

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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## SPECIAL.

Next week's "Freethinker" will be a Special Number, price Twopence.

### THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR.

THERE is much food for the cynic in the history—the true history—of the Sunday opening of the World's Fair at Chicago. Long before the big show was ready the question was fiercely agitated whether the Lord's Day should be desecrated by letting the people go through the turnstiles. All sorts of opinions were expressed. Some said the show ought to be opened on Sunday because it was the only day the people could go in large numbers. Others said that the drinking saloons, and worse places still, would be open on Sunday, and if the Fair were shut the moral state of Chicago on the Lord's Day would be worthy of Sodom and Gomorrah. Others said that the Fair was a good place to visit, and Sunday was a good day, and the better the day the better the deed. Others said it would be a bad thing to open the Fair on Sunday because it would interfere with the blessed Day of Rest. Finally, the great tribe of Sabbatarian bigots declared that the Sunday opening of the Fair would be an insult to God Almighty, who would never stand it, and would probably destroy all the buildings and exhibits in a fit of holy vengeance.

The debate on this Sunday-opening question was long and strong. It ended in a negative decision, but not before the Freethinkers and Liberals had considerably educated the public mind upon the subject. The one good of all such struggles, in fact, is that reason gets a wider hearing.

Well, the World's Fair opened with a big crush on a wet day. Things looked promising, and America was going to lick creation—as usual. But somehow the attendance at the show did not come up to expectation. The daily returns were so small as to mean something like bankruptcy. This went on for some time, and at last the real God of the United States had an innings. The Almighty Dollar asserted himself. He asked the Americans if they were going to let themselves look small in the eyes of Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia; if they were going to let the show be a failure; and, above all, if they were going to let it prove a bad investment. That settled it. At once the tide began to turn. A reaction set in on behalf of Sunday opening. Religion carried the day when there was nothing to lose by it, but as soon as it stood in the way of business the Yankees began to "hum" and "ha." After a brief interval of reflection they decided to give the other side a trial. Then it was, exit Jehovah and enter the Almighty Dollar.

John Milton made Satan address the sun as "The God of this new world, at whose sight all the stars hide their diminished heads." Satan, however, like Jesus Christ, did not know of America. It wasn't on the maps when he went to school. What he knew

we call the *old* world. The *new* world of to-day is America. And the god of *this* new world is the Almighty Dollar, at whose sight (when on the war path) all the stars of the theological firmament hide their diminished heads.

Scripture says that the love of money is the root of all evil. Perhaps it is. But the religious people have a good share of that *root*, and a mighty big share of the *branches*. And how they shake them to bring down the golden fruit! Just as holy Peter shook Ananias and Sapphira to get out of them the cash they had kept back from the apostles' exchequer.

The reign of the Almighty Dollar is not confined to America. Englishmen—yea, and Scotchmen, Irishmen, and Welshmen—worship him under a different name. Sometimes he passes as a Trinity, instead of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

£ s. d. ! £ s. d. !  
Ever blessed Trinity.  
Three in one, and one in three,  
Ever blessed £ s. d. !

Sometimes he is known as "rhino," "brass," "oof," "yellow-boys," etc., etc.—all such names being loving designations of the one, great, unchangeable (except into small change), everlasting, omnipotent, beneficent godhead. "The one remains, the many change and pass." Names alter, but the thing is imperishable.

We are prepared to back the Almighty Dollar, under any alias, against all the gods in the Pantheon. All other deities are worshipped by *sections* of the human race; he alone is worshipped by all, from pole to pole, from China to Peru. His temples are everywhere, in fact, where even a handful of people swop, barter, trade, or transact anything in the shape of a bargain. Wherever money exists, and one man is able to make anything out of another, the Almighty Dollar is worshipped and adored. To the reveller he promises (and gives) rich, rare wines, flashing in golden cups; to the voluptuary a mistress, lissom-limbed and honey-mouthed; to the despot power over millions; to the men and women of "the world" fine dresses, opera seats, horses and carriages, town houses, country mansions, and troops of servants. These things and others he bestows upon his elect, and people strive to "make their election sure." When they bask in the golden sunlight of his smile all is bright; the gods of other faiths are neglected, heaven and hell are idle dreams, and death itself is a thing to be forgotten.

Yes, it is the Almighty Dollar that has opened the World's Fair. Every god does good now and then, generally by accident. We must set this against the Almighty Dollar's doings in England, where the hat is going round for the Liberator victims. Balfour, Hobbs, Wright and Co., worshipped this deity, and sacrificed thousands on his altar. They were pious men, they were aided and abetted by other pious men, and all of them talked about "God." But that was generic; his specific title was the Almighty Dollar.

G. W. FOOTE.

## BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY.\*

MR. LILLIE'S little book on *The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*, is one which deserves the attention of all interested in the sympathy of religions, or in the complex question of the origin of Christianity. Having long since given my opinion that Christianity is to some extent indebted to the prior religion of Buddha, and having also in a review of Mr. Lillie's previous work *Buddhism in Christendom* expressed dissent from some of his conclusions,† I may now fairly congratulate him on putting his argument in concise and readable form, and proceed to deal with it in my own fashion.

Everyone allows that Christianity is, in part, based on Judaism. The New Testament constantly appeals to the Old, and much in the Church is based on the synagogue. Yet Christianity is distinct from, and in some important respects antagonistic to, the spirit of Judaism. Certain of its features, such, for instance, as its spirit of abnegation and its doctrine of the Incarnation, remain to this day "to the Jews a stumbling block." Mr. Lillie then does well to preface his inquiry with a chapter on the religion of the Jews, which he shows to have been essentially a religion of sacrifice and taboo.‡ How was it Christianity came to abolish these distinctive features? The suggestion that the influence came from Buddhism, "the religion of the bloodless altar," cannot be lightly set aside in view of the evidence that this great missionary religion did penetrate to Syria and Egypt, and that in both these countries communities were established known as Essenes and Therapeutæ, which, recruited from the Jews, yet bore token of their affinity with Buddhism.

The rock-hewn inscriptions of Asoka prove that in the third century B.C. Buddhist missionaries went from India to all neighboring potentates, mentioning by name Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemy of Egypt, Magas of Cyrene, and Alexander of Greece. One inscription reads: "Both here and in foreign countries everywhere the people follow the doctrine of the religion of Asoka wheresoever it reacheth." One of the Buddhist sacred books, the *Milinda-panha*, is occupied with a discussion held in Syria between Nagasena, a Buddhist and Menander, who, we are told, was born at Alexandria, and who became a convert. The *Mahawanso*, old Buddhist chronicles of Ceylon, mentions among those who came from afar to a great celebration (B.C. 157), the Thero of Yona, and 30,000 priests "from the vicinity of Alasadda, the capital of the Yona country." Bishop Lightfoot, with more ingenuity than ingenuousness, suggested this referred to *Alexandria ad Caucasum*, an inconsiderable town of Cabul. But the great trade emporium between Egypt and the East is glaringly referred to, and the reference suggests the explanation of the hitherto unsolved enigma of the origin of Christian monkery.

Protestants, in lopping off what they consider the excrescences of Christianity, have thereby obscured its origin. In particular they have lost sight of how largely primitive Christianity was a monastic system. Its essential precepts, found in the Sermon on the Mount, its doctrine of forsaking father, mother, wife, and child, and taking up the cross, are the teachings of monks. It has been usual to say that Christian monkery came from Egypt, and no doubt that is true. But the question is, how came monkery into Egypt? It was not native to the old Egyptian religion, and appears to be no earlier than the worship of Serapis under the Ptolemies. Since there is evidence that Buddhist missionaries did visit

Egypt, it is certainly no unreasonable conjecture that they may have led both to the institutes of monkery in connection with the worship of Serapis and also to the monastic community of the Therapeutæ, whose books Eusebius believed to be our gospels (*Ec. Hist.* ii. 17).

Mr. Lillie has a chapter on the Essene Jesus. He finds both an Essene and Anti-Essene Christ in the New Testament, and he holds that the latter has been interpolated. He seems to think that there was an actual historical Jesus, an Essene. But I would submit to him that it is barely possible that the sole historical nucleus may have been built up on John the Baptist, and that what was originally said of John may afterwards have been ascribed to the ideal Jesus Christ. Mr. Lillie, whose chapters on *The Gospel According to the Hebrews*, *The Church of Jerusalem*, and *Johannine Buddhism*, show he has closely studied the early history of Christianity, will not deem this suggestion so startling as would an orthodox Christian. Where all is conjecture, why should not I throw out mine also?

The similarity of the teaching of the Essenes as reported by Josephus and Philo to that of the New Testament has often been pointed out, and also their similarity to those of Buddhism. The moral teachings of Buddhism are indeed essentially the same as those of Christianity. Sometimes they are expressed in superior form. The maxim of the Dhammapada, "Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth" (v. 103), is decidedly preferable to the gospel injunction "Resist not evil." How similar to the teaching ascribed to Jesus is the saying of Buddha, that the law against adultery is "broken by even looking at the wife of another with a lustful mind" (Buddhaghosa's Parables, p. 153) "A man," says Buddha, "buries a treasure in a deep pit, which, lying concealed therein day after day, profits him nothing; but there is a treasure of charity, piety, temperance, soberness, a treasure secure, impregnable, that cannot pass away, a treasure that no thief can steal" (Khuddaka Patha, p. 13). Mr. Lillie devotes many pages to such parallels and their cumulative force is very considerable. While many of the sayings ascribed to Jesus can be paralleled from the Talmud and other Jewish writings, the parables remain distinct. Yet Buddha taught in parables. Mr. Lillie gives as specimens the parable of the prodigal son and that of the woman at the well. I have recently argued that Luke's gospel, which chiefly gives us the parables, is largely made up from the Gnostic gospel used by Marcion, and here it may be noticed that Gnosticism, which formed the anti-Jewish element in the early Church, is identically the same name as Buddhism, and indeed represented Buddhist thought as modified by Persian, Grecian, and Egyptian influences.

