much about a foolish fanatic.

The Rev. Dr. McGregor says "the Scottish church services are growing brighter and the prayers shorter." It must be a great relief to the Almighty.

A Scottish Sunday-scholar, being asked what places were destroyed by fire and brimstone, replied "The cities of Sodom and Balmoral."

Jesus Christ taught that those who are smitten on one cheek to offer the other for the same treatment. But his disciple, the Rev. C. A. Talbot, rector of Church Eaton, Staffordshire, is of a different opinion. He advocates boxing for boys, as it would enable them to take care of themselves, and to take a licking without showing spito.

C. A. Talbot, he

Says they didn't know everything down in Judee.

Jay Gould will stand a poor chance on the morning of the resurrection. His mausoleum consists of granite slabs 82 feet long, each weighing 15 tons. The whole affair weighs 300 tons, and rests on a solid concrete foundation

8 feet thick. The Yankee millionaire will have a job to lift up that lot when Gabriel blows his trumpet.

Christopher Crayon, in the *Christian World*, says—"I remember as a young man writing an article denouncing the imprisonment of George Jacob Holyoake for blasphemy. I published it in fear and trembling; it seemed to me a very bold thing to do. Now such an article would be deemed commonplace, and a man may express his opinions on religious matters without running the risk of being sent to gaol."

You are mistaken, Mr. Christopher Crayon. It is not ten years ago since Mr. Foote went to gaol for blasphemy, and his sentence was twice as long as Mr. Holyoake's. There is no security for Freethinkers until the Blasphemy Laws are utterly abolished. We invite you also to consider the Portsmouth case. What do you think of the state of religious liberty in England when the simple words "discussion invited" on a Sunday lecture bill rouses the wrath of the bigots, and makes them fly to an old Act which virtually puts Freethought meeting-places in the same category with riotous public-houses and brothels? It appears to us, Mr. Christopher Crayon, that you are shouting before the wood is anything like cleared.

The Liberal press in Germany is at loggerheads with the Government on the question of religious education. The Minister of Public Worship and Instruction has decided that the children of "Dissidents" can be compelled to attend public religious instruction, and their parents can be fined and imprisoned for not sending them. This is a direct violation of the spirit of the law, and there will be a rumpus in Germany if the Government persists in its bigoted course.

Christian education of the young is the surest support of despotism. This is apparent to Emperor William and his advisers. It should be no less apparent to Liberals in every part of Christendom. Altars and thrones are in a natural alliance against the people.

Spurgeon's "Life" seems a long way off from being written. Mrs. Spurgeon says she has "a great wealth of material," but she is waiting for "a clear indication of the will of the Lord as to the person or persons whom he has qualified for the important work." What a lot these pious people do think of themselves.

The professors of mystery are concocting a new book. It is to be called "Christ and Criticism," and to be written by Nonconformists, we presume as a rival to *Luce Mundi*. Poor J. C.! He is really to be pitied. The black gentry won't leave him alone, though he has been dead nearly two thousand years. They'll make the last penny out of him they can. How they must laugh in their sleeves at the fine way in which they all live on that poor Galilean carpenter.

"Ex-Salvationist" writes to the *Times of India*, telling of the deplorable condition of the Salvation Army officers sent out to convert India. "Often a large list of sick officers has been prepared to send to England, and the presiding officer ordered it to be cut down to a dozen or so, saying it would never do to send such a long list to England. I have known officers week after week, in answer to the question, 'Have you had enough food?' to answer 'No,' and no notice whatever was taken of it. I have known European girls to go to bed night after night crying with hunger. I myself have, after lying sick in bed, or rather on the floor all day, had to go from door to door begging from the heathen for food. Headquarters knew about this. Why did they not give me food? I resigned only after the chief officer informed me that he could not give my sick wife a good diet ordered by three doctors." He says further that "a staff officer's wife and infant child were compelled to sleep on a chuam floor, where they nearly died, while Miss Booth was travelling around South India with a large party of officers."

At Croydon, the bandmaster and sergeant-major of the Salvation Army, have been convicted and fined for assault. A feature of the case commented on by the magistrates, was the manner in which the Army people gave their evidence, for according to their statements, no violence was used, whereas, as a matter of fact, the magistrates were con-

vinced to the contrary. The Army seems to develop an *esprit de corps* rather than a spirit of truth.

Dr. Gritton, who has for many years run the Lord's Day Rest Association, and has for more than forty years been a Church of England clergyman, has received baptism by immersion at the hands of Dr. J. A. Spurgeon, at West Croydon Baptist Church.

In Western Australia last year, 217,000 sheep perished for want of water. The Lamb of God had no providence over these flocks.

Parker is continually harping on the iniquity of the *Liberator* directors. He dropped £1,000 through the concern. He ought to thank them for making his entrance to heaven so much the easier.

Dr. Parker has been writing some made stuff in the *London Echo*. Had he sent it in anonymously it would have gone into the waste basket. Much of it is a colloquy with his "Eye." Dr. Parker has a great deal of that article, but it is generally spelt "I."

It appears from the *Hongkong Telegraph* that the missionaries in China rely on sympathy and aid from Government officials at home rather than from those in China, who know them too well. At Kienyang the missionaries got into trouble with the natives, and applied for redress to Mr. Phillips, the British Consul at Foochow. Instead of embroiling himself with the Chinese, Mr. Phillips snubbed the Christian "joss-men," who telegraphed to headquarters, and, much to everybody's surprise, her Majesty's gunboat "Rattler" was dispatched to Foochow, the Consul being surprised by the ship's arrival and the commandant astonished to find nobody expected him. These accidents serve to show how the men of God are doing their best to foment a feud with the Chinese.

The sedate Chinese are not a drum-and-trumpet people, and are astonished and alarmed at the Salvation Army propagating religion with bands and banners with the motto "Blood and Fire." This confirms all they have heard of Christianity and its dissemination by a domineering race, whose gospel is always accompanied by gunpowder and gunboats. English merchants, who wish only to do business with the natives, are of opinion that the missionaries are the curse of China.

The Chinese have an object lesson of the beneficent character of Christianity before their eyes in the continual disputes between the Protestant and Catholic missionaries. The Chinan-Fu correspondent of the *Hongkong Telegraph* says both Catholics and Protestants are pressing forwards into all parts of the province, and there is danger of more or less collision if proselytising between them is encouraged.

At the early Christmas mass in St. Aloysius Church, Cincinnati, the Rev. Father Swalen shot himself dead with a revolver. The service was suspended for some time, but was afterwards concluded.

"Commodore" True, a negro of Hiawatha, Kan., who had killed a friend, as the lynchers' noose was adjusted cried, "Well, boys, I'll meet you in heaven." And he was straightway jerked to Jesus.

Believers in the loving-kindness of an all-powerful Providence should read the account of the starving peasants wandering about in the vain search for food during the famine in Finland, or simply peruse the number of accidents to children through frost and fog.

In California heavy floods have done damage to the extent of a million dollars. The inhabitants fled, leaving their cattle to perish.

