

# The Freethinker

[Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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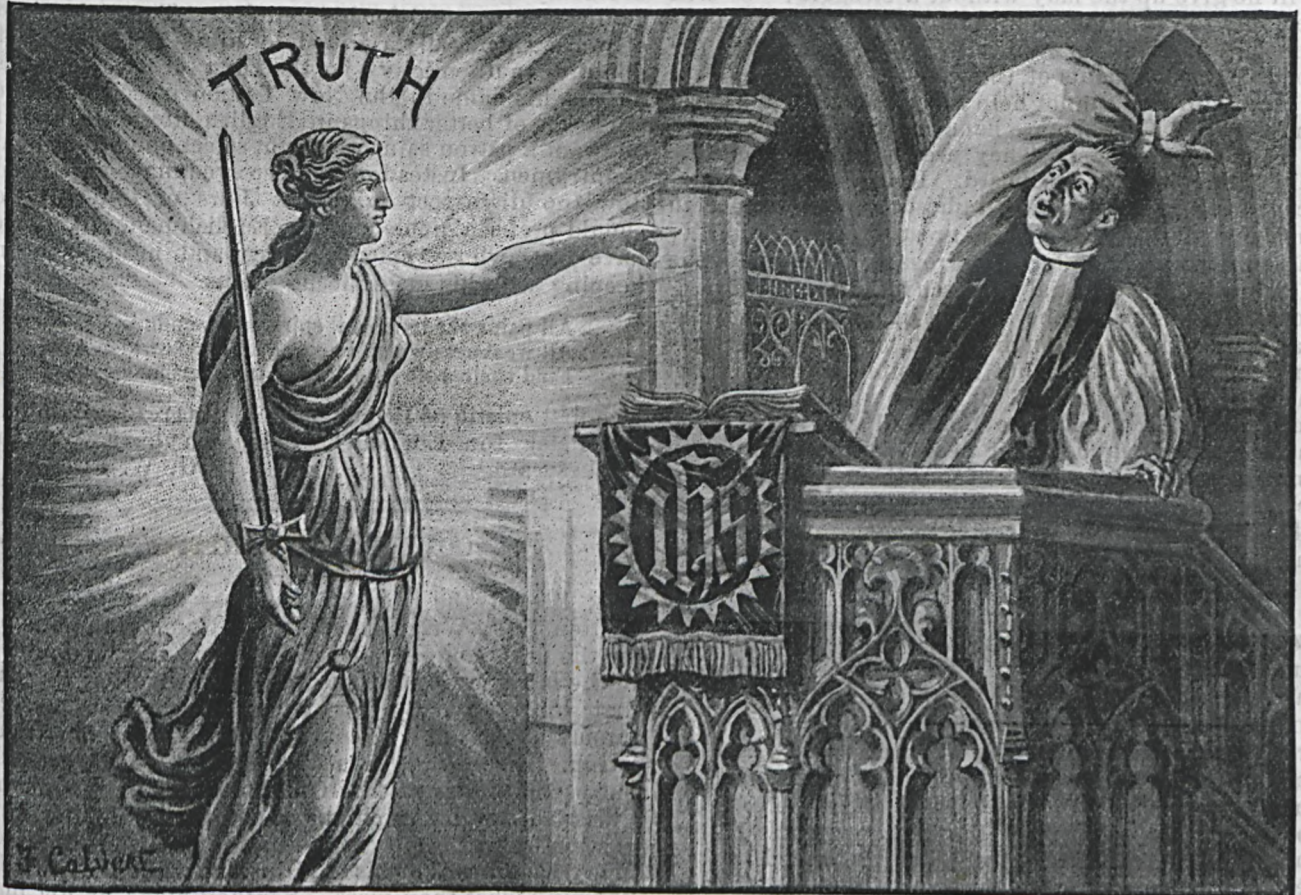
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## THE CLERICAL MACBETH.

Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee.

Take any shape but that.

—*Macbeth*, ACT III., SCENE 4.

## PETER FOR ENGLAND.

ST. GEORGE has hitherto been the patron saint of England. He has been depicted on our coinage slaying a dragon, and celebrated in many patriotic songs. Both his identity and character, however, have been the theme of discussion. According to Gibbon, he was a cheating bacon-merchant of the fourth century, who embraced Arianism, and was exalted to the archbishopric of Alexandria. Eventually the infamous scoundrel was imprisoned and lynched by the indignant populace; but his memory was honored as that of a hero and martyr, and in course of time he became "the renowned St. George of England, the patron of arms, of chivalry, and of the garter." Such is Gibbon's account of this pious worthy, but there are those who contend that the great historian was mistaken, and that St. George of England was a later and much different personage, who never sold bacon, never cheated, and never died under the hands of an infuriated mob.

No. 619.]

Whether true saint or canonised blackguard, St. George seems to have had his day, and to be passing under a horrible eclipse. He appears, indeed, to be doomed to extinction, or at least to oblivion. He has received notice to quit his position as the patron saint of England, and another and far superior saint is to be installed in his place. The greatest of all the saints in the calendar, whose name is associated with the biggest church in Christendom, and whose successor rules at the Vatican—St. Peter himself, is henceforth to look after the welfare of our beloved country.

The change is to be effected in July, and this is how it came about. Cardinal Vaughan, the successor of Cardinal Manning, is Archbishop of Westminster, and feels himself a mightier person than all the members of Parliament who assemble in that locality. His red hat covers an ambitious head. He dreams of England as a Catholic country, lying in the hollow of his hand. Nor is the dream distasteful to the Pope; on the contrary, it is known that the Papacy has long been bent on the conquest of "the mother of empires." Accordingly a neat little arrangement was made during the Cardinal's

visit to Rome. His Holiness was requested that St Peter might be made the patron saint of England. To this request he cordially acceded, and as old men cannot wait it was decided to act with promptitude. Papa Pecci has fixed on July 3 as the epoch-marking day. At the Brompton Oratory the Cardinal is to dedicate England, and all that therein is (including Atheists), to St. Peter. The prayer to be used on the occasion is already drawn up and actually printed. "Humbly kneeling before thee," the Cardinal will say, "we offer to thee this country in which we live." Truly the offer is a magnificent one, if only the Cardinal had the power to make it; but England is not yet his to give—and it never will be.

In the Pope's letter to Cardinal Vaughan "this little isle set in the silver sea" is called "Our Lady's Dowry." But if the dowry is to be St. Peter's he will have to marry Mary, and what is to become of St. Joseph? Will he give up the lady without a struggle? Or will he apply for an injunction in the upper Court of King's Bench? We look forward with much interest to the possible developments of this case.

Meanwhile we cannot help reflecting that Pope Pecci and Cardinal Vaughan are handling the calendar as if it belonged to them. They are shuffling about the saints like pieces of cardboard. It does not apparently occur to them that canonised ghosts have any voice in their own destinies. With a great show of humility these priests are insufferably arrogant. They allot the members of the celestial hierarchy their several positions. They kick out one, and put in another. Cardinal Vaughan will go through the farce of "offering" England to St. Peter, but a possible refusal is not included in the program. St Peter will have to do as he is told. As a matter of fact, all the saints were made by the Church, and if necessary the Church can unmake them. Any insolence on their part would be severely resented, and any mutiny sternly repressed. The saints reign, but the priests govern; ghosts have the shadow of power, but living men the substantial reality; and each must keep his place.

It is rather audacious, however, for the Pope and Cardinal Vaughan to treat the saints *publicly* with such slender consideration. St. Peter was a peppery saint on earth—when he cut ears off, as Byron says—and, unless he is very much changed since he was crucified (as they fable) with his head downwards, his rage at this treatment should be more easily imagined than described. It would have been more polite to obtain his consent to the arrangement. Failing that, it might at least have been pretended. It is really bad policy to let the world see the trick so plainly. Even the most devoted Catholic, with a grain of reflection, must shudder to see the very "rock" on which the Church is built ordered about like one of the lackeys of the Vatican.

There is another serious aspect to this business. Cardinal Vaughan may take England in his hand (in imagination) and offer it to St. Peter. But there are two sides to a bargain, and it is far from certain that England will accept him as a patron. She is used to St. George, to begin with; in the next place she has lost her old belief in "saints." The modern samples don't wash well. For the most part they shrink disgracefully. Besides, this St. Peter has a questionable record. He is reported to hold the keys of heaven, but Protestants are apt to believe in entering that establishment through Jesus Christ. And they have always thought a great deal more of the Tarsus tent-maker than of the Galilean fisherman. St. Paul did indeed persecute the Christians before he experienced that miracle or sunstroke outside Damascus, but he walked straight after his conversion. St. Peter, however, ratted—yes, positively ratted. When his Master was arrested he joined in the skedaddle of the eleven brave apostles, who "all forsook him and fled." Subsequently he turned up in court to watch the trial. Being recognised there by the gentleman whose ear he had amputated, he declared it was a case of mistaken identity. This he repeated when recognised by one of the damsels in waiting. Finally, when spotted by a number of persons, who said that his very speech betrayed him, he lost his temper and began to curse and swear. "S'w'elp me God," he exclaimed, "I don't

know the fellow from Adam." It was a wretched exhibition of cowardice, and as England has a great admiration for "pluck," she isn't likely to take kindly to St. Peter.

Further, the saint's personal appearance is against him. St. Paul was not a beauty, though Jesus has been idealised into a very nice-looking young man, with long flowing locks and a beautiful beard; but St. Peter was really ugly, having blood-shot eyes, protuberant brows, and a long flat nose. How on earth, we should like to know, is such a figure as this to be foisted upon us as the patron saint of England? It might have been managed, perhaps, a few centuries ago; but the feat is impossible in this æsthetic age, when the very East-enders of London are used to fine exhibitions of pictures, and all our chief provincial towns have very respectable art galleries. Yes, it must be allowed that St. Peter's personal appearance is decidedly against him. Nor is it maintainable that his genius compensated for his ugliness. The only piece of writing generally ascribed to him—and that is of doubtful authenticity—is the first of two epistles bearing his name in the New Testament. Now, there are heaps of better things in English literature, and if we want a patron saint we might select one of our own countrymen. Instead of a queer-eyed, ugly-nosed old Jew (no disrespect to decent Jews of to-day!) we should prefer a noble-looking Englishman. And we have one whose splendid face and head were in keeping with his magnificent genius.

All pains the immortal spirit must endure,  
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,  
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

The first epistle of Peter! Tush! let us read "Hamlet."  
St Peter for England! Bah! we have William  
Shakespeare. G. W. FOOTE.

