

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. XIII.—No. 16.]

SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 1893.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

## CHRIST AND BROTHERHOOD.

CLERGYMEN are supposed to be educated; that is, they go to college before taking holy orders, and study what are called "the classics"—the masterpieces of Greek and Roman literature. Theology is not enough to fit them for the pulpit. They must also be steeped in "the humanities." It is felt that they would never find all they require in the Bible. They find a great deal of it in Pagan writings, and as these are unknown to the people, it is safe for the clergy to work the best "heathen" ideas into their interpretation of the Christian Scriptures. There was a time, indeed, when Christian preachers were fond of references to Pagan poets and philosophers. The people were so ignorant, and such implicit believers, that it could be done with security. But now the case is altered. The people are beginning to "smell a rat." It dawns upon them that if so many fine things were said by those old Pagans—not to mention the still more ancient teaching of India and Egypt—Christianity can hardly merit such epithets as "unique" and "wonderful." Accordingly it is becoming the fashion in clerical circles to avoid those old Pagans, or else to damn them all in a sweeping condemnation. Some indeed go to the length of declaring—or at least of insinuating—that all the real truth and goodness there is in the world began with the Christian era. This extreme is affected by the Evangelical school, and is carried to its highest pitch of exaggeration by such shallow and reckless preachers as the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Soon after the *Daily Chronicle* correspondence on "Is Christianity Played Out?" this reverend gentleman, and most accomplished "perverter of the truth," screamed from the platform of St. James's Hall that women and children were regarded as slaves and nuisances before the time of Christ; which is either a deliberate falsehood, or a gross misreading, both of history and of human nature. Mr. Hughes has since been gathering his energies for a bolder effort in the same direction. He now publishes in the *Methodist Times* his latest piece of recklessness or fatuity. It is a sermon on "The Solidarity of Mankind," and is really an exhibition of the solidity of Mr. Hughes's impudence. It required nothing but "face," as Cobbett used to call it, to utter such monstrous nonsense in a sermon; it would need a great deal more courage than Mr. Hughes possesses to utter it on any platform where he could be answered and exposed.

Mr. Hughes believes in our "common humanity," and he traces it from "the grand old gardener" (Tennyson). "We are all descended from Adam," he says, "and related to one another." Now this is not true, even according to the Bible; for when Cain fled into the land of Nod he took a wife there, which clearly implies the existence of other people than the descendants of Adam. But this is not the worst.

No. 612.]

Fancy a man at this time of day—a burnin' an' a shinin' light to a' this place—gravely standing up and solemnly telling three thousand people, most of whom we suppose have been to school, that the legendary Adam of the book of Genesis was really the father of the whole human race. It is a spectacle for gods and men, yea, and little fishes.

This common humanity is claimed by Mr. Hughes as "a purely Christian conception." Yet he foolishly admits that "the Positivists in our own day have strongly insisted on this great crowning truth which we Christians have neglected." Nay, he states that when Kossuth appealed in England on behalf of Hungary, he spoke in the name of the "solidarity" of the human race. And why *solidarity*? Because the word had to be taken from the French. And why from *the French*? "Because the French," Mr. Hughes says, "have risen to a loftier level of human brotherhood than we." Indeed! Then what becomes of your "purely Christian conception," when "infidel France" outshines "Christian England"? How is it, too, you have to make the "shameful" confession that "we"—that is, the Christians—took "nineteen centuries to find out that the negro was a man and therefore a brother"? You did not find it out, in fact, until the eighteenth century—the century of Voltaire and Thomas Paine—the century in which Freethought had spread so much, even in England, that Bishop Butler in the Advertisement to his "Analogy," dated May, 1736, could say that "many persons" regarded Christianity as proved to be "fictitious" to "all people of discernment," and thought that "nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule." How is it your "Christian conceptions" took such a surprising time to be understood? How is it they had to wait for realisation until the advent of an age permeated with the spirit of scepticism and secular humanity?

Mr. Hughes is brave enough—in the absence of a critic—to start with Jesus Christ as the first cosmopolitan. "He came of the Jewish stock," we are told, "and yet he had no trace of the Jew in him." Of course not—in Christian sermons and Christian pictures, preached and painted for non-Jewish, and indeed Jew-hating nations. But there is a very decided "trace of the Jew in him" in the New Testament. To the Canaanite woman he said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." To the twelve he said, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It was Paul who, finding he could not make headway against the apostles who had known Jesus personally, exclaimed, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." That exclamation was a turning point. It was the first real step to such universalism as Christianity has attained. No wonder, therefore, that Comte puts Paul instead of Jesus into the Positivist calendar, as the real founder of Christianity.

Even in the case of St. Paul, it is perfectly idle to suppose that his cosmopolitanism extended beyond

the Roman empire. A little study and reflection would show Mr. Hughes that the very fact of the Roman empire was the secret of the cosmopolitanism. Moral conceptions follow in the wake of political expansion. The morality of a tribe is tribal; that of a nation is national; and national morality only develops into international morality with the growth of international interests and international communication. Now the Roman empire had broken up the old nationalities, and with them their local religions. The human mind broadened with its political and social horizon. And the result was that a cosmopolitan sentiment in morals, and a universal conception in religion, naturally spread throughout the territory which was dominated by the Roman eagles. Christianity itself was at first a Jewish sect, which developed into a cosmopolitan system precisely because the national independence of the Jews had been broken up, and all the roads of a great empire were open to the missionaries of the new faith.

But let us return to Mr. Hughes's statements. He tells us that the solidarity of mankind was "revealed to the human race through St. Paul"—which is a great slur upon Jesus Christ, and quite inconsistent with what Mr. Hughes affirms of the Nazarene. It is also inconsistent with the very language of St. Paul in that sermon of his to the Athenians; for the great apostle, in enforcing his argument that all men are God's children, actually reminds the Athenians that "that certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

Mr. Hughes goes on to say that "our common humanity" is "a perfectly new idea." "Max Müller," he tells us, "says that there was no trace of it until Christ came. It is a purely Christian conception." Professor Max Müller, however, is not infallible. He sometimes panders to Christian prejudices, and this is a case in point. What he says about "humanity" is an etymological quibble. Certainly the Greeks knew nothing about it, simply because they did not speak Latin. But they had an equivalent word in *philanthropos*, which was in use in the time of Plato, four hundred years before the birth of Christ.

Max Müller or no Max Müller, we tell Mr. Hughes that he is either reckless or ignorant in declaring that the idea of human brotherhood owes its origin to Christ, Paul, or Christianity. To say nothing of Buddha, whose ethics are wider than the ethics of Christ, and confining ourselves to Greece and Rome, with the teaching of whose thinkers Christianity comes into more direct comparison—it is easy enough to prove that Mr. Hughes is in error, or worse. Four centuries before Christ, when Socrates was asked on one occasion as to his country, he replied "I am a citizen of the world." Cicero, the great Roman writer, in the century before Christ, uses the very word *caritas*, which St. Paul borrowed in his fine and famous chapter in the first of Corinthians. Cicero, and not St. Paul, was the first to pronounce "charity" as the tie which unites the human race. And after picturing a soul full of virtue, living in charity with its friends, and taking as such all who are allied by nature, Cicero rose to a still loftier level. "Moreover," he said, "let it not consider itself hedged in by the walls of a single town, but acknowledge itself a citizen of the whole world, as though one city." In another treatise he speaks of "fellowship with the human race, charity, friendship, justice."

We defy Mr. Hughes to indicate a single cosmopolitan text in the New Testament as strong, clear, and pointed as these sayings of Socrates and Cicero—the one Greek, the other Roman, and both before Christ. Let him ransack gospels, epistles, acts, and revelations, and produce the text we call for.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

## THE LANGUAGE OF THE GOSPELS.

THE four canonical Gospels are written in Greek. The oldest manuscripts, dating at earliest to the fourth century, are in that language. Have ordinary Christians ever thought of the improbability of such works having been written by unlearned and ignorant Jews (Acts iv. 13), or of the absurdity of God giving a second revelation to his chosen people in a language they did not understand? That this was the case with the Jews of Palestine before the destruction of Jerusalem we have the authority of Josephus, who was governor of Galilee at that time, yet confesses he could not pronounce Greek with sufficient exactness, for, says he, "our nation does not encourage those that learn the language of other nations" (*Antiquities* xx. 10. 2). This is corroborated by the Talmud, the Mishna mentioning (*Sota* 49), that at the time of Titus it was forbidden to any Jew to have his son instructed in Greek. Josephus further tells how, when Titus during the siege of Jerusalem repeatedly summoned the besieged fanatics to surrender, this was always done in Aramaic,\* whether Titus commissioned Josephus to speak or spoke in his own name by the help of an interpreter (*Wars* v. 9. 2; vi. 2. 1; vi. 62).

The New Testament itself bears witness that the corrupt Hebrew known as Aramaic was the language of Palestine. In Acts i. 19 mention is made of a Jewish tongue, different from the Greek and Roman. Being the language of Jerusalem, it must also have been that of the provinces, for it would be in the capital Roman and Greek would first come in vogue.† The word *Aceldama*, referred to as "in their proper tongue," is Aramaic. When Paul wanted to speak to the people of Jerusalem, "he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue" (Acts xxi. 40), and "when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence" (Acts-xxii. 2). They suspected his devotion to Judaism, but his command of their language ensured their respect. Paul evidently thought Jesus retained his language after his ascension, for, according to Acts xxvi. 14, 15, he told King Agrippa that he heard a voice "saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." We contend, then, that the very language in which the gospels are written is proof positive that they were not written, still less published, at the time or in the place where they could be effectively contradicted. Jesus declared himself sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, yet the records of his teaching are first made in a different language to their own.

It is true all the early fathers who say Matthew wrote a gospel declare that he wrote it in the Hebrew tongue. This is the declaration of Papias, Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Epiphanius, and Jerome. If they were all mistaken, deceived or deceiving, we are without any authority for believing that Matthew wrote any gospel at all. But it is certain our "Matthew" is not a translation. The conclusion is inevitable. We have not Matthew's gospel now, unless it be in the fragments of *The Gospel According to the Hebrews*, collected and translated by E. B. Nicholson. If so, it was totally unlike the canonical gospel according to Matthew. It left out all about the miraculous birth of Jesus, and

\* Syro-Chaldaic, a Babylonian offshoot of Hebrew.

† Here let it be noted that Greek was rather the literary language of the Roman empire than that of the people. Moreover, New Testament Greek is quite of a different kind from that employed by, say, Plutarch, being in fact ecclesiastical, and, as some think, Byzantine Greek. Take, for instance, the word *epiousios* (Matt. vi. 11, Luke xi. 3), translated "supersubstantial" in the Douay Version. The very word shows an underlying doctrine.

made the Holy Ghost his mother instead of his father. It began, "There was a certain man by name Jesus, and he of about thirty years, who chose us out." Jerome, who long lived in Palestine, distinctly states that this Gospel according to the Hebrews was the original of the Greek Matthew. Why then was it not put into the canon, and who supplied the many additions and alterations found in the canonical Greek? Some further light on these questions may be found when we examine the internal evidence.