Mr. Lillie's chapter on Rites is especially a strong one. Custom and ritual is even more enduring than dogma. From the time of our earliest acquaintance with Buddhism, travellers have been struck with the marvellous similarities between the observances in Buddhist and Christian monasteries and temples. The Abbé Huc mentioned how he found "The cross, the mitre, the dalmatic, the cope of the Grand Lamas, the services with double choirs, psalmody, exorcisms, censers suspended by five chains, the benediction, ecclesiastical celibacy, spiritual retirement, worship of saints, fasts, processions, the holy water."\*\* He might have added tonsure, relics, bells, public confession, penances, pilgrimages, use of flowers, long candles, etc. James Ferguson, a high authority on ancient architecture, asserts that the details of the early Christian church were borrowed *en bloc* from the Buddhists. "Relic worship, he says, "was certainly borrowed from the East, and

\* *The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*, by Arthur Lillie. London: Swan Sonnenschein and Co.; 1893.

† *Secularist*, 1876; *Progress*, April 1884, and June 1887.

‡ In my *Bible Studies* I have dwelt on the same aspects of Judaism.

\*\* *Travels in Tartary, Thibet, and China*, vol. ii., ch. 2, p. 50.

nine-tenths of the institutes and forms of Latin Christianity from Buddhist sources."\* Mr. Rhys Davids observes of the similarities of ritual, "If all this be chance, it is a most stupendous miracle of coincidence; it is, in fact, ten thousand miracles."† Mr. Lillie well illustrates the unlikelihood of the earlier faith when once established, taking over the doctrines and rites of the later religion. "Buddhism, by the time that a Christian missionary could have reached it, was a far more diffused and conservative religion than Anglicanism." Altogether, a very strong case is presented, and the book deserves the best consideration of all students of the origins of Christianity.

J. M. WHEELER.

### WAS JESUS AN IDEAL MAN?

DISTINGUISHED men in the realms of literature have at various times recorded that Jesus was their Ideal Man—the most perfect model of humanity that ever entered upon the scene of life! To them he did not appear as a God, or even as a miracle-worker, but only as a unique man. Byron, in writing of Socrates and Jesus, speaks of the latter as "Thou diviner still." Theodore Parker, Greg, Renan, Lecky and others, wrote of Jesus in the highest terms, and exalted him to a height of sublimity unequalled by any other member of the human family. It is, however, worthy of note that Renan, in his *Life of Jesus*, says that Christ had "no knowledge of the general conditions of the world" (p. 78); he was unacquainted with science, "believed in the Devil, and that diseases were the work of demons" (pp. 79—80); he was "harsh" towards his family, and was "no philosopher" (pp. 81—83); he "went to excess" (p. 174); he "aimed less at logical conviction than at enthusiasm"; "sometimes his intolerance of all opposition led him to acts inexplicable and apparently absurd" (pp. 274, 275); and "bitterness and reproach became more and more manifest in his heart" (p. 278).

Believing that freedom of thought and of utterance is the inalienable right of all, we do not question its exercise upon the part of anyone in dealing with the character of Jesus. But inasmuch as the defenders of Christianity have repeatedly referred to the opinions of these eminent men of Jesus as evidence of the truth of Christianity, we think that it may be useful to inquire if such opinions are justified by the reported facts of his life and teachings as found in the New Testament. No doubt many have been led to form extravagant notions of Christ through a partial and an imperfect study of his character; others, through custom and a desire to be thought somewhat in touch with the religion of their country. It is surprising what some people will do rather than be thought odd in their conduct. It is related of Renan that when he attended the funeral of Littré, the Positivist, he, like others, sprinkled "holy water" on the coffin. Many of us, under special circumstances, do things that appear to sanction principles and practices of which we entirely disapprove. Paley, we are told, signed the Thirty-nine Articles "for peace and quietness sake." But this only proves the weakness of human nature; not that the actions performed are always believed in.

In modern controversies we have seen the name of Jesus used to personify a principle, variously termed "highest morality," "holiness," "the incarnation of love," "social purity," etc. Some persons even allege that they see in Jesus the symbol of all progress, including Republicanism and Socialism. With such people the name of Jesus is an influence by which they think social life can be raised to its highest possible plane. That orthodox ministers, who are bound hand and foot to a supposed Infallible

Church and an alleged inspired Bible, and whose mental vision is obscured by a mystic faith, should be so deluded, we can understand. But it does appear to us somewhat singular that writers on history, like Renan and Lecky, should speak of Jesus as they do when all trustworthy history is silent upon his very existence. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the words of the Rev. James Cranbrook, who, in referring to Jesus in the preface of his work, *The Founders of Christianity* (p. 5), observes: "Our idealisations have invested him (Christ) with a halo of spiritual glory that, by the intensity of its brightness, conceals from us the real figure presented in the gospels. We see him, not as he is described, but as the ideally perfect man our fancies have conceived." The fact is, such eulogistic sentiments as those we have referred to about Jesus are not justified by the gospels or the alleged writings of the Christian Fathers. Such extravagant claims represent the fanaticism of hero-worship, not the calmness of intellectual discrimination.

In English-speaking countries the family institution is one that commends itself to millions of our race. It is justly esteemed, when properly arranged and suitably conducted, as the source of the highest pleasure, comfort, and social happiness. Now inasmuch as Jesus was neither husband nor father, he could not possibly be a model or an exemplar, much less a superior example to mankind in these relations. And judging from his opinions as expressed in Matthew xix., his views were thoroughly opposed to a condition of matrimonial bliss. Moreover, in Mark x., he is credited with offering inducements which, if acted upon, would destroy all domestic fidelity. As a teacher he is described in the gospels as being mystical, dogmatic, and vituperative; so much so that no controversialist of to-day, who had any respect for his reputation, would attempt to emulate Jesus in this particular. He seemed to indulge the delusion that he and those who agreed with him were alone right, and that those who differed from him must necessarily be wrong. He tolerated no opinions but such as were favorable to himself and his mission. Neither in the art of debate nor in the propounding of principles calculated to regulate and promote the well-being of society, should we regard him as our Ideal Man.

Jesus enunciated no broad and generous scheme of religious or political liberty. He merely took an advantage of such freedom as was established before his time; as he found society in this respect, so he left it. Despotism and slavery received no rebuke from him, nor is there any evidence that he considered them injurious. Many reformers strove for centuries to relieve mankind of these evils, and failed; but Jesus never even attempted to remove them, or to lay down principles by which in happier times others might accomplish the work successfully. If the gospel records may be relied upon, he not only refrained from doing these things, but he actually taught abject submission to existing institutions, and he urged his followers not to resist the principle of evil itself. It matters not what reasons may be given as to why he so acted, the fact remains that his conduct as a reformer was not such as we at the present time would regard as being that of an Ideal Man. We fail to see, moreover, where the proof is that he was a friend of labor; for while in his time the working classes in Rome were suffering the most severe trials, and had to submit to the cruelest indignities, as pointed out by Lecky, Jesus never put forward one plea on their behalf. And among his references to labor we find the foolish advice, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth." If this were acted upon in our time, progress would be indeed paralysed.

We are aware that the usual reply made to this and similar charges, is that Jesus laid down certain

\* Rude Stone Monuments, pp. 499-513.

† Hibbert Lectures, p. 193.

principles and left his followers to apply them. This, however, is not the fact, for we fail to discover in the gospels any principles to guide us in science, philosophy, general education, politics, or domestic duties. Many of the teachings ascribed therein to Jesus are so impracticable, that in the present age they are entirely ignored. But supposing such principles had been given by Christ, as an Ideal Man he should have done something more; namely, have shown how they could be applied in daily conduct. This he made no attempt to do, hence he failed as a reformer of the world. Even his teaching upon love was neither new nor capable of universal application. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" was taught long before Christ's time, and evidently he fell into the error of supposing that love could be manifested at command, which it cannot be. Love is the result of causes, and it is not possible to exercise it at the command of any one person. Love is a growth, an inspiration evoked by reciprocal feelings, and where these are absent passion may be professed, but genuine love cannot exist. The views propounded by Jesus on peace and forgiveness had been previously enunciated upon a broader basis by Hillel and others. Christ despised riches and the vanities of the world, but so did John, whose disciple he was. Community of goods, casting out devils, and the reprobation of the oath, were not novelties in the time of Jesus. He followed Judaism even to sharing the common aversion to the heathens. Outside his own fraternity they were "dogs" to whom it was not meet to give the food of "the children."

Taking into consideration all the events narrated of Jesus in the gospels, he appears to us to have been a well-meaning but a deluded person. Of course he had some good traits in his character, as most men have; but he was, in our opinion, far from being an Ideal Man. His emotions predominated over his reason, and his enthusiasm frequently perverted his better judgment. Thus we find that in conduct he was inconsistent, in opinions contradictory, in teachings arbitrary, in knowledge deficient, and in faith vacillating. To us he appears to have thought and taught false notions of himself, false views of life, and to have had no knowledge of science. He deceived his followers by his pretensions, and victimised himself by his own credulity. He acquired the idea that he was not only the greatest of men, but God over all men; that he was the Son, equal with the Father, the promised Messiah, who was to sojourn for a time on earth, die on the cross, and return to his Father, where he was before the world was. As we disbelieve in Christ as God, so we disbelieve in him as a perfect man, or as the most perfect and the greatest reformer that the world has seen. To lay claim to title and authority, both being false, as Christ did, is not a sign of greatness of intellect or of disinterestedness of intention. If he were deceived in thinking himself the Son of God, he was not fit to be blindly followed; and if he simply deceived others, he should not be regarded as being an Ideal Man.

CHARLES WATTS.

#### HOW TO HELP US.

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

#### A FREETHINKER AT LARGE.

#### XIII.—WITH THE FRIENDS OF RUSSIAN FREEDOM AND MR. GEORGE KENNAN.

THERE is abundant reason why Secularists should regard with sympathetic approval the work of that small but influential body known as the "Society of Friends of Russian Freedom." To adapt the classical saying of the immortal Somebody (I have quite forgotten his name): "I am a Freethinker: and nothing that concerns Freedom is alien to me." This Society\* exists in order to aid, as far as possible, the Russian patriots who are trying to obtain for their country that political freedom and self-government which Western nations have enjoyed for generations. It appeals to the enlightened men and women of all countries, without distinction of nationality or political creed, who cannot witness with indifference the horrors perpetrated in the empire of the Tsars, and who wish a better future for the masses of the Russian people. Its monthly organ, *Free Russia*, is perhaps the only means by which the truth concerning the internal condition of that enormous empire is made known to the outer world; for *Free Russia* contains clandestine correspondence which would never be permitted to pass the frontier through the ordinary channels of communication.