"Old wives fables" was an expression of that misogynist Paul (1 Tim. iv. 7), but Mrs. H. A. Dugdale has a vigorous protest in the *Liberator* against its being used by Freethinkers. Referring to the expression, "old women's tales" being employed by Mr. Wallace Nelson, she says: "This insult to 'old women' was launched in face of the facts that men made the 'tales,' that men crammed them into women's minds, that men burned and otherwise physically

tortured women who refused to be so crammed; and that not alone the men of the past, but the men of the present age are careful that their womenfolk shall continue to be so crammed with the mind-deadening old men's tales. They send their wives to the temple of "tales," in order that they may appear respectable; and, from the same contemptible worship of men's opinions, they allow their defenceless children's brains to be poisoned by those same silly old men's tales."

The Rev. W. R. Trench, of All Saints, Notting-hill, read as his Christmas Day sermon to his congregation the whole of a leading article from the paper *W. Noble* used to call the *Timeserver*. Probably it was at least as good as any matter he could have produced himself.

"A Villager," writing "Village Sketches" to the *Daily News*, tells how the village has been troubled by a minister who says there is no Devil. First he says the witches went. "The rector says that there aren't any, and that the belief in them is just an old and exploded superstition; but he read out himself one day a text about not suffering a witch to live. There's the authority of the Bible, and we can't feel quite comfortable about the complete disappearance of witches, though none of us have ever been personally acquainted with one. And we can't see any reason why they shouldn't exist. A witch would be more comprehensible than the way messages go on the telegraph wires, if you come to think of it."

"I allus knowed woodcock time had cum," once said a marsh farmer to a writer in the *Daily News*, "when parson reads 'burning fiery furnace' in church lesson." He was much more a sportsman than a theologian (adds the relater of this story); but he meant the morning lesson (old style) for the nineteenth Sunday after Trinity, which fell about woodcock time.

In the cathedral at Salzburg hangs a great lamp supposed to burn eternally, and interesting as a remnant of a very old custom which was essentially religious and at the same time practical, that of keeping an ever-burning flame. This great lamp has been found extinguished every morning much to the consternation of the worshippers, who got to regard it somewhat as the Parsees regard their sacred fire, as a symbol of God himself. It was supposed the attendant did not pour sufficient oil, and he was told he would be discharged, though he protested his innocence. The deacon, however, fearing to be unjust, one night remained in his confessional quite unobserved. At ten o'clock an enormous rat, running along the ceiling of the vault, crept cautiously down the rope by which the lamp is suspended, remained for some time feeding on the oil, and then retired the way he came. The mystery was thus explained, and the man kept his place.

Ritualism is either absorbing the Evangelical element in the High Church, or driving it to dissent. When it borders close on Romanism as at Lincoln Cathedral, it appears to tend to the advantage of Nonconformity. Lincoln was always considered true blue Church of England, but now the Nonconformists claim more than half the population, which exceeds 40,000.

The Religious Census of Canada shows 2,781,522 described as Protestants, 1,990,465 Roman Catholics, and 60,692 Freethinkers, or those who refuse to be classified.

The Bishop of Manchester is sending to Nonconformist ministers a copy of his paper read at the Church Congress on the religious education question in Victoria, where he alleges that secular education has led to a great increase in the number of criminals. Bishop Moorhouse fails to show any real connection between the two things. Even a religious paper like the *Christian World* asks him to reconcile "the increase of crime with education in Australia with the decrease of crime along with the increase of education at home, and with the freedom of Wales from crime, where, to protect the Board schools from clerical influence, no religious teaching is given at all."

Lord Gifford declared in his will that the trustees of the Gifford Lectureship might engage Atheists as well as Theists to occupy the chair. But they show no sign of doing this, and probably never will. Christian after Christian takes his

fee, delivers his lectures, and makes room for another Christian. The trust is a gigantic farce, as we thought it would be from the first. It is simply an agency for putting cash into orthodox pockets.

Anent the controversy on the little Board schoolboy discovered by Mr. Coxhead, who said that Joseph was Christ's father, Mr. Headlam gives his own experience at a Bethnal Green infant school. He asked, "Why do we keep Christmas Day? Whose birthday is it?" and an infantile voice replied, "God's birthday, sir."

Father Clarke, of the Jesuit mission in England, describes Mr. Mivart's views as to happiness in hell, in the *Nineteenth Century*, as "at variance with the teaching of the Church, and calculated to do immeasurable mischief to the souls of men." If Father Clarke is right, Mr. St. George Mivart may himself have the opportunity of experiencing how much happiness is permitted in the infernal regions.

A Catholic pilgrimage, headed by the Duke of Norfolk, will start for Rome on St. Valentine's Day, and spend from Feb. 17 to Feb. 28 in the Eternal City. Other pilgrimages are being got up from all parts of the Catholic world with the object of showing to the Italian government the devotion which still attaches to the old gentleman at the Vatican.

The Rev. H. E. Haweis writes in the *Fortnightly* on "Ghosts and their Photos," in which he evidently believes. Perhaps he will yet induce the Jerusalem ghost to sit before the camera.

In the Spanish provinces of Aragon, Murcia, and Estremadura some five hundred country school teachers have not received a cantabo of pay for the last two years, and in many cases can hardly keep body and soul together by begging on the public streets. The village priests of the same districts are still so fat that their cheeks can generally be seen from behind.

The newly discovered *Revelation of Peter*, proves that the early Christians had very material and superstitious notions of the Millennium. They looked forward to having plenty of the new wine of the kingdom promised by J. C. Papias, indeed, early in the second century, said on the authority of John, that Jesus promised that in the coming days vines should grow, each having 10,000 branches, each with 10,000 twigs, each with 10,000 shoots, each one with 10,000 clusters, and on every cluster 10,000 grapes, and every grape giving 25 metres or 216 gallons of wine, or enough to intoxicate all the inhabitants of the earth for the space of thirty thousand million years.

This reminds us of a tale from the collieries, which has recently come to us from Lancashire, in a dialogue between a collier and his wife, which displayed their ideas of the perfection of bliss. Husband (who has been fetched out of a public-house)—"See thee, Mary, it's a damned shame ez I cawn't enjoy mysel' loik t'other chaps. It's Saturday neet; aw've done me work, aw've turn'd up moast of th' brass to thee, an' yet tha winna let me bide." Wife—"Let thee bide! Na, tha coom along, an' look tha! Tha wast drunk Wensd'y neet, tha wast drunk Thursd'y neet, tha wast drunk last neet, and thou'rt three-parts drunk now. What more dost tha want? Dost want to be an *Hangel*?"

Although the late R. A. Proctor pretty well settled its hash, talk about the Star of Bethlehem still occasionally turns up at Christmas time. The latest theory is that of Mr. J. H. Stockwell, who suggests in the *Astronomical Journal* that what the wise men look for "His star in the east," was really a conjunction between Jupiter and Venus, which took place May 3, B. C. 6. Well if the Magi did not know two planets from a new star they may have been called "wise" in irony; and just to fancy making the birth of the Son of God to follow on a conjunction between Jupiter and Venus.