Mark, there is some reason to think, was originally written in Latin, and intended for the Roman Christians. Indeed, the learned Rev. Mr. Black, in his *Palæoromæica*, contends that the whole of the Greek New Testament betrays marks of having been translated from a Latin original,\* and that, too, in many passages, by an ignorant translator, who in rendering certain passages has suffered his ear to mislead him by a similarity of sound suggesting meanings wholly different from those which the original Latin words would convey. However that may be—and assuredly the theory has never received the attention it deserves—it is certain the Church only pretends that its canonical gospels were written in Greek. To my mind this in itself offers conclusive proof that they were not written by natives of Palestine, nor until after the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews.

In connection with this subject we might point to the literary character of the discourses attributed to Jesus in, for instance, the Sermon on the Mount,† as proving they are not transcripts of spoken utterances, but literary compositions. Indeed, there is much to be said for the position that the gospels have been compiled from preceding lectionaries such as are now found in the Roman Breviary and Anglican Prayer Book; but further consideration of these points may be reserved till we examine the internal evidence of the gospels. J. M. WHEELER.

#### AN ACCOMMODATING FAITH.

CHRISTIANITY is the most accommodating faith that was ever born of human weakness and mental decrepitude. It has truly been "all things to all men." Persons with quite opposite natures and who entertain opinions of the most marked diversity, have been found among its believers and its expounders. Within its fold are the ascetic and the luxurious enjoyer of life; the man of action and the man of contemplation; the miser and the philanthropist; the Quaker and the Salvationist; the believer in three Gods and the worshipper of but one; the adherent to doctrines and creeds, and the man who alleges that he is free from the belief in all theological ceremonies; the defender of hell and the opponent of the dogma of any supernatural punishments "beyond the grave." This elastic nature of the Christian faith, and the fact that its profession has its pecuniary advantages, will largely account for its popularity in this part of the globe. Thus men who are termed Christians hold views as to what is meant by Christianity that are diametrically opposed to each other.

It must not be supposed that this heterogeneous character of the faith is a proof of the comprehensiveness of the system ascribed to Christ. It is nothing of the kind, but on the contrary it demonstrates the indefinite, incomplete, and undecisive character of its teachings. The so-called truths of the New Testament are not self-evident, for if they were they would have commanded uniform opinions from

those who have honestly sought their true signification. That this is not so is proved by the many Christian sects now existing, and also by the fact that there are many individuals of no sect at all, who consider that to regard Jesus simply as one of the moral reformers of the world is quite sufficient to justify a person calling himself a Christian. Does not this explain why names of scientists and other eminent authorities are frequently cited as being representatives of Christianity? The religion of such men as Newton, Milton, Mazzini, and Garibaldi was the very antithesis to that taught in the churches to-day. No Christian having regard for his intellectual reputation would degrade himself by publicly defending the views propounded by the theological schools of men like C. H. Spurgeon and Dr. Talmage. Moreover, the Christianity of the Roman Catholic Church is looked upon by Protestants as the very essence of superstition, while the Catholics designate Protestantism as rank heresy. To complete the picture of this "happy family" of believers the Christian Socialists contend that both Churches are wrong, that they ignore the "true spirit of Christ," whose object (these Socialists say) was to cure the evils of this life and to establish heaven upon earth. Now all these different representations of Christianity furnish undoubted evidence that the faith, or to be accurate, the faiths, bearing the name of Christ to-day are simply the reflex of individual opinion, and have no logical sanction in the teachings ascribed to the Nazarene.

The accommodating nature of Christianity has recently been illustrated in the special sermons delivered on Good Friday last by Canon Scott Holland, the Bishop of Christchurch, the Jesuit father of the Roman Catholic Church the Rev. Joseph Morris, and Mr. Tom Mann. In these sermons there was a terrible conglomeration of theological mystery, absurdity and perplexity. The Canon expatiated upon the agony of the death of the man Christ, the Roman Catholic urged that "he who died was God," the bishop gloried in the thought that the cross was drawing all the nations of the earth to Christ, while Mr. Tom Mann in his sermon impeached all the Churches for their lack of effort to improve the condition of the people. There was nothing in heaven, he said, that "corresponded with an empty stomach below," and therefore a similar condition ought to exist on earth. He mentioned that quite recently a deputation from Japan came over to England to inquire as to the advisability of introducing Christianity into that country. The answer they took back was that, seeing the awful social conditions of the great industrial centres in this country, they could not advocate the adoption of that religion.

The morning papers of April 1 reported that the Canon delivered seven addresses in St. Paul's Cathedral, the place being crowded. His subject was the "Three Hours' Agony," and his discourse was based upon the "last word" of Christ before he died on the cross. The difficulty, however, that here appears to us is to know what his "last word" really was. It is not reported by Matthew and Mark, and the two accounts given by Luke and John flatly contradict each other. Luke says the last sentence uttered by Jesus before he "gave up the ghost" was "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." John states it was "It is finished." Now, which of these accounts is correct? One must be wrong, and, considering it is alleged that both were given by "inspiration," it would be interesting to learn why the one is relied upon rather than the other. It must have been indeed a melancholy sight to the intellectual observer when he observed such a vast multitude as filled St. Paul's on this occasion, bowing before the representative of the bleeding cross, which to us is a symbol of heartless cruelty, refined injustice, and supreme folly. It is too true that Freethought

\* See "Another Theory of the Gospels," *Freethinker*, Nov. 22, 1891. Father Hardouin, the learned Jesuit, also held that the New Testament was originally written in Latin.

† See "The Literary Character of the Gospels," *Freethinker*, March 27, 1892.

criticism of theological pretensions is still a necessity, for superstition and blind devotion are still rampant with their degrading influence in our midst.

The Bishop in his sermon, like the Canon, dwelt upon the love of God in sacrificing his son, and much was made by the prelate of the alleged power of Christ in drawing men to him. Now it was admitted by the Rev. Joseph Morris, in his sermon, that God could have "redeemed the world" without giving his "only begotten son" to be executed by the demand of a disappointed people, and it is further granted that Christ was "without sin." Where, then, was the display of love in inflicting torture on an unoffending son for a purpose that could have been accomplished without such an act of cruelty? As to Christ drawing all nations to him, the very idea of it is absurd. The majority of nations eighteen hundred years after his death have not even heard of him, and the few people who profess to have been "drawn to him" are not near him in practice, inasmuch as they virtually ignore the lessons he left for their guidance. They use his name either because they find it fashionable and profitable to do so, or else because they regard it as a charm to protect themselves from misery in another world. Selfishness is the mainspring of their sham worship. Where, however, are the visible and useful results of this unnatural sacrifice? Has it improved the condition of the people? Let the present drunkenness, wretchedness, and criminality of "Christian England" give the answer. Has it dethroned wrong, abolished injustice, and established equity among men? The present indictment of Christian Socialists against the Churches furnishes the reply. Finally, has it produced such conditions of society that will render poverty and starvation impossible? The thousands of aching hearts, empty stomachs, and homeless families that are now enduring the agonies of privation in a land of plenty are sad refutations to such a supposition.

The accommodating nature of this orthodox faith is further seen in the efforts made by its adherents to explain its shortcomings as an improving agency. When we lament the poverty and wretchedness around us, we are told that God has said "the poor shall never cease out of the land." When we deplore the sorrow and despair that are in society, we are reminded that these drawbacks are among the "appointed curses to the sons and daughters of Adam." When we manifest discontent with the present order or disorder of things, we are enjoined to be content to remain "in that state of life in which it has pleased God to call us." When we make an effort to improve the world by purely secular means, we are informed that faith in Christ is of more importance than labor for man, and that we "are of ourselves unable to do any good thing." It is from such false teachings as these that mankind needs to be redeemed. Let the human family be saved from the snares of a faith that fosters these unfortunate errors, and the greatest salvation that could ever rescue man from the depths of moral and intellectual degradation will be won.

CHARLES WATTS.

#### HOW TO HELP US.

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

#### WONDERS, BIBLICAL AND UNBIBLICAL.

THE story of creation pales into insignificance when compared with the gorgeous Hindoo theory, clothed in luxurious language, so entirely different from the Builder's contract in Genesis. The work was done in six working days, and the architect and builder was his own surveyor, and said it was all "very good." One of the first items, next to the paragon of animals called Adam, one is struck with is the wonderful trees in the garden. It has often occurred to me that if the superintendent had been acquainted with them, he would have also planted other wonderful trees. He supplied knowledge and aprons; why not the rubber tree of India, from the juice of which indiarubber shoes are made? Then there is the bread-tree of Ceylon, which, it is said, lasts for months at sea. Its companion, the butter tree (Shea), found in Africa, would have been useful. To complete the supply the milk tree (Palo de Vaco), which gives a nourishing drink like milk when pierced. Baron Humboldt describes it as a picture of a shepherd distributing the milk of his flock. The Araguans call it the cow. Then again, when the shades of evening came over the garden, what more essential than the candleberry myrtle, the berries of which, it is said, make excellent candles. Then, as cleanliness is next to godliness, the quillai tree of China has bark with soap properties; and for the special use of Mrs. Eve, why not the shrub called Thurania, of Chili, having an aromatic perfume? In bad weather, one of the immense trees that afford shelter for an army would have been useful. Moreover, if it had ever occurred to Adam to build, the Troolie plant, with its leaves three feet by thirty, would have made durable roofs.

Noah and his unique collection of animals are said to have found themselves on the top of Mount Ararat. It seems a still greater wonder how they managed to get safe down from the region of perpetual frost and snow. M. Tournfont describes how he and his friends descended. He leaves it to be guessed how Noah, having the choice of so many animals to ride on, did it; but "we laid ourselves on our backs and slid down for an hour together, and when we met with flints which hurt our shoulders, we turned on our bellies or went on all fours." The elephants would require all their intelligence to do the journey in safety; for he describes some parts as precipices of a perpendicular kind, frightful to look at, which makes the head turn round. "The horrible precipices," as David might say, "show the grandeur of the Lord."

The pillar of fire that for forty years gave light in the wilderness is illustrated by Mrs. Ellwood in her Egyptian travels. At Cossier, a scene that made her doubt the evidence of her senses and appeared incredible, was the sun, emerging from the bosom of the waters, assumed, instead of its circular form, that of a pillar of fire. Some of the ancients, Agatharchides in particular, mention "the sunrise, like a pillar of fire," as seen on their coasts. Lord Valentia noticed a similar appearance at Mocha when the sun was setting. Mr. Cattell relates that he once saw this phenomena on the North Wales coast. The rainbow, which is a purely natural phenomena, was set in the skies as a sign that there should be no more flood. But it is now our privilege to see two and sometimes three bows. After a long drought it is regarded as a certain sign of much rain. If seen at noon, it portends heavy rain; and if seen in duplicate, settled and heavy rains two or three days after.