#### COWPER'S INSANITY.\*

THE life of the poet Cowper has frequently been written. Mr. Wright's recent handsome volume is by far the most complete and exact, yet it may be doubted if the last word on the subject has been uttered. The first biography, by his friend Hayley, suppressed important facts out of consideration for persons then living. Erroneous views were started which are still but partially dissipated. Owing to the admirers of the Christian poet being chiefly religious people, the connection of his insanity with religion has been obscured. Many have heard of his sad illusions without distinctly knowing what they were. Southey alone of his biographers seems to have suspected that the religious influences around him may have been detrimental, but he would have been the last to attribute any pernicious influence to the Christian creed, and rather makes Cowper's pious spiritual director, the Rev. John Newton, the scapegoat.

It would be incorrect to say that religion was the cause of Cowper's disorder. Doubtless it had a physical basis in the state of his nervous system. But religion was its constant irritant. It turned native sensibility into morbid fear; it enhanced and gave shape and color to his vain imaginations, and it prevented the possibility of a cure, owing both to his friends regarding his affliction as a supernatural visitation, and himself looking on indulgence in amusements and exercises which might have cured him as temptations from the Devil.

The son of a well-to-do clergyman, related to the Lord Chancellor, Cowper lost when but six years old that tender mother whose praise he has lovingly embalmed in one of his best known poems.† Sensitive and delicate as a finely-tuned violin, he was subjected to the barbarous, bullying, fagging system then common in our public schools. Sent to an attorney's he laments that he wasted his time in "giggling and making giggle." He fell in love with his cousin Theodora Jane, but her father forbade the

\* *The Life of William Cowper*, by Thomas Wright, Principal of Colwyn School, Olney. T. Fisher Unwin.

† Cowper's disorder is even evinced in these beautiful lines. He rejoices that she has reached the shore, "Where tempests never beat nor billows roar," though despairing of his own fate.

marriage on the ground of consanguinity, but more probably because he doubted his nephew's fitness for the storm and stress of life. When at last a good billet was found him as clerk in the House of Lords, fears of opposition and dread of examination at the bar of the House fairly overcame his mind.

"Now came," says he, "the grand temptation; the point to which Satan had all the while been driving me, the dark and hellish purpose of self-murder." He tried laudanum, the river, and his garter, on which he hung till he lost consciousness. "When I came to myself again, I thought myself in hell." "A sense of God's wrath," says Mr. Wright, "and a deep despair of escaping it, instantly succeeded, and the fear of death now became more prevalent in him than the desire of it had been before." Religious terrors, which pass over the really guilty like water on a duck's back, henceforward clouded and darkened his life.

Cowper verily believed that he had sinned against the Holy Ghost, and that for him there was no forgiveness, neither in this world nor in the world to come. On one occasion he exclaimed to his brother, "Oh, brother, I am damned! Think of eternity, and then think what it is to be damned." About this time he wrote the lines commencing "Hatred and vengeance are my eternal portion."

Damned below Judas; more abhorred than he was,  
Who for a few pence sold his holy Master!  
Twice betrayed Jesus, me, the last delinquent  
Deems the profanest.

Him the vindictive rod of angry Justice  
Sent quick and howling to the centre headlong;  
I fed, with judgment, in a fleshly tomb, am  
Buried above ground.

The poet was sent to an asylum kept by Dr. Cotton, a pious man and writer of hymns. There he recovered, and taking up a verse in the epistle to the Romans, says, "In a moment I believed and received the gospel." His pious friends regarded his cure and conversion as supernatural, and when a relapse came treated it with prayers instead of medicine.

Cowper had many spiritual doctors, or rather quacks, ministering to his disease. There was the Rev. Martin Madan, a renowned Evangelist, editor of a popular collection of Psalms and Hymns, afterwards notorious as the author of *Thelyphthora*, or a treatise on female ruin, in which he advocates polygamy as the true scriptural doctrine. He dwelt on original sin, the efficacy of the blood of Christ; only making his patient worse. Then came the Rev. John Newton, who, after commanding a slave ship, repented, took orders, and became noted for preaching people mad.\* To him Cowper acted as a kind of lay curate. All agreed his afflictions were owing to the machinations of the Devil. Amusements, cards, dancing, etc., were prohibited. Scripture reading, religious conversation and divine service twice a day, was the daily round. By the advice of his female friends, Mrs. Unwin and Lady Austen, he writes poems, but they must be submitted to his spiritual directors. Engaged to be married to the maternal Mrs. Unwin, he breaks down again, having a fatal dream on which Mr. Wright lays much stress. Cowper, writing twelve years after, says of it, "Before the recollection of which all consolation vanishes, and it seems to me must always vanish." Mr. Wright thinks he heard in his dream a voice of doom. His view is not novel. That acute critic, Sainte Beuve, long since, in his *Causeries de Lundi*, wrote of Cowper: "He seemed, amid all his meditations and spiritual communings, ever to hear a fundamental and deep voice which cried to him—'It is all over with thee, thou art lost. *Actum est de te periisti!*' Nothing served to console him on this point, nothing undeceived him." Mr. Wright makes something too much of this

\* In writing to his friend, Mr. Thornton, of a case of insanity at Olney, Newton says: "I hope the poor girl is not without some concern about her soul; and, indeed, I believe a concern of this kind was the beginning of her disorder. I believe my name is up about the country for preaching people mad; for whether it is owing to the sedentary life the women live here, poring over their pillows for ten or twelve hours every day, and breathing confined air in their crowded little rooms, or whatever may be the immediate cause, I suppose we have near a dozen in different degrees disordered in their heads, and most of them, I believe, truly gracious people."—*Southey's Life of Cowper*, chap. vii.

dream, which indeed was but one outcome of a mind unhinged by the whole nightmare of evangelical theology. The Rev. Stopford Brooke, in his *Theology in the English Poets*, says: "His Calvinism, which he seems to have had before meeting with Newton, combined with the tendency to madness in him, had produced a religious insanity, which, occurring at intervals through his life, finally fixed its talons on his heart and never let him go, even in the hour of death." Cowper did not acknowledge "Calvinism"; but he saw what the most pious Hindus, Mohammedans, and Christians have ever seen, though Mr. Brooke fails to discern it, viz., that the belief in a supreme creator and sovereign involves belief in predestination. If there be a God, he is the sole disposer of events. Man in his hands is but as clay in the hands of the potter. Believing irrevocable doom was pronounced against some unpardonable sin, the poet's sensitive nature led him to fear that he had committed it. The faith displayed by Abraham in preparing to sacrifice his only son has ever been held up to emulation by pious Christians, and Cowper thought himself bound to imitate the father of the faithful, offering himself as victim. Hence repeated attempts at suicide.

Towards the close of his life, Cowper came under the influence of another crazy outcome of Evangelicalism, Samuel Teedon. Cowper believed himself abhorred by God; Teedon esteemed himself God's special favorite. The superior took the inferior at his own valuation, and consulted him upon his own dreams, carefully recording the oracular nonsense Teedon vouchsafed as divine communications. Needless to say, the prescriptions of piety and prayer did no good. In his last poem, "The Castaway," he thus compares the fate of a sailor washed overboard in the Atlantic, to his own.

No voice divine the storm allayed,  
No light propitious shone;  
When, snatched from all effectual aid,  
We perished, each alone:  
But I beneath a rougher sea,  
And whelmed in deeper gulphs than he!

A similar case to that of Cowper came under the notice of his co-temporary poet, Dr. Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of the great naturalist. "Are you not ashamed," he asked his patient, "to worship a devil?" Had Cowper realised that the God who could torment him through life and then damn him for ever must be a fiend, surely he would have thrown off the incubus which overpowered and disordered his reason. But he would have rejected any questioning of his Maker as rebellion and blasphemy. His religion was no better than abject prostration before the fancied arbitrary power of an imaginary being. Religion at bottom is based on devil worship, and orthodox Christianity, with its eternal hell and atoning blood, is but a modified savagery.

From the dread influences of his insane faith Cowper never recovered. In his last days he believed that good and evil spirits haunted his couch, and that the latter had the mastery. Dr. Lubbock, of Norwich, called upon him shortly before his death and inquired how he felt. "Feel!" replied Cowper, "I feel unutterable despair." Only love and pity fill one's heart at the thought of the creed cursed Christian poet. Yet sometimes when we hear of horrible infidel deathbeds we cannot help mentally contrasting the end of the sceptical Hume with that of the Christian Cowper. Nor can we avoid the reflection that religion was responsible for the worst of his suffering. His spirit was warped and his religious beliefs insane, even while his intellect was clear. "You will think me mad," he writes; "but I am not mad, most noble Festus, I am only in despair; and those powers of mind which I possess are only permitted me for my amusement at some times, and to accumulate and enhance my misery at others." Cowper was naturally of a happy and even sportive turn of mind. With a loving and lovable disposition, noble and influential relatives, devoted female friends, a capacity of seeing the beauty of common things, and of taking interest and finding pleasure even in trifles, the poet's lot should have been "serenely happy, breathing golden air." It was cursed by the dogmas of religion. Had he been able to throw them aside—and mingle in the work and pleasure of the

world, to his tenderness and sincerity he might have added the cheerfulness and courage that would have made him a greater poet and a happier man.

J. M. WHEELER.

### THE VALUE OF GREAT NAMES.

WITH the view of proving that the Christian faith is true, its exponents are fond of quoting the names of great men, and of claiming them as believers in Christianity. It does not appear to occur to these enthusiasts that the truth of a system depends, not upon names, but upon the intrinsic value of the principles taught. Many of the grandest verities of to-day once lacked the prestige of the adherence of the mighty intellects of the earth. This was so at the early stages of Christianity, when its believers were composed of the ignorant, the superstitious, and the servile classes of society. The Christian historian, Mosheim, informs us that "among the first professors of Christianity there were but few men of learning, few who had capacity enough to insinuate into the minds of a gross and ignorant multitude the knowledge of divine things." The subsequent alliance of great names with the Christian system arose more from state policy, custom, and self-interest than from any studied convictions that its teachings were true. And even now it cannot be said, with a due regard to accuracy, that the genius, the science, and the philosophy of the nineteenth century give their support to orthodox Christianity. The Church has always claimed for itself the credence, reverence, and deference that should have been rendered only to truth.

The absurdity of assuming that a thing is true because great names can be cited as being in its favor will be seen when applied to questions that are free from religious prejudice. No names would have any weight, at the present day, against the belief in the rotundity of the earth, and in its diurnal motion, any more than they would against the acknowledged theory of the circulation of the blood. But such a sway had its effect before the times of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and Harvey. We are aware that the power to decide the credibility of any theory or practical value of any doctrine, requires more critical and observing faculties than most men possess. It is, therefore, quite natural that persons in whom these faculties are deficient should rely upon the aid of more powerful understandings than their own, in forming judgments upon matters beyond their comprehension. This fact explains the unfortunate influence which the priests have always exercised over the weak and credulous. The evil to guard against is in relying upon such aid as if it were infallible; and we should always bear in mind that it is our own opinions that should be our guide, and not those of others. The influence of Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Socrates, Plato, Mahomet, and Jesus upon the masses of mankind is limited by the estimate formed of them by their admirers. It is not the names of the dead that really have a force in the world, but the activity of the living minds absorbed in the contemplation of the characters and teachings of their respective heroes.