We suggest that the theory of "irony" has not yet been sufficiently worked by Christian advocates. The Bishop of Ripon gives, in the January *Expositor*, a hint that might be carried much further. He suggests that when Jesus says: "Make unto yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," the passage should be taken as ironical. Probably also when Jesus said he would come again in

that generation, when he said, "Ask and it shall be given you," and when he promised that his disciples should drink poison without being hurt, he was only ironical.

Canon Scott Holland preached to the Unemployed in St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday evening. Some persons reputed to be Freethinkers took part in the farce. The preacher's text was "Jesus." It is amusing to read that nine officers and sixty constables were in attendance, besides another and stronger force drawn up in the crypt. Canon Scott Holland's sermon was wretched stuff—simply treacled sawdust, with a tincture of opium.

Just before Christmas a bottle was picked up off the Verlin Islands, containing a paper bearing the following words: "Sailing ship Good Hope sprung a leak; water gaining fast; God help us. Captain Forbes." *God help us!* Apparently God didn't—as usual. A quantity of wreckage, supposed to be that of the "Good Hope," is floating off the islands.

The "God strike me dead" yarn turns up from America in a new and possibly a true form. It is told by the Rev. D. C. Hardin, in the Baptist *Gleaner*, of Fulton, Kentucky. It appears that Mr. Hardin debated with Mr. Remsburg, and concluded by turning to his opponent and challenging him to raise his right hand to heaven, with the Bible in his left, and say: "O God, if this book is true, strike me dead here and now." Mr. Hardin raised his own right hand, and, with his Bible in his left, said: "O God, if this book is not true, and did not come down from thee, strike me dead here and now." Mr. Hardin is perfectly convinced that if Mr. Remsburg had followed his performance "he would have been sent home a corpse," but as he also is living still, he probably has his version to give of the occurrence.

The Church party, meeting at Totnes, has been discussing Secular education and the spread of irreligion. One gentleman said the sight was very sad; another said the whole world had altered. A sky-pilot regretted the abolition of the village stocks. The Conference closed with "a vote of thanks" to somebody, and that was the total upshot. Totnes and the district would, no doubt, be a good soil for sowing Free-thought seed.

"Colonel" Nichol, editor of the *War Cry*, would not have his child vaccinated. For this he was fined, and as he would not pay the penalty he was taken to Pentonville Prison to do a week's imprisonment. His "comrades" at the Salvation Army head-quarters collected the money and paid the fine, and "Colonel" Nichol was released. By this means the serious drama was turned into a farce. If "Colonel" Nichol knew what his "comrades" were doing, his was a very cheap martyrdom; if he did not, they were guilty of a great piece of impertinence.

A great change has come over the *Pall Mall Gazette*. It turned on a "funny" man to report Mr. Frederic Harrison's New Year's address to the Positivists. The man's wit was peculiar. He made a great deal of the fact that the busts of Moses and Homer were bald. On leaving the hall his eye caught the words "The Service of Man," and "as I walked out," he says, "I wondered what the man's name was." This profound and brilliant witticism ends the funny man's report. He evidently thought it a superb climax—something to create a sensation in the metropolis.

The Marquis of Queensberry sends us a friendly letter in reference to our last week's paragraph. He complains of being misrepresented by the newspaper report to which we referred. In his lecture at Birmingham he did not advocate polygamy at all. What he contended was that a legitimate concubinage would be an improvement on the illegitimate one that exists, and, as he thinks, must exist, under present conditions. We are not surprised to find that Lord Queensberry was misrepresented; it is the common fate of those who criticise existing institutions. On the other hand, we should like to point out that while polygamy is a Bible doctrine, as we said last week, it is not so long since a Church of England clergyman published a volume in defence of concubinage as a practice authorised by the Christian Scriptures. Beyond this we do not propose to enter into the merits of the question. It is enough to put on record that the Marquis of Queensberry has not been advocating polygamy.



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Jan. 8, Secular Hall, Humberston-gate, Leicester: at 3, "John Morley: Statesman, Writer, and Freethinker"; at 6.30, "The Doom of the Gods."

January 15 and 22, Hall of Science; 29 and 30, Bristol.  
February 5, Hull; 12 and 19, Hall of Science; 26, Grimsby.  
March 5, Liverpool; 12, Leeds; 19, Hall of Science; 26, Manchester.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS. — Jan. 8, Hall of Science; 15 and 22, Birmingham; 28, Chester-le-Street; 29, South Shields; 30, North Shields; 31, Ebchester. Feb. 2, Hetton-le-Hole; 3, Blyth; 4, Bolden Colliery; 5, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 12, Liverpool; 19, Leicester; 26, Birmingham; 28, Sheffield. March 1, 2, 3, Sheffield; 5, Birmingham; 12, Hall of Science; 19, Bristol; 26, Glasgow; 27 and 28, Glasgow. — All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him (with stamped envelope for reply) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

E. P. S. — Thanks for card and good wishes.

J. WALTERS. — We don't intend to give the fellow any further notice. The whole affair is monstrously ridiculous.

J. SAUNDERS. — We approve your sentiments, but cannot find room for insertion.

C. E. SMITH. — Always glad to receive your cuttings. We do not know the lecturer you mention.

G. J. DOBSON. — Our compliments to Huddersfield friends.

W. HATCHER (Barnsley). — Mr. Foote cannot offer you a date at the moment; he will do so as soon as possible.

H. BISHOP. — Thanks for your trouble.

R. TAYLOR. — The matter shall be seen to.

W. V. KEEBLE. — Quite right.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND: — W. C. (Dorking), additional penny for thirteen weeks, 1s. 1d.

ORIENT (Liverpool). — Thanks for your appreciation of what you are good enough to call our "grand and noble work."

R. G. LEES. — We reciprocate your good wishes, and thank you for promises of support *re* Portsmouth.

J. W. WITTERING. — The date is booked.

C. MESSER. — The N.S.S. Secretary will send you your certificate in due course. Pleased to know you are delighted with our double number, and that Freethought is spreading in your district.

C. DOUG. — Send the Shilling Week subscription by Tuesday, and give thanks to the Liverpool friends.

E. GAZK. — Mr. Foote is nearly himself again. A week's holiday would put him in A 1 form.

S. G. GRANT. — We recently wrote some paragraphs on Müller's Orphanage. The cutting you send us shows that it gets well advertised.

STANLEY JONES, who is in London until Feb. 8, would be glad to make a few lecturing engagements in the metropolitan district. Branch secretaries should communicate with him at once if they can avail themselves of his services.

JOHN GRANGE. — We value your appreciation of our "glorious twopenny worth," and of Mr. Foote's services as President of the N.S.S. We also take the opportunity of expressing our recognition of the good work you have been doing in the Bradford district.

D. BATES. — See "Acid Drops." Thanks for good wishes.

E. S. — You ask our opinion of the passage. We never read greater nonsense. To criticise it fully would take more space than we can afford.

E. E. POPE. — Your newsagent is talking nonsense. He can obtain the *Almanack* for you if he chooses. Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.O., will send you a copy post free for 6d. By all means join the N.S.S., and do so at once.

W. LAMB. — Glad to hear from one we have influenced, and to have your opinion that our double number "is splendid."

G. NAEWIGER has resigned the secretaryship of the Hull Branch; the new secretary is Mr. Davison, 1 Francis-street east, Hull.