Perhaps the best companion to the serpent, which held a theological debate with Madame Eve, was the classical Bosloquitor of Rome. It is quite as remarkable that an ox should speak in the streets of Rome as a serpent in the garden. The birth and death of any distinguished person have generally been attended by some wonderful manifestations. Some of the ancients considered it necessary to have two stars in order to be happy—one on the day of birth and another on the day of marriage. The founders of Athens and Rome both had the repute of having sprung from the gods, and both were born out of wedlock. Plutarch accounts for these things by the fact that the recorders were chiefly poets, and that an

affectation for something extraordinary or preternatural prevailed in ancient nations and families.

The birth of Romulus was full of marvels. There was a cruel king, and it was declared necessary that a virgin should have a son, and another person was warned in a dream, and a herdsman saw some wonderful things. There is enough in Plutarch's Romulus to satisfy any believer in the gospel of Luke. He says that, though suspected as fabulous, we should consider the greatness and grandeur of Rome, and not "think it could ever have been effected *without some supernatural assistance at first*, and an origin more than human." This is precisely on all fours with the modern contention about Jesus and Christianity. Romulus also disappeared suddenly; neither his body nor his garments could be found; he was holding an assembly without the city. "The air on that occasion was suddenly convulsed and altered in a wonderful manner, and the light of the sun failed and they were in astonishing darkness, and on every side dreadful thunder and tempestuous winds." The patricians told the people he was caught up to heaven, and they must worship him, as he would be a propitious Roman deity.

CHARLES T. CATTELL.

(To be concluded).

### THE HUMBUG OF CHRISTIANS.

AT such a heading as the above the "essential Christian" (who is generally a person in whom there is no power of self-denial for the sake of others, who lives as the rest of the world, and comforts himself with the thought that he is saved because Paul has said "Christ died to save all sinners," whereas if Christianity be true he is going respectably to hell) will cry "platitude"—perhaps because the truth of the title is so apparent. It may be a platitude, but very little harm comes from the repetition of things that are true. It would astonish us if we did not know what shallow casuists and sophists Christians are, that they should cry "platitude," etc., to any moral truth which Atheists enunciate, and yet find something fresh in the same old tale delivered by their ministers every Sunday (while they "sit with faces of foolish praise"), who tell them to look up to heaven and have their pockets picked of pence; and, as a consolation, offer them nothing better than the eternal twanging on one string, and the old inanities which will disappear when the schools are wrested from the sacerdotal grasp, and the great thinkers are taught side by side with the Bible, which should be regarded as literature, the meaning of which is not even understood by the hundreds of warring sects.

Let us see if there is any humbug in praying Christians. They tell us that God grants their prayers. That is their explanation of fortunate coincidences. But let us accept their plea for the nonce. They think God grants favors to some in answer to prayers. How mean and partial then is God not to grant the prayers of thousands of sincere and mistaken souls, who have in agony asked him to save them from poverty, misery, sin, and death! It would seem as if he had created them for the purpose of amusing himself with their sufferings. Prayer in its best form never gives more than passing consolation. Some work hard and are ill-treated all day long; they are comforted a bit, or persuade themselves so, when they pray, but they undergo the same misery next day. Prayer which makes us endure what we ought not to suffer, is not worth much. It makes us weak and foolishly trusting, and such folly is always inviting the impudence of the stronger. Prayer would let us be plucked and plundered by the world; then God would leave us to be laughed at for our childish faith. To those who have lived comparatively stainless lives, and prayed and trusted for some comfort above a starvation wage, the rich Christian manufacturer says: "You must work, work hard; practise thrift; don't marry so young; crucify the passions," etc.; and shows how it can be done by exhibiting his large family. His humbug is manifested when the workers do take his counsel and work, and try to gain social salvation by combining in trade unions and federations to limit the power of capital. He then says they have forgotten God, not looked to Christ; they did pray, trust God. There are higher things than those of this life, which is but a transient dream; and with the money which he has wrung

from the underpaid toil of his white slaves, he subscribes for the conversion of black ones; subscribes to a chapel; so buys the grovelling adoration of its minister, and is regarded as being clothed with the vestments of sanctity. History, which is red with the bloody story of Christian crime, is not clearer about anything than this—that the possessing classes have always used Christianity to draw the poorer off the scent and hunger for greater comfort and some measure of popular power. A church is often nothing better than a dust-throwing machine, for plainly it is to the parson's interest, and to the interest of the rich Christians, to combine in a selfish conspiracy to rivet upon the people the fetters which prevent economic emancipation. If there were no hunger and pain and all were happy, there would be no praying to gods, and no pay to gospel purveyors in the vain hope that they could mitigate God's wrath and could secure spiritual and temporal blessings.

Some snobbish Christians will often sneer at the Secular party for its honest poverty, forgetting that their own Church has obtained its money by false pretences of the most cowardly, flagitious, and abominable kind. They will point to the richest men in the parish, say they believe in Christ, and say you should believe because these do. They will add that Jobkins, the great manufacturer, or some inventor, believes in Jesus; but in theology no man should pose as an authority, however great he may be in other branches of study. If such a one has not studied the question, is his hasty opinion, given because it will secure cheap applause and the approval of his neighbors, a stronger argument than the reasoning of some poor clerk who has spent years in attending lectures of all sorts and earnestly poring over his books? The latter must be more competent to give judgment than the millions, who are so fearful of their faith slipping away from them that they *dare not* partake of the splendid heritage of the great dead, and who have the faith drilled into them in infancy and youth, and will damn those who are of other religions.

Let us notice that peculiarly Pharisaic sect known as Plymouth Brethren, who will have nothing to do with chapel or church and ceremony, on the ground that they are the embodiment of the primitive virtues of the early Christians. They call themselves "Bible Christians," and have been denounced with virulence by Spurgeon, Parker, and others—perhaps because they do not contribute to the salaries of such shrewd, shkelgarnering gentlemen, or to their respective organizations. Now if the Brethren dislike all conventicles and meeting places, and are simply Bible Christians, why is it necessary for them to meet in a "room" and see each other? The other sects they denounce do no more than that, only their meeting place is called church, chapel, or meeting-house. Why should the Brethren "break bread" and eat, and perform other ceremonies, for it is only what the others do under another doing name—call it sacrament, or what you will? Why should they want to meet and confirm each other, seeing that they are "born again"? Surely the spirit which has entered them will make them strong enough to stand apart, without any props of fellowship and communion. The strongest man is he who stands alone, and whether it be true or false faith, it must have a strong hold on a man if it makes him do that. Socrates, Mahomet, and other men whose names gleam from the past, stood alone, and faced death with more courage than Jesus Christ, whom a cowardly band of Jewish cadgers—all "born again"—left in the lurch when the chief mendicant was collared by the secular power. Surely the true faith should make the Brethren as strong as what they would think a false one made Socrates and Bruno! Of course nature made the latter stronger souls, but the logical outcome of the Brethren's professions is that the faith makes them Daniels. Why then are they not?

C. E. BACON.

(To be continued.)

Love is the only creed destined to survive all others. They who think that no church can exist without a strong spice of terror, should watch the growth of education, and see which system of it is the most beloved. They should see also which system in the very nursery is growing the most ridiculous. The threat of the "black man and the coal hole" has vanished from all infant training. What answer is the father, who would uphold the worst form of it, to give to the child whom he has spared the least?—*Leigh Hunt*.

## NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

REPORT of Executive meeting held at Hall of Science, April 5. The President in the chair. Present: Messrs. R. O. Smith, G. Standing, S. Hartmann, J. M. Wheeler, J. E. Brumage, R. Forder, A. B. Moss, C. J. Hunt, E. Bater, J. Fisher, T. Gorniot, W. Trew, O. W. Martin, W. H. Baker, B. Wherle, W. Heaford, G. H. Baker, E. M. Vance, Asst. Sec.

Moved by Mr. J. E. Brumage, seconded by Mr. C. J. Hunt, "That the National Secular Society arrange for a visit on a Sunday to the grave of our late distinguished and beloved leader, Charles Bradlaugh, about the month of July. That our President, Mr. G. W. Foote, be requested to attend, and friends within easy distance by rail be invited to meet the London contingent."

The President stated the proposal was one in which he cordially concurred, provided the Demonstration was to be organised exclusively by the N.S.S. The resolution was carried unanimously.

The voting papers for the Conference showed the following: Branches voting for Hanley, 23; Bristol, 9; Huddersfield, 6; Portsmouth, 5; Wolverhampton, 2; Chatham, 2; Glasgow, 1. It was formally decided by the Executive that the Conference should take place at Hanley.

The question of sending lecturers to the West of England and South Wales during the summer months was discussed, and finally remitted to the Organisation Committee.

E. M. VANCE, Asst. Sec.

## FAITH OR DOUBT.

HAVE you often told a lie  
And derided Sorrow's sigh?  
Faith will save you.

Have you always told the truth,  
And regarded wee with ruth?  
Doubt will damn you.

Have you fawned upon the strong,  
And opposed the feeble throng?  
Faith will save you.

Have you aided the oppressed,  
And relieved the sore-distressed?  
Doubt will damn you.

Have you robbed whene'er you could,  
And deprived the poor of food?  
Faith will save you.

Have you oft the needy fed,  
And to Hunger given bread?  
Doubt will damn you.

Are your thoughts as black as mud,  
And your deeds as red as blood?  
Faith will save you.

Do your thoughts all good-ward flow?  
Are your deeds as white as snow?  
Doubt will damn you.

Has the Law just made you stop?  
Are you pinnioned for the "drop"?  
Faith will save you.

Are you dying midst the tears  
Of a world you've blest for years?  
Doubt will damn you.

Deeds are naught—'tis Faith or Doubt;  
Faith in what? well, find it out!  
Doubt will damn you!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

"Here, Freddy, there's a nice book about a good, kind missionary, who was killed by the wicked savages." "Thanks, mamma. Do you have to read far before they kill him?"

"Do you know the value of an oath?" asked the judge of an old darkey who was to be the next witness. "Yes sah, I does. One ob dese yeah lawyers done gib me foah dollars for to swear to suffin. Dat's de value of an oath. Foah dollars, sah." And then there was consternation in the courtroom.