It is quite true that in the realms of science and of literature we find such men as Locke, Milton, Bacon, Newton, Addison, and a host of others accepting the Christian name, and this fact is regarded by some as a collateral proof of the truth of the system which the name is supposed to represent. But it can only prove at the most the assertion of a confession of a faith, not that the faith itself is true. If a list of the names of eminent thinkers proves the truth of any opinion, another list may disprove it. The fact that Charles Darwin, after patient examination and careful research, arrived at the conclusion that there had never been a special creation, is more valuable than the opinions of any number of persons who merely assented to prevailing notions without due consideration, or who did not care to incur the odium attached to the repudiation of popular views. Instead of accepting any faith upon the authority of eminent men, it would be more dignified to inquire what were their reasons for endorsing it. Moreover, when such authorities are

adduced in favor of Christianity, it is desirable to ascertain if possible what they really believed upon the subject. For instance, did they accept as matters of fact the stories of the Fall of Man, the Flood, the death of a part of an infinite God, who afterwards entered a room where the doors were shut, and, after partaking of a meal of broiled fish, ascended to heaven? Did these men believe that sickness was caused through the possession of material devils and that it could be cured by prayer? or did they consider that any "deadly thing" could be drunk without doing harm to the human system? If men, no matter how great they are, do not believe these New Testament teachings they fail to prove themselves Christians, much less to prove that the system is true.

It should be borne in mind that scientific men are too deeply engrossed with their own special studies to allow themselves time to give theology the attention that would enable them to become authorities on the question. They would repudiate the pretensions of anyone who gave an opinion upon scientific subjects, if they had no better qualification to deal with them than they themselves have to deal with Christianity.

Take the case of Professor Huxley, who has recently given utterance to opinions that are utterly antagonistic to orthodox conclusions. He puts this matter on its true basis when he urges that the important point is what is the thing said, not by whom it was said. The rational method of procedure now adopted by thinking men and women is totally different from that pursued in bygone days. In this age of thought, people as a rule do not believe what great men say because they say it; their assertions must stand the test of critical examination. Had this method obtained in earlier times many delusions that now prevail would very probably never have existed. We admit the difficulty upon the part of the masses to reject what is generally believed; and we grant that individuals are, more or less, influenced by superior intellects; but we repeat that the lesson to be learnt is that great authorities should not be the masters but only the servants of the human mind. Others may suggest, but the decisions must be our own.

There is another very important consideration reference to the opinions of scientific men, who some times appear to be in favor of Christianity. They have made special and independent inquiries as to the laws of matter and mind which neutralise or refute theological conceptions respecting these two important subjects, so that whatever they may be thought to believe, they cannot endorse that which contradicts the facts of science. Newton having propounded the law of gravitation, his belief that Jesus ascended to heaven, as related in the gospels, would have no weight with those who believed in centripetal force. We are not saying that Newton *did* accept the story of the Ascension, as that fact would in no way affect our argument. Locke maintained that truth was the measure of knowledge, and that all else, however recommended, was but ignorance or something worse. He was an unbeliever in orthodoxy. Bacon had no high opinion of miracles, for he said God never worked any to convince unbelievers; and he compared the searching for final causes with trying to milk the barren heifer. Milton's view of Christianity would be sufficient to exclude him from any orthodox church at the present time. Emerson claimed equality with all men, and looked upon Jesus only as a brother. It does indeed appear to us an incongruity to cite such great men as these as supporters of orthodoxy, when they were, as Buckle as shown, instrumental in delivering the English intellect from the yoke of ancient superstition.

We, however, live in revolutionary times. Great changes have come over the spirits of theological dreamers, who now profess to find arguments for the existence of God in the writings of Voltaire and Paine, and witnesses to the divine character of Christ in the works of Renan and his brother Freethinkers. If we are asked, "Should Christ ever visit this earth" will he find any of his true followers? we should answer by giving a new interpretation to the letters D.V.—doubtful very. If we were to collect a list of the greatest thinkers and writers of the present century,

instead of quoting them on the side of orthodoxy, we should group them in the temple of scepticism, and place upon the porch the inscription, "Broad is the way and many there be that find it."

In referring, as we are, to great men, it must not be understood that we depreciate their efforts, or that we wish to dim the glory that adorns their history. This glory not only illuminates the domestic circle, but it tends to enrich the whole human race. Every man of genius, however, has his proper function, and that is to teach those who are less intellectually gifted, the right path to tread through life, without attempting to enforce by the authority of creeds and dogmas that which may fetter the human mind and interfere with the exercise of the highest mental freedom.

CHARLES WATTS.

#### A LESSON IN THEOLOGICAL ETHICS.

If grown tired of enjoyment you seek some employment  
To act as a moral corrective,  
And to teach you the use of religious abuse,  
And the method of pious invective:  
I can point out a way by which any delay  
In obtaining the needful diversion,  
Is avoided with ease; and so now if you please,  
Let us start on an errant excursion.

We will lay ourselves out to unearth some devout  
And sincerely religious fanatic,  
Who will swear black is white and then prove he is right,  
In a manner less clear than emphatic.  
Having found our logician and opened our mission,  
We expectantly hang on his sentences,  
Which turns out to be trash in the shape of a hash  
Of calumnious death-bed repentances.

Then we mildly suggest that perhaps 'twould be best  
To avoid ill-advised personality;  
But our orthodox spouter insists that each doubter  
Is clothed in all kinds of rascality.  
Being stung to the quick we quote instances thick  
Of gay clerical gents' misbehavior,  
But we're told "'tis unfair to bring such things to bear  
On the precepts of our Blessed Savior."

Still we show how each week the police reports reek  
Of these reverend objects of loathing:  
But our friend will insist that the point we have missed,  
And that those are but wolves in sheep's clothing.  
We confess with a "pish" that we harbor no wish  
To wear clothes that fit wolves so precisely;  
Then we beg our new friend to proceed to the end:  
Whereupon he resumes rather nicely,

By disclaiming all thought of his uttering ought  
To offend a poor suffering sceptic:  
Nay, much rather would he give him gruel and beef-tea,  
Ay, and physic him like a dyspeptic.  
For it must be disease (that's the clerical wheezo)  
That will cause men to fly from salvation.  
And such lunatics should be confined for their good,  
Until cured of their sad aberration.

We both silently laugh at this innocent chaff,  
So much like an inebriate thinking  
That he's sober and clear, while oppressed with a fear  
That everyone else has been drinking.  
Our queer friend then essays to present to our gaze  
The sweet light of God's love for his creatures!  
A paternal affection and holy protection  
Exhibiting singular features.

For instance, this "Love" reigning here and above,  
Will demand blood and fire as essential,  
As well as some fasting, and burning, and blasting,  
Ere heaven becomes consequential.  
And to make matters worse, the implacable curse  
Of our Father in Heaven may cover  
Those on earth who, most near to our hearts, are so dear:  
A parent, a child, or a lover.

But our priceless reward for "obeying the Lord"  
Is a ticket to view through eternity  
A prolonged pantomime, more grotesque than sublime,  
And well worthy a godly fraternity.  
For unless it's a joke, horses vomiting smoke,  
And strong angels of death and destruction,  
Beards and elders gone daft, some with eyes fore and aft,  
Keep God's Heaven in a state of high ruction.

So with honest regret that such trash should beset  
An otherwise sane fellow creature;  
We then leave the poor lout, looking soft and devout,  
His weak mind stamped on every feature.  
Although he and his kind, being morally blind,  
Strive to hinder all others from seeing;  
Freethinkers desire no rack, thumbscrew, or fire,  
To force disputants into agreeing.

C. DEANE.

#### A LETTER FROM MANILA.

ON Good Friday, March 31, was afforded here in Manila another instance, worthy I think of being placed on record in the *Freethinker*, of the ever-watchful and loving care of our Heavenly Father. At half-past one or two o'clock commenced one of the biggest fires on record here. By about five o'clock, when it had reached the sea and could go no further, between 5,000 and 6,000 houses were burnt to the ground, and of course an immense number of people rendered homeless.

During the progress of the fire most of the people were in the churches. Only the sick and infirm were at home in many houses, and of these six suffered the tortures of being burned to death, while a great many were only considerably injured. By the inscrutable providence of God, the fire occurred at a time when the bells of the church (the only means of communication here in fires) could not be allowed to ring for that purpose, and it was nearly five o'clock when the priest of the church of the parish where the fire was allowed the bells to sound the bad news. To add to the distress, it was almost impossible to save any furniture and clothes, because on this Thursday and Friday of the year no vehicles of any description, excepting tramways, are ever allowed to be used, for the purpose, as I can only suppose, of permitting the horses and carabos an opportunity of joining also in the devotional farces of this period of the year; or perhaps it is to afford plenty of room to the numerous processions of Virgin Marys, Jesus Christs, and other ghosts and saints which crowd the streets on these and other days of the year. One of these, the biggest of the year, was taking place in another part of the city during the latter end of the fire, and in which the Archbishop and Governor were assisting.

One of the incidents of the conflagration, and which I vouch for as an eye-witness, was the burning of a small church, completely, while two feet distant only was a wooden and nipa (straw) house, which escaped. "God moves," etc.

Between earthquakes, fires, and the priests here, you bet, Sir, we have a rough time of it. My great satisfaction here is the weekly arrival of the *Freethinker*. I am not the only Freethinker out here, but I think the only one who subscribes to the paper. What a pity, I often think, that all who have Freethought at heart don't subscribe to its representative journals, and so, in such a simple and pleasant manner to themselves, help it on. I like the second Photographic Biographic Number immensely, and hope you will continue it month by month.

A gentleman said across the tiffin table to me (in the hotel) to-day, "I am feeling very low and glum here in Manila, and want cheering up. I wish you would send me two or three of your *Freethinkers* to liven me up. It's always brisk and cheery, that paper," and so on, but I really must spare your blushes.

B. CHARLES BRIDGER.

Another saved sinner, John Hill, who murdered Joseph Dodson in cold blood, has been jerked to Jesus from Camden, New Jersey. As his hands were pinioned he muttered, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus," and expressed his expectation of meeting the sheriff in heaven.

The *Church Times* has an impudent article on "John Penry, the Welsh Erastian." Three hundred years ago the Church put Penry to death. Now its organ accuses him of "the narrow and inhumane theology of Calvin and Beza, one of whose books he translated into English," and, since there are no worse charges, calls him Separatist, Erastian, etc. Not one word is said of his martyrdom, for which apparently the *Church Times* is unrepentant.