P. H. ECHLIN writes: — "Permit me to congratulate you on your new year's number. It is admirable. I bought several copies which I sent away, and I advise those who are on the 'converting lay' to post a few copies to Christian acquaintances."

RON MAHON. — Send the elementary text books to the Camberwell Branch, which has science classes, conducted by Mr. Coppock. Address, 61 New Church-road, Camberwell-road, London, S.E. It is good of you to make the offer.

JOSEPH BROWN acknowledges for N.E. Secular Federation: — Bedlington Branch 5s.; Mr. Robinson 2s. Mr. Brown congratulates us on our double-number and hopes we shall issue one every month. We intend to issue a special illustrated twopenny number the first week in each month, but we cannot make it such a budget as the new year's double-number, the cost of producing which was so great

that, even with a larger sale than usual, we only just made both ends meet.

B. MARGENSON. — No doubt the meetings you refer to are doing good. Mr. Foote hopes to pay the works a visit the next time he is in the neighborhood.

H. BREWSTER. — Glad to hear you are so pleased with our new year's number, and that you are lending it about as much as possible.

J. BAKER. — We hope the ball will be kept rolling at Ipswich. Mr. Foote will come again by and bye.

G. MEADOWS. — Thanks for friendly letter. We hope to realise your good wishes.

J. PROCTOR. — If all were of your mind, and deed, the Shilling Week would bring enough to push on Freethought work gloriously.

J. F. HAMPSON. — We appreciate Mrs. Hampson's good wishes. Every lady in our party is worth two men, at least at present.

F. MARGETSON. — Pleased to hear that your conversion to Secularism has saved you many a pound.

D. WOODHOUSE. — We wish you also a happy and prosperous new year.

F. ABLARD. — Folding the *Freethinker* before sending it to the publisher would cost us at least £60 a year, and we cannot afford it. We may be able to by and bye. The joke you send is an old one. It appeared many years ago in one of Mark Twain's books.

G. GOODAY. — We appreciate your efforts to help us and promote the cause.

J. CLOSE. — We are more determined than ever to "uphold the flag."

J. G. BARTRAM. — Mr. Engstrom's letter, being marked private, cannot be printed or dealt with without his consent. At the same time, if he has charges to make against Secularism, he should make them publicly and take the responsibility. His one case is no case at all and is also very ancient. We invite his attention to the constant cases of clergymen who go wrong. Let him get out his own beam before he searches for our mote.

R. FORD. — There are a few copies of the Double Number left. Order of Mr. Forder direct if your newsagent does not supply you.

A. FAGE. — Subscription copies will be sent as ordered. Thanks.

D. B. SWETLAND. — You admirably express the philosophy — or, as some might call it, the religion — of Secularism. We share your estimate of Colonel Ingersoll. He is a grand man. Glad to hear you like the *Freethinker*. Theology is perishing indeed when the women begin to forsake it.

W. M. KNOX. — Send the Belfast list for Shilling Week by Tuesday. Why are you astonished at the local press giving prominence to the Theist's argument and leaving out everything salient in the Agnostic's speeches? What did you expect, you sanguine man?

J. M. HEADLEY, newsagent, 76 George-street, Yarmouth, who supplies all Freethought literature, writes: — "The current *Freethinker* is grand; words cannot express my appreciation."

E. ANDERSON. — Tuesday 4 p.m. is too late for insertion till next number.

J. HOOPER. — Sorry to hear of your illness, and hope 1893 will be more generous.

HUMANITAS. — Your letter is very welcome. Pleased to hear you say "the Double Number is certainly one of the best twopenny worths that ever came under my notice." We should like to hear a good report of Freethought in Dublin as well as in Belfast.

C. SHUFFLEBOTHAM. — Enclosure under consideration. We shall keep Shilling Week open till Tuesday next; all who send up to Tuesday will be in time for next week's *Freethinker*. Beyond that it is hardly advisable.

W. H. — Such appreciation is encouraging.

S. R. STEPHENSON. — Glad to hear you think our double-number so good as to order five extra copies.

L. V. CLIFTON. — We hope Mr. Standing will have good audiences at Wolverhampton this Sunday.

J. H. WHITHAM. — (1) It would be quite impossible for Mr. Foote to sit in the House of Commons and do justice to the present requirements of the National Secular Society; nor would he spend five minutes or fivepence in what is called "nursing" a constituency. He has a much larger constituency, and a much more real and definite one, than most members of parliament; it consists of thousands of thinking, independent, and energetic men and women in all parts of the country. (2) Social reasons would probably prevent some of the persons you mention from becoming vice-presidents of the N.S.S. As the years roll by such reasons will lose their force.

F. GIBSON. — Mr. Forder has sent you the *Bible Handbook* in cloth, containing all the parts. The balance is put to Shilling Week.

F. HALL (Great Ayton). — Parcel sent. Pleased to hear you like Mr. Cattell's "Conversations with Christians."

NOTTINGHAM, Aberdeen, Camberwell and Bristol lecture notices arrived last week on Wednesday, too late of course for insertion.

GEORGE ANDERSON.—Always glad to receive your cuttings.

J. DAVIES (Dundee) came across the *Freethinker* four years ago through a friend. It has ever since been his weekly companion, and since the enlargement he has ordered three copies instead of one. This correspondent adds—"Through Mr. Gott's advertisement in the *Freethinker*, I have sent him a few orders. The goods have given the greatest satisfaction; in fact, the parties have told me they don't understand how he can give such value for the money."

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.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Liberty—Liberator—Progressive Thinker—Flaming Sword—Secular Thought—Modern Thought—Twentieth Century—Für Unsere Jugend—Freethinker's Magazine—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—Clarion—Church Reformer—Ironclad Age—Independent Pulpit—La Vérité Philosophique—Echo—Watts's Literary Guide—Freedom—Cosmopolitan—Star—Morning Leader—Manchester Examiner and Times—South-west Recorder—Printer's Ink.

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. 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.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3 s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

### SHILLING WEEK.

We intended to print the names of "Shilling Week" subscribers in our next issue, but to save time we print this week all that have arrived up to Tuesday morning. It is a very good beginning, and we hope the stream will flow in at the same rate all the rest of the week. The fund will be kept open till next Tuesday morning. By that time we hope every reader of this journal who can possibly afford it will have contributed according to his means. If everyone does his part, sending a shilling if he cannot send more, we shall be able to pay over a handsome sum to the National Secular Society's treasurer.

G. W. FOOTE.

### SUGAR PLUMS.

There was a great rush for our New Year's double-number, and we disposed of a larger edition than we usually publish. Unfortunately, owing to disarrangement at the machiner's, through to the holiday, the supply could not keep pace with the demand, and we lost the sale of two or three thousand copies. Of course this is very galling, but we must bear it with Secular fortitude. Next time we issue a double-number we shall prepare for all contingencies. Meanwhile the extra sale, such as it was, should benefit our regular circulation.