## ACID DROPS.

Another case of special providence! It was on a Sunday morning, and H.M.S. *Raleigh* was voyaging from Lagos to Fernandez Po. The chaplain, the Rev. Wilson Highmoor, was conducting divine service, when the ship was struck by lightning. Despite the faith of all engaged in worshipping the Lord the performance was abruptly terminated. Chaplain and sailors alike were afraid to give Providence free play in the circumstances.

Last week's *Athenæum* printed the full list of names for Section I. of "P." in the "Dictionary of National Biography." Among them is—"Paine, Thomas, political and infidel writer, 1737-1809." Of course Paine is very properly in the list, but why *infidel*? Surely in such a serious work as this Dictionary of worthies of all denominations, social, political and religious, it is absurd to find any one dubbed "infidel." The editors should know better.

"God in Unexpected Places" caught our eye as a big headline in the *Christian Commonwealth*. Over it was the word "Holborn." It looked as though God had turned up in that locality, and the fact was worth reporting—as indeed it would be. But a closer inspection showed us that "Holborn" was the name of the preacher. That made it all right. Still our pious contemporary should be more careful. It should not print blasphemy, nor carelessly suggest it.

This same pious contemporary, in its Easter article, protested that "the disciples were not ignorant men." They were not "learned," but they were "far from being uneducated." This is directly in the teeth, however, of the Acts of the Apostles; an authority which, while it is not absolute, is at least preferable to that of the *Christian Commonwealth*.

That Christ rose from the dead is "certain," says the *C. C.* But the proofs are not so much the vulgar testimony of eye and ear witnesses. No, the most "powerful" and "convincing" proof is the "abiding" of the Paraclete (the Holy Ghost) in the Church. What exquisite fooling, to be sure! It was reserved for Christian logic to prove an occurrence by what happened afterwards.

"Now that the Talmage tabernacle is again brought into publicity," says the *Chicago Standard*, "by its appeals for salvation from the sheriff, it is not unkind or out of place to inquire what possible claim this church, with its announced membership of over 7,000, has upon the pockets of the public." It goes on to say that the congregation is mean, its gifts to missions are so small as to be notable, and it is "not so much a church as a curiosity shop." As for Talmage himself, he is said to be "rich," and to have "received for many years a larger salary than any other preacher except John Hall ever received in this country, and his outside income from lectures and syndicate sermons is ample." Were it not for the hard cash we should exclaim "Poor Talmage!"

An extremely, and, to our mind, absurdly laudatory article on George Macdonald's poetry appears in the *Christian World*, which ought to be more careful in its references. For instance, it says of Dr. Macdonald that "with Novalis, indeed, he might be called a God-intoxicated man." But why with Novalis? It was Novalis himself who used the expression of Spinoza.

Why on earth, too, does the *Christian World*, in its review of Leslie Stephen's *An Agnostic's Apology*, resort to the stale trick of ascribing his scepticism to some "defect or absence of faculty"? It is a ludicrous idea that Leslie Stephen is deficient in some faculty which is possessed in a superior degree by the *Christian World* reviewer—unless it be the faculty which is commonly called *cheek*.

Cardinal Vaughan's *Tablet* has again been boasting of the attention and respect which the Roman Catholic Church now commands in the public press. It does not suggest the reasons. We fancy it is largely owing to the numerous Irish journalists. These gentlemen are not usually very good Catholics, but they still regard the Church with attention, and can be relied on to mention anything that tends to give it an occasional lift.

Of course there are other reasons. Among them the decline of Puritanism, the spread of Ritualism, and inter-communication with countries where Roman Catholicism is the prevalent superstition have tended to bridge the distance between Church of Englandism and Rome. The High Church Ritualist must feel himself after all nearer to the Romanist than to the Dissenter. Indeed, he delights to call himself Catholic, and dislikes Protestantism above all things. Journalists, too, usually recognise that the real struggle is between Freethought and Rome.

This is how the *Church Times* speaks of the Nonconformist martyrs Barrows, Greenwood and Penry: "It is needless to say that had they lived in the present day they would have got off scot-free, but the time when they carried on their coarse and fanatical attack upon the authorities of the day was one in which such language as they used could not be tolerated." No regret is expressed that Archbishop Whitgift and the authorities of the Church put these men to death for exercising the right of free speech.

The clergyman who was arrested and fined for drunkenness in the Strand appears to have given a false name, since Alfred Thomas King cannot be found in any clergy list. There was no mistaking his calling, however, which was told by his garb, as well as by his confession to the magistrate.

At St. Mildred's, Bread-street, Cheapside, on Palm Sunday, there were two in the congregation. The service was given but no sermon. This church, with its heavy endowments, is preserved on the plea that it is of historical interest. It was built by Sir Christopher Wren, and it was there that the Freethinker Shelley married the daughter of the Freethinker Godwin. In 1816, and for twenty years afterwards, there was no other way open for Freethinkers to legitimatise their children save by going through the Church mummery of "love, honor, and obey."

"What is coming over our Sunday morning congregations?" asks the *Methodist Monthly*. Chapels, it says, are hardly one-third filled in the forenoon. Well, this is bad enough, but it is not the worst. By and bye the chapels will be hardly one-third filled in the evening. Then it will be "Ichabod, Ichabod! The glory of Sky-Pilotism is departed!"

Mr. Stead's alleged communications from living persons at a distance are not received quite warmly by the Spiritists. They don't see why his communications should be different from theirs, and suggest that it is really spirits of dead persons, who pretend to be his living friends. On the other hand, Mr. Stead holds that the Spiritist mejums, trance speakers, etc., may really be operated on by living persons since there is no reason to believe the hand is more under the influence of another mind than the tongue. If living people use his hand, why not other people's tongues? Altogether the occultists leave us in a nice fog. Meanwhile Mr. Stead is trying to establish a telepathic and clairvoyant bureau, so that he can really supply news from all parts, from Mowbray House, Thames Embankment.

Another "exposure" has taken place of the trade in lithographed sermons. But why all this pother about such a natural and necessary traffic? Is it right that half-baked ministers should cudgel their poor brains, at the risk of losing the little they have, just to produce a rickety sermon by Saturday night? Spare the poor devils, for God's sake—or somebody's sake, say their own; and let them buy good sermons instead of making bad ones. For our part, if we dropped into a church, we would rather hear a bought or borrowed sermon from a competent pen, than listen to a miserable abortion from the Rev. Weakling Whiner or the Rev. Helpless Howler.

The controversy on sky-pilots sermons still continues in the *Standard*. One correspondent says, that on his holiday he heard a sermon in a village, and on his return home next Sunday sat under a brother curate who worked off the same sermon. He taxed him with it, and he admitted having brought it lithographed from a man who advertised "original and bright" sermons. Not long after they discovered that this identical sermon had been cribbed verbatim from Charles Kingsley's *Good News from God*. If the sky-pilots were honest, they would frankly tell their congregations, that

to compose a fresh sermon twice a week is really too much for their powers.

Russian peasants in the government of Peem are dying in great numbers from famine. In some villages the dead are lying unburied, their relatives being too exhausted to perform that office. The Lord has also been visiting Serbia, where earthquake shocks have reduced thousands of houses and a number of churches to ruins.

The Rev. J. A. Elliott, a missionary from India, was frank enough to tell the people at a meeting of the Wesleyan Foreign Missionary Society at Newark that "neither he nor any other missionary could preach in India if it were not for the Union Jack floating there and 60,000 British bayonets behind it." This is a confession that the natives of India do not want Christianity any more than do those of China.

William Williams, the Devonshire murderer, made an edifying end. The Bishop of Exeter was so convinced of his piety that he confirmed him in prison. After that, who can doubt he is now in the company of David, Solomon and Co.

Great is the sustaining power of religion! Edward Hemmings, who murdered his wife at Handsworth, near Sheffield, was duly hung at Leeds. He expressed a hope that he would meet his relatives in heaven. Perhaps he was rather squeamish about meeting his wife there. The latter part of his last day was spent in reading and praying with the chaplain. The next morning he rose at six, and ate a hearty breakfast. As he was to be hung at eight, the performance shows his serenity, and proves the support of the gospel at the hour of death—especially to murderers.

A curious paper is the *Political Thunderbolt*, a special issue of *Common Sense*, the organ of the Common-Sense Society, which proposes to dispense with the middleman in trade, politics, and religion. It advocates co-operation and sending of members to Parliament, and its method appears to consist in buying pills at wholesale prices from the Common Sense Reform Medicine Company.

Accuracy was never a Christian virtue, and the Rev. T. Given-Wilson, vicar of Plaistow, maintains the reputation of his faith. In his twopenny cadging pamphlet (it is twopence colored, and perhaps a penny plain) he boasts of having got possession of the "notorious Cromwell Club," which is now St. Mary's Mission Hall. He describes it as "a Freethinking club with a drink license." It was not a Freethinking but a political club, and clubs do not have licenses. The local Freethinkers sometimes hired the club hall for lectures, and that was the extent of their connexion with the place. Mr. Given-Wilson knows the club was called after Oliver Cromwell, and perhaps he knows (though perhaps not, for he seems ignorant of many things) that Oliver Cromwell was a Christian.

The Liverpool Christian Evidence Society is rather peculiar in its methods. Three weeks ago it had a lecture on "The Rottenness of Secularism." Then it had another lecture on "Christianity Superior to (Rotten) Secularism." Then it had a third lecture on "Is Secularism Played Out?" Finally it had a lecture with a sensible title, "What is Secularism?" Three sittings were occupied in gloating over the fall of that about which it was necessary to ask at the finish "What Is It?" Logic is evidently not the strong point of the Liverpool Christian Evidence Society.

Salvation Army music is often trying. One of the Army's bands, marching in Whitechapel, proved too much for a dog, who followed it and barked his adverse criticism. The drummer, however, spied his chance, and giving one of his drumsticks an extra twist, he brought it down upon the dog's forehead, laying it bleeding and senseless upon the ground. This little performance brought him before the magistrate at Worship-street police court, where he was fined £2 and 10s. costs, or a month's imprisonment. The dog had his lesson in musical criticism; and J. M. Johnson, navy and Salvation drummer, had his in humanity. On the whole the dog seems the superior animal of the two.

Two cases of cruelty to animals were charged against Salvationists last week. The second was that of a horse worked in connection with the S.A. Bakery when not in a

fit condition. Dr. Ranger, who appeared for the S.A., admitted the animal was unfit to be worked, and an adjournment was granted that the question of destroying the horse might be considered.

The sanitary inspector for St. George the Martyr, Southwark, had to apply to prosecute Wm. Booth, the owner of the Salvation Army Shelter, Blackfriars-road, for leaving it in an insanitary condition and dangerous to health. Mr. Slade made an order for the notice of the inspector to be complied with, with costs.