The *Church Times* founds an argument against Dissenters on Dr. Clifford having admitted to his Bible-class the Jewish Rabbi Dr. Singer, who took occasion to deprecate the attempts to convert Jews, whom centuries of persecution had failed to move, at so much per head. The *C. T.* says, "The spectacle of a Jewish preacher permitted to make fun of Christian missions in a professedly Christian assembly is an outrage on Christian sentiment." If a Christian persecutes a Jew, that is but a punishment for killing Christ, but if a Jew chaffs a Christian, that is an outrage.

## ACID DROPS.

By a vote of ten to seven the Huddersfield Town Council has refused to let the tram cars run on Sunday. Hugh Price Hughes's paper boasts of this pious decision as chiefly due to the exertions of the Huddersfield Methodists. We should like to know if Mr. Hughes does all his Sunday travelling on his own legs, and if the people who listen to him on Sunday afternoons at St. James's Hall, London, also decline the aid of cars, buses, and trains. Unless they do the *Methodist Times* is very hypocritical in boasting of this Sabbatarian victory at Huddersfield.

The *Methodist Times*, by the way, has a column of gossip about Chambers's Encyclopedia, in which we read the following:—"The selection of writers of the principal articles is in most cases the happiest possible. Here are a few examples: Mr. Price Hughes writes on John Wesley," etc. Mr. Hughes is editor of the *Methodist Times*. Modest Hughes!

This modest man's paper refers to Dr. Lawson Tait's remark that Birmingham contains, in proportion to its population, three times as many young liars as any other town in the country. One doesn't see how the statistic was discovered, but the *Methodist* paper snaps at it greedily, and attributes it to the local School Board policy of "reading the Word of God without note or comment"—which is described as "absurd" and "hideous." Of course the legitimate deduction is that the Protestant cry of "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible," is a very foolish one; and that God's Word, without the antidote of man's explanation, is calculated to make liars of all the young people who read it. We have ourselves held an opinion something like this, but we never put it so bluntly.

"Why are the Brain-Workers outside the Church?" is the heading of a leaderette in the *Christian Commonwealth*. Evidently the fact is dawning upon the Christian mind. Our contemporary consoles itself by reflecting that "Christianity in its purity and simplicity has never been popular with what is understood as the cultured classes." This is rubbing vinegar into the wound.

This same contemporary congratulates Archdeacon Farrar on his statement, which was referred to in our last issue, that the sin against the Holy Ghost is unbelief. Our contemporary feels itself in a position to settle the point. "The unpardonable sin," it announces, "is nothing more nor less than the deliberate and persistent rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the sin of unbelief, and this sin cannot be pardoned either in this world or in the world to come." This is clinched with the text, "He that believeth not shall be damned"—which is short and sweet.

Charles Bradlaugh, then, is certainly in hell. He committed the unpardonable sin. Captain Verney, Mr. Hastings, and Mr. De Cobain took care to commit other crimes, and they are all right. Every one of them is going to heaven.

That eccentric and not too modest preacher, the Rev. John Robertson, of Gorbals Church, Glasgow, has been refused a new gospel-shop by the Presbytery. The site was to cost £6,000, and the building £30,000. Mr. Robertson spoke on behalf of the appeal, and incidentally mentioned that he had ordered angel's wings for himself, but they had not arrived. Some Glaswegians hope they will come to hand soon, especially if Mr. Robertson puts them to a proper use.

The Church Defence meetings in London have had the support of forty-three bishops and five dukes. Very strong language has been used against Disendowment, and the reason is plain enough when we look at the finances. The expenses of the Albert Hall meeting were £400, and the collection only realised £50. Less than £150 was contributed at St. Paul's. That is, some 12,000 friends of the Church (including the aforesaid forty-three bishops and five dukes) shelled out between them about £200, or about fourpence apiece. No wonder they clamor against Disendowment, and cry that the Church will go to the dogs if left to her own resources.

Disendowment would indeed be a bad thing for some people. For instance, the advowson of Holywellcum-Needingworth, St. Ives, Hunts, is advertised for sale, with immediate possession "in consequence of illness." The population is 680, and the net income £420. "Gravel soil" and "excellent rectory house and grounds" complete the picture. Yes, it will be an awful day when Disendowment puts an end to these little luxuries.

The Rev. J. B. Birkenshaw, of Bradford, the new president of the Yorkshire Association of Baptist Churches, said some unpalatable truths in his presidential address. The Church was obliged to follow the fashions. The age was clever and cultured, and clever, cultured sermons must be supplied. It was musical, and the service of praise must be artistically rendered. It insisted on being amused, and the Church responded with a lively bill of fare. A wave of Socialism was passing, and they must deal even on the Lord's Day with economic and industrial questions. Altogether Jesus Christ and him crucified gets but a poor show.

Christianity in provincial parts of Italy is an uncivilised heathenism, and during the recent prolonged drought, peasants might be seen laden with robes and chains and carrying heavy stones by way of penance, wailing and calling on the saints for the blessings of water. These processions were organised by priests, who did not, however, bear the chains or carry the heavy stones.

Russian Armenia is suffering from acute famine. In the district of Erzeroum there is a general dearth of almost all kinds of food.

The just-published Blue Book on the Kanakas question has some severe hits at the missionaries. A Government agent in the South Sea Islands declares the energies of the missionaries are partly devoted to trade—and trade of a not very desirable kind. The goods at one mission store consisted, not of Bibles, but of "several cases marked 'beer,' one case of 'Old Tom gin,' two large bags of shot, and eight boxes of percussion caps for Enfield rifles." Many of the traders, it seems, accuse the missionaries of unfair competition in business. The business consists largely of supplying rival sets of natives with ammunition for exterminating each other.

When not employed in this eminently Christian traffic, they recreate themselves by trips to Australia. In Santo, the largest island, there are two missionaries. The agent inquired for them and heard they were at Sydney. At Mallicolo, there are three, all off for holidays to Australia. He says: "When I went to Api, I asked for the missionary there. He also had gone to Australia for holidays. The missionary at Tongoa had also gone for holidays to Norway or Sweden. The Queensland labor trade has more attraction evidently for these reverend gentlemen, from the noise they make about it, than the work in 'the Lord's Vineyard.' But I saw three large churches of the French Jesuit priests, and the priests hard at work too, while the Presbyterian missionaries are minding other people's affairs."

The Rev. W. Cuff, one of Spurgeon's spiritual offspring, denounces the "higher critics," whose writings have a "baneful" effect on "young men." He says it is high time they began to "build up something." To which the *Christian World* replies that the higher critics can only build with materials, and asks whether Mr. Cuff and his friends have "anything new in this department to offer." This is all right and we hope our contemporary will remember it in future when it feels inclined to tell Freethinkers that *their* work is only negative.

Mr. R. F. Horton is preaching a doctrine which ought to "catch on" with ministers and divinity students. It is just this—that, if the Bible isn't inspired, they are. He says that the Bible nowhere pretends to be the Word of God. On the other hand, each new preacher (even the thick and fat headed ones) is a prophet, who receives his message "direct from God." Well, this is cheek, with a vengeance. It beats all the old impudence hollow. Even the Catholic Church never pretended that its individual priests got messages from heaven, or, as Mr. Stead puts it, tips from God. It was the Church at large that God spoke through. "No, no," says Mr. Horton, "God speaks through me personally. Don't you notice it?" Well, some of us don't!

Cadging is going on all over the country for presents to Princess May. She is likely to get several truckloads. Meanwhile the Hull dockers cannot get money enough to stave off hunger. Such are the fruits of Christianity, after eighteen hundred years of steady cultivation.

While the cadging for Princess May is going on we may also reflect on what other women, just as good as she is, have to endure in *Christian* England. Miss J. O. Ford, lecturing the other evening for the Humanitarian League, stated that women tailors in Leeds earned 14s. a week on an average. To do this they had to work from 8 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., and then take a big bundle of work home, and slave at it till midnight. Out of the cheapness of the clothes they make their sweaters subscribe for presents to princesses. Yes, Christianity is a religion of justice, and woman's best friend. Ask Princess May.

What is the matter with Mr. Moncreu Conway? According to the *Echo* he has been addressing the Liberal Social Union in favor of the Established Church. Mr. Conway appears to think that the Church could be stripped of its dogmas and made a democratic institution. Well, if it could be, it would be just as intolerant as the dissenting bodies, none of which would, in Mr. Conway's opinion, have harbored a man like the late Dean Stanley. But why was Stanley allowed to stay in the Church? Because he was in the secure position of Dean of Westminster, which is a diocese of its own. Had his position been subject to popular election, he would have lost it. In the dissenting bodies it is precisely the democratic element, and the dependence of ministers on congregations, which destroys even the modicum of freedom that obtains in the Church of England. Mr. Conway ought to see this. He ought also to see that for the State to endow Sunday rostrums, is simply a grant in aid of the average man. Mr. Conway himself would never be elected to one by the mob. They would put up their favorite tub-thumpers, and men of his stamp would have to "fend for themselves." On the whole we fancy Mr. Conway is on a wrong track. He had better stick to the old Radical doctrine that the State has nothing to do with opinions.

The question Is dancing sinful? has again occupied the attention of the Free Assembly, which is fast departing from the traditions of its fathers. A Mrs. Mackay, wife of Dr. Mackay, of Lochcarron, attended three balls and danced at one. For this conduct she was repulsed from the Communion Table in the Free Church there. The lady brought the matter before the Assembly, and gained a victory, despite the declaration of her minister that if he went back to the Highlands with the report that dancing was sanctioned by the Assembly, he might cease to try to convert souls. What would Dr. Begg say at this latest triumph of Satan?

The Sabbatarians cry out on behalf of the poor assistant. Yet to stave off Sunday opening of the British Museum, they urged its opening at night, which entails far more work than would an extra day, which might be compensated for by a day off in the week. It now appears that the evening opening, with the electric light burning, costs at the rate of five shillings per head for every person attending. The truth is London working men, when they have returned to their homes after their daily labor, have neither time, cash, nor inclination for another journey to spend a short while at the Museum. They want it open on their one day of leisure. The evening opening is only an expensive farce to please the Sabbatarians.

The Rev. A. J. Harrison, who is delivering the Boyle Lectures this year, has the advantage of knowing more than the average minister of the controversy with unbelief. His opening lecture is cutely directed to minimising difficulties. He repudiates the damnation clauses of the Athanasian Creed. But he ought to know that the Apostles' Creed is as much a forgery as the Athanasian. Mr. Harrison, among other things, lays it down that, "As on the one hand, I ought not to conclude that because one book in a set is true that therefore all others associated with it are true also—even though it may be customary to bind them in one cover—so on the other, I ought not to regard the failure of one book to pass the ordeal of criticism as evidence against even one of the remainder, much less against them all. So, also, a corrupt passage here or there does not prove the rest corrupt." But the biblical books are in this predicament. They all come down to us through the hands of a Church,

which originally pretended they were all alike inspired. If it now can be shown, as assuredly it can, that the second epistle ascribed to Peter is a forgery, what reason have we to consider the first epistle is the word of God? If Daniel is a forgery, as certainly it is, how can we be positive of the genuineness of Isaiah?