Furthermore, there is a very special reason why Freethinkers should look upon Russian revolutionists as comrades; for these men and women are Atheists probably without exception. Peter Kropotkin once assured me that amongst the educated class in Russia (and it is from that class almost exclusively that the revolutionary party is recruited) Atheism is as much a matter of course as is conventional conformity to Christianity amongst our own "hupper-suckles." The martyrs of the movement—the men and women who have died upon the scaffold, rotted in dungeons, or perished miserably in the remote settlements of Siberia—were moved by no impulse save a generous desire to free their fellow-creatures from the bonds of a crushing and detestable tyranny.

In our midst to-day there are men, like Prince Kropotkin, who have abandoned the advantages of wealth, rank, and social distinction, in order to labor for humanity; receiving as their reward the exile's doom. Happily they have escaped from the despot's power and in a foreign land they work for the realisation of their dreams of liberty and free development for their native land, which shall be seen by them no more.

The pitiful, yet glorious, history of the Russian revolutionary movement has aroused the chivalrous enthusiasm of many friends in England and America; and of these none is more deservedly distinguished than Mr. George Kennan, whose work in the press and on the platform has exposed to the civilised world the horrors which mark the treatment of political exiles in Siberia by the government of the Czar. Originally a traveller and an explorer, Mr. Kennan was transformed by his Siberian experiences into an ardent apostle of liberty, denouncing with righteous indignation the outrages which he had seen inflicted upon the victims of oppression.

Mr. Kennan is, at the moment of writing, upon a brief visit to London; and the Society invited its members and friends to meet him at Barnard's Inn Hall on the evening of Saturday, June 11. In due course I attended at that quaint, old-world little room, which is soon to pass away; and there I saw an assembly which bore eloquent testimony to the generous sympathy of English men and women for their despot-ridden brethren in Russia. From Westminster five members of Parliament had come, notably Mr. J. Allanson Picton, who was once a clergyman; artists, authors, journalists, scholars, and a goodly

\* Treasurer, Robert Spence Watson, LL.D.; hon. sec., Mr. W. W. Mackenzie, 24 Redcliffe-gardens, South Kensington, W.

number of ladies had assembled to greet Mr. Kennan and to encourage him in his noble work.

Naturally, the chief object of interest to me was our American guest, the man who had touched the heart of the civilised world by his scathing exposures of the organised brutality of the Imperial régime. Mr. Kennan is apparently about fifty years of age, but the hardships of Siberian travel may have frosted his hair prematurely. His handsome, mobile face reflects every phase of emotion; it is set in stern determination as he speaks of work yet to be done, and it beams with irrepressible enjoyment as a humorous phrase is uttered.

The principal political refugees from Russia—Prince Kropotkin, the mysterious writer who is known to the world as "Sergius Stepiak," Felix Volkovsky (who has lectured upon the Hall of Science platform), and Tchaikovsky—were of course present, and were the centres of groups of friends.

After much conversation and some really fine singing, Mr. Picton assumed the position of "chairman," briefly introduced Mr. Kennan collectively to the company, and then called upon the guest of the evening to say a few words. Mr. Kennan is a practised lecturer, and he speaks clearly and to the point. With regard to his writings on Siberia and the exiles, he said that if his words had touched the hearts of men, it was because they had in many instances been written with tears in his own eyes. He had never expected, at his time of life, to find his heart dominated by a new emotion; but when, in travelling through Siberia, he had discovered by actual investigation the appalling misery of the political exiles and had witnessed the horrible outrages to which they were subjected, he had determined to devote the remainder of his life to their cause. The Russian empire was, of course, now closed to him, as to many others. The government of that country regarded ideas, or men supposed to be in the possession of ideas, as its deadliest enemies. Therefore it stood at the frontier, with blacking-brush to obliterate from printed matter any passages suggestive of freedom and progress; and with bayonet to keep out the men whose minds were filled with pestilent notions of liberty. By means of his standing army of soldiers, and his lying army of policemen, the Tzar hoped to preserve his throne and the existing order of things. Two commissioners from the United States had recently made to their Government a report upon the social condition of Russia. Two hundred copies of that report had been addressed by post to various persons in Russia, but not a single copy had crossed the frontier.

At this point Mr. Kennan suggested to his hearers, by an effective dramatic touch, the impossibility of keeping *inside* the Russian dominions some of those in whose safe custody the Czar had a deep personal interest. Kropotkin, as is well known, escaped from the Petropavlosky fortress in St. Petersburg; Volkovsky has made his way across the vast expanse of Siberia to England and freedom. Turning to the latter, who stood by his side, Mr. Kennan said: "In 1885 I took leave of my dear friend, Felix Volkovsky, in Siberia; and I parted from him as we bid farewell to one who is dying." This impressive comparison accentuated the satisfaction with which the sympathetic friends saw the whilom convict standing in health and strength amongst them.

Some time since the world had been shocked by the news of a frightful atrocity perpetrated by the officials of the Czar upon the political exiles at the mines of Kara. It had been determined to dispatch some of these unfortunate people to a still more remote settlement, and parties had been sent forward under conditions which practically meant death by starvation upon the road. A petition was accordingly presented to General Ostashkine, praying that departures might be arranged, as had hitherto been the case, in

pairs at intervals of a fortnight. This petition was seized upon as a "combined resistance" to authority, and an imaginary "revolt" was "suppressed" with horrible barbarity. Some of the "rebels" were hanged. A young man, one of those condemned to die, had, on the eve of his execution, adjured his comrades to see to it that their deaths should not be without result. "Write all this to Kennan," he said. Despite the lynx-eyed agents of the Czar, the frightful facts were duly recorded and reached Mr. Kennan in America. "I am proud," added the speaker, "that on the steps of the scaffold that young man thought of me and looked to me to plead their cause before the world." As he uttered these words his voice faltered under the influence of strong emotion; and the succeeding phrases of polite thanks for the reception which had been given to him had a painfully conventional and artificial ring, although they were obviously spoken in all sincerity.

Perhaps the enthusiasm with which the cause of the Russian revolutionists inspires me may not be shared by my fellow Freethinkers; but to me it is one of the profoundest realities of my life. It dates from the time, some fifteen years ago, when I published in the *Republican* some biographical sketches, translated from the first (Italian) edition of Stepiak's *Underground Russia*. The ideal self-sacrifice of Demetrius Lisoguob, the heroic devotion and death of Sofia Peroffskaia aroused in my mind a sentiment of sympathy and admiration which has been strengthened by time and confirmed by the personal friendship of Kropotkin and Volkovsky—men who have suffered in prison and in Siberia for the crime of endeavoring to raise their fellow creatures from bondage and superstition. It has been my fortune to aid them, in humble ways, in their work; and to them I am indebted for the influence of an example which abides with me, through passing trials and discouragements, as amongst the loftiest ideals of humanity.

GEORGE STANDRING.

#### THE WAIL OF THE SCRIBES.

To speak truly your thoughts—that is a primary virtue. Sincerity in thinking, sincerity also in the expression of that thought, are essential conditions of human progress. For of mental progress there can be none while men champion creeds of whose fundamentals their judgment does not approve, or allow themselves to be the slaves of opinions which their reason does not sanction. If you begin, or get yourself into the habit of idly writing what you do not feel with your whole mind, of babbling unthinkingly the shibboleths of others, buttressing discredited or obsolete faiths, you are not only poisoning your own intellectual life, but you are sinning against the highest interests of the race of which you are a part, and more—you may be preparing for a remorse when your dormant conscience rises in revolt, that may cost you a terrible price. Recently we have had two men, eminent, or at least important in the world of letters, who seem to enforce this by their sighing and wailing. The other day Mr. Grant Allen pathetically told how, having written a book into which he put his whole heart, he was told, on sending it to his publishers, that publication of such a book would mean ruin to him; whereupon he courageously destroyed the manuscript, and delivered himself of some curses of Mrs. Grundy. Now another literary man tells somewhat the same story. Mr. Robert Buchanan—who, by the way, seems to be getting bolder as he goes on—writes thus in the *Iller* for May: "With a fairly extensive knowledge of the writers of my own period, I can honestly say that I have scarcely met one individual who has not deteriorated morally, by the pursuit of literary fame. For complete literary success among contemporaries, it is imperative that a man should either have no real opinions, or be able to conceal such as he possesses, that he should have one eye on the market, and the other on the public journals, that he should humbug himself into the delusion that book-writing is the highest work in the Universe, and that he should regulate his likes and dislikes by one law, that of expediency. If his nature

is in arms against anything that is rotten in Society, or in Literature itself, he must be silent. Above all, he must lay this solemn truth to heart, that when the World speaks well of him, the World will demand the *price* of praise, and that price will possibly be, his living Soul."

Behind the natural floweriness of Mr. Buchanan's style, and taking the passage to point the want of independence in conventional literature, the wail is, unfortunately largely true. What, however, is the lesson to be learned from this? Cursing Mrs. Grundy is, after all, an idle pastime. Mrs. Grundy is immortal; she always existed, she probably always will exist. She has a charmed life that survives the curses. For what, really, is Mrs. Grundy but a figure of speech to indicate the natural inertia of society? The force of habit is enormous. Society tends to swing on in the same groove; it only changes gradually and imperceptibly. And we should always remember, when we are dealing with the world's problems, with religious questions, or social questions, or political questions, that no one person is responsible for the present state of things. The world has reached its present state—religiously, socially, politically, in every way—in the course of its natural development. Of course we should not lose sight of the fact that we too, are factors in the making of the future world, and that the mark we shall leave upon it will be proportionate to our own energy.