Lord Gifford left a considerable sum for the purpose that critical discourses on the subject of Natural Theology might be delivered. He made a special proviso that Sceptics, Agnostics, or Atheists might be chosen, provided they treated the subject in a spirit of reverence. This year the trustees have chosen the Rev. Principal Caird. Certainly there is no want of reverence there, but a most decided want of criticism. Judging by the reports in the Glasgow papers, we should think Lord Gifford, who was a hard-headed lawyer, would be considerably surprised if he knew what a flood of eloquent sentimental slush his bequest would give rise to.

The pretty story we inserted in last week's issue from the *Christian Herald*, telling of a blasphemer who was struck blind, was actually read out as a frightener to the children at a Board school in Merton-road, S.W. If these are the kind of teachers already in occupation, we wonder what sort of teachers would be substituted by the clericals if they had the power?

The convicts at Chicago Penitentiary are in revolt at their chaplain. According to *Open Court*, more than a third of the prisoners refused to go to chapel for the reason that the pastor inflicted on them unnecessary mental torture by preaching at them three sermons, one after the other, taking for his text the story of the Prodigal Son. Says the *O. C.*: "Wearing on his very soul, as on his clothes, the stripes of human vengeance, the outcast felon feels that the parable is a mockery of his despair. It may do very well for the mahogany pews, where it applies to nobody in particular, but for the penitentiary it is too personal altogether. In refusing to be lectured and tantalised three consecutive Sundays as a congregation of prodigal sons for whom the 'welfare of society' requires that no fatted calf shall ever be provided in this world, the convicts displayed a praiseworthy moral spirit that entitles them to sympathy. When the sanguinary Draconian code prevailed in England, a judge having sentenced a man to be hanged for 'counterfeiting the coins,' imposed upon him also this pious benediction, 'and may you find in the next world that mercy which a due regard for a sound currency forbids you to expect in this.'"

Through worrying over the salvation of his soul, W. R. Newell, a student of the Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny, Pennsylvania, has become insane.

Too much religion has led to another case of suicide. At Poole, Mrs. James, wife of the Sergeant-at-Mace for the town, hung herself with a blind-rope from the door of a coal house. At the inquest it was stated that she was a very religious woman. She often complained to her husband of her wickedness, and was frequently found in an attitude of prayer.

The "public meeting" against the Welsh Suspensory Bill, presided over by the Bishop of London at Cannon-street Hotel, is called for three o'clock, that being such a convenient hour for the public. Tickets for this public meeting have to be obtained from the Church Defence Society. If the Bishop of London really wants the expression of public opinion, let him try a meeting in Trafalgar-square. Doubtless the Church of England Working Men's Society would undertake the arrangements.

The Archbishop of York tells his clergy to defend endowments not as "vested interests and clerical incomes," but as "the property of the Almighty." Exactly. We hope the nation will regard the matter in that light, and take care of the Almighty's property for him until he applies for it, instead of handing it over, as at present, to the benefit of vested interests and clerical incomes.

Taking up the *Christian Globe*, we were attracted by the heading "A Chatham Miracle," and being always on the look out for evidence that Providence is not entirely defunct, began to read. We had not gone far before, smelling a rat, we discovered that the Chatham miracle was a two-column advertisement of Dr. Blank's Pink Pills for Pale People, put in the ordinary type and with no intimation of its nature. The religious papers seem always open for these dodges. After all, however, Dr. Blank's pills can get more *bond fide* testimonials for their efficacy than can be produced for any of the Christian miracles.

The *Free Methodist* has been having a discussion in its columns on "Is Theology Played Out?" Of course the editor does not allow that it is, but the discussion itself is pretty significant.

At Seville, during the Easter holidays, there was a religious procession, with a magnificent image of the Virgin Mother clad in a black velvet cloak, embroidered with rich gold lace and precious jewels. Through some mishap the blessed virgin's clothes caught fire, and her priests lay the damage at 20,000 pesetas. Wealthy Catholics soon made this up, though the mass of their countrymen have not as much to keep them during the year as it takes to provide this one image with clothing.

The discovery by Mr. W. Antony of the charred remains of one of Bishop Bonner's victims at Coggeshall, Essex, has excited much local interest. The remains are said to be those of a Thomas Hawkes, who was one of six burnt by order of Bishop Bonner in February and March, 1555. No particulars of his case are to be found in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments of the Martyrs*.

It appears that old Jehovah leaves those of his chosen people who are in the Holy Land in a state of chronic destitution. Both Christians and Jews have been begging for them, the first-named being bent on proselytism, and the Jews themselves on not letting any of the true sheep out of the fold. There are said to be 75,000 Jews in Palestine, but the chosen people refuse a census from religious scruples, remembering how Jehovah afflicted the nation because David numbered Israel, moved by the Lord according to 2 Sam. xxvi., but tempted by Satan according to 1 Chron. xxi.

Mr. T. P. O'Connor (the genial, gushing "Tay Pay") announces in the *Weekly Sun* the forthcoming publication in its columns of a new story of the life of Annie Besant, under the title of "Through Storm to Peace." In the course of his announcement he remarks that Mrs. Besant "was for a period one of the most potent voices in favor of the gospel of negation and materialism." Gospel of negation is good—as a phrase; but it shows how shallow the great "Tay Pay" is outside party politics and light literature. Mrs. Besant was a potent voice, but the gospel she preached as a Secularist was not one of negation. It was a gospel of reason, inquiry, independence, courage, and humanity.

"Negation and materialism" is quite grotesque. Materialism is anything but negative. It is a positive theory of the universe—whether right or wrong. It is only negative in the sense that Mr. O'Connor's Protestantism is negative to Catholicism, or his Catholicism negative to Protestantism.—By the way, what the deuce is he?

Mrs. Besant has become very respectable since she gave up unadulterated reason, and took to mixing it with oriental superstition. As a Secularist she would still be an outcast. As a Theosophist she keeps other superstitionists in countenance. She believes in "something," and that is a passport to their esteem. In this sense, at any rate, she has passed through storm to peace. But battling with the storm is the more heroic position.

The *Weekly Bulletin* is a financial paper, but it has some remarkable Freethought articles and paragraphs, usually directed against the iniquity of a State Church. Prof. Edwin Johnson, M.A., is contributing a notable series of articles, headed, "£6,750,000 Per Annum: How to Save It." He contends that the whole pretences of the Church are built on forgery.



**MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.**

Sunday, April 16, Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street, Liverpool:—11, "Can We Follow Christ?"; 3, "Happiness in Hell"; 7, "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?"

April 23, Bradford.

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

**MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.**—April 16, Hall of Science, London; 17, Battersea; 23, Hall of Science, 30, Bolton. May 7, Manchester; 14, Birmingham; 28, Hall of Science, London. June 4, Hall of Science; 11, Birmingham; 23, Sheffield; July 25 and 26, debate at Jarrow-on-Tyne; 27 and 28, debate at Newcastle-on-Tyne; 30, South Shields.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him (with stamped envelope for reply) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

**T. DETCHON.**—Mr. Wheeler meant the two to be entirely distinct. Dr. Davidson is not reputed to be the author of *Supernatural Religion*. Nor is the gentleman you mention.

**A. SIMSON.**—See "Sugar Plums." Can you get a hall for a week-night lecture at Brighton?

**J. H. W.**—The subject requires fuller and more careful treatment.

**F. CHAPMAN.**—(1) The advertisement is rather misleading. You can hardly expect to find Mr. Moss's books, or any other Freethinker's, at the first bookseller's shop you come to. Mr. Forder will send all such books post free at the published price. (2) Glad to hear you say that "we as Freethinkers should give more heed to the first and second clauses of "How to Help Us." The great thing is to get newsagents to sell the *Freethinker*.

**HALL OF SCIENCE BUILDING FUND**—Collected at Mr. Foote's lecture on April 2, 19s. 10d.; collected on April 9, 12s. 8d.

**J. HUTCHINS.**—Mr. Balfour's book on *Philosophical Doubt* is the work of a professed Christian who sees the rational difficulties of his faith. It was published many years ago.—Your story is pointed, but a little "too-too" for our columns.

**J. PARTRIDGE.**—We thank the Birmingham Branch for its efforts to get the *Freethinker* into the Public Libraries.

**J. D. WALKER.**—See paragraph. Mr. Foote intended to visit Tyneside at the end of this month, but it seems that a hall is not obtainable at present for Sunday lectures in Newcastle.

**J. JONES.**—Colonel Ingersoll has never had a set debate, nor any kind of debate, with Father Lambert.

**W. FERGUSON.**—(1) We advise you to study Whately's *Logic* first, and Mill's *System of Logic* afterwards. Both volumes can be obtained for a few shillings. Lessons in formal logic are scarcely needed in the *Freethinker* when good books on the subject can be obtained so cheaply. (2) If you are a man of limited information and leisure, we advise you to read for facts and ideas, rather than for mere logic.

**C. H. DUGDALE.**—Thanks for the information, but Christian incivility, or even impudence, never takes us by surprise.

**WIMBLEDON Freethinkers** who desire to form a Branch of the N.S.S. please communicate with Mr. G. Herbert, 7 Derby-road, South Wimbledon. Mr. H. Snell lectures at the Liberal and Radical Club, Wimbledon, on Thursday evening, April 13, when Mr. Herbert will be present.

**SAM STANDING**, 2 Morton-street, C. on M., Manchester, will be happy to hear (and we hope he will hear) from Freethinkers in Lancashire and Yorkshire who are willing to arrange for outdoor lectures.

**H. JONES.**—See "Sugar Plums."

**C. T. BROWNE.**—We cannot find space for acknowledgment of subscriptions by individual Branches, unless on a special occasion or for a special object.

**J. PRINGLE.**—Thanks for cuttings. Glad to hear you were so pleased with our Easter Special Number.

**A. LIDDLE.**—In our next.

**RON MAHON.**—Not destroyed, but waiting for a convenient space.

**G. SCOTT.**—Will find room if possible.

**JOSEPH BROWN.**—You did not mention the time, and we could not give it.

**F. TODD.**—We note your statement that Mr. J. D. Nieass was "an Atheist of the most advanced type, personally known to many members of the West London Branch, some of whom attended his funeral." Also that, by his express wish, there was no religious ceremony. These things are kept out of the ordinary press, which still thinks it its interest to pander to Christian prejudices.

**PROVINCIAL.**—In type for next week.

**G. W. B.**—Cardinal Vaughan may smile at your letter. He's in a good line, as the commercials say, and can afford to.

**A. LEWIS.**—Hope to find room in our next.

**C. W. HECKETHORNE.**—It would be better to treat the subject more fully. Will you do so?

**C. J. WARREN**, 20 Rhodeswell-road, London, E., will be pleased to receive back numbers of this journal, and any Free-thought pamphlets, for free distribution at outdoor meetings. Mr. Warren has distributed a large quantity in previous

O. J. HUNT desires us to convey his sincere thanks to the Branches and friends who have sent him expressions of sympathy in his recent bereavement.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—S. Soper, 1s.; T. Trollope, 1s.