Everywhere the clergy are making strenuous efforts to prevent the extension of Board schools. We have heard of their having in country places declared that a School Board would mean an extra shilling in the pound, and on this pretence asked even dissenters to subscribe at least sixpence or ninepence in the pound to church schools. Friends of progress in all parts where the denominational schools are insufficient or inefficient, should communicate with the Board of Education at Whitehall.

The Bible is the child-beater's manual. We are not surprised, therefore, that the Rev. E. R. Ruck-Keene, vicar of St. John's, Crowborough, Essex, has been fined £2 and costs for savagely thrashing a schoolboy named James Bond. The bruises were so bad that the boy could not let the bed clothes touch his body. Some strong remarks on the case were made by the magistrates.

Christian invention is active but not fertile. The same old story about "infidels" does duty again and again. Thomas Paine confided his remorse to "a nurse," and it was "a nurse" who heard Voltaire raving like a madman on his deathbed. Now "a nurse" is trotted out in regard to Victor Hugo, and as a Dominican missionary stands sponsor for her, she will be accepted by all good Catholics. This nurse was a negress who tended Hugo's daughter, and when she left for the Barbadoes the poet said to her, "When you hear of my death, have three masses said for me." Of course she had them said, and paid for them herself. Good old nurse!

Rocheport, who is an Atheist, sets Paris laughing at this farcical story about Hugo. "This old woman," he says, "supposed to have been discovered by the clergy, to whom she brought the fees for three posthumous masses in honor of Victor Hugo, reminds us too clearly of the famous lady of color, the nurse of Washington, whom Barnum trotted about the United States, making her forty years older than she was in order to give some semblance of authenticity to the deception. The Barnums of Catholicism have no doubt paid as much for their negress as the American *impresario* paid for his, but they are not likely to be so successful. The refusal of Victor Hugo on his death-bed to accept the offers of the Church, which, had he consented, would have been only too glad to place him among the saints, still sticks in their gizzard, and not even an army of old negresses would remove it."

The Rev. G. D. Hooper, of Luton, surprised his congregation by requesting those who had Bibles to take out their pencils and obliterate the fourth verse of the fifth chapter of John. He called "a foolish old fable" the story of the angel troubling the water of the pool of Bethesda, and said it had "crept" into the text in the ancient times. Of course this is very interesting, and perhaps very commendable. It is good to see a minister looking at the truth even between his fingers. But if all the foolish old fables are to be cut out of the Bible it will be thinned down to very moderate proportions.

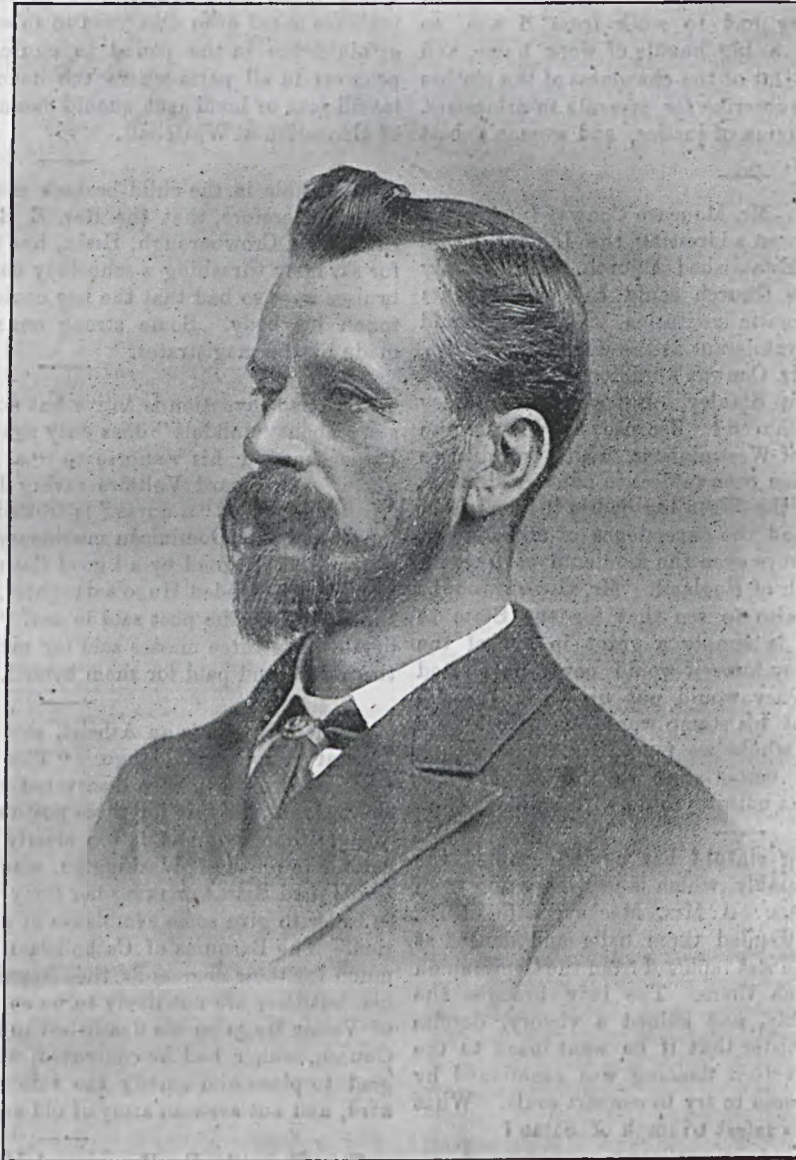
Canon Scott Holland, preaching at St. Paul's on Sunday afternoon, spoke of the "joy of declaring the Athanasian creed." That is, the joy of declaring that the vast majority of the world's inhabitants are doomed to "perish everlastingly." Well, there is no accounting for taste. What is one man's meat is another man's poison; what is one man's joy is another man's horror.

Clergymen's sons are not always paragons of good manners. Mr. Austen Taylor, who has been remarking at Liverpool that Mr. Gladstone is cheating death, and lingering upon the public stage for devilish mischief, is a son of the Archdeacon of Warrington.

A rival—or shall we call it a friendly auxiliary?—to the Christian Evidence Society has started, calling itself the Bible Defence Society. This title, or very similar ones, were taken by several now defunct organisations. The new B.D.S. appears to combine anti-Romanism with the defence of the holy books

## ROBERT OWEN SMITH.

ROBERT OWEN SMITH, as his name might indicate, is the son of a Freethinker. One of his brothers is Thomas Paine Smith. Born on July 12, 1843, Mr. Smith is nearly fifty years of age. All the best, the working, part of his life has been spent in connexion with the Secular cause. At the age of twenty-five he was committed to the Hall of Science experiment. Mr. Bradlaugh called a meeting at his city office to form a Company for the purpose of erecting a Secular Hall. Three persons attended—Mr. Bradlaugh himself, a stranger, and Mr. R. O. Smith. This was not very promising, and soon afterwards Mr. Smith proposed a scheme which met with Mr. Bradlaugh's approval. Mr. Smith was to take a lease of some house property in Old-street, and put his young life and his talents into the enterprise of transforming it into a home for Secularism; and Mr. Bradlaugh was to lecture from the new platform, and induce the party to render financial assistance. For a long while it was a severe struggle. Mr. Smith had occasionally to "hide his diminished head" to avoid being taken off to Holloway Gaol for debt. But at length all difficulties were surmounted; not, however, before Mr. Smith's health had been irrecoverably damaged. Mr. Bradlaugh's genius as an orator was one element in the making of the Hall of Science, but it would not have succeeded by itself. Mr. Smith's business capacity was equally necessary. It required something more than a Sunday lecture to keep that big establishment going, and if it failed the Sunday platform was lost. Mr. Smith's services to the party were fully



ROBERT OWEN SMITH.

recognised by Mr. Bradlaugh, who nominated him as a Vice-President of the National Secular Society. Mr. Smith continues to hold that position. He is also a member of the Organisation Committee and steadily attends to the work. From the first, too, he has been a Vice-President of and Treasurer to the London Secular Federation, whose business has likewise his careful attention. Failing health and family necessities compelled him to relinquish his position at the Hall of Science. It was impossible for him, especially after Mr. Bradlaugh's death, to bear the responsibility of the establishment. He has founded a quiet, and we hope a lucrative,

business in the city of London. His practical abilities would always have commanded success in the commercial world. We hope those abilities will, to some extent, be long at the service of the National Secular Society.

## SECULARISM.

When it is demonstrated that perpetual motion is unattainable by mechanical device, that gold cannot be synthetically manufactured in a laboratory, and that the philosopher's stone is an impossible dream, much otherwise valuable effort is saved and true science is advanced. A like gain is made when human intelligence ceases to concern itself with the soul's hereafter, but turns its attention to realising a better life in the present world.

Until we can get a religion that will make people honest there is no use of paying any more money to the ministers and priests. Let the supplies be cut peremptorily off till religion makes religious people honest.

## HOPE'S UNREASON.

(After G. L. Mackenzie.)

"In every evil, good comes in despair."  
So unctuously the pious Christian cries.  
If this be really true, the wisest fool  
May each daily act apply the rule;  
And arguing syllogistically thus,  
Display Beneficence in every "cuss."  
"If wrong is right, should not the weak be strong?  
Their roughest road is better rough than smooth,  
And flea-bites cannot irritate but soothe.  
Say blessings curse, I'll curse instead of bless,  
And cancer's pain prefer to love's caress.  
Earthquakes I'll welcome, pray for war not peace.  
And life surrender up to lose surcease;  
For when I'm dead, as death can be but life;  
I then shall wake and enter vital strife.  
This we call life in very truth is death;  
We only breathe when time has stopped our breath.  
The sane are foolish, the insane but wise—  
Come lunacy until all reason dies."

O Christian, close your mouth to priestly pill  
Reason alone can save from earthly ill.

E. ANDERSON.

## A FACT FROM SILLY SUSSEX.

A FEW weeks ago two gentlemen in a little town not a hundred miles from Hailsham, in order to raise themselves in the estimation of the vicar of the parish (a high and mighty gentleman), and in other respects improve their social position, were silly enough to allow his reverence to baptise them in the parish church.

The interesting ceremony has caused intense amusement to the intelligent portion of the population, as the two aspirants to holy baptism have each seen over fifty summers.

The reverend gentleman left immediately after the ceremony (which was carried out privately on a week day, the water for the font being fetched by the vicar himself) for change of air, and has not as yet recovered his equanimity sufficiently to return and face his flock.

In order to commemorate the occasion, it is proposed to present the gentlemen, who have been born again, with a feeding bottle, powder-puff, and rattle, etc.