Mr. Foote lectured at Wellington Hall, Portsmouth, on Sunday, according to announcement. Mr. Scarrott took the chair at all three meetings. He and other of the local "saints" were spoiling for a fight. We regret to say they were disappointed. Mr. Foote was at the hall in the morning a half an hour before the lecture, so as to be in readiness for anything that might occur, but everything passed off quietly. In the afternoon a well-known detective was seen outside the hall, but he did not come inside. This was the only "incident." The evening audience was crowded and full of enthusiasm.

We had everything ready at Portsmouth, even to the extent of ample bail if the police should be foolish enough to arrest any one. They did not arrest any one; in fact, they did nothing. Whether they intend to do anything is more than we can say. There is still time for them to take action

if they feel disposed. Some of the Portsmouth friends think the police may try to interfere when the platform is occupied by a less known lecturer. In any case the Branch will have the fullest support. Mr. Foote would rather be in the fight, if it occurs, in order to conduct it personally; but his not being in it would not make the smallest difference in any other respect. It would be his duty, and certainly his disposition, to rally the Freethought party to the point of the enemy's attack. And it wouldn't need much rallying.

Fight or no fight at Portsmouth, the prompt action taken in this matter will satisfy the N.S.S. Branches that their rights are not to be tampered with lightly. Whoever attacks the liberties of one Branch will have to fight the whole Society, from its president down to the latest recruit. This is worth knowing by the Branches—and also by the bigots. Of course the Portsmouth Branch will go on as though nothing had occurred, except that the recent bother will probably stimulate the members' enthusiasm.

Although last Sunday was New Year's Day, when home parties are in season, Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience in the evening at the Hall of Science, London. The meeting was very enthusiastic. Mr. Watts made a strong appeal on behalf of the "Shilling Week," which resulted in 104 shillings being subscribed. Mr. Watts lectures again at the Hall next Sunday morning and evening. At the latter lecture the Marquis of Queensberry will preside, and Mrs. Watts will give a recital.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake sends us his latest photograph. It is a very fine one, taken by James Ball, 17 Regent-street, Waterloo-place, London, S.W. We intend to reproduce it in our special twopenny number, the first week in February.

Mr. Holyoake writes as follows with respect to our Shilling Week:—"I enclose my shilling to your Shilling List. When I proposed a shilling subscription for Italian freedom in 1855 it brought 9,000 shillings. Many will be glad if you are equally successful. I have heard some say they were glad of the proposal, since they did not like to make a small subscription to Secular funds, and a larger one than a shilling was beyond their means. I hope all that are of this way of thinking will hear of the opportunity you now give them."

We hope so too, and we trust they will make use of the opportunity. This number of the *Freethinker* will be in the hands of most of its readers before the close of Shilling Week. Mr. Holyoake's letter should screw every one's courage to the sticking point. When an old veteran, who might well be taking his ease without troubling about such matters, comes to the front in this way, there is really no excuse for anyone who holds back.

This is a fair occasion for wishing our aged colleague—once, and still in many ways, our teacher—a happy New Year. In doing so we shall be expressing the wish of thousands of Freethinkers. It does one good to note the youthful fire in the veteran's heart, despite the snows of seventy-six winters on his reverend head.

A special fund has been started to give greater publicity to the Freethought lectures at the London Hall of Science. Good audiences meet there, especially on Sunday evenings, but there is room for more, and an effort will be made to fill the vacant seats, and thus to carry the message of Freethought into a larger circle of the people of London. Mammoth bills are to be posted on street hoardings, and other advertising methods resorted to, if the fund permits. The following subscriptions have already been handed to us:—J. Laws, £1. 1s.; H. C. B., £1; S. R. Stephenson, 5s.; D. Davies, 10s.; M. Mensbier, 5s.; H. F. S., 10s.; G. Ward, £1; Miss Robins, 10s.; D. Woodhouse, 10s. 6d.

Wednesday evening, Dec. 28, was horribly foggy in London. It required some strength and courage to go any distance from home. The *Conversazione* at the Hall of Science was therefore less numerously attended than it would have been otherwise. For every person present there were probably two or three kept away. About two hundred and fifty braved the weather, including a good many ladies, and all seemed to spend a very enjoyable evening. Miss Vance, Miss Brown, Mrs. Standing, Mrs. Foote and other ladies served the guests with light

refreshments; occasional songs were rendered by Miss Edwards and Mr. Edwards, Mr. Harding, Mr. Pearce, and Mrs. Caudwall, who was enthusiastically encored; and Mr. Foote, besides a five-minutes' address, gave a Shakespearian reading. Madame Saunders ably presided at the piano. The rest of the evening was spent in animated conversation.

The President's "At Home" is a new feature of Mr. R. O. Smith's suggestion. It was so much appreciated that another will be given as soon as the weather is more propitious. It affords Mr. Foote an opportunity of chatting with known and unknown friends, and members of the N.S.S. in general an opportunity of getting acquainted with the members of the Executive and with each other. Among the members of the Executive present on Dec. 28 were Messrs. Forder, Standring, Smith, Reynolds, Roger, and Samson.

Although we cannot follow Comte in all his social reconstruction, we have a real sympathy with Positivism, and we are glad to notice that Mr. Frederic Harrison's two addresses at Newton Hall, on Dec. 31 and Jan. 1, were so well attended. Mr. Harrison said some beautiful things which all Secularists would appreciate. By the way, Dr. Congreve has sent Mr. Foote a present of some of Comte's books—in English—for the Hall of Science Library.

Professor Huxley, says the *Bookman*, looks years younger since he changed his residence from London to Eastbourne. When he is not paying flying visits to town, he may be frequently found in his garden, having developed a great interest in horticulture.

Bristol Freethinkers—at any rate all of them who read this journal—are earnestly invited to join the local N.S.S. Branch. It has done excellent work during the past twelve months, and it will do still better in 1893 if adequately supported. The secretary's address is—J. Keast, 32 Morgan-street, St. Paul's, Bristol. Besides hearing from Freethinkers willing to join the Branch, he will be very glad to receive parcels of Freethought literature for distribution among the "heathen," of whom there is a great multitude in the city, a long way off "salvation."

The Hull Branch has made capital progress under Mr. Naewiger's secretaryship. Four years ago it was formed through an announcement in the *Freethinker*. Since then a great number of lectures have been delivered; a debating class has been formed, which is turning out some good speakers; a fair library has been got together; a heavy loss, contracted two years ago, has been cleared off, and there is now a reasonable balance in hand. Mr. Naewiger wants now to take a little rest.

The Nottingham Branch "places entire confidence in Mr. Foote as President of the N.S.S., and pledges itself to support him and the Portsmouth Branch in their struggle for liberty." We hope the police will give the Nottingham Branch an opportunity of being as good as its word.—By the way, Mr. Sam Standring is to lecture at Nottingham on Monday (Jan. 9), when we trust he will have a hearty reception.

Camberwell Secular Hall will to-day (Jan. 8) be the scene of a tea and entertainment on behalf of the funds of the London Secular Federation. The Camberwell Branch gives the use of the hall and takes all the trouble. We hope, therefore, its efforts will be appreciated, and that a goodly number of metropolitan Freethinkers, especially of those on the south side of the Thames, will patronise the function. Tea is to be served at 6 o'clock.