HULL FUND.—"Jonathan," Haverfordwest, 5s.

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—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Echo—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—La Raison—Lucifer—Secular Thought—Printer's Ink—Natural Food—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—De Dageraad—Fur Unsere Jugend—Française de la Libre Pensée—Post-Barnet Press—Weekly Bulletin—Political Thunderbolt—Bulletin Mensuel de la Federation—Devon Evening Express—Islington Gazette—Religio-Philosophical Journal—Glasgow Herald—Witby Gazette—Science and Art—Schoolmaster—Arbroath Guide—Newark Herald.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.O. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.O. 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* (including the twopenny special number for the first week in each month) will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 7s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 9d.; Three Months, 1s. 10½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

Mr. Foote lectures to-day (April 16) at Liverpool. The weather is very much against indoor meetings, but the Liverpool Freethinkers will probably do their best to fill the Oddfellows' Hall on this occasion. Mr. Foote's subjects are attractive and should provoke discussion.

We understand there is to be some discussion at Mr. Foote's lectures in Liverpool. We are glad to hear it. But the "warm-hearted enemy of Secularism" who is told off for the job will have to keep to the subject and behave himself decently. It will be a trial to him, no doubt, but he will have to undergo it.

It is a long time since Mr. Foote lectured at Bradford. In the early part of last year the Star Music Hall was engaged for him, but the police threatened the proprietor and so terrorised the proprietors and lessees of other halls in the town that not one was to be obtained for Sunday lectures. This state of things continues, but Mr. Foote does not wish to neglect Bradford, and in response to the strong invitation of the local Branch he has consented to deliver three lectures in a hall that he would otherwise regard as ineligible. It will hold no more than 300 when packed. The price of admission has therefore been fixed by the Branch at sixpence. Threepenny seats are impossible on this occasion. We say this for the information of the poorer members of our party. Mr. Foote's lectures at Bradford take place next Sunday (April 23).

Mr. G. J. Holyoake gets merrier as he grows older. Age cannot wither him nor custom stale his native humor. He writes to us from a sick room, where we deeply regret to say he is confined with a bad cold. To borrow a witticism of Charles Lamb's, they lie two in a bed. Mr. Holyoake's medicine-man says if he doesn't get rid of the cold, the cold will get rid of him. He is therefore nursing that cold, and trying to kill it with kindness. Our readers will be glad to see its funeral card.

Mr. Holyoake, it will be remembered, is Chairman of the Liberty of Bequest Committee, in respect to which he sends us the following communication: "Mr. Mansfield is increasing the names of members who will back the Bill. A good selection of names is very important to its success. One influential adviser thinks the Bill is not drawn so 'tactically' as it might be. Again, it is thought that it is undesirable to introduce the Bill unless there is a prospect of its being disc-

cussed. But nothing will be discussed this year, save the great measures to which the Government are pledged, while its introduction (even without discussion) will be a great advantage from its being printed and circulated among members. It will be necessary to hold public meetings in several towns in exposition of its objects and to familiarise the public mind with it before we can hope to carry it. On the 19th it is intended to hold a meeting of the Committee, when some practical steps may be resolved upon which will then be suggested."

Mr. Watts had a capital audience at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, last Sunday—the largest of the season. Many strangers were again present, and every copy of the *Freethinker* on hand was sold. Previous to the lecture Mr. Baker read a long letter from our friend, Joseph Symes, which was received with hearty applause. To-day (Sunday, April 16) Mr. Watts lectures morning and evening at the Hall of Science, London.

On Monday evening, April 17. Mr. Watts lectures at the Battersea Secular Hall, his subject being "Happiness in Hell, Misery in Heaven." Chair taken at 8.

Mr. Touzeau Parris lectures to-day (April 16) at Bristol. We hope the local Freethinkers, and especially our friends there, will give him good audiences and a hearty reception.

Our Special Numbers continue to be successful, and, finding their way into fresh hands, they are helping the circulation of our ordinary numbers. Last week's *Freethinker*, despite the fact of the holiday season, reached high water mark. Of course we do not advance in leaps and bounds, but slowly; still it is going up the hill of success instead of down, which is in itself gratifying. If our friends will only put a little more energy into the attack on newsagents they will be doing us a great service. Almost any newsagent who takes a few copies, being guaranteed by a Freethought customer against loss, soon finds regular subscribers.

Our artist is at work on three fresh Cartoons. The first, to appear in our next Special Number, is a striking one, and will probably attract much attention.

*Flowers of Freethought* is the title (and a pretty title too) of a volume by Mr. Foote which is at the binder's and will be on sale next week at our publishing office. It comprises a careful selection of the best articles that have appeared from Mr. Foote's pen during the past ten or twelve years. A good many articles had to be omitted, in order not to swell the bulk of the volume unduly, and raise the price of it too high for our readers' pockets. These will be included in a second series, which will be published in the early part of the winter. The volume now issued will doubtless be valued by those who have frequently pressed for its publication. All the articles selected are complete in themselves. One thing at least may be safely prophesied; some readers (orthodox ones) may swear, but no one is likely to go to sleep over this volume.

A friend of the Secular movement offers to subscribe £10 towards bringing out a series of pointed propagandist pamphlets, to be sold at a halfpenny, and to be circulated at Freethought meetings, especially out of doors during the summer. The scheme is practically mature, and will be carried out immediately. But before printing we should like to know if any other friends would like to subscribe to this object. If there are, we shall be glad to hear from them at once. The amount of matter that can be given for the halfpenny will, of course, depend on financial considerations. We may add that the pamphlets will be written by Messrs. Foote, Wheeler, and others, in clear, precise, and popular language.

This year's Conference of the National Secular Society will be held at Hanley. The local Branch has been able to obtain the use of the Town Hall for Whit-Sunday, so there will be no lack of proper accommodation in this respect. Branches should immediately take steps to be represented at the Conference. We hope to see a large delegation from all parts of Great Britain, and perhaps also from Ireland, or at least from Belfast.

Next to Hanley, which solicited the vote of the Branches by circular, the largest number of votes was cast for Bristol.

The Bristol Branch has done excellent work during the past twelve months, and we should like to see next year's Conference held in the leading city of the West of England. Delegates would have a hearty reception there, and those who had the time could visit Clifton and other places of interest in the neighborhood.

Individual members of the N.S.S., not connected with Branches, are pretty numerous. If any of them mean to travel from home at Whitsuntide, they might do worse than go to Hanley and take part in the Conference. They are all entitled to vote. If a poll is taken on any division the Branch delegates vote for the number of members they represent.

Many readers of the *Freethinker* have not yet joined the National Secular Society. May we appeal to them to join it during the present month? By so doing they would strengthen our hands in many ways. The minimum subscription is one shilling per year, but those who can afford to give more should give it.

At the last meeting of the N.S.S. Executive it was unanimously resolved that a visit to Charles Bradlaugh's grave should be organised during the summer. It will take place on a Sunday afternoon, and a special train will be engaged if possible to convey the demonstrators from Waterloo. There should be, and there probably will be, a very large gathering of Charles Bradlaugh's admirers. The order of procedure will be duly announced. We presume the demonstrators will have to visit the grave singly or in groups and some open space will be found outside the cemetery for a general meeting and the delivery of brief addresses.

We stated in our brief report of the late unveiling of Charles Bradlaugh's bust over his grave, that Mr. George Anderson was present. It was so stated in the newspapers, but we find it was an error. Mr. Anderson was not present. Nothing hangs to it, of course, but we like to be correct. We hope to see him there, with all the rest of our dead leader's colleagues and supporters, when the N.S.S. demonstration takes place.

Hitherto the *Freethinker* has been refused admission at the Birmingham Free Libraries. The local N.S.S. Branch is now making another effort, and is going to try the effect of a good petition upon the Libraries Committee. Sheets are lying for signature at Baskerville Hall, and friends can be supplied with them on application to the secretary, Mr. J. Partridge.

The Newcastle Sunday Music Society is arranging to go again upon the war-path, under the energetic leadership of Mr. Joseph Brown. On Sunday evening last, at the N.S.S. Branch's hall, Mr. E. Copland lectured to a large audience on "The Sabbath," and alluded amidst cheers to the forthcoming band performances on the Town Moor. This evening (April 16) the Branch's platform will be occupied by Mr. A. Dawson, who is leaving for America, and will deliver a farewell lecture. No doubt he will have a good audience.

The *Dundee Weekly News* is sending a number of working men to the Chicago Exhibition. Their expenses will be paid, and voting papers for the candidates will be given in the *News*. Among the candidates is an active member of the Newcastle N.S.S. Branch, Mr. Arthur Sturt, 29 Byker-street. Any of our readers who take part in the voting will perhaps remember him.

The North-Eastern Secular Federation's adjourned demonstration takes place to-day (April 16). Meetings will be held at Ryhope, Seaham Colliery, and Seaham Harbor. The speakers are Messrs. Brown, Pearson, Dawson, Selkirk, and Mansel.

The Manchester Branch's concert in aid of the sufferers from the Cotton Lock-Out realised £4 17s. The sum is handed over to the *Clarion* fund.

Mr. Hooper's open-air lectures at Wolverhampton were well attended. One or two Town Councillors were at the afternoon meeting, and there was some opposition. We hope the Wolverhampton Branch will persevere with its outdoor propaganda.

Mr. C. Cohen lectures at Newcastle on May 7. On his way thither he has arranged to lecture at Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Hanley. He will be glad to lecture at other places on his way home—that is, during the week following May 14. Mr. Cohen's services should be secured, we think, by the Yorkshire Branches. His address is 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, London, E.

Mr. Stanley Jones is now in London, and will be in it a good deal during the summer. Cannot the London Branches offer him engagements? He is quite willing to lecture out of doors.

Mr. C. J. Hunt proposes to start on a lecturing tour in the West of England from May 7 to May 22. Plymouth, Bristol, Bath, Swindon, Cheltenham, and perhaps Cardiff and Swansea, will we imagine be glad to avail themselves of his services. Mr. Hunt's address is 48 Fordingley-road, London, W.

The London Hall of Science Children's Party was a great success. The committee has a small surplus in hand, and has decided to hand it over to the Benevolent Fund.

The London Secular Federation is urgently in need of funds for the open-air propaganda. Subscriptions should be sent to the treasurer, Mr. B. O. Smith, 142 Old-street, E.C. The Branches look to the Federation for solid assistance in this work, and it cannot be rendered without the financial support of N.S.S. members in the metropolis.