Reported verbatim. Jamie (aged eight): "I'm going to get baby to say my prayers for me." Mamma: "Why don't you say them yourself?" Jamie: "'Cause God will pay more 'tention to baby." Mamma: "Why so?" Jamie: "'Cause baby's just come from heaven a little while ago, and he's better 'quainted with God than I am."



## TOBY KING.

Mr. A. KING, of Hollington, Hastings, is a local celebrity. He is universally known as Toby King. His genial English face and Alpine hat are almost as familiar to Hastings as the sea itself. We regret to state that Mr. King has for some years been a great sufferer, though he bears his burden with much fortitude. When we first met him, nearly twenty years ago, he was a splendid specimen of humanity; tall, broad, strong as an ox, with a pair of steady blue eyes as frank as the sunlight, and no room in them for hatred or fear. In after years he used to attend Mr. Bradlaugh's demonstrations in Trafalgar-square, and the stewards' ring round the platform was always solid where Toby King stood. Once, at a meeting in Hastings, a local "bruiser" came in with some "pals" to kick up a row. Toby told him to be quiet, or he would go out, and the fellow laughed. A minute afterwards he was off the floor in Toby's two hands; in that fashion he was carried out and downstairs, and deposited on the pavement. Of course such a job couldn't be done very delicately, and the fellow's kneecap got hurt, for which Toby had to pay to the tune of £250. Mr. King was a working navvy at first, and for a long time after he became a big contractor he used to work side by



TOBY KING.

side with his men, who would have done anything for him. The man's independence of character is illustrated in the following story. He used to do work on the estate of a certain nobleman, and one day the agent sent for him. "Mr. King," he said, "I'm very sorry, but his lordship says you are to do no more work on his estate." "Why's that?" asked Toby. "Well," said the agent, "the fact is, his lordship has found out you're an Atheist." "Oh," replied Toby, "is that all? I thought you'd something against me. I can do without his lordship, if his lordship can do without me." Toby walked out with not so much as a frown on his face. He did no work on that estate for some time, but in the end they were glad to have him back. Of late years Mr. King has gone in for market gardening, and we understand successfully. He is naturally less active as a Freethinker and a politician than he used to be. But he is not the man to hide his opinions under any circumstances. Toby King is known all about the district as an Atheist, but also as a rare good fellow with a heart of gold.

A young lady being at confession, after the priest had asked her several questions, he felt curious to know who she was, so inquired her name. The lady, not choosing to tell him, replied: "Father, my name is not a sin."

## HEALTH AND RELIGION.

It is not good to dwell much on morbid conditions for any other purpose than scientific study, for the sake of the prevention or cure of suffering in other cases. I am aware that the religious world, proud of its Christian faith in the "worship of sorrow," thinks it a duty and a privilege to dwell on the morbid conditions of human life; but my experience of wide extremes of health and sickness, of happiness and misery, leads me to a very different conclusion. . . . Every book, tract and narrative which sets forth sickness as a condition of honor, blessing and moral safety, helps to sustain a delusion and corruption which have already cost the world too dear.—*Harriet Martineau.*

## A CURIOUS MOLLUSC.

Professor Moseley has discovered a mollusc which has 11,000 eyes. This seems a curious arrangement for a creature that lives in a shell; but no doubt, if sufficiently careful investigations are made, it will be found that 11,000 has proved to be a more useful number of eyes for this particular animal than 10,000 or 5,000, or the modest 100 with which Argus is said to have been content. It may be imagined, however, that the over-ocular mollusc will interest the public so much as the sphex. This insect outdoes the cuckoo entirely, for it makes the spider not merely hatch its eggs, but let the grubs eat it after they are hatched. It would be interesting to know what spiders think of the place held by the sphex in the scheme of creation.—*Liberator.*

Ingersoll's idea of hell is a wet night and nobody to hear him lecture.

Said a fond wife to her husband, "Am I not your only treasure?" "Yes," was the reply, "and I would willingly lay you up in heaven."

"My son," said the Rev. Mr. Chadband, putting his hand on the head of a young urchin, "I believe Satan has got hold of you." "I believe so, too," the urchin replied.

Most of the ladies who frequent the churches and chapels would, if they spoke the truth, agree with the lady who said that the consciousness of being well dressed gave her more consolation than religion.

"Is there any person you wish me to marry?" said a wife to a dying spouse, who had been somewhat of a tyrant in his day. "Marry the devil, if you like," was the gruff reply. "No, I thank you, my dear, one husband of the same family is enough for me."

Rab Hamilton was an Ayr "natural." He used to sit on Sundays at the head of the pulpit stairs. One day he had put his head incautiously between the rails and could not get it back again. Instantly the whole congregation was aroused by a loud voice crying out, "Murder! my heid'll hae to be cuttit aff! Holy minister! Congregation! O, my heid maun be cuttit aff!" When rescued and asked what made him put his head there, he said, "It was jist to look on wi' another woman."

Christianity virtually says to mankind: Jesus made the atonement for all the sins that men can ever commit, so, go on and cheat, lie, steal, kill, be mean, low, immoral, only believe as the priest tells you and you are safe.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

June 11 and 18, Hall of Science.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—June 4, Hall of Science; 5, Battersea; 11, Birmingham; 18, Barnsley; 25, Sheffield. July 2, Huddersfield; 25 and 26, debate at Jarrow-on-Tyne; 29, Blyth; 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.

"QUIZ" asks—"How would it do to have a Special Number of the *Freethinker* every fortnight. The cartoons of Mr. Calvert are so nicely done and with so much taste that I regret exceedingly that the Comic Bible Sketches were not produced by such an artist. Could you not see your way to giving your readers a Christmas Number, charging 4d. or 6d. for it? The cartoon 'Church Arithmetic,' is a capital one, the faces of the youngsters admirably drawn, and the figure of the little chap on the stool crying (with the sum on his slate correctly done:  $3 \times 1 = 3$ ) is first-rate. 'Is Christianity Played Out' is another very fine cartoon, the faces of the men portrayed recognised at a glance. I look forward to the Special Number with great pleasure, and I feel like Oliver Twist—*I want more!*"—This correspondent is informed that we intend to make the Special Number for the first week in July a Summer Number, with more reading matter and several illustrations. The price will probably be 3d.

J. STAFFORD.—In our next. Have handed your N.S.S. subscription to Miss Vance.

W. H. TAYLOR.—The rainbow is an optical illusion, caused by the sun shining after rain upon the drops of water in the air. It is not a *thing*, and was not therefore *placed* in the sky as a sign of God's promise. The story is only a sign of the writer's ignorance.

E. CHURCH (Holloway) says he was recently at Hull, and that on looking for St. George's Hall he found it was not at 6 Albion-street, but at 8 Story-street, and no meeting was held there. Perhaps the mistake was somehow on Mr. Church's part. Can the Hull Branch explain?

H. GOOD.—Acknowledged as desired. Thanks.

J. CONLEY's subscription to the London Secular Federation, acknowledged in our issue for May 21 as 1s., should have been 11s. We regret the printer's blunder.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—L. J. Good (California), 10s.

N.S.S. SPECIAL FUND.—L. J. Good (California), 10s.

NIL DESPERANDUM.—See "Acid Drops."

SAM STANDRING desires us to announce that he is leaving Manchester, and cannot make any more lecturing engagements for the present.

H. C.—Thanks for cuttings.

BONIFACE.—The reverend gentleman's letter is obviously a private communication, and we cannot criticise it without his consent. If he likes to send us a letter it shall be inserted and answered.

J. F. E.—There is no such passage. Ecclesiastes iii. 19 says "a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast."

W. SWEETMAN.—We regret to hear you have difficulty in getting the *Freethinker* through newsagents at Cardiff. It is impossible for us to deal with them; pressure can only be put upon them by their customers. Of course we can deal, up to a point, with the wholesale agents in London; but we must first know who they are that refuse or omit to put the *Freethinker* in their parcels.

H. N. LANCASTER.—If you think that the assertion of the clergy is sufficient to prove the authorship of the gospels, we don't wonder at your being impressed by Father Lambert's pamphlet. Mr. W. P. Ball dealt with that pamphlet in our columns some six years ago. Our opinion is that Father Lambert never touches the essence of Ingersoll's arguments.

M. ANDREW.—Thanks for your letter. We shall "peg away."

DOUBTER.—Do as you would be done by is a very good sentiment, but it would sometimes fail as a rule of practice. There is an old case of a runaway slave belonging to a poor widow. To do as you would be done by would lead you to protect the slave and also to send him back to his owner.

READER.—The matter is too personal for this column.

W. M. KNOX.—Thanks. It shall be seen to.

L. SMALL.—We wish your Logic Class all success. See "Sugar Plums."

J. W. GOTT.—Your letter arrived when the page was made up. We have to go to press early with the Special Numbers, which have to be very carefully printed and folded afterwards.

A. ASPINALL, newsagent, 168 Stanley-road, Liverpool, desires to enforce the utility of displaying the *Freethinker* contents-sheet. Newsagents who do so, as he knows from experience, will soon find a good sale for the paper. Mr. Aspinall much enjoyed our criticism of Mr. Balfour.

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—Independent Pulpit—Tablet—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—De Dageraad—Modern Thought—La Verité Philosophique—L'Intransigeant—Christian Links—Naturalist's Journal—Sirilaka Situmina—Freedom.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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

The *Freethinker* (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. 10d.

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.

We once more appeal to Freethinkers in all parts of the country to give their prompt and generous support to the National Secular Hall Society (Limited), so that our party may soon have first-rate headquarters in London, associated with the memory of Charles Bradlaugh. Our previous appeals, we are happy to say, have borne fruit, but very much more is needed. Those who intend to help should send at once for share application forms to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Mr. Charles Watts had a good audience last Sunday evening at the Hall of Science, London. The applause throughout the lecture was frequent, and at the close long and enthusiastic. Mr. Watts again lectures at the same hall this Sunday evening, June 4, and at Battersea the following evening.

The *Twentieth Century* (New York) reprints from our columns Mr. Foote's article on "Are Atheists Wicked?" Articles from the *Freethinker* used frequently to be reprinted in Monroe's *Ironclad Age*, which never reaches us now. If this meets the editor's eye we hope he will see that his paper is forwarded regularly in future.

Mr. Irving has been patronised by bishops, but he fights shy of the Church. Speaking at the annual dinner of the Theatrical Fund, he put Shakespeare as a moral teacher above all the Black Army. "Sympathy, tolerance, serene and sustaining wisdom," he said, "are preached in the plays of Shakespeare as they never have been preached in the pulpit." And the poet himself has put his gospel of humanity into words which wear the stamp of immortal truth."