The N. E. Secular Federation's annual social gathering was a great success. Owing to the trade depression there was a falling off in attendance from the country districts, but the Newcastle and Shields "saints" were present in force. About 150 sat down to tea. Mr. S. M. Peacock presided at the concert, at which several local artists gave their services. Mr. Joseph Brown, the Federation secretary, says they will take a larger room and make a bigger affair of it next year.

The Rev. Stewart Headlam states, in the *Church Reformer*, that at last there is a chance of some of the London Board School play grounds being open on Sunday. The Board has passed a resolution enabling the divisional members, under

certain restrictions, to deal with this matter. The ratepayers should write to their members urging that this be done.

#### DEBATE ON AGNOSTICISM IN BELFAST.

On December 22 last a debate took place between Mr. J. H. Gilliland, of the Ulster Branch of the National Secular Society, and Mr. John Straiton, preacher, of the Church of Christ; Mr. Gilliland taking the affirmative of the proposition "That Agnosticism is the true position regarding the Existence of God." The debate took place in the hall belonging to Mr. Straiton's supporters, and the attendance of the public was very large, the holding capacity of the hall being taxed to its utmost limit.

In affirming the proposition Mr. Gilliland put forward an able and succinct statement of the Agnostic position, showing how futile it was for man, with his limited capacities, to attempt to bring infinities into the range of personality; how nature was cruel to the individual and worked through evolutionary laws that precluded the idea of design and a designer as enunciated by the Paleyan school. All formulated ideas of God have been wanting in logical consistency, and showed evidence of being the result of man's imagination. The God of the Bible, for instance, exhibiting caprice and and cruelty, revenge, injustice and tribal punitiveness, characteristics of the Jews forming prominent features of his nature.

Mr. Straiton opened in the negative with a flippant taunt at the confessed ignorance of Agnostics. A man who admits he is ignorant should sit reverently and learn, instead of attempting to teach. The God idea is universal; even the poor ignorant savage bows his head to something higher than himself. Thomas Paine was a believer in God. David Hume had stated that man's imagination was really limited by his objective environment, so that he could not have evolved the idea of God without its being a reality, any more than he could imagine a sixth sense.

In his second speech Mr. Gilliland pointed out that man had again and again imagined things that had no objective reality—fairies, for instance; and it has since transpired that Mr. Straiton very carefully omitted to quote Hume fully, as the complete quotation would have disproved his own case.

In two succeeding speeches the disputants warmly set up their respective cases, and the last speech fell to Mr. Straiton. In this, while he repudiated the wish to introduce fresh matter, the unscrupulous character of the Christian defender became plain. He repeatedly put words into his opponent's mouth unuttered by him, and carefully avoided answering the most trenchant points urged by Mr. Gilliland. The attack on the character of the God of the Bible he avoided entirely, allowing the case against poor Jehovah to go by default.

The debate was carried out in a friendly spirit; personality was only introduced in a small way by the Christian speaker, and it fell exceedingly flat. A vote of thanks to the chairman, Mr. H. L. Thomas, a mutual friend of both parties, terminated the proceedings. A local magnate, Sir James Haslett, had consented to preside, but he conveniently had another appointment. A small charge for admission was made, the total amount of this being handed over to the Royal Hospital, Belfast, all the expenses incurred being borne by the respective organisations.

W. M. KNOX.

#### OBITUARY.

I regret to announce the death of George Daly, member of the Leyton Branch, who expired on Dec. 26, after a long and painful illness. Almost his last request was for a Secular burial. Mr. F. Haslam attended and read the service.

Mrs. Annie Walker, also a member of the Leyton Branch, died suddenly whilst preparing her Christmas dinner. The deceased lady and her family are well known to the Secularists of the district, and at their request the Secular Burial Service was read by the undersigned. Mr. Rosetti also delivered a brief address.

E. M. VANCE, Asst.-Sec.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS TO N.S.S.

SPECIAL FUND.—A. G. Lupton, 2s. 6d.; T. Bullock, 2s. 6d.; A. Tripp, £1; A. Marks, 10s.; J. Chamberlain, 2s. 6d.

BENEVOLENT FUND.—A. G. Lupton, 2s. 6d.; A. Tripp, £1; Dr. Duncan, 10s.; J. Chamberlain, 2s. 6d.

E. M. VANCE, assistant-sec.

THE ORIGIN OF EVIL.  
(FROM THE DUTCH OF C. VOSMAER.)

WITH his hand in his beard  
Sat the lonely Jahveh,  
And stroked his beard,  
His eternally-grey, old-Testamentary beard;  
And the Eternal One would have died if he could,  
Of weariness, for the Sabbath day  
Had come, and he might not—  
See Deuteronomy fifth and verse fourteen—  
Work on the Sabbath.  
Beside his feet, and leaning on his footstool  
The earth, was crouched the Fool of Heaven, Satan.  
He had exhausted all his quips  
And all his cranks,  
And even he himself was devilish weary.  
Then said to him Jahveh: "Art thou weary,  
Like all the angels,  
Whose spiritless, virtuous, long-drawn countenances,  
And tasteless hallelujahs,  
Are fit to make me long for something sinful?  
Amuse me, rascal,  
Or . . . if thou'rt so proper,  
By mine own self, thou shalt be made an angel!"  
At that the god of mockery shrieked  
And said to his master:  
"Lend me thy footstool, the earth,  
And I will juggle before thee!"  
"Thou may'st," said Jahveh,  
"So that thou swear thou wilt not let it fall,  
And give it honorably back."  
Then Satan took the earth and juggled featly  
With sleight-of-hand, diabolically nimble.  
Up his right arm the earth-ball spun and clambered,  
Ran 'round his neck and trembled down his left arm;  
And he tossed it into the air,  
Spun it whizzing,  
Threw it beneath him,  
Turned a somersault,  
And stopped it equiposed above its start-point,  
And Jahveh laughed, until the evening came,  
And the Sabbath was over.  
Honorably Satan gave the earth back,  
But since that day, alas!  
All over it are visible the marks  
Stained by his dirty fingers.

—*Twentieth Century.*

MR. HALL CAINE ON CHRISTIANITY.

MR. HALL CAINE, the novelist, is writing a Life of Christ, or rather he has written it, but he wants to go to Palestine and live there for some time before publishing. What he will gain by living there is not very obvious. Perhaps the Holy Ghost will make another descent for Mr. Caine's benefit.

Mr. Caine tells the Rev. D. P. McPherson that there is "a great craving for the human side of Jesus, the Elder Brother rather than the Man God." "But," he adds, "I am fully convinced that it is the supernatural and not the human claim of Christ that has, and always will have, the great appeal for the world. Strip Christ of his divinity, and I do not see much chance for Christianity."