If, then, "respectable" society will not buy your books, if you write them sincerely, and you want the support of "respectable" society, well, you must put up with the inconvenience. The question, however, presents itself; is it worth playing to these groundlings of respectability? What is the World's praise, in the sense in which Mr. Buchanan uses the phrase? What value is it to have your name on ten thousand tongues, your books in ten thousand hands, if those books are *not* yours, if they are but the hollow echo of opinions you do not hold? Well, the answer depends on how you take things. The man of the world who simply desires to make money, whose ideal consists in raking in as much gold as possible, grasps at the "World's praise"; he regards the man who champions an unpopular or tabooed opinion as a fool. "Why not swim with the tide? 'Tis so much easier and pleasanter, so much more comfortable. Of course what you say, we all know is the case, but why make such a fuss about it when 'twill only bring you suffering?" That is the philosophy of the "man of the world." It is just a question of ideals. The conventional man believes he can find pleasure on those lines; the other man finds a higher happiness, as he thinks, in the consciousness of his having spoken sincerely.

But perhaps there never was a time when the necessity for sincerity in expression was greater than the present. When the old creeds are crumbling, and the new ones are scarcely strong enough to be recognised, the impulse to flabbiness in writing, is immense. Hence the tendency amongst literary men to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds; and hence, too, the meaningless and mawkish sentimentality that disfigures so much of contemporary literature. Take any of the old fathers; take say, even Luther. You will find that the thought is often crude, that the observation is defective, that of real insight there is often none. Much of the writing, say the descriptions and conceptions of hell and of the terror their god was supposed to inspire, is often odious, barbarous and revolting. Yet for all that you can, in most cases, *understand* what the man means. His ideas may be absurd, but you can fathom them, such as they are. But you can find scores of books to-day—in fact among religious books they are almost the rule—which you might read from cover to cover five times over without getting any clear conception of what the writer intended, whether he was orthodox or heterodox, whether he agreed with the popular creeds, or whether he did not. Average religious literature to-day largely consists of hazy and unreal doctrines, the mystery of which would consist in anyone being able to find a meaning where the writers themselves had none.

But there is another point to be considered. It very often, in fact generally, happens that the heretic of to-day is the hero of to-morrow. Giordano Bruno was persecuted while he lived, and ultimately murdered; yet Bruno lives to-day in the heart of every man who honors courage and heroism; and in the city of his murder—in Rome itself—his memory has been strong enough to cause a statue to

be erected, which proudly tells the world, from the shadow of the Vatican, that Bruno is not forgotten. Shelley was banned and hunted while he lived; to-day it is not uncommon to hear aristocrats and bishops spout their praises of him. The praise it is true may be as empty as the previous persecution was contemptible, but it at least shows the turn of the wheel. And so it comes, as between the hero and the conventionalist, that the one reaps the enduring recognition of posterity, while the other merely tastes the evanescent praises of his own day. Thus is Diderot justified in his statement that "posterity is for the philosopher, what the other world is for the devout."

Every moment of our lives, almost, we are receiving impressions that are moulding our opinions; and on the other hand, the most unheeded utterance on our part may start a train of thought in another that may develop into a great and steadfast conviction. Everyone can remember how often a chance phrase, a newspaper paragraph, has set him thinking, and how sometimes in the course of that thought there comes a flash that reveals new problems, or casts a new light on the old. Surely, then, it is something to know, when the sleep that knows no waking steals on, that you have striven to the best of your ability in helping your brothers to an understanding of the problems that surround them, that you have not been the mere idle babbler of a forgotten day; that you have not been content to merely swell the mass of platitude the world carries on its back; above all, that you have not prostituted your intellect and your brain to the service of what you believe to be a lie.

FREDERICK RYAN.

## ACID DROPS.

"A Believer" suggests that the present drought may have its uses. It may enable us to gauge how long a time it takes for prayer to reach to heaven. It appears that although the Archbishops of Canterbury have ordered several prayers for rain, no official prayers for sunshine and fine weather have been put up since 1845. It may therefore be calculated that it probably takes about 48 years for prayers to reach the throne of grace. As heaven's throne, according to the Rev. Thain Davidson, is situated somewhere in the constellation Hercules, an astronomical mathematician ought to be able to calculate the approximate velocity of prayer.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has assumed the dignified in answer to an invitation to attend a Parliament of Religions at Chicago. "The Christian religion," says he, "is the one religion." It cannot enter a Parliament of Religions without assuming the equality of the others, and the parity of their position and claims. So as he cannot boss the show, he will keep out. Benson is quite right. Those who enter such a parliament must resign their exclusive claims to universal dominion. But facts are chieft that winna ding, and all the archbishops and bishops cannot alter the fact that the Church is but one of many sects, and Christianity but one of many religions.

The Parliament of Religions is not a new idea. It may be found fully set forth in Volney's *Ruins of Empires*. Ingersoll says of the World's Fair Parliament: "I think it will do good if they will honestly compare their creeds so that each one can see just how foolish all the rest are. They ought to compare their sacred books and their miracles and their mythologies. If they will do so they will probably see that ignorance is the mother of them all. Let them hold a congress by all means, and let them show how priests live on the labor of those they deceive. It will do good."

Mr. Smith, a Scotch Evangelist, on his way to assist Mr. Moody at Chicago, stopped at Montreal to warm up the natives. In the course of his observations he told of a visit of his to a poor washerwoman. She did not wish to see him, but he pushed his way in, and he calculated it would take more than one washerwoman to turn him out. She told him she didn't believe in the judgment and destruction he preached about. What with a drunken brute of a husband, and other afflictions, she had enough to endure here, and she didn't think there could be any worse place elsewhere. Evangelist Smith didn't find it easy to upset that poor woman's logic.

Dr. Lunn, who has just resigned from the Wesleyan ministry, is "a painfully good man." He was shocked recently by an eminent journalist about to start a new paper;

who exclaimed, "I am not going to have any of your damned purity in my paper." We rather sympathise with that eminent journalist. The "purity" he won't have is really dirtiness turned inside out. It reminds one of Swift's description of "nice" people—people with nasty ideas.

The Merionethshire police are instructed to put the law in force against persons using profane language. It seems that women are exempted from the operation of the Act. Merioneth men who want to swear cheaply in this hot weather will probably get their women folk to say the big, big D's.

In the House of Commons the Home Secretary, in reply to a question by Mr. H. J. Wilson, said the coroner at Shrewsbury had made a mistake in treating Mr. Avery, who requested to make affirmation, as trying to excuse himself from serving as a jurymen. His attention had been called to the Act of 1888, and he had been requested to comply with it in future. Such cases should be immediately brought to public attention.

The American bigots are terribly incensed at the opening of the World's Fair on Sunday. We notice that the First United Presbytery Church of Boston appealed to the President of the United States to "guard the gates next Sabbath with troops if necessary." The Rev. Dr. Rossiter of New York, after this "open and daring defiance of God," wouldn't be surprised at anything that might happen to the fair. "I would not be surprised," he says, "if an electrical storm, the like of which the world has never known, should with flashing lightning and tremendous winds level those mighty buildings to the ground and leave Jackson Park, Chicago, a frightful and appalling evidence of the just wrath of God." Dr. Rossiter is in a very bad way. We advise leeches and a purge.

General M. M. Trumbull, writing in *Open Court*, mentions that the pastor of the Jefferson Park Presbyterian Church, Chicago, preaching against the opening of the World's Fair on Sunday, said: "In some way God will save our Sabbath for us and take vengeance on those who have provoked him to anger. The cyclone is his, and ten cases of cholera might produce a panic that would ruin the exposition." This heavenly hope, said the General, roused the spirits of the congregation and gave a more spiritual tone to the succeeding hymn. This oblique foreboding was a prayer for pestilence and storm, and within the prayer was a sentence that once would have meant thumbscrew and rask and rope and fire for the men who would open to the people on Sunday anything so good as the Fair.

The Rev. H. Moyle, Methodist minister at Ashampstead, Reading, has been sued for refusing to pay a journalist his commission for enabling him to sell 2,100 shares which the reverend gentleman held in the Palace Theatre Company. The man of God got the shares by underwriting and recommending the shares as a good investment to members of his congregation, sold out himself, and refused to pay commission. Evidently Methodism has altered since the days of Wesley. We daresay Mr. Moyle could give his congregation tips as to the winner of the St. Leger.

The "converted infidel" dodge seems a paying one. It was practised by a fellow at Battersea, whose little game has been spoiled by the Charity Organisation Society. Besides getting outdoor relief from the guardians, he was assisted by the Church Army, the Salvation Army, and several local ministers. The fellow's success may throw some light on the "converted infidel" business in general.

Last Sunday the vestry of the Hanley Tabernacle was burgled, and the collection of £15 7s. taken. The P.S.A. was having a big function, and curiously enough the solo given was the "Lost Chord" and the text was the apocryphal one, "Be ye good money-changers."

A Christian paper tells a story of a deacon called Hunt. When he was a carnal man he used to beat his oxen, but after his conversion his cattle were remarkably docile. Being asked the reason, he said that instead of beating his oxen he went behind the load and sang the Old Hundredth, which had a soothing effect upon them. We should think it did! The Old Hundredth is enough to send any living thing

asleep. We recommend it to Mr. G. E. Sims and other insomniacs.

Mr. Stead is about to start a spiritist *Review of Reviews*, to be entitled *Borderland*. We expect the new organ of spookology will dwell on the confines between sanity and insanity, and cover the frontier ground of charlatany and superstition.

The sky-pilots of Morecambe are much concerned at the running of Sunday steamers to Blackpool, Llandudno, etc. One of the local ministers publicly prayed for the safe return of the Sabbath-breakers, though perhaps he would not have been displeased if his prayer had not been answered.

How they love one another! Here is the *English Churchman* accusing the Rev. T. Outram Marshall, organising secretary of the English Church Union, of saying the thing that is not in his assertion that the E.C.U. does not go in for prosecution or persecution. The E.C. asserts the Union did prosecute, until it found the law was against Ritualism.