The *Freethinker's Magazine* keeps up to a good standard. The number before us has a portrait of Abraham Schell, one of the benefactors of Freethought in America. English readers will be pleased to notice Mr. G. J. Holyoake's pointed brief paper on "Ethical Jesuitism," in reply to Dr. James's contention that Nature does what Providence was said to do. The veteran says: "I believe in Ethics, I do not believe in Christianity." "The Providence of which I speak is the Christian Providence—who is said to bend his ear to prayer, who is a very present help in the hour of our utmost need, and who will deliver those who call upon him. This is Christian doctrine, and is a traitorous doctrine, and betrays to their destruction all who trust to it. The doctrine of Providence means help by Prayer. Ethicalism means help by Science. Nature only profits us by compliance with its laws. Its march of law is pitiless, cruel, unrelenting toward personal error and inattention. It has no ears for human cries of horror and agony, no eyes to see danger to life, no hand to help—its merciless tread tramples on humanity. . . . Why should a moralist keep up the false pretence of a merciful, all-succoring, all-tender, all-sympathising, ever-interfering Providence at the call of faith and the beck of Prayer? Jesuitism

is not more treacherous, more pretending, more deceitful, than this."

Mr. S. P. Putnam, who is busy organising the International Freethought Congress at Chicago, is preparing a work, entitled *Four Hundred Years of Freethought* sketching an outline of progress since the discovery of America.

On July 1 the Canada Evidence Act 1893, which permits affirmation instead of oath throughout the Dominion, comes into force. The Canadian Secular Union and its energetic president, Captain R. C. Adams, must be congratulated on this successful termination of their valliant struggle.

The Belgian Freethought Federation has been holding its annual meeting at Liège. Satisfactory progress was reported. Among the questions discussed were those of the legal status of woman and the political activity of Freethought societies.

A new Freethought Society has been started at Vienna. It is founded by Miss Clara Stockinger. Owing to the law, its meetings have to partake of a semi-private character.

The secretaries to the Shelley Memorial Fund find that the money at the disposal of the committee is wholly inadequate to meet the expenses of founding and endowing a Shelley Library and Museum at Horsham. They suggest that it shall be applied to founding and endowing an annual prize for English literature at the Horsham Grammar School.

Professor Huxley is loaded with academical honors. Honorary degrees have been conferred on him by the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Warzburg, Brussels, Bologna, Breslau, Edinburgh, and Dublin.

In connexion with the Liverpool Branch a Logic class will be started this afternoon (June 4). The first meeting is to be held in the Board Room, Oddfellows' Hall, at 3. The class will be conducted by Mr. L. Small, and the text book is to be Jevons's *Primer of Logic* (Macmillan, 1s.).

At the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association the Rev. Dr. Crosskey, of Birmingham, delivered a powerful speech in favor of the separation of religious and secular teaching in public schools. In his opinion this is the only way out of the difficulty. Dr. Crosskey was supported by Mr. J. R. Beard, of Manchester, who asserted that the Conscience Clause was absolutely inoperative. After a long discussion, a resolution was passed condemning the present dogmatic teaching, and another far more drastic which was as follows:—That, in order to secure religious equality, it shall not be competent for School Boards to provide for the teaching of either religion or theology."

The *Allahabad Pioneer* reports the career of a young man-eating tigress who in six months killed thirty persons, depopulated several villages, and stopped work over the greater part of a forest district, despite a reward of 500 rupees for her head. In a country full of game, and where cattle were plentiful, she would carry off men and women while cutting their crops in the fields. A proof of a watchful Providence over the interests of tigers.

A piece of sickening, blasphemous piety occurs in a leading article in the *New York Independent*. An illustration is taken from the legal slaughter of criminals by electricity. A man sits in a chair, in his usual health; no cause appears, but he suddenly dies. "Is not this somewhat the way that God works?" We don't see him, perhaps we forget him, but if we had looked we should have "found his finger at the keyboard of the universe." Now the man who "sits" in the chair is put there and fastened there; and the cause (the electric current) is deliberately applied by the executioners. After reflecting on this we are in a position to appreciate the *Independent's* "God."

*Christian Links*, the organ of the Christian Kingdom Society, may be described as an intermittent publication. The number for May states that, "owing to want of funds, we have been unable to print since July." The sole rule of the CKS, is proclaimed to be "Loyal obedience to the spirit of Christ." This does not seem to include any very strenuous self-sacrifice for the kingdom.

## GOSPEL TEMPERANCE.

A PROPHET is not without honor, save in his own country. At this distance of time and place, a firm belief in the spotless moral character of the Man of Nazareth is as easy as a disregard of those scripture truths that do not agree with the believer's gratuitous assumption made before investigation. In the absence or in spite of any preconceived idea of the character of Christ, however, an examination of the gospels will reveal the fact that the Son of God, like the gods of the heathen round about, was not above suspicion. He bears witness of himself, that "the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. xi. 19. Luke vii. 34), the justness of which reputation he not only does not dispure, but rather seems to confirm by contrasting his own festive habits with the abstemiousness of the Baptist.

Nowhere in the gospels is it taught that except ye be sober ye cannot be saved, or anything to that effect. Christ's only allusion to drunkenness is that recorded in Matt. xxiv. 45-51 (and in nearly the same words in Luke xii. 42-48)—"Who then is a faithful and wise servant [*doulos*, slave], whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. . . . But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come"—and punish him with the barbaric vindictiveness which Christ considered justice. But while a mere slave who makes a beast of himself, and fights his fellow-slaves instead of doing his work, might not unnaturally incur the contemptuous condemnation of even a Galilean wine-bibber, there is no reason to suppose Jesus saw any harm in a peaceable jollification; in fact, on one occasion, he miraculously supplied little less than a hundred and fifty gallons of wine to keep a spree going, after the guests had "drank freely" (Revised Version), till they were incapable of noticing the quality of what they drank (John ii. 1-11). The word rendered "have well drunk," in the Authorised Version, is *methusthosi* (*methuo*, to be or make drunk), from *methu*, wine; from which also are derived *methusos* (drunk, a drunkard), *methustikos* (a wine-bibber), *methu* (drunkenness), etc. The same verb is used in 1 Thess. v. 7. Rev. xvii. 2, and other places, where it is impossible to disguise the meaning even in a translation. If the evangelist had not meant the guests were at least "elevated," he would (as in c. 6. v. 53, etc.) have employed *pino*, "to drink," instead of *methuo*.

Christ's doctrine that "whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly" and so forth (Mark vii. 18, 19; Matt. xv. 11-20), is shockingly anti-total. Still more direct endorsements of the divine command to "bestow" your money "for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after . . . for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth" (Deut. xiv. 26), were the institution of the custom of wine-drinking in remembrance of him, and his promise to his disciples that they should drink it new with him in kingdom-come (Matt. xxvi. 29).

A pious Christian writer reverently remarks: "The spirit of antiquity regarded the meals of human beings as having the nature of sacred rites (*sacra mensæ*). If therefore it sounds degrading to compare the Christian Communion to a club dinner, this is not owing to any essential difference between the two things, but to the fact that the moderns connect less dignified associations with meals than the ancients did, and that most clubs have a far less serious object than the Christian society. The Christian Communion is a club dinner: but the club is the New Jerusalem; God and Christ are members of it: death makes no vacancy in its lists, but at its banquet-table the perfected spirits of just men, with an innumerable company of angels, sit down beside those who have not yet surrendered their bodies to the grave" (*Ecce Homo: A Survey of the Life and Work of Jesus Christ*, p. 163). Somehow, there always did seem to be a sort of spiritual meaning in that "communion of saints" business.

The Lord's Supper has long been degenerated into a mere ceremonial pretence of eating and drinking, but in the beginning it was not so—it was made a good square meal, not always free from scrambling. Paul, who advocated

moderate drinking and other new-fangled ideas not broached in the gospels, complains of the disorderly communion of the saints at Corinth—"For (says he) in eating everyone taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry and another is drunken (*methuei*). What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? . . . Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home. . . . And the rest will I set in order when I come" (1 Cor. xi. 31-34). But if Christ did not intend this result of his institution, why did he not guard against it by precept and example? Or did he not foresee it? At all events, this apostolic exposure of the primitive "purity" of the Holy Communion, as it existed among its founder's contemporaries, does not inspire feelings of unmitigated adoration for that God-ordained, perpetual, gospel protest against total abstinence—the Supper of the Lord.

J. F. HENLEY.

#### GEMS FROM CHAMFORT.

(*French wit and Freethinker, born 1741, died 1794.*)

It is asserted that Madame, the king's daughter, playing with one of her nurses, looked at her hand, and after counting her fingers exclaimed, "What! you have five fingers too, like me?" And she counted them again to be sure.

La Fontaine, hearing someone mourn over the lot of the damned in the fire of hell, said, "I flatter myself they get used to it, and at last are like fishes in water."

A countryman divided his little property between his four sons, and went to live, now with one and now with another. He was asked on returning from one of these visits, "Well, how were you received? How did they treat you?" "They treated me like their own child," he replied; and from the lips of such a father the answer was sublime.

Monsieur de —, who saw the source of human degradation in the establishment of the sect of Nazarenes and in Feudalism, said that, to be worth anything, it was necessary to un-French and un-baptise oneself, and become Greek or Roman in spirit.

Marmontel, in his youth, much sought the society of old Boindin, who was famous for his wit and his scepticism. The old man made an appointment with him at the Café Procope. "But we cannot speak there on philosophic matters." "Oh yes, by means of a special language, a kind of *argot*." Then they made up a vocabulary: the soul was called *Margot*; religion, *Javotte*; liberty, *Jeanneton*; and God the Father, *M. de l'Etre*. A man dressed in black, with an unpleasant countenance, joined in the conversation, and said to Boindin, "Sir, may I venture to ask you who is that M. de l'Etre that behaves himself so badly, and gives you such dissatisfaction?" "Sir," replied Boindin, "he was a police spy." One can imagine the roars of laughter, the man being himself in that profession.

Louis XV. inquired of the Duke of Aven (afterwards Marshal Noailles) if he had sent his plate to the mint. The duke replied, No. "But," the king said, "I have sent my own." "Ah, sire," rejoined the duke, "when Jesus Christ died on Good Friday he knew very well that he would rise again on Sunday."

Diderot was asked what kind of man was M. d'Epinay. "He is a man who has eaten two millions, without saying a sensible word or doing a good action."

A lady ninety years of age said to Fontenelle aged ninety-five, "Death has forgotten us." "Hush!" said Fontenelle with finger on lip.

Fontenelle had composed an opera in which there was a chorus of priests that scandalised the devout, and the Archbishop of Paris wanted to suppress it. "I don't meddle with his clergy," said Fontenelle, and he shouldn't meddle with mine."

Monsieur — begged of the Bishop of — a country house which he never visited. The bishop replied, "Don't you know that one should always have a place one doesn't go to, but where one thinks he would be happy if he did go?" After a moment's silence Monsieur — said, "That is true, and it is that which made the fortune of heaven."

A man of letters who was made to feel a certain nobleman's superiority of position, said to him, "My lord, I am not

ignorant of what I ought to know; but I also know it is easier to be above me than beside me."