Being asked by his interviewer what he thought of the prospects of "the union of Christendom," Mr. Caine delivered himself as follows:

"I do not know enough of the differences of belief in different denominations to judge of the possibilities of union. As one who has travelled in many countries and witnessed the effects of various faiths, it has often occurred to me that the divisions of Christendom were very mean and paltry. But then I have found Judaism as much divided, and Islamism as foolishly broken up into sects. And sometimes, on coming out of a Mohammedan mosque or an Eastern synagogue, I have told myself that it was childish and pitiful and even monstrous that three families of one faith should hate and persecute each other as they do. To me it has been as easy to worship among the Jews as among the Christians, and almost as easy among the Islamites as among either of the other two. I am prepared to hear that this is a breadth that comes of narrowness. So be it. I think that any union which excludes the Jew and the Muslim must be only a half union of God's people. And I do not think that the Jew

would ever join hands with the Christian, even if the Christian were to abandon belief in the divinity of Christ. The Muslim might, for his faith is wrapped up with no race feeling, and no sense of peculiar mission. As for the Catholic, I cannot conceive of his abating one jot of the supernaturalism of Christianity, and therefore I see no chance of his joining the Muslim, the Jew, or the 'broad Christian.' In short, though personally I can see my way to stand apart from, and yet side by side with, all who profess faith in one God, and though it seems to me a strange waste of force that people who kneel to the same deity should fight among themselves about minor things, while their real enemy Unbelief is going practically unchallenged, I do not see much likelihood that the whole family of the worshippers of Jehovah will ever find a common standing ground."

SHILLING WEEK.

(When no figures follow the name the amount is 1s.)

Four Britons 4s., A. Guest, W. Clogg, E. M. Vance, Annie Brown, C. Shepherd, W. C., J. De Gruyter, J. Haynes, J. Taylor, H. Stevenson, B. Margerison, A. R., T. S., E. S., J. H. S., E. Calvert, Oxford Working Man, Potestas, H. Brewster 2s., C. Quinton, A. Scopes 2s., Tutor 2s., W. Scottow, C. G. H., J. Baker 5s., G. A. Meadows £1, T. Ferguson, J. Proctor £1, F. Gibson 3s., G. Hampson, L. S. Hampson, A. F. Hampson, Mrs. Hampson, C. Shufflebotham 5s., A. Gadsden, W. H. 2s., W. Smith 5s., A. Riley, S. R. Stephenson 2s., C. Riddle, J. P. Adams 2s., A. Campbell 5s., J. G. Hobson, C. H. Hall 2s., W. H. Spivey, J. Netherwood 2s., W. Cliffe, W. Fodge, T. Stead, Fieldsend, E. Moorhouse, R. Tabrum, A. Cross 4s., R. Baker, Anti-Humbog and Wife 2s., Mr. and Mrs. Towers 2s., K. A. G. 3s., A. Alford, R. Morrow 2s., J. Mill 2s., Alpha 1s. 6d., W. Hatcher, J. Browne 1s., A. Essex, G. F. F. 5s., S. Stauffer, R. Waller 2s., W. Smith, W. B. Jevons 5s., F. Yeoman 5s., F. Simoni 2s. 6d., A. Hochmuth, Bishop, Rich 2s., Newman, Steel, Mogasker, Adams, Simpson, Fairchild, Schofield, Friend, J. Grango 2s. 6d., H. Holland 2s. 2d., G. J. Holyoake 2s., A. J. H., Orient, L. R., G. C. F., J. M. Headley, J. Hooper, W. Parrot, J. Bland, J. Pembury 5s., S. Grant, J. Eccles, Pepperbox 1s. 6d., J. Abbott, E. Gage, W. Taylor, A. Searle, C. Goodenough, Berks Tory 2s., R. Shaw 3s., R. Messer, R. Haigh, C. W., Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson 2s., W. Lamb 5s., H. Gadd 5s., R. S. 2s., J. Seddon, J. Hay 2s. 6d., J. Sutton, Mr. and Mrs. Gott 2s., G. Gooday 5s., C. B. R., F. Ablard, F. W., A. Beldharn, F. Clark, P. Cotroni 2s., A. Fagg 2s., Amy, H. Fagg, F. Margetson, H. Shepherd, J. Gordon 2s. 6d., R. Taylor, Three Chums, G. May, Mr. and Mrs. James 2s., J. W. Griffiths, J. R. Griffiths, B. Shaw, B. Lee, E. Pope, E. T. and Q. Bressit 2s., J. H. Maden, Matt Brown, Polly Robins, G. Ward, J. Rowney 3s., W. J. A., W. T. Herbert, Carter, Watson, W. Davey, E. G. T., E. Chamberlain, W. Tozer, Mrs. Penny, Robertson, Fielding, Harris, Yidishe Freethinker 2s., C. Kingston, Miss Sargent, Weir, M. B. 2s., Liz and Arthur Hamilton 5s., W. Moore, W. Leate, Com, Able 2s., Riley, Ryton, C. Skinner, Turkington, J. Linkstead, A. Purcell, G. B., R. Judge, Summerhayes, T. Lewis, J. Grover, T. Field, J. Field, Gladding, Jackson, Mr. and Mrs. Poulden 2s., R. E. S., Lightowler, W. J., C. Kelf, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Edwards 2s., Mr. Miller 2s., Mr. Doorno. *Handed to Mr. Watts without names*, £2 4s. T. Almond, H. G. S. 5s., A. Charles and wife 2s., H. Good.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY (ONLY).

J. H. Whitham, L. N. Clifton, J. Davies, W. C. Johnson. Per Mr. Forder: W. Butcher 2s. 6d., Ramo, A. Friend £1, J. Storry, Mr. Rae, Mrs. Rae, Miss Rae, Cantab, D. Young 2s. 6d., Mrs. Young, "D." 2s., R. Davison 4s. 6d., J. West, J. Cookson 6s., J. K. Sykes, Wildflower, J. Hart 6s. 6d., H. Horell, G. T., E. Clements, H. Abbott 2s., R. Ellis, E. Truelove 2s., J. Ames 2s. 6d., W. J. Dunham, W. Stuart 10s., R. H. Side 3s., A. O. Side, E. D. Side, L. F. Side, Mrs. E. D. Side, A. A. Sido, Alice Side, Flora Side, Bortram Side.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND (ONLY).

J. D. Leggett 5s., J. Grimshaw, J. H. Whitham, J. Unsworth 2s., L. N. Clifton, F. Hall, J. Davies, Humanitas 5s., D. P. S. 2s. 6d., A. W. Marks 3s. 5d., P. Condon, J. Chamberlain 4s. 1d., Cantab, R. Davison 4s. 6d., V. E. Mallett 12s. 9d., J. Hart 6s. 6d., T. Breary (Natal) 8s. 11d., P. Barber £1, J. Hume, J. Close 2s., W. C. Johnson.

HOW TO HELP US.

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

## DOWN WITH MEN!

According to the *Woman's Herald*, a Female Suffragist in America spoke at a meeting as follows: "Miss President, fellow women, and male trash generally,—I am here for the purpose of discussing woman's rights, recussing her wrongs, and cussing the men. I believe women were created equal with man, although they are a little more equal now. As a success, man is a failure. I bless my stars my mother was a woman. They say man was created first. Well, suppose he was, ain't first experiments always failures? The only decent thing was a rib, and that went to make something better. They throw in our faces about Eve taking the apple, but I bet five dollars Adam hoisted her up the tree, and only gave her the core. What did he do when found out? True to his masculine instincts, he slunk behind Eve, and said—'It is not I, but she.' Thus woman had to father everything, and mother it too. What we want is the ballot, and the ballot we mean to have if we let down our back hair, and swim in a sea of gore."