All the Established churches in Scotland held last Sunday as a day of humiliation and prayer to put off the prospect of disestablishment, and, what they fear most, disendowment. Of course lots of sermons were preached, denouncing the robbery of revenues bequeathed by pious ancestors, etc. etc. The howls of lamentation at the prospect of universal secularism are pretty fully reported in Dr. Cameron's paper, the *North British Daily Mail*, and form very amusing reading.

In several pulpits in Scotland, the day of humiliation and prayer took the curious form of a thanksgiving for the result of the Linlithgowshire election. Neither lamentations nor rejoicings are likely to affect the ultimate result. The Established Church has received warning, and sooner or later it will have to go.

The Rev. Dr. Marshall, in giving the charge to the newly-ordained ministers at the Methodist New Connection Conference at Huddersfield, told them that a minister should never forget "that he was God's deputy and representative on earth." If their prototype is similar to these deputy God Almighty's, what a queer one he must be.

The *Sydney Sunday Times* is going the whole hog in its articles on "Why the Masses are not at Church." In one House of God the writer found "twenty-two ancient adults and forty-seven restless children." After describing the service and the sermon he says—"Why are the Sydney people not at church? says the Sphinx. Why are they? says common sense."

The Rev. Benjamin Waugh, secretary to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, has been interviewed by *Cassell's Saturday Journal*. Among the people who "systematically pursue a course of inhuman conduct towards their children" he includes "professors of religion." He doesn't include Secularists this time. Probably he finds the game of libelling Secularists is played-out.

Mr. Teesdale Davies was a Liberator director. In examination he said that he had previously been an agent, and was a minister of religion. He never examined the balance sheets; he saw them in print and thought they were "all right." Being asked whether he knew what a reserve fund was, he replied "Well, I think I do (laughter)." We think so to.

Prof. Barnard, of the Lick Observatory, who has been for two years photographing the stars in the Milky Way, says: "The old text-book gives the stars in the Milky Way as two millions, but I can photograph more than that number in a dry plate exposure of five minutes." If Jesus Christ has to be incarnated on all the satellites of these suns, he will have his work cut out. No wonder he cannot attend to the prayers of mortals on this little planet.

We have come across a lot of rubbish in the Spiritist press, but never met anything more flagrantly absurd than the pretended views of the spirit of "George Eliot" in the *Progressive Thinker* of June 10. It makes her say she joined the Church in her lifetime, and when she got to heaven

"H'm, I thought, George Eliot doesn't count for much here." The fraud who fabricated this communication evidently never went to the trouble of either reading George Eliot's life or studying her writings.

The grain-producing regions of the Upper Volga have a plague of locusts. In the government of Saratoff fifty thousand acres of cereals have been destroyed. Famine and cholera are followed by this new calamity. Providence is working for the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and the locusts are in the majority.

As an illustration of what Christianity did for woman, take the following from p. 230 of Mr. C. H. Pearson's profound work on *National Life and Character*: "As late as the thirteenth century, the Church courts in England ruled that a husband could transfer his wife to another man for a period determinable at the recipient's pleasure." A man's wife was, in fact, classed, as in the Decalogue, with his ox, his ass, and anything which is his.

The gospel of the risen Jesus is responsible for a deal of folly. In Kentucky, a sect known as the Power Society has arisen among the colored population. They claim, on the strength of the gospel promises, to be able to work miracles. Their leader, known as Mother Taylor, offered recently to exhibit her power by bringing a dead child to life. After sprinkling the grave, God was called upon to show himself and display his power. He failed to put in an appearance, but the believers do not distrust him or their own selves. They say the reason of nonsuccess was that the parents of the child had not sufficient faith.

The *English Churchman* is dilating upon "Unbelief." It opens in this style: "The fearful effect of unbelief was plainly foretold by the Lord Jesus when he said, 'If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.'" Let us give Mr. Jesus the credit of not talking such arrogant nonsense as this. Such sayings as "I am the way, the truth, and the life"; "All who came before me were thieves and robbers," etc., were evidently not the utterances of any sane man, but words ascribed to him by his worshippers long afterwards.

A deal of Christian missionary enterprise is devoted to proselytising from other Christian bodies. In his recent book, *Four Months in Persia*, Mr. O. E. Biddulph, speaking of a colony of Armenian Christians at Julfa, says (p. 75): "It seems a strange inconsistency to find amongst a community of the most ancient Christians existing an English missionary; and it is difficult to imagine how funds collected, presumably for the conversion of the heathen, can with any appropriateness be expended upon the education of Armenian youths, who are, as a rule, quite quick enough, and can, in most cases, afford the luxury far better than many classes in England."

It has now come to light that the articles which were abstracted from the treasure-chests of the Teeshoodova Monastery were, after a diligent search, discovered in the cells of some of the monks. The chief articles of value that were stolen were some gorgeous vestments known as the "holy robes," which are worn by the principal monks when they officiate on such special occasions as Imperial coronations. These vestments are richly encrusted with valuable diamonds, pearls, and other precious stones. But although all the vestments were recovered, the diamonds and pearls had been torn out of them. An even more disgraceful fact was brought to light during the search for the jewels, as it was ascertained that several women were living secretly with the monks. The upshot of the business is that all the monks of the monastery have been arrested. The crime of sacrilege in Russia is a particularly heinous one, and the punishment of those who have committed the present will probably be the Siberian mines for life.—*Daily Chronicle*.

General Booth promised to set up a Law Department in his Social Scheme, but no hint was given that he would go into the detective business. He appears to have done this, however. A female witness at the Marylebone Police-court, who had been "watching" a bigamous woman for some time, confessed that she was employed by the Salvation Army. The woman charged with bigamy was the wife of James Carden, a Salvation Army officer. She lived with

Carden for a year, then they married, and got through £5,000 together.

Thomas Wright, carrier, of Greens Norton, was fined at Towcester the sum of £3 10s. and costs for stabbing his donkey with a knife. Defendant owned he had been in the habit of stimulating his donkey in this way. Twenty old wounds and two fresh ones were found on the poor animal. Wright has been for many years a Primitive Methodist local preacher.

In the hearing of a case against the licensee of St. George's Hotel, 15 Islington, Liverpool, for keeping an immoral house, the "boots" stated that the only person who went there with luggage that he remembered was the bishop. The magistrate interposed and said, "I suppose you mean someone named Bishop, not an ecclesiastic." But this was not the meaning at all. Who the bishop was did not transpire, but of course he went to reclaim the unfortunates who make this hotel their resort.

The clergy have given up fox-hunting, but continue their equally contemptible hunting after preferment. The *Church Times* is responsible for the statement that an advertisement for a priest to work in a thoroughly interesting slum parish brought only five applicants, while another for a chaplain on a year's yachting cruise brought no less than five hundred.

The Archbishop of York, speaking for the Parochial and Foreign Mission to the Jews, said that a lady friend once said to a Jew, "We are both looking for the Messiah. You are looking for his coming for the first time, and I am looking for his second coming." Yes, the Jew might have answered, "You have to bring him on the scene a second time just because the events prophesied to accompany his advent palpably did not happen in the time of your 'Meshumit.'"

What a nose of wax is the Bible! The *Church Times* can even find an argument for Church endowments on the story of early Christian communism found in Acts. It reminds its readers that it was the laymen who were told to sell their goods and place the proceeds at the apostle's feet; ergo, laymen for all time ought to lay their wealth at the feet of the clergy. Fortunately these men of God cannot deal with the refractory in the summary manner with which Peter served Ananias and Sapphira.

The Revised Version of the New Testament has not proved a commercial success. It is being privately offered by the publishers at very low rates. Five hundred copies of the sixpenny edition can be bought for a penny each, and the better editions at the same rate of reduction. You can't change the people's fetish so easily after all.

The Indian opium crop has been seriously damaged by hailstorms. According to the *Anti-Opium News* this destruction is due to the prayers of an aged Quaker. It would be more to the purpose if that aged Quaker would do a bit of praying for England. Rain is wanted here very badly. Why doesn't the aged Quaker pray hard for it? Perhaps Jehovah can only *destroy*.

According to a *Christian World* correspondent at Chicago, the Sunday services there are advertised in the Sunday papers. "The British visitor," he says, "who has heard before he arrives of the struggle to death which the churches of America are going to wage in order to shut the Fair gates on a Sunday, waxes somewhat cynical when he discovers the preachers and hours of service of these same churches advertised in journals printed and sold on the 'Sabbath Day.'"

That poor Minister's Wife with the six children has raised a long correspondence in the *Christian World*, which in turn has called forth an editorial article. Our contemporary thinks the subject is one "on which Christian writers and teachers need to think more strenuously and speak more plainly than has hitherto been the case." It gives up the idea that babies are sent by Providence. "We are beyond that now," it observes, "and have become capable of recognising that Providence works through the common sense of individual brains." Good old Providence! However, it is well to note that Christians do in the course of time "become capable of recognising" what they have been in the habit of howling at other people for recognising before them.