On Wednesday evening next (April 19) a Freethought Demonstration will be held at the London Hall of Science, under the auspices of the Secular Federation, and in support of the open-air propaganda. The chair will be taken at 8 by Mr. Foote, and the list of speakers includes Charles Watts, Touzeau Parris, G. Standing, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, H. Snell, C. Cohen, and J. Rowney. We hope there will be a crowded meeting. Admission is free, but those who can afford it should bring something to put in the collection box for the Federation's work.

The second Conversazione at the London Hall of Science was too near the holidays to be a complete success. A good number were present, however, including most of the members of the N.S.S. Executive. Conversation went on until 11 o'clock, varied with a few songs and a couple of readings, one from Mr. Foote. After the Conversazione the younger members had a dance, and the proceedings terminated a little before 12. It was altogether a pleasant evening.

Our old colleague and good friend Robert Forder is bringing out a new edition of Frances Wright's *A Few Days in Athens*. He describes it as an "interesting and valuable" book, which it undoubtedly is. The matter is good, the English is correct, and the style is vivid. There is to be a Subscribers' Edition of 250 copies at half-a-crown. These will be numbered and signed by the publisher. Orders for copies should be sent in by April 25. The common edition, to be ready on May 1, will be sold at eighteen-pence.

The new Brighton Branch held a meeting on the Level last Sunday afternoon, which was addressed by Messrs. Bell, Ford, and Simson. In the evening, at the Eagle Hotel, the officers were elected and other business arrangements made. Mr. Bell is president, Mr. Holyoake vice-president, Mr. Ford secretary, Mr. Simson corresponding secretary, and Mr. Tripp treasurer. We wish the Brighton Branch all success, and shall be happy to render it any assistance in our power.

The Chicago World's Fair will contain the first photographic portrait ever taken. It represents the sister of Sir William Herschell, and the photographer was Professor J. W. Draper, the Freethinking author of *The Conflict of Religion and Science*.

We see from the *Truthseeker* that it has been definitely decided to hold an International Congress of Freethinkers at Chicago. The early autumn is mentioned, which in America, we presume, means September or October. Judge Waite has accepted the Chairmanship of the Organising Committee. We shall look forward with interest to further details.

We regret to learn that Herr Voelkel has been obliged to

return from Zürich to Germany to undergo his sentence of thirteen months' imprisonment for blasphemy.

Our Parisian friends hold an Anti-clerical Conference, at 1 p.m. on Sunday, April 30, at the Salle de l'Harmonie, 94 Rue d'Angoulême.

Mr. James Anderson, manager of the Hall of Science Club, organised a fancy dress ball a month or two ago. It was a select party, discrimination having been used in the disposition of tickets, and we believe it was highly successful. Mr. Anderson informs us that he is organising another to take place on Tuesday, April 18. He will be happy to give particulars to any members of the N.S.S., either by post or personally at the hall.

## DEBATE AT GLASGOW.

[CONCLUDED.]

ON the evening of the 28th ult. Bailie Morrin presided. The subject of debate was, "That Secularism, as a Philosophy of Life, is adequate to satisfy the Needs of Mankind."

Mr. WATTS, in opening, at once addressed himself to a definition and an exposition of the leading terms in the proposition under discussion. Secularism is the regulation of life by purely human means, and has no necessary connection with the belief in a future state. It has four positive theses—1. That reason, aided by experience, is man's highest guide. 2. That science and its application constitutes man's true providence. 3. That man ought to seek for and practise the highest morality. 4. That mental liberty is the inalienable birthright and most precious possession of humankind. Secularism has also four negative features—1. The repudiation of biblical infallibility. 2. The rejection of the authority of Church and dogma. 3. Disbelief in the biblical conception and delineation of God. 4. Renunciation of the belief in the prayer of supplication. Secularism finds its *raison d'être* in the psychological principle of the inevitableness of unbelief, since, from the constitution of the human mind and the endless diversities of environment, uniformity of thought is impossible. Recognising this, Secularism proclaims the equal right of all to think, speak, and act freely—that is, irrespective of ecclesiastical or arbitrary prescription. Mr. Watts then enumerated the six distinctive principles of Secularism. Taking next the term philosophy, it might be defined as a wise use of existence, or alternatively, in the words of Lewes, as the explanation of things. Philosophy teaches us how to make the best of life, physically, morally, and intellectually, by demonstrating that this life is the only certitude, and that nonconformity with the laws that govern it entails evil and death. Coming next to the phrase "needs of mankind," it is to be noted that wants are not needs. The first often spring from habit, the second are essential to the highest well-being of the race. The speaker here formulated six of the more important "needs of mankind." Commenting upon one of these—the fostering of domestic happiness—Mr. Watts said that on the previous night Mr. Deans had asked what the words husband and wife meant for Secularists. He was pained by the apparent innuendo of the question, and he felt constrained to say that if any insinuation were intended he hurled it back at its author as a base calumny. Marriage for the Secularist meant the union of two loving hearts with the prescribed legal forms and the continuance of the contract till death, unless a violation of it by one or both of the parties, rendered further love and happiness impossible, and left no redress but divorce. The Secularist motive was personal excellence, and the general welfare of society. The means for attaining this were the best human resources, discriminated by reason combined with experience and utility. They had the witness of history for the enormous improvements effected by these agencies. On the first night he had been interrogated as to whether circumstances improve men, or men improve circumstances. The answer was—Both. Man was himself a circumstance—so that his character was formed for and by him. The impotency of the will alone to regenerate the individual was acknowledged even by men of science, like Graham in his *Creed of Science*.

Mr. DEANS was bound to confess that Mr. Watts had been very liberal with his information about Secularism. It was confusing, however, to get so many different presentments of the subject. Mr. Watts seemed unable to stick to a single version, since he varied it every time he spoke. They

were told that Secularism had negative aspects. Of course he knew it. These were all that separated it from other systems. Then it appeared that Secularism enjoined paramount attention to the affairs of this life; but so did theology. The Churches inculcate secular practice. Then it was said that theology interfered with the co-operation of men for social improvement. Nonsense. The clergy and religious people were foremost in good works, although they were often hampered by those who pretended to better things. Theologians recognise reason and experience, and they never asserted that prayer could achieve what science could do. His opponent had contended that the sincere Secularist was safe in the hands of a just God, if there be one. What "cheek" for him to expect to reap what he had not worked for. They had looked in vain for an exposition of morality and mind; only theology could explain these. Mr. Watts was subjecting theological teachings to a process of distortion; and he either knew he was doing it, or else he must be grossly ignorant of them. Concerning Secularism and marriage, he would have something to say before the debate ended. [Mr. Watts: Not in your last speech. Mr. Deans: No.] There was no thought of innuendo in his mind when he put the question, but he had certain facts in view. Concerning the action of circumstances in forming character, it was "ridiculously absurd" (*sic*) to affirm that man was the product of circumstances, even with the qualification that man was himself one of the circumstances. That notion reduced man to the position of a puppet pulled with strings. As for reason, he and every theologian fully recognised its value and fearlessly exercised it. Secularism need not usurp it all to itself. In his opinion, Secularism was one of the worst things that had ever come into the world. Mr. Watts had given them what he called a definition of truth. It was what the best knowledge and the greatest intellects pronounced to be true. The best knowledge—where was that? Not among Atheists, surely. The greatest intellects—were they among the Secularists? Why, you could write their names on the back of an envelope. Mr. Watts had mentioned Cromwell and Washington, but they were Christians; and all the greatest intellects had been those of believers. They were informed that life was "organic activity." Fiddlesticks! How did life evolve from that which was inert and lifeless? It must have proceeded from life.

Mr. WATTS said that Mr. Deans would oblige his audience by explaining where life was before its manifestations. It was unreasonable to condemn Secularism because it had a negative side. That was a feature common to all systems. How could theology encourage secular virtue, like industry, thrift, etc., if it was based on the doctrines of Jesus? It seemed that whenever Mr. Deans couldn't answer a statement, he said he had no objection to it. Theologians might use reason; but none would be found to say that it is supreme. That sovereignty is reserved for faith. Mr. Deans had quoted from Isaiah, "Come, let us reason together"; but Christians showed no consuming desire to extend such conferences to unbelievers; and while it was true that Mr. Deans was an exception for once, he was mightily afraid they would not get him to come again. The attitude of the Secularist in reference to a future life had been characterised as presumptuous. As one who had earnestly studied all the evidences for and against the belief, he knew that it was impossible to know anything about the matter. His opponent loved science unless when it warred with his theology; then it might go to—anywhere. As for the greatest intellects, it was a commonplace that many of them were sceptical, and even George Washington was a Deist.

Mr. DEANS, after hunting some time for the place, read an extract from the report of the Bradlaugh-McCann debate, purporting to be Mr. Bradlaugh's words in his debate with King; their effect being that Mr. Bradlaugh regarded any woman as a wife who had lived with and borne children to a man. It was notorious also that Joseph Barker resigned the co-editorship of the *National Reformer* because in its pages Mr. Bradlaugh recommended "a vile and loathsome book." From the Secularist standpoint there is no morality. Here was a toast from the *Secularist's Manual*—"To the speedy acceptance of the truism that man's character was made for him and not by him"; and yet in another toast the word "accountable" occurs. Preposterous. Jesus did not exhort men to asceticism. He declined to discuss the question of mental necessity. The man who could say he had studied all the evidences for and against a future life could say anything.

Mr. WATTS regretted that his opponent had disclosed such an aptitude for misrepresentations. If he had read a few lines further down in the report from which he quoted he would have found that Mr. Bradlaugh disowned the words which appeared in an unauthorised report of his debate with King, and he had offered to pay a sum of money to a charity if King would publicly vouch for their accuracy. Again, in his own case, Mr. Deans had cited his words without the qualifying context, and so conveyed a wrong impression. Regarding necessitarianism it could easily be shown that many orthodox theologians held the doctrine in its extreme form. The deliverances of Luther, Melancthon, etc., were read upon this point. To sum up, Mr. Deans had failed to deal with his definition of philosophy, or indeed with any of his leading positions. They had been treated to exhortation in lieu of argument. The reproach of barrenness of good works had been levelled against Secularism, but what were the facts? During the forty years of its existence, Secularism had won the battle for Liberty of Speech and a Free Press. Through Charles Bradlaugh it had removed the political and some of the legal disabilities imposed upon heresy, and that it had not done more was due in part to the infamous law that despoiled Secular Societies of dead men's money. In a rousing peroration Mr. Watts appealed to the audience to give a just verdict upon the result of the debate. "I speak as unto wise men. Judge ye what I have said."