I have heard a devotee, speaking against those who discussed the articles of faith, say, "Sir, a true Christian does not investigate what he is ordered to believe. It is like taking a bitter pill; if you chew it you will never swallow it."

There are well-dressed follies as well as well-dressed fools.

The physical world appears the work of a powerful and good being, who has been obliged to leave to a malignant being the execution of a part of his plan. But the moral world seems to be the capricious work of a devil gone mad.

What is a philosopher? A man who opposes nature to law, reason to custom, his conscience to opinion, and his judgment to error.

The most wasted of all days is the one in which we have not laughed.

Society is composed of two great classes; those who have more dinner than appetite, and those who have more appetite than dinner.

Live and let live, without hurting yourself or anyone else; that, I believe, is the sum of morality.

#### BOOK CHAT.

Prize Essays have never been very fortunate; often it has been difficult to sell them, and in a short time they generally drop into oblivion. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that the two Prize Essays on "The Practical Value of Christianity" by the Rev. J. Broadhurst Nichols (for) and Mr. C. W. Dymond (against), are now being circulated with a new title-page bearing Watts and Co.'s imprint, and offered for the low price of threepence, or twopence for fifty copies and upwards. Neither essay is without merits, but on the whole both are unsatisfactory. We said so when they were first published, and a fresh glance at them only confirms our opinion.

A very different volume comes to us from Watts and Co. in the form of *A Concise History of Religion*, Vol. I., by F. J. Gould, published for the Rationalist Press Committee. In the words of the title-page it comprises "Sketches of the Chief Religions of the World, with the exception of Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism," which are reserved for the second volume. Mr. Gould states in the Preface that his object is to give facts, and not to enter into discussions, although he hopes to "make it evident that Christianity is but one of a great family of religions." Certainly the volume is as full of facts as an egg is full of meat, and they are presented in an orderly manner and an interesting light. The list of books referred to is a good library catalogue in itself. Yet there are some curious omissions. For instance, the name of Darwin is excluded, though his great chapter in the *Descent of Man* should have been indicated to the student. In dealing with the origin and development of the belief in soul, also, Mr. Gould does not bring out sufficiently the logical steps by which the savage proceeds in his imaginary construction of a spirit-world. It is precisely the *how* of the thing which is most instructive. For the rest, however, we have nothing but praise for Mr. Gould's performance; it is careful, solid, and honest; and we cordially recommend it to all who desire a bird's-eye view of this great subject, with ample references for a more detailed study.

*Old and Young* (May 20) has a sensible article on "Children as Ghost-seers." After giving instances that children frequently see visions and imaginary pictures which they take for realities, it remarks: "Species change, but traces of what they were formerly are unmistakably stamped on their young. Here, then, is a clue to the origin of the spirit-world. It is a clue, moreover, confirmed by the teachings of anthropology. The students of this science are all but unanimous that notions concerning another world arose out of a belief in ghosts. If children believe their visions to represent realities, so, undoubtedly, did our ancestors. Many groundless arguments and baseless assumptions which stand in the way of human progress at the present day, are perhaps no more than the natural and unavoidable consequences of what was once the prevailing gift of ghost-seeing."

Dr. Resch, a German scholar, has tried a new avenue in gospel criticism. He has made an elaborate collection of sayings ascribed to Jesus or the Lord, to be found in early Christian literature, but not to be found in the same words in our gospels. The list is a very formidable one, and leads Dr. Resch to several conclusions, the more prominent of which is that these sayings were not derived from oral tradition or from

any later form of gospel, but from an older form, which he would identify with the original Logia of St. Matthew. He not only includes the saying, "It is more blessed to give than receive," found in the Acts, but also finds traces of this earlier gospel in the writings of Paul. Dr. Resch should now go a step further, and he may find that the nucleus of these sayings antedate Christianity itself.

Herr A. Drews has published two thick volumes in German of *The History of German Speculative Philosophy since Kant*. His conclusion seems to be that now there is but one God, the Unconscious, and his prophet Edward Hartmann.

Francis William Newman, who is now eighty-seven years of age, has completed and sent to his publisher an important little work on *Saul of Tarsus*, whom he esteems to have been the real founder of all that is vital in Christianity. The genuine epistles of Paul and that of the Apostle James he holds to be our earliest and best authorities on primitive Christianity.

Mr. H. Croft Hiller is one of the younger school of scientists, who emulate the French in not fearing to speak out their conclusions. No doubt the theologians will find his book, *Against Dogma and Freewill* (Williams and Norgate), highly dogmatic. But, as Mr. Hiller notes in his preface, he is opposed to the dogmas of ecclesiasticism founded on fiction, not to those of science founded on fact, and he is quite content if his own dogma stands or falls with the evidence on which it is based. Mr. Hiller throughout does not hesitate to contrast the modest methods of science with the pretentious charlatany of a revelation which reveals nothing.

An idea of Mr. Hiller's advanced standpoint may be gathered from the following passage:—"The morality which pretends to be a supernatural revelation ratified and maintained by supernatural decrees and penalties is, most emphatically, a convention, pure and simple—and moreover a most preposterous one. Of course, there could be, no more, communities of men without standards of conduct preventing them from pillaging and murdering one another, than there could be communities of wolves without standards of conduct preventing them from killing and eating one another. Yet there is no more of the supernatural about the man's than about the wolf's standard of behavior; both are merely the effects of evolution on the respective types, one of which has evolved a very elaborate, while the other retains a primitive standard of behavior." Mr. Hiller's dogma against freewill is largely founded on Weismann's view, that extraneous influences only affect the individual immediately subject to them; that to permanently affect the type through heredity, the germ cell must be modified before the individual is born, and that no such modification can ensue from any influences affecting the individual during life. This may be considered the best opinion, supported as it is by Mr. Romanes and Mr. W. Platt Ball. But in view of the opposition of Mr. Herbert Spencer and Mr. Collins, it must, we think, still be considered *sub judice*. Nonetheless, Mr. Hiller's book is one which deserves, and we hope will receive, the attention of thoughtful students, since it is likely to be tabooed by the theologians.

#### A MODERN DAVID.

Mr. David Wolfe Bruce, 80 years of age whose personal estate is valued at thirty million dollars, was arrested in New York on the 20th of April and charged with keeping a harem in the vicinity of 28th Street and 6th Avenue. Nine young girls, whose respective ages ranged from 17 to 21 years, were necessary to gratify the sensual desires of this octogenarian, commercial Sultan. Mr. Bruce is a prominent member of the Presbyterian Congregational Tabernacle, 34th Street and 6th Avenue, and is the President of the "Type Foundry Trust" of the United States.—*Dalziel*.

#### 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.]

##### LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 9.50, start for brake excursion to Riddlesdown. Monday at 8, Charles Watts, "Science and the Theory of a Future Life" (3d. and ed.) Tuesday at 8, dancing (free).  
Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, C. James, "What must I do to be Saved?"  
Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, C. Cohen, "Science and Supernaturalism."  
Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7, musical selections; 7.30, Charles Watts, "The Delusions of Prayer" (3d. 6d., and 1s.)  
Islington—Milner Lodge, 18 Waterloo-terrace, Upper-street: 9, quarterly meeting.

##### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, A. Johnson, "Christianity and Drink."  
Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, C. J. Hunt, "The Resurrection."

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Slavery."

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, H. Snell, "The Social Evolution of Man"; members' meeting after the lecture.

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, a lecture.

Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Christian Religion"; 3.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt."

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday at 8.30, Stanley Jones, "The Cooling of Hell."

Hammersmith Bridge: 6.30, W. Heaford, "An Hour with the Devil."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, F. Haslam, "Is Christianity Played Out?"; 3.30, J. Rowney, "The Christian's God." Wednesday at 8, C. Cohen, "Evolution v. Special Creation."

Islington—Newington Green: 3.15, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Morality."

Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, Mr. St. John, "This World and the Next."

Lambeth—Kennington Green (near the Vestry Hall): 6.30, E. Calvert, "Secularism, the Light of the World."

Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, J. Marshall, "The Gloom of Jesus: was he Insane?"

Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, a lecture. Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Christ as an Ideal."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt: is the Story True?"

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, J. Rowney, "The Christian's God"; 3.30, W. Heaford, "Why did Christ Die?"

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, Mr. St. John will lecture; 3.15, C. J. Hunt, "Faith."

Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Christian Creed."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, S. H. Alison, "Hell's History."

The "Queensberry" R. and A. Club: Saturday, June 3, at 5 and Sunday at 10.30, at Reader's Boat-house, Lea-bridge, rowing. Monday and Friday at 8, at the "Central" Baths, Clerkenwell, swimming. Wednesday at 8, general meeting of members.

##### COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 7, R. S. Bransby, "The Search for Truth"; preceded by a Review of the N.S.S. Conference.

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, J. White, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 7, A. B. Moss, "The Delusions of Theology."

Derby—Mission Hall, top of Sacheverel-street, Normanton-road: Monday at 7.30, monthly business meeting.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "The Relativity of Knowledge."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Busholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': J. M. Robertson, 11, "Toryism in Politics—with Special Reference to Home Rule"; 3, "Toryism in Literature"; 6.30, "Toryism in Religion." Tuesday at 8, debating circle, W. McClement will read a Paper.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rookingham-street: 7, Mr. Eadon, "Swedenborg, the Dreamer."

South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean-road: Mrs. Thornton Smith, 11, "Secularism: what it is"; 3, "The Meaning of Malthusianism"; 7, "Responsibility: from a Freethought Standpoint."

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, Mr. Selkirk, "The Doctrine of Divinity."

##### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Bradford—Market-ground, Godwin-street: 6.30, John Grange will lecture.

Brighton (on the Level): 3, A. Little, "Is the Christ of the Gospels an Historical Character?"

Chatham—New-road (near Waghorn Memorial): 11, A. B. Moss, "Inspired Nonsense."

Hull—Corporation Field: 3, G. E. Conrad Naewiger, "How I Became a Freethinker."

Sunderland—Wheat Sheaf, Monkwearmouth: 6, Mr. Selkirk, "The Natural and the Supernatural."

#### LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Vassall-road, Brixton, S.W.—June 4, m., Wood Green; 11, e., Lambeth; 18, Chatham; 25, m., Camberwell.

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minister and the congregation repaired to the church, where the funeral discourse was to be preached. After the sermon was finished the minister halted to make some remarks to his congregation, when a brother, who wished to have an appointment given out, ascended the stairs of the pulpit and gave the minister's coat a hitch to get his attention. The divine, thinking it a dog having designs on his pocket, raised his foot, gave a sudden kick, and sent the good brother sprawling down the steps. "You will excuse me, brethren and sisters," said the minister confusedly, and without looking at the work he had just done, "for I could not avoid it. I have sausages in my pocket, and that dog has been trying to grab them ever since he came upon the premises."

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