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

July 2, Hall of Science; 9, Birmingham.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS

- MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—June 25, Sheffield. July 2, Huddersfield; 9, Hall of Science, London; 16, Birmingham; 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.
- LECTURE NOTICES, etc., must reach us by the first post on Monday, as we go to press earlier next week, it being a Special Number.
- LULIE MONROE POWER.—Glad to receive your journal again. We hope you receive the *Freethinker* regularly.
- A. THORNTON.—Cuttings always welcome.
- R. J. D.—There are different standards. You should not send the same piece of verse to a number of journals simultaneously. It is contrary to etiquette. You may send several copies of a letter, but not of a composition. Editors will decline to insert if they know the contribution is a kind of circular.
- J. SUNDERLAND.—We do advertise the *Freethinker* on all our Tracts, which are widely circulated.
- D. P. CARNEGIE.—It would be awkward to publish a poem in instalments. It is like exhibiting a statue in pieces. The part you forward has merit, but it would be the better for compression. Diffuseness is always easy; it is concision that is difficult, but it means form, and without form where is art?
- J. BLACKER.—Balfour's gifts to chapels sink into insignificance beside the pious resolutions passed by the *Liberator* Directors, and the employment of Christian ministers as agents and advertisers.
- LIVERPOOL.—There is every prospect of a reasonable dividend as soon as the purchase is completed by the discharge of the mortgage. When this is done, the rebuilding will commence, and the Hall of Science premises will then become more useful and valuable.
- R. CHAPMAN.—See "Sugar Plums."
- G. GILES.—The lady is not a member of the N.S.S., and we are in no way responsible for her speeches. If you want to know what she actually said on the occasion referred to, you should write to her yourself. We do not discuss such matters in the *Freethinker*.
- FRIEND OF MAN.—We have nothing to do with the inscription on the Bradlaugh Monument at Northampton. "Thorough" was Mr. Bradlaugh's own motto.
- A. SIMSON.—Thanks for placing the share application forms before the Brighton members. Glad to hear of your well-attended meeting on the Level.
- J. THOMPSON.—California is a long way off. It would scarcely interest our readers.
- H. COURTNEY.—Glad to hear that your health is nearly recovered. Sorry to hear you found the cause so ill-organised at Southampton. We believe it was always a difficult place to work.
- L. W.—Your young friend's verses are hardly up to the mark for our pages.
- C. DOEG (sec. Liverpool Branch) says that Mr. George Wise's letter is an evasion. The statement that the Liverpool Branch was bankrupt was made by the Black Champion at Hengler's Circus. Mr. Doeg says the voluntary winding up of the local Hall Company was advertised in the *London Gazette*. The Liverpool Churchmen started a scheme for erecting a cathedral, which also failed. This was not advertised. Twelve churches in Liverpool receive financial aid from the Corporation; the Liverpool Branch doesn't, and doesn't want to.
- J. SAMSON.—Thanks for promise of cheque towards the Chicago Delegation Fund for Messrs. Foote and Watts.
- B. BRODIE.—Obliged for cuttings.
- R. G. W.—There seems a pretty kettle of fish on the fire at Spurgeon's Tabernacle.
- C. PARKER.—Your complaint of the inactivity of the Secularists at West Ham seems well founded. If a hall cannot be obtained for indoor meetings, there is no reason why outdoor lectures should not be attempted.
- R. KILLICK.—Thanks. See paragraph.
- G. W. BLYTHE.—We have always maintained the rights of animals as well as men, and sympathised with Renan who said he couldn't be uncivil even to a cat.
- T. ELLIOTT.—Sorry to hear the Newcastle secretary is suffering from rheumatic fever. Hope you will have a good attendance at the annual meeting. The phenomenal weather has been "a damper"—to use a paradoxical expression.
- C. BURTON.—We think it has been the practice to close Baskerville Hall in July and August. The problem of organisation at Birmingham seems a very difficult one. Mr. Foote is lecturing there on July 9, and will be happy to have a chat with the Branch committee and members.

- W. STEWART.—It is not easy to offer "advantages" to members of the N.S.S. What you suggest may be possible in time, but the time is not yet.
- A. LITTLE.—Pressmen are often great sceptics. Probably the one who reported your lecture wrote *con amore*. We have not seen the Grant Allen article you refer to.
- B. BRNDELACK (Melbourne).—You should send your list of "converted infidels" to Mr. Joseph Symes, editor of the *Liberator*, Melbourne, who, as they are all Australian, will be better able to deal with the matter than we are. It would be foolish on our part to insert your letter, as we have no means of testing your statements.
- 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—Fur Unsere Jugend—Ironclad Age—Watts's Literary Guide—Weekly Bulletin—North British Daily Mail—Birmingham Argus—Music Hall—Post—Evening Standard—Daily Chronicle—Herts Advertiser—Leeds Express—Yorkshire Evening Post—Brighton Gazette—Southampton Times—Commonweal—Sirilaka Situmina.

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.

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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.

## SPECIAL.

A GOOD many fresh shares in the National Secular Hall Society were applied for last week. One gentleman applied for forty, and paid for them in full. A lady also applied for twelve fully paid-up shares. This encourages us in continuing our appeal to Freethinkers. We want every one of them to see as quickly as possible what he can do for the Hall of Science scheme, and thus help to secure first-rate headquarters for the National Secular Society and a worthy memorial to Charles Bradlaugh. If all do their best up to the end of July, and raise the number of shares to 3,000, Mr. George Anderson promises to give £300. It is a handsome offer, and the Freethought party should try to secure it. If they do so, the rebuilding will soon be commenced, and the biggest enterprise our party has ever engaged in be carried to a successful completion.

The new Prospectus is now out, and copies can be obtained, post free, from Miss E. M. Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. G. W. FOOTE.

## BRADLAUGH'S GRAVE.

WE regret to say that the Necropolis Company, which undertook to run a special train to Brookwood on Sunday, July 2, for the N.S.S., has acted very mysteriously. Tickets were not sent to Mr. Forder as promised, though the requisite guarantee for 300 was given. On Tuesday I told Mr. Forder to get the tickets at once or cancel the guarantee. Letters, telegrams, and interviews ended in our being referred to the South Western Company. As we go to press Miss Vance is making inquiries at Waterloo Station. I shall not be able to state the result this week. Applications on the subject will meanwhile be answered at 28 Stonecutter-street. An announcement will appear in next week's *Freethinker*.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Next week's *Freethinker* will be a Special Number, price twopence. The Cartoon will be a novelty—a satire on the Royal Wedding and the cadging which precedes it. This will afford our readers an opportunity of introducing the Special Number to their Radical friends, and may lead to an increase in its circulation.

We always reckon on a fall in our circulation during the summer, like the editors of other journals, but we are happy to state that this year, despite the phenomenal weather, the fall has been extremely little. Last week's *Freethinker* sold better than the previous week's, and was only about two per cent. less than our best winter circulation; which shows what a firm hold the paper has upon its readers.

Our Summer Number is to be published as nearly as possible on July 10. It will contain thirty-two pages, including several cartoons, small sketches, and portraits, as well as special reading matter. Thick toned paper will be used, and the Number bound in a handsome colored wrapper.

Mr. Touzeau Parris lectures at the London Hall of Science this evening (June 25), his subject being "Devil Worship: the Popular Superstition." We hope our colleague will have as good a meeting as is possible in this tropical weather.

Last Sunday was the hottest day that had been known in Barnsley for many years, the thermometer being 87 degrees in the shade. No marvel, therefore, that Mr. Charles Watts found it hot work to give three lectures in one day in such an oppressive heat. It was, however, encouraging to him, he reports to us, to find a very large audience at each of his meetings, friends coming more than twenty miles to hear our colleague. The enthusiasm was at its highest pitch throughout the day, and Mr. Watts was invited to return at an early date. The sale of literature was exceedingly good.

Mr. Watts writes in the highest terms of the members of the Barnsley Branch of the N.S.S. They are hard-workers and persistent in their efforts to keep Secular principles before the public. The ladies also do their share in making the movement locally effective. To-day (Sunday, June 25) Mr. Watts lectures three times in Sheffield.

Mr. Joseph Symes, in the *Melbourne Liberator*, mentioning the portrait and notice of himself in our Special Number (April 4), says: "I thank Mr. Foote for that kindly notice; and beg through him to shake hands once more with all my friends in the old land, and to wish them health, long life, and success in their great work." As Mr. Symes has again got married this May, we must once more congratulate him and wish himself and Mrs. Symes all happiness.

Mrs. Proctor, widow of the late R. A. Proctor, astronomer and Freethinker, has been appointed curator of the Proctor University, at San Diego, California.

Samuel B. Putnam, President of the American Federation of Freethinkers, has been having a debate with the Rev. A. J. Wheeler at the Fanueil Hall, Boston, on June 6, 7, 8 and 9. The subject discussed on the first two nights was "The Bible is the Divinely Inspired Word of God," affirmed by the Rev. Mr. Wheeler. On the last two nights, "The Morality of Secularism is Superior to the Morality of the Christian Religion," affirmed by Mr. Putnam.

The *Freethinkers' Magazine* for June presents its readers with a view of the monument to Charles Bradlaugh at Brookwood. There is an article on "The World's Parliament of Religions," another on "Creation, Faith, Worship and Religion," and discussions on the questions "If a man die shall he live again?" and "Is there happiness in hell?"

Both the *Brighton Examiner* and the *Brighton Gazette* report Mr. C. E. Ford's recent lectures on the Levell on the subject of "The Crimes of Protestants."

Members of the Newcastle Branch should muster in full force at to-day's (June 25) annual meeting, and arrange for an active propaganda during the next twelve months.

The South Shields Branch went on an excursion to Holywell Dene on Sunday. There was a large party of members and friends, including many children. The weather was very fine, and various sports were indulged in, varied by recitations and speeches. Copies of the *Freethinker* were distributed on the way home.

We are happy to state that the South Shields Branch is in a very flourishing condition. Its annual report shows a steady increase in membership, and the past year's income is the highest on record. After plenty of lectures and distribution of literature, the Branch begins a new year with a fair balance in hand.

Freethinkers of North-east London are asked to rally at Newington-green on Sunday afternoons, to support the platform of the Islington Branch. Persistent ruffianism has prevailed at this spot, and last Sunday the hustling and shouting of the well-dressed rowdies at times threatened the break-up of the meeting.

The Battersea Branch holds its quarterly tea and soiree to-day (Sunday, June 25) at 5.30. Strangers are particularly invited. Tickets (6s. each) can be had at the door. While the hall is being cleared for the entertainment it is proposed to hold an outdoor meeting at the park gates at 6.30. The members' quarterly meeting for election of officers, etc., takes place on the following Sunday, after the evening lecture.

Lady Shelley's presentation of the Shelley Memorial at University College, Oxford, was made in the presence of several clergymen. The Master of University College, in acknowledging the gift, said that "the rebel of eighty years ago was the hero of the present century." It will be remembered that it was University College from which Shelley was expelled as an Atheist.

We are happy to see that the difference between the American Secular Union and the Freethought Federation of America has been settled. The two societies, with the Canadian Secular Union, are now working together for the success of the International Freethought Congress, which is to be held in October instead of September. The committee is trying to secure a hall in the Art Institute. We are awaiting notice of the precise date.