Mr. DEANS argued that the evidences for the spiritual being of man were as conclusive as those for his physical being. All that Secularists had done was for their own benefit; quite in keeping with the selfishness which lies at the root of their system. The idea of a "safe and happy death" for people who expected annihilation was ludicrous. Here in the last issue of the *Freethinker* was a reference to the death of Jules Ferry, who is reported to have exclaimed, "I am a lost man"—not in the theological sense of course, but it meant that he was done for, snuffed out. Even if Mr. Bradlaugh denied the accuracy of the report of the Bradlaugh-King debate, he did not repudiate the sentiment. The opinions of Luther and others only proved that theologians might be inconsistent, but didn't prove Mr. Watts's position consistent. Secularists were in a sorry plight; they did not know what truth was. [Mr. Watts. Absolute truth in speculative matters.] He was certain Mr. Watts had not said that at first. (Cries of "Yes, yes") Mirabeau (*sic*) had confessed that "Atheism could not make a wicked man good"; and reason, with all its puissance, must yield to faith,

In one respect the debate was unsatisfactory. Mr. Deans has not the remotest conception of the theory or practice of polemics; he seems constitutionally incapable of seeing a point or of making one; but to Mr. Watts's old friends and new acquaintances the occasion was an interesting and enjoyable one. With the lapse of time Mr. Watts's natural aptitude as a debater, matured and enriched by a wide and diversified experience, has attained a high degree of development and efficiency. Always master of himself, Mr. Watts is never betrayed into unseemly exhibitions of temper. While chivalrous in his bearing towards an opponent personally, he is unsparing in the treatment of his arguments, and makes straight for their weakest points. What one specially admires in Mr. Watts is the genial, kindly spirit that suffuses and softens, without in any way impairing, the virility of his advocacy of Secularism.

J. P. G.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### DESECRATION!

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR.—A funny thing came under my notice the other day. A paper called the *Christian Globe*—possibly to emulate journals of the *Tits Bits* order—distributed boards to newsagents, with the name of the paper on the top, on which their placards should be posted. But alas! to what base uses may not placard-boards descend? A Walworth newsman actually stuck a *Freethinker* placard on the holy paper's board. There was the familiar yellow poster shining brightly beneath an enamelled tin plate bearing the legend *Christian Globe*. Really it is a wonder the board did not crack under the strain of such a weight of blasphemy, or the tin plate skedaddle in righteous indignation. But what will the *Christian Globe* say?—Yours, etc.

F. R.

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): 7.45, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "And yet it Moves" (2d. and 4d.); 9.15, social gathering. Monday at 8, Charles Watts, "Happi ess in Hell, Misery in Heaven" (3d. and 6d. Tuesday at 8, dancing.  
Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, A. Brooker, "The People's Right to the Land" (free).  
Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, H. Snell, "Kate Marsden and the Outcast Lepers of Holy Russia." Friday at 7.30, free science classes (hygiene and astronomy).  
Edmonton—North Middlesex Hall, Fore-street: 7, "Man's Duty and Responsibility."  
Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Charles Watts, "The Revolt of Woman" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, Charles Watts, "Jesus the Ascetic and Christ the God" (3d. 6d., and 1s) Wednesday at 8, London Secular Federation Demonstration (free).  
Notting Hill Gate—"Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street: Monday at 8.30, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, H. Snell, "Is Christianity Played Out?"  
Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, Mr. St. John will lecture; 3.30, E. Calvert, "The Darwinian Hypothesis."  
Hammersmith—The Grove: Thursday at 8, Mr. St. John, "The End of the World."  
Hammersmith Bridge: 6.30, Lucretius Keen, "The Rock on which I Stand."  
Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Christianity on Trial"; 3.30, J. Rowney, "The Sermon on the Mount."  
Islington—Highbury Fields (southern corner, near Highbury Station): 3.15, A. Guest, "Christ's Resurrection."  
Mile End Waste: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Faith."  
Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Gospel of Freethought."  
Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, J. Rowney, "The Sermon on the Mount."  
Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, E. Calvert, "All Scripture Given by Inspiration of God"; 3.15, W. Heaford, "God and Morality."  
Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Christ as an Ideal Exemplar."

The "Queensberry" R and A. Olub: 10, members meet at Reader's Boathouse, Lea-bridge, for rowing practice. Monday and Friday at 8, at the "Central" Baths, Clerkenwell, swimming.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 11, adjourned quarterly meeting; 7, miscellaneous concert.  
Brighton—Eagle Hotel, Glo'ster-road: 6.30, committee meeting; 7.30, Mr. Medhurst, "The Resurrection" (free).  
Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: Touzeau Parris, 11, "Some Bible Symbols: their Origin and Meaning"; 3, "The Certainties of Religion Worthless"; 7, "Jesus Christ, neither Man nor God."  
Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, F. J. Boorman, "Science and the Bible"; 2.45, Sunday-school for children; 7, J. J. Taylor, "Christ as a Reformer"  
Glasgow—People's Palace, Watson-street (near Cross): Mrs. Annie Besant, 11.30, "The Basis of Morals"; 3, "Democracy in America"; 6.30, "Re-incarnation as a Fact in Nature."  
Hull—St. George's Hall 8 Albion-street: Sam Standring, 11, "The Jew as Christian Evidence"; 3, "The Slave and Labor Struggles"; 7, "Man's Search for God."  
Jarrow—Co-operative Hall (small room), Market-square: 7, business meeting.  
Leeds—New Waverley Hotel, Call-lane: 7, recitations and business meeting.  
Liverpool—Oldfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: G. W. Foote, 11, "Can we Follow Christ?"; 3, "Happiness in Hell"; 7, "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?"  
Manchester N.S.S.—Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: S. H. Alison, 11, "The Soul and Immortality"; 3, "Darwinism and Design"; 6.30, "His Satanic Majesty" (preceded by recital from Whittier). Tuesday at 8, debating circle, J. W. Watts, "Atheism."  
Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, Mr. Dawson will deliver a farewell lecture.  
Nottingham—Shortland's Café (bottom of Derby-road): 7.15, Mr. Stapleton will lecture.  
Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: C. Cohen, 11, "Charles Darwin"; 3, "The Meaning of Secularism"; 7, "The Fate of Religion." Monday at 8, C. Cohen, "Religion and Freethought."  
Reading—Foresters' Hall, West-street: 7, Mr. Laver, a reading.  
Sheffield—Hall of Science Rockingham-street: Miss Ada Campbell, 8, "The God the Christians Worship"; 7, "Why I am Not a Theosophist—A Reply to Mrs. Besant"; tea at 5.  
South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, business meeting; 7.30, T. Thompson, "Will the National Adoption of Malthusianism Improve the Economic Condition of the Wage-workers?"  
Wolverhampton—Athenaeum Assembly Room, Queen-street: 7, A Member, "My Reasons for becoming a Vegetarian" (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Bradford—James-street, Godwin-street: 6.30, H. Smith, "The Present Day Social Unrest."  
Brighton (on the Level): 3, Mr Ford "The Bible v Science."  
Rochdale—Town Hall-square: 7, Sam Standring, "Spiritualism and Witchcraft."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Vassall-road, Brixton, S.W.—April 16, Manchester; 23, m. Hyde Park. May 7, m. Wood Green; e, Lambeth; 14, m. Battersea; a, Islington; 21, m. Camberwell; 28, m. Midland Arches; e, Lambeth.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—April 16 and 17, Portsmouth; 23, a., Victoria Park; e., Camberwell; 30, Ipswich.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—April 16, m. Mile End; a., Finsbury Park; 23, m. Battersea; 30, m., Hyde Park; a., Finsbury Park; e., Hammersmith. May 7, m., Bethnal Green; a, Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow; 14 to 21, annual tour; 28 m., Islington; e., Kilburn.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—April 24 and 25, Sunderland; 29, Arbroath; 30, Aberdeen. May 7, Edinburgh.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Botherhithe, London, S.E.—April 16, Hyde Park; 23, Hammersmith; 30, Wood Green. May 7, m., Camberwell; 14, e., Camberwell; 21, m., Westminster; a., Finsbury; 28, m., Wood Green; e., Hammersmith.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—April 16, Bristol; 30, Hall of Science. May 7, Camberwell.

J. ROWNEY, 1 Dufferin avenue, E.C.—April 16 to June 25, m., Regent's Park; a., Hyde Park.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—April 1, m., Battersea; e., Camberwell; 23, Birmingham; 30, m., Westminster; a, Victoria Park. May 7, m., Clerkenwell Green; a, Woolwich; 14, m., Camberwell; 28, m., Hyde Park; a., Regent's Park.

SAM STANDRING, 2 Morton-street, C.-on-M., Manchester.—April 16, Hull; 23, Blackburn; 30, Sheffield.

ST. JOHN, 8 Norland-road North, Notting Hill, W.—April 16, m., Finsbury Park; 23, m., Victoria Park. May 14, m., Hyde Park; 21, m., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith; 28, m., Bethnal Green.

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did likewise. As the last of the same family who died came and took his place age after age upon the ladder, it followed inevitably that they all successively reached the depth of hell. The holy man who beheld this thing asked the reason of this terrible damnation, and especially how it was that the seigneurs whom he had known, and who had lived a life of justice and well-doing, should be so punished. And he heard a voice saying, 'It is because of certain lands belonging to the church of Metz, which were taken from the blessed Stephen by one of this man's ancestors, from whom he was the tenth in descent; and for this cause all these men have sinned by the same avarice, and are subjected to the same punishment in eternal fire.'

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Mrs. S. (with pride): "They are."

Mrs. J.: "Never Swear?"

"No."

"Nor lie?"

"No."

"Nor fight?"

"No."

"Nor steal?"

"No."

"Then," said Mrs. Jerker, "I don't
see what you want to send them to Sun-
day-school for. They might get into
bad company there."

"I don't know," said St Peter at the
gate of Paradise, shaking his head dubi-
ously, "I don't know. You look as if
you had been dissipating—all the buttons
off your shirt, your coat all frayed at the
wrists, your collar unironed—no, I'm
afraid I'll have to put you on the elevator
when it goes down."

"But, St. Peter—"

"Well?"

"I married a woman with a mission."

"You did?"

"Yes, sir."

"Excuse me, my dear sir. Come
right in. The gate's wide open for such
as you."

So he went right in to have his buttons
sewed on, and so forth.

It is said in some parts of Africa there
are birds with bills a yard in length. If
the theory of transmigration of souls is
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Why is a Zulu princess like a pro-
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do people bite when they love each
other?"

Papa Crash: "No, my child. But
why do you ask?"

Bobby: "Why, when Mr. Whitechoker,
the preacher, was here the other day he
said, 'The Bible says we must love one
another.' Then ma laughed and sat on
his knee, and he bit her in the mouth,
and she bit him in the mouth more'n
forty times."

A teacher asked a little girl who the
first man was. She said she did not
know. He then asked an Irish child,
who, looking very proud at being able to
give the answer, said, "Adam, sir."
"You need not look so grand about it,"
said the first scholar, "He wasn't an
Irishman."

"Say, Edna, do you believe that story
about Adam and Eve, and the serpent,
and the Garden of Eden?"

"Believe it, of course I do."

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R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.