## INGERSOLL IN NEW YORK.

The Broadway Theatre was crowded from the gallery to the back of the stage last Sunday night to hear Colonel Ingersoll's estimate of Voltaire. The orator spoke for two and a quarter hours, but no one thought it was half-past ten when he finished. It is very evident that Liberal sentiment is widely diffused among the people, for the lecture, as our readers know, bristles with criticism of Christianity and her priests, and when he flung his darts of sarcasm the building "trembled with applause," as the *Sun* reporter felt it. The lecture was substantially as our readers have seen it, but the Colonel went outside his notes once or twice. An allusion which the audience thought referred to Dr. Parkhurst and like busybodies was a reference to the harshness of the clergy. "You have no idea," he said, "how severe priests are. If you allowed all the priests and ministers of New York to form a legislature to make laws for York, where would you rather live—here or in a well-regulated penitentiary?" A roar of laughter showed that the audience understood the allusion. "I would never think I had done my duty to a client," he went on, "if there was a clergymen on the jury. A clergyman never thinks justice is done unless hell is raised with somebody." Mr. Moody's description of his prayer on board the steamship "Spree," when she was disabled and storm-tossed on the ocean, evoked from Colonel Ingersoll another remark that tickled his hearers hugely. "Religion," he said, "is to most men what a lifeboat is to a ship. The passengers leave lifeboats alone until a storm comes, and then they begin to think of them seriously, unless some man happens to be on board who is lucky at prayer." A burst of laughter greeted this, and there were audible whispers of "Moody!" Mr. Ingersoll's voice was in excellent shape, the hoarseness which sometimes troubled him having disappeared, and when, in telling of the agony of a tortured man, he lowered it almost to a whisper, he could be heard distinctly in the farthest part of the great theatre. The lecture and its delivery was a great treat to those who had the good fortune to be there.—*Truthseeker*.

## THE EQUALITY OF DEATH.

THE Hadji said: "If o'er my tomb  
Should grasses wave and roses bloom,  
And if with tears the spot should be  
Sometimes bedewed for love of me,  
My rest would be a blissful rest,  
And I would count the Hadji blest."

No roses deck the Hadji's grave—  
He sleeps beside a foreign wave—  
And never woman's eye grows dim  
In that strange land at thought of him;  
And yet, no doubt, the Hadji's rest  
Is quite as sweet as if his breast  
Were by a million roses prest,  
And woman made his grave her quest.

H. Z. SPENCER.

Billy—"Does the Lord take the papers, ma?" Mother—"No, my child." Billy—"Oh, I thought he didn't, it takes our minister so long to tell him about things."

## LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

Secretaries may send in a month's list of lectures in advance.

## LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, H. Snell, "Tennyson and Modern Thought," with recitals (2d. and 4d.); social after the lecture.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 11.15, debating class; 7.30, C. Cohen, "Charles Darwin" (free). Monday at 9, C. Cohen's science class (physical geography). Wednesday at 9, C. Cohen's class on "Spencer's Ethics." Thursday at 8.30, open discussion (free).

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11, debating class, J. Hyn Ter, "Land Nationalisation"; 6, tea and entertainment.

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road: 8, a lecture.

Edmonton—North Middlesex Hall, Fore-street: 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Materialism and Ethics."

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Charles Watts, "The Church, the Labor Question, and Modern Progress" (free); 6.30, musical selections and recital by Mrs. Charles Watts; 7, Charles Watts, "Which is the Greater Light—Christ or Science?—a Reply to the Bishop of Worcester" (3d. 6d., and 1s.) Wednesday at 8, H. Snell, "The Program of Christianity" (free).

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove: Thursday at 8, C. J. Hunt, "Gods: Ancient and Modern."

Progressive Association, Penton Hall, 81 Pentonville-road: 7, P. R. Pratt (Fabian), "Socialism Four Hundred Years Ago—a Page from the History of Perth" (free); preceded by vocal and instrumental music.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, J. Rowney will lecture.

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, Mr. St. John, "Science and Miracles."

## COUNTRY.

Belfast—Crown Chambers, 64 Royal-avenue: 7, J. S. Herron, "Evolution."

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: 6.30, O. Trumper will lecture.

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 2.30, J. Thatcher, "Pasteurism"; T. A. Williams to reply.

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 2.45, Sunday-school for children; 7, entertainment and dramatic sketch.

Glasgow—City Hall Saloon: Annual Conversazione (ladies 1s. 6d., gentlemen 2s. 6d., children 1s.)

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: 7, A Freethinker, "A Plea for Total Abstinence"

Heckmondwike—John Rothera's Bottoms: 3, a meeting.

Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, Peter Millar, "Is Christianity True?"

Ipswich—Co-operative Hall (small room), Carr-street: 7, a meeting.

Leeds—Crampton's Temperance Hotel, Briggate: 7, readings and recitations.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, Mr. Bergmann, B.Sc., "Cosmic Evolution."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eidon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, Mr. Mitchell, "Shakespeare."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck-street: 7, James Hooper, will lecture. Monday at 8, Sam Standring, "Elijah on Mount Carmel."

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

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 3, mutual improvement class, Mr. Webb, "The Origin and Formation of the Solar System"; 7, a meeting.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, Samuel Taylor, "Are the Scriptures Inspired?"

South Shields—Capt. Duncau's Navigation School, King-street: a meeting.

Wolverhampton—Athenæum Assembly Room, Queen-street: Sam Standring, 11, "How Paul Made Christianity"; 3, "Christ on the Labor Question"; 7, "The Folly of Prayer."

## LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Jan. 8, Camberwell; 19, Hammersmith; 29, Hall of Science. Feb. 16, Hammersmith.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Jan. 8, Battersea; 11, Hall of Science; 15, Libra Hall; 22, Camberwell. Feb. 12, Battersea; 19, Camberwell; 26, Libra Hall. March 12, Battersea; 19, Camberwell; 20, Blackheath Liberal Club; 26, Libra Hall. April 2, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Jan. 15, Battersea; 22, Leicester. Feb. 26, Camberwell.

O. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Jan. 15, m., Battersea.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Jan. 8, Libra Hall; 15, Portsmouth; 22, Hull; 23, Beverley; 25, Hall of Science; 29, Chatham. Feb. 4, Birmingham; 5, m. and e., Birmingham; a., Wolverhampton; 12, m., Battersea; e., Libra Hall; 19 and 26, Edmonton. March 5, Libra Hall; 12, Manchester; 19, Edmonton; 26, Camberwell.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Jan. 8, 9, 10, Glasgow; 14, Plaistow Green; 15, Hyde Park; 18, Hall of Science. Feb. 5, Hall of Science; 8 and 9, Liverpool; 19, 20, 21, Manchester. March 5, Sheffield; 10, Beverley; 13 and 14, Hull.

J. GREEVZ-FISHER, 78 Harrogate-road, Leeds.—Jan. 15, Shipley.

SAM STANDBING, 2 Morton-street, C-on-M, Manchester.—Jan. 9, Nottingham; 10, Manchester; 22, Leeds.

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