We are issuing by the request, and with the assistance of a generous friend of Freethought, a series of halfpenny pamphlets for sale and distribution at Secular meetings, especially in the open-air during the summer months. Numbers I. and II. are now ready. The first is "A Hundred and One Questions" for the Orthodox to Answer; the second an Open Letter to the Churches from the pen of Mr. Foote on "The Book of God." Other numbers are in preparation and will follow immediately.

London Freethinkers will in many cases have this copy of the *Freethinker* in their hands before the discussion opens at the London Hall of Science between Mr. Foote and the Rev. C. Fleming Williams (Thursday, June 22). They will note that the chair is taken at 8.30, not at 8 as stated in our last issue. We don't want them to lose half an hour if we can help it.

### OBITUARY.

Died on Saturday, June 10, Rosina, wife of Mr. W. Sowdon of Watford, aged 59. She remained true to her principles and resolutely refused to be intruded upon by clergymen. Those who know the sturdy Freethought of her husband will tender him their sympathy in his bereavement.—R. FORDER.

We regret to record the death of Mr. George Scott, of Stockton-on-Tees, who was killed in crossing the line at Yarm Station. Mr. Scott was a staunch Freethinker, and in his more prosperous days a generous supporter of the Secular cause. His character was a noble one; all who knew him held him in high esteem. His daughter found a letter in his safe, showing that he knew his state of health was such that he might die suddenly, or fall a victim to some accident. The letter expressed his firm conviction as an Atheist, and ordered that he was to have a Secular funeral, as inexpensive as possible, and without any showings of mourning.

## CHRISTIANITY, COWARDICE, AND CHARITY.

[CONTINUED.]

LET me say for myself that I do not hate any fine maxim alleged to have been uttered by Christ (though we can trace that most of them floated down to his time from those whom Christians call infidels); any inspiring phrase which can be woven into the national life, purifying our politics and purging our souls of the dross which weighs them downward; yet do I reject the fairy tales, the dreams and guesses at truth, the vague ideas of men who saw in every storm the blackness of God's wrath, and peopled natural cataclysms and convulsions with the demons of their own terrified imaginations. I repudiate utterly the preposterous story of the miraculous birth of Christ, and I think we should hate with increasing bitterness the irreligiousness of the religious, the men who prate of Christ, yet live no godly life, and make money by the mouthing of holy words in boxes called pulpits. We can see that any new idea which threatens to undermine old traditions, sap old views, and raise the man whom it is the fashion to call "common," and whom Christians have kept so, by the mighty lever of cheaper secular education, is viewed with horror, and the utterers of it are soiled with the slanderous slime cast by Christian cowards whose lives, if viewed in the light of their Christian professions, are living lies.

Can any Freethinker doubt what I have said of the persistent persecution of Christians, when he views the cunning scheme to get behind the compromise of 1871, the treacherous and insidious attempt to chouse the electors, and foist upon the Board schools the Anglican teaching? What is it but a mean and cowardly endeavor to darken, with theological horrors, the pure and expanding minds of little children? The Church party were elected for one thing, they proceed to do another for which they had no mandate. They persecute us because we have escaped from the fold, and are showing the rest how to follow. That means the loss of the shepherds' bread and butter earned in that dishonest way, so they wish to pen in the young minds. "Moral instruction for the young" is the cowards' phrase for wishing to train up a race of hot young Tories, who, if they do not later on break from the darkness in which they have been reared, will fight for the privileges and property of the clergy who have befogged their intellects, and taught them to regard Freethinkers with abomination. What will the Anglican teaching lead to? Can we dare doubt that the children will be taught to order themselves lowly and reverently before their betters; to speak no evil of dignities, and chant "God bless the squire and his relations, and keep us in our proper stations," instead of singing inspiring songs and hymns of liberty and progress? Can we trust the snivelling priests who are paid by capital to teach the slaves of capital to speak no evil of those who are borne on the broad back of labor?

Moral and religious training forsooth! Does the mere contemplation of, and cackle about a scarecrow figure on a cross *ipso facto*, cause Christians to act nobly and bravely? It should. In *Salvator Mundi*, the Rev. Samuel Cox says, "If any man hold, or is convinced that he holds any truth, in God's name let him utter his truth or conviction, and leave the consequences with the God who gave it him, and who is quite able both to rule and to save the world without our help, and is not in the least likely to be helped by any man's infidelity to his convictions." We will see how these truths are spoken by the parsons who, in Carlyle's phrase, "have no tongue but for plate licking," and who, to quote Ruskin, "dine with the rich and preach at the poor"; the dialectical parsons and Christian moralists who will mildly reprove wrong in the abstract and gas about truth and goodness, and who, instead of boldly doing right, use their dialectical powers to invent a hundred reasons for not denouncing specific wrongs. The Christian minister who is supposed to speak the truth regardless of consequences, will excuse himself for attacking the vices and selfish follies of the rich and fashionable, on the ground that he wishes to be charitable. That is his euphemism for sheer cowardice. The same charitable silence is

not kept when he has to deal with the petty faults of honest Freethinkers, whose greatest crime is to ask for evidence of the truth of theological tale pitching. The reason he does not rise, rebuke, and fight against the men in high places, who welter in vice and oppress the meek and righteous, is because the job is a disagreeable one, and he persuades himself, or tells you so, that God will eventually reward the good, and round on the sinner. Yet strange to say he tries to be a bit in advance of God if there be a chance without personal risk of making things hot for the poor heretic who dares to doubt that God. Some of these paid Christians love God so much that they forget to love human charity and honesty. It seems to me that parsons of all sects would have quite enough to do if, instead of attacking what they are pleased to call unbelief, they devoted their energies to exposing the Christians who never try to lead Christ-like lives; for they must know that the average members of their flocks are always ready to grovel to their social superiors, and that they will never do anything to amend wrong and bad laws as long as the continued existence of such puts money in their pockets. But the theologian does not trouble himself much about your confirming to a system of ethics; his main concern is that you shall adhere to a set form of dogmas. One reason for the hatred shown by commercial Christians to Freethinkers is, they see that the latter lead as good lives as themselves, and do as much useful work, and that they thus show the Christians are humbugs, because they always profess that armed with the faith they can do so much more, and lead purer lives than unbelievers.

Let us now hearken to the coward's cry, "Where's yer 'orspitals?" It would only be fair if the Secular party could be asked that question 2,000 years hence by some of the braying and booing asses "respectable" Christians are not ashamed to use as tools." In some fairy tales we read that plants and animals talk to each other. What should we think of the charity of a crawling reptile if, in one of those stories, we read that it hissed to a seedling springing from an acorn, "Where's your tree trunk? What ships have been built of the wood from your progeny? What old woman's pot has been warmed with your cast-off twigs?" Years hence the oak would give the answer, and so shall the Freethought party if allowed fair play.

It is cowardly and spitefully mean to say to the Secularists, "Where is your special hospital labelled 'For Freethinkers only'?" Does any Christian dare to so libel the Secularists as to say there is no charity among them? How many, I wonder, of the working men who in their workshops each year contribute to the Hospital Saturday Fund are attendants at gospel-shops? It is in consonance with Christian cowardice for Christians to take the pence of these men—pence which they can ill spare—and then from platforms bewail that the Church has lost its hold over the working man. Nay, they go farther, and say that he has sunk so low that he prefers to wander in the fields on Sunday morning and sit at home in the afternoon over what, with delicate courtesy, they call low-class newspapers. That is because the workman does not choose to go and be dosed with religious soothing-syrup flavored with brimstone. It is a bold claim to make, but I am prepared to back it with numbers of instances of effects traced to causes, and it is that the increased remedial work of the last ten years is due mainly to Freethinkers, for it is the taunt of the Secularist that has stung the better sort of Christians to quicker action. Before leaving this point, I think I may say that if any Freethinker built a hospital from the proceeds of a life of unfair trading and rascally practices, augmented by harsh and galling exactions from his workers, whose wages were further reduced by a cunningly devised system of fines like those in force in the shops of chapel-supporting drapers, who calculate their scales with such exquisite cruelty that no man or tender girl, unless they were God Almighty, could escape being fined, we should be more ashamed than proud of the gift. We should think of Lowell's words—

Have ye founded your thrones and altars, then,  
On the bodies and souls of living men?

The echoes of the agonies of the tortured and diseased

victims of unscrupulous capital would reverberate in our souls. At any rate we should not boast about our "orspital," we should not cut our principles to suit the opinions of the donor, and we should not invite him to preside always on our platforms as Christians do to their commercial pirates and "phossy jaw" and lead poisoners. We should not cease to pay greater honor to moral worth and intellectual merit rather than to wealthy mediocrity. We should not speak of our Freethinker in the sickening, oleaginous and laudatory style one hears Christians speak at their chapel and church doors after service, when the carriages sweep away the rich brethren of the Lord, men who, before the month is out, will be saying nothing of the Sunday amusements of the rich, but damning the working man for causing the Sunday labor which will carry him for a brief space into purer air, *i.e.*, away from what is facetiously termed the house of God. We should of course be glad that the rich Freethinker had at last recognised his long overdue debt to humanity, and we should grieve that till then he had flung away a splendid chance of benefiting and humanising his fellow-men.

CHARLES E. BACON.

(To be concluded).

### ON PREACHERS.

THEY tell me this, and tell me that,  
And they tell me everything,  
The road iorks here, and the road forks there,  
And the road goes round in a ring.  
They give me wheat, and they give me chaff,  
And call it the bread of life,  
They claim religion is pleasure and peace,  
They claim it is penance and strife.

They reason from love that God is good,  
From hate—and they make him bad;  
They preach: "His mercy forever endures."  
They preach that he will get mad;  
They figure and twist, and make him one,  
They twist him again—he is three;  
They split his kingdom in two, and yield  
The devil, the earth and sea.

They prove the Bible is true, and prove  
It teaches an endless hell;  
They prove it is truer than that, and prove  
That all at last shall be well.  
They say that it says what it does not say,  
And what it does say—deny,  
And, say what you will, if you say they are wrong,  
They say what you say is a lie.

There's Elder Brown, of the Baptist church,  
He argues it plain and square,  
That ducking a man is saving a man,  
And no other method is fair.  
But the Presbyterian parson, White,  
He argues it square and plain  
That spraying a man is saving a man,  
And all other methods are vain.

While Rev. Green, the Methodist man,  
Declares, with a two-sided wink,  
The odds doesn't matter a single drop,  
But just as you happen to think.  
And Quaker Smith has a broad-brimmed view,  
And says with a "thee" and a "thou,"  
That water baptism don't wash with him  
(His claim I'm inclined to allow.)

But how in the devil, or how in the Lord,  
Such mysteries may abound,  
And celestially be all the truer because  
They are not terrestrially sound.  
It's more than my noddle can manage, so  
I say to the preachers, Go on!  
What God wants of me, he can tell it to me  
As well as he could to St. John;  
And I say to the Lord, and believe if the Lord  
Has got any sense he can see  
He needn't to send any preachers around  
When he has any business with me.

FRANK FELT.

### A MOUNTAIN REMOVED BY FAITH, AND A HOUSE TRANSPORTED BY ANGELS.

(See Matt. xvii. 20; xxi. 21. Mark xi. 23. Luke xvii. 6.)

NOW-A-DAYS, though one has faith as big as a mountain, he cannot remove even a grain of mustard-seed. It was not ever thus if we may believe the veracious traveller and chronicler, Marco Polo. He records that in 1250, the Caliph of Bagdad was taken prisoner by the Tartars, and says:—

"This seemed a just judgment from our Lord Jesus Christ on him; for in the year 1225, seeking to convert the Christians to the Mohammedan religion, and taking advantage from that place of the Gospel, 'That he which hath faith, as the grain of mustard-seed, shall be able to remove mountains,' he summoned all the Christians, Nestorians, and Jacobites, and propounded to them in ten days to remove a certain mountain, or turn Mohammedans, or be slain, as not having one man amongst them which had the least faith. They therefore continued eight days in prayer, after which a certain shoemaker, in consequence of a revelation made to a certain bishop, was fixed upon to perform it. This shoemaker, once tempted to lust by sight of a young woman in putting on her shoe, zealously had fulfilled the order of the Gospel, and literally had put out his right eye. He now on the day appointed, with other Christians, followed the cross, and lifting his hands to heaven, prayed to God to have mercy on his people, and then with a loud voice commanded the mountain, in the name of the Holy Trinity, to remove; which presently, with great terror to the Caliph and all his people, was effected, and that day is since kept holy by fasting, also on the evening before it."

When Marco Polo wrote, about 1299, the story was fresh in the minds of Christendom that the house of the Virgin Mary had been bodily removed by angels from Nazareth to the coast of Dalmatia. It was subsequently conveyed equally miraculously to Loretto, in Italy, and in 1518 Leo X. pledged the papal infallibility to the truth of the miracle, which could be disputed by none who believed in the reality of Christ's promises.

In these two cognate stories we may see the twin pillars of Christian supernaturalism, credulity and fraud. The story of Marco Polo is simply the repetition of a legend which grew out of the gospel text. But the tale of the house of Loretto was a deliberate fraud, concocted for purposes of revenue. When the Saracens took Palestine the monks who showed the holy places found their harvest from pilgrims cut off. They therefore set up a new Virgin's house, first in Dalmatia and afterwards in Italy, when they found a far richer stream of pilgrimage Romewards would visit the Holy House at Loretto by the way. This one instance should suffice to open the eyes of those amiable people who are so fond of telling us that religion, and all its adjuncts, has grown out of the necessities of man. Of course it has, but the necessities have often been those of idle, fraudulent priests, desirous of consuming the products of ignorant workers. Take away the twin pillars of credulity and fraud, and the temple of supernatural religion would be like the temple of Solomon with Boaz and Jachin removed.

J. M. W.

### BOOK CHAT.

*The Creation of God*, by Dr. Jacob Hartmann, comes to us from the "Truthseeker" Company, New York. The author is a downright Atheist, and writes with considerable vigor. His book is a curious *olla podrida*, plain scientific teaching mingled with racy Biblical criticism. The defect of the latter is that Dr. Hartmann regards the Bible too much as real history. His chapter on "The Soul—What is it?" is terse and powerful. The position he takes up is unmistakable. "Soul," he says, "is the product of imagination. It has no immortality, because it has no existence." Dr. Hartmann's concluding advice is "Be your own God, your own Savior, your own priest."

The "Truthseeker" Company also sends us a *Handbook of Freethought*, by W. S. Bell. The title-page represents it as

"containing in condensed and systematised form a vast amount of evidence against the superstitious doctrines of Christianity." This is borne out by the contents. Mr. Bell has compiled a book which will be very serviceable in the great fight between Reason and Faith. We hope it will have, as it deserves, a wide circulation.

In the *Open Court* of Chicago, Mr. M. D. Conway is writing a series of papers on "Mothers and Sons of God." His first paper is devoted chiefly to Adam and Eve. He notices that in the Hebrew when Cain was born, Eve says: "With Jahveh I have begotten a man," and argues that there were two lines of descent, one from Jahveh and Eve, the other from Adam and Eve. No wonder Eve was considered the prototype of Mary, if she treated Adam as her successor did Joseph.

*The Rise and Progress of Modern Spiritualism in England*, by James Robertson (Manchester: 73A Corporation-street; 6d.), is a brief sketch of the history of Spiritism in England, reprinted from the *Two Worlds*. It is preceded by a short account of Spiritism in early faiths; then Joan of Arc, George Fox, Mozart and Beethoven, Swedenborg, Mesmer, and Joanna Southcott are put down as mediums, while Andrew Jackson Davis is described as the modern John the Baptist, the forerunner of the New Dispensation inaugurated by the Fox Sisters. Partial accounts are given of Home, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, Mrs. Britten, Alderman Barkas, and other well-known workers in the movement. Prof. Huxley's letter declining to investigate is described as "one of the silliest letters ever penned by a cultured man."

Judge Waite's book on *The History of the Christian Religion to the Year 200* has reached a fifth edition. In this work he points out the influence of the apocryphal gospels in moulding the Christian legends.

*Science, Creation, and Revelation*, by J. H. Burrige (London: A. Holmes, 14 Paternoster-row), is a little book of the good old-fashioned sort. Mr. Burrige will have none of your new-fangled talk about evolution. He believes in creation. "This cannot be disproven; while the theory of evolution is entirely destitute of proof in the whole range of human history and observation." Darwin labored in vain for such men as Mr. Burrige. He believes in inspiration—no half measures, but verbal inspiration; not that the Holy Ghost is responsible for the mistakes of translation. As to the Pentateuch: "You cannot refuse Moses and believe Christ. The two stand or fall together. 'He wrote of me.'" We think Mr. Burrige's little book as full of nonsense as an egg is full of meat, yet we wish it a wide circulation, for it serves to show what good old orthodoxy still remains.

*The Religion of the Brain*, by Henry Smith (Watts and Co.) is a volume which does not challenge a strenuous criticism. The author indulges in a kind of chat about religion, physics, and metaphysics. Sometimes he is thoughtful, and sometimes the reverse. Occasionally he is ill-informed, as, for instance, when he says that in Jesus was concentrated all the good that had been taught before, and when he says that the bee contracts its cell geometrically by "instinct." His statements about his own power of "suggestion" seem to us rather imaginative. On the whole, however, he seems to us on the right road.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 5.30, tea and soiree (6d.) Tuesday at 8.30, dancing (free).  
Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, T. O. Benson, M.A., "Neo-Malthusianism—a Reply to Objections."  
Camberwell—81 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, W. Heaford, "Insanity an Ingredient of Religion."  
Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7, musical selections; 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "Devil Worship, the Popular Religion" (8d., 6d., and 1s.)  
Finsbury Park Branch, 11 Blackstock-road Thursday, June 29, at 8, members' general meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed"; 6.30, A. Johnson, "Old Testament Saints."  
Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, C. James, "Buddha, Confucius, and Christ."

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, S. H. Alison will lecture.  
Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, C. Cohen will lecture.  
Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen will lecture.  
Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Christian Religion"; 3.30, E. Calvert, "Is the Old Testament a Divine Record?"  
Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday at 8.30, Mr. St. John, "Science and Miracle."  
Hammersmith Bridge: 8.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Christian Creed."  
Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Christian Creed"; 3.30, J. Rowney, "The Holy Bible." Wednesday at 8, C. Cohen, "Religion and Freethought."  
Islington—Newington Green: 3.15, W. Heaford, "The Plain Truth about the Bible."  
Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, A. B. Moss, "Life Hereafter."  
Lambeth—Kennington Green (near the Vestry Hall): 6.30, C. James, "Buddha, Confucius, and Christ."  
Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, Mr. St. John will lecture.  
Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Why Did Christ Die?"  
Mile End Waste: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Life and Times of Robert Owen."  
Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, H. Snell, "God's Book."  
Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, J. Rowney, "The Holy Bible"; 3.30, H. Snell, "The Ascent of Man."  
Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, J. Marshall, "The Gloom of Jesus: was he Insane?"; 3.15, C. Cohen, "The French Revolution."  
Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, Mr. St. John will lecture.  
Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Why Christianity has Failed."

The "Queensberry" R. and A. Club: Excursion up the River Lea to Broxbourne (tickets 2s, at the hall); boats leave Reader's Boat-house, Lea-bridge-road, at 7 a.m. Monday and Friday at 8, at the "Central" Baths, Clerkenwell, swimming. Wednesday at 8, at the hall, athletics.

COUNTRY.

Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 9, members and friends leave for annual picnic to Aldborough.  
Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, Thomas Didymus, "Our Sailors."  
Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: Tuesday at 8, debating circle, social evening. On Sunday at 6.45, members and friends leave London-road for annual picnic to Cleethorpe.  
Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, members' annual meeting.  
Reading—Foresters' Hall, West-street: 7, members' meeting.  
Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rookingham-street: Charles Watts, 11, "The Bible Up to Date"; 3, "Religious Fanaticism"; 7, "Is there a Life Beyond the Grave?—the Question Answered"; tea at 5.  
South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean-road: Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "Theosophy and Christianity"; 3, "Democracy in America"; 7, "The Latest Theories of Heredity."